

**Chapter 161: Battle in the Secret Mansion**

Guo Haidong grinned slightly. He grasped his ruby-red lance firmly and said, "Zhang Ruochen, I'm a warrior who ranks 874th on the Profound Board. How about you? You're not even a Warrior of Division Profound! You indeed have no respect for me, don't you?"

"I don't want to waste time with you. Come on, let's fight!"

Zhang Ruochen had already offered him a chance to back off. Yet, he did not cherish it. Zhang Ruochen would not spare him this time.

He moved forward three steps in a row with each step being 21 meters long. In total, he moved 63 meters.

"Boom!" When Zhang Ruochen reached the ground after making the third step, he had already dashed in front of Guo Haidong. His powerful step caused a shallow pit on the ground.

A sword light flashed and seven Sword Breaths appeared before Guo Haidong's eyes.

And the sound of seven swords harshly erupted next to his ears.

Guo Haidong's countenance changed again. He held the red lance tightly with both of his hands. Then, he spun it quickly to ward off the sharp sword light.

"Bang! Bang!"

The clash of seven strikes in a row made seven flames flare up. Zhang Ruochen hit the red lance in Guo Haidong's hand, making it tumble around and shiver.

Such a powerful force descended from the long lance into Guo Haidong's body, which fluttered and turned his arms numb.

After the seven hits, the flesh between Guo Haidong's thumb and index finger had been split open which caused a blood rupture. The red lance had almost fallen out of his hand.

He could not help but back off in distress. This was the first time that he found Zhang Ruochen to be scary. Not only did he possess a fast speed but he also had an exceptionally high degree of power.

"Waaa!"

Abruptly, Zhang Ruochen swung his sword onto Guo Haidong's arm. A blood-light flashed—his arm was chopped off and it flew in the air.

"Phew!"

The icy air on the Snow Dragon Sword then manifested. A thin layer of white Ice Crystals condensed on his right arm where the blood had begun to freeze. It looked like it had turned into a translucent, scarlet crystal agate.

Guo Haidong screamed out loud. His left hand grabbed the long red spear tightly and he retreated back with a stagger. He was in such serious pain that cold sweat covered his entire body while the muscles on his face were distorted.

“Zhang Ruochen, how dare you cut off my arm today! I’ll take revenge and have both your arms and legs cut off in the future! Wait and see!”

Guo Haidong stared at Zhang Ruochen maliciously with hatred and resentment in his eyes.

He turned around and rushed toward Chikong Secret Mansion at a speed of 63 meters per second.

Zhang Ruochen had acquired a faster speed than Guo Haidong as he could move 500 meters forward in just nine steps. Then, he flew on top of Guo Haidong’s head and surpassed him.

“Go to hell!”

From his arm, Guo Haidong took out a Battle Formation that was drawn on Spiritual Paper. He quickly opened the Battle Formation, activated the Genuine Qi, and smashed toward Zhang Ruochen.

“Boom!”

Wisps of thunderbolt inscriptions gradually appeared on the surface of the Battle Formation. It emitted an eye-catching light and formed a round-shape attack array with an eight-meter diameter that Zhang Ruochen was wrapped up in.

“Haha! Zhang Ruochen, this is the ‘Electric Cloud Formation’, a second-class attack array that even a warrior of the Initial Stage of the Earth Realm would be killed by.” Guo Haidong laughed out loud outside the array.

“Do you really think that you can trap me with a second-class attack array?”

Zhang Ruochen’s hands clenched the sword handle. His clothes ballooned out while his hair was fluttering in the air. A Blood Wave with a nine-meter diameter appeared under his feet.

The Blood Wave was formed by Spiritual Blood. Countless blood inscriptions condensed together and generated a mysterious image.

When the Blood Wave started rotating, it exploded out a forceful vortex power and broke down the Electric Cloud Formation.

“Puff!”

The Battle Formation was floating in the air. Suddenly, it shattered, burned up, and turned into ashes.

All of the thunderbolt power had been pushed out by the Blood Wave. It turned into gleams of electric strips and dissipated in every direction.

“Your Blood Wave... it’s a Divine-stage Blood Wave...” While looking at the Blood Wave under Zhang Ruochen’s feet, Guo Haidong was totally shocked. Without any hesitation, he released the Wings of Wind and was ready to escape.

A warrior who was able to generate the Divine-stage Blood Wave possessed an extremely strong fighting force. Having seen the power of Zhang Ruochen, Guo Haidong clearly knew that he was not his match in fighting. Therefore, running away was the only way that he could save himself.

Guo Haidong started transferring a wisp of his Genuine Qi into the Wings of Wind. Before he fully activated the Wings of Wind, there was a sword light that flashed in front of him and caused pain in his eyes.

“Pfff!”

Zhang Ruochen’s sword had pierced through Guo Haidong’s glabella. By making his glabella the center, the icy air surged out from the sword and had completely frozen Guo Haidong’s head in the ice.

“Boom!”

The body of Guo Haidong heavily fell on the ground.

Zhang Ruochen retrieved his Snow Dragon Sword. Not even one drop of blood had contaminated the cutting edge of the sword. It remained bright and clean like a piece of snow-jade.

“You chose to carry evil in your heart, so you only have yourself to blame for what happened!”

Zhang Ruochen picked up the Wings of Wind in Guo Haidong’s hand and took a closer look. They were lower-class Wings of Wind that only allowed him to use them three times.

Then, he put away the Wings of Wind and stored Guo Haidong’s red lance in the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel. It was a valuable fifth-class Genuine Martial Arm and Zhang Ruochen would consider himself a fool if he did not take it.

There was a bag on Guo Haidong’s back in which three bags of water, four bottles of pills, an Anti-Thunder Pearl, a Thunder Pearl, and eight Spiritual Crystals were carried.

Zhang Ruochen took everything in the bag away and decided to count the treasure when he found a safer place to rest.

When Zhang Ruochen stood up and was about to leave, he felt that there was a strand of icy air that suddenly broke out behind his back. Every inch of his body tensed up that his body changed into a shadow, dashing five meters sideways.

“Whew!”

A cyan brilliancy radiated out back and forth from where Zhang Ruochen was standing. It drew a magnificent arc in the sky.

Lang Xin, who was standing under the giant wooden door, caught and grasped the cyan brilliancy, which was flying back.

Surprisingly, the cyan brilliancy was indeed a 15-centimeters-long blade with a vulture glyph on it. The blade handle was embedded with smooth Spiritual Crystals and it came with a sharp blade edge in cyan.

The blade was a fifth-class Genuine Martial Arm, on which 27 inscriptions had been carved.

Lang Xin gripped the blade with two of his fingers. He glanced at Guo Haidong quickly and spat out the mean words coldly: "Such a waste!"

He then shifted his sight towards Zhang Ruochen and mocked him. "Zhang Ruochen, I think people might have underestimated you for killing Guo Haidong in such a short period of time. With your capability, you're certainly qualified to rank in the top 500 on the Profound Board."

Lang Xin was in his 20s and looked relatively young. His arms were slightly longer than ordinary people's as well as having wider shoulders. Moreover, his thick eyebrows and straight nose gave off a resolute and persistent feeling.

Zhang Ruochen stared at the blade in Lang Xin's hand. He asked, "What's your ranking on the Profound Board?"

"My current ranking is 580th," Lang Xin responded.

Zhang Ruochen was confused and asked, "But still, you want to kill me?"

Lang Xin's eyelid slightly lifted and he said, "Yes, I do. The most idiotic thing you've done is offend Xun Guihai by marrying the woman that he loves. You are absolutely an eccentric nut meddling with Commandery Princess Yanchen of Qianshui Commandery. Don't you know that there are a lot of top warriors whom you should admire in the internal School of the Martial Market that are chasing after her?"

Zhang Ruochen asked, "Then why do you want to help Xun Guihai kill me?"

"Stop being naive. Do you think I want to kill you just because of Xun Guihai?" There was a sense of coldness displayed in Lang Xin's eyes. He lifted up his head and looked around the underground world of Chikong Secret Mansion. He said, "Since I've entered Chikong Secret Mansion, I don't need to suppress my Realm. I'm going to break through to the Earth Realm now!"

Lang Xin took out a thumb-sized Pill and swallowed it down his throat. Instantly, there was a crackling sound that emanated from his body. Every inch of his skin turned red with gleams of Genuine Qi that were displaying out from his body. It formed a large Genuine Qi cloud which totally engulfed his body.

In order to participate in the Intermediate Relic Exploration Test, Lang Xin had suppressed his realm to the Final State of the Black Realm for four years. Since he had already entered Chikong Secret Mansion, his Realm could be freely elevated.

Not only Lang Xin but Xun Guihai, Luo Shuihan, Huang Yanchen, Duanmu Xingling, Tuo Muzi... all of them planned to break through to higher realms when they entered Chikong Secret Mansion.

Shortly after, Lang Xin had broken into the Initial Stage of the Earth Realm and greatly enhanced his fighting force. With his current ability, even the top five warriors on the Profound Board were probably not strong enough to be his opponent.

"Where is he? Has he escaped?"

Lang Xin looked around and tried to find Zhang Ruochen. Yet, Zhang Ruochen had already disappeared without a trace.

Under the circumstances, Zhang Ruochen had no reason not to escape.

Lang Xin was a warrior of the Division Profound. Once he broke through to the Earth Realm, no doubt his power would be enhanced a few times more. Zhang Ruochen clearly understood that he was no match fighting against him so, therefore, he left.

Zhang Ruochen displayed Shadow of the Royal Wind Dragon, by which he could move tens of meters forward with each step. He had reached a speed of 66 meters per second.

He did not use the Wings of Wind as each of the wings could only be used three times. It was a precious treasure that he would not use randomly unless it was needed.

“Zhang Ruochen, you have nowhere to hide!”

The voice of Lang Xin resounded behind Zhang Ruochen and it was getting closer.

“He’s so fast!”

Zhang Ruochen looked back and identified Lang Xin, whose speed had reached 74 meters per second. Even the No.1 warrior of the Profound Board was not as speedy as he was.

“Clash!”

Lang Xin had shortened the distance between Zhang Ruochen in a hundred meters. He swung his arm where a flying green blade flew out between his fingers as if it had turned into a rainbow and pierced on Zhang Ruochen’s back.

While the flying green blade pierced into the Time and Space Domain, Zhang Ruochen applied the power of space warps. That forced the flying green blade to change its flying pattern and revert back toward Lang Xin.

Lang Xin was shocked and got out of the way immediately.

“Boom!”

The blade hit the ground behind Lang Xin and created a half-meter-deep pit. Smoke and ashes vented out from the bottom of the pit where the flying green blade was thrust into.

Since Chikong Secret Mansion was located deep underground, the ground was covered with a thick vermilion lithosphere. The power of the flying green blade was clearly shown by making a half-meter-deep pit in the ground.

Lang Xin stretched out his arms as his fingertips released a strand of Genuine Qi light that wrapped the flying green blade up.

The blade trembled before flying back into Lang Xin’s hand.

*“Zhang Ruochen is so incredible! What type of martial technique did he just display?”*

Lang Xin looked at the disappearing Zhang Ruochen with frustration in his eyes. He whispered, “There will be chances to kill Zhang Ruochen in the future. I had better take care of my own business. According to the Chief, the warriors of the Black Market have all been imprisoned in Magma Valley. Once I set

them free, we must get every single student of the School of the Martial Market killed. As for those pretty genius female students... we should keep them alive and sell them to the Black Market. It's going to make a good profit!"

Then, Lang Xin took out a fragmentary beast-skin graph and looked to find the direction of Magma Valley. His shadow disappeared in the dark miasma within a flash.

After Lang Xin had left, Zhang Ruochen came out from the Time and Space Domain. He stared at where Lang Xin was heading and mumbled, "He's the spy of the Black Market!"

## **Chapter 162: The Monster in the Stone Wall**

The Black Market and the School of the Martial Market had long been enemies. If Lang Xin released the heretics of the Black Market who were currently being locked up in Chikong Secret Mansion, it would be a disaster for the students who had entered the Mansion.

It was also unfavorable for Zhang Ruochen.

"I have to kill Lang Xin. If he releases the warriors of the Black Market into the Mansion, I'll be unable to stand upright in Chikong Secret Mansion."

Zhang Ruochen walked out from the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel and summoned for Blackie.

Blackie's body was as big as a lion with a huge waist and legs. His stomach was plump, and his eyes were as massive as bowls. The pair of black wings on his back could extend to eight meters long if he expanded them.

"Blackie, I'll follow behind Lang Xin while you stay here and wait for senior sister apprentice Duanmu. If she enters Chikong Secret Mansion, tell her to meet me at Magma Valley and help me out," said Zhang Ruochen.

Blackie responded, "Wait... he is a master at the Initial Stage of the Earth Realm. If you chase after him, isn't that seeking death?"

"If he sets the heretics of the Black Market free, it will be a catastrophe." Zhang Ruochen looked determined. Once he made a decision, he would not change his mind.

Blackie nodded and said, "Okay, but please be very careful! This place is strange. I can sense the breathing of powerful savage beasts. Don't you dare die and drag me down in such a mysterious place! I don't want to die here!"

Zhang Ruochen released the Space Domain and immediately disappeared from where he stood.

Yet, Zhang Ruochen did not actually disappear. Instead, he generated the power of the Space Domain and distorted the space surrounding his body, thus forming a blind spot of vision.

Since Zhang Ruochen had mastered the Space Domain, he was confident and brave enough to follow behind Lang Xin. Even though he was not yet a strong opponent for Lang Xin, at least he was certain that he could escape from him if he got caught.

Following the trace that Lang Xin had left, Zhang Ruochen walked toward the depths of Chikong Secret Mansion carefully step by step.

Chikong Secret Mansion was located deep underground in the nest of the Four-winged Earth Dragon. It occupied a relatively large amount of space below the surface.

On the way to the underground, Zhang Ruochen had noticed that there were both human and beast bones along the way and that some remnants had been thrust into the bones.

After chasing for 5 kilometres, Zhang Ruochen finally found the figure of Lang Xin.

Lang Xin was walking down the stone stairs carefully as there was turbulent magma beside him.

Suddenly, the sound of a hurricane broke out just as Zhang Ruochen was about to reach him.

“Phfff!”

A strong, gusting, crimson heat wave blew from the depth of the Mansion.

Zhang Ruochen quickly stuck the Snow Dragon Sword into the ground in order to stabilize his body. He utilized the power of the Space Domain to reduce the wind power of the heat wave.

The forceful wind power caused the stone wall near Zhang Ruochen to crack a finger-sized breach.

“Crack! Crack!”

The breach continued to expand to one meter wide in the end.

“Awoo!”

The deafening sound of a howling beast came from the crevice.

A tentacle more than 10 meters long covered with dark carapaces darted out from the crevice. It wrapped Zhang Ruochen’s body tightly and dragged him over.

Zhang Ruochen’s arm was completely bound. He could only grab and swing the sword upward with his fingers.

“Boom!”

He pierced through the black tentacle with the Snow Dragon Sword, a seventh-class Genuine Martial Arm. It sparked but did not break the carapace.

Then, the tentacle generated a forceful power and dragged Zhang Ruochen to the edge of the crevice. He thrust one leg into the stone wall, stabilized his body, and supported himself from being pulled over.

*“What kind of savage beast is this? Just one of its tentacles displays such forceful power. If it drags me to the crevice, I’ll be a dead man!”*

Hearing footsteps, Zhang Ruochen turned and saw Lang Xin walking towards him.

Lang Xin stared sternly at Zhang Ruochen, who was bound tightly by the black tentacle and could not move an inch. He sneered. "Zhang Ruochen, there's a way to reach heaven and yet, you decide to break into the underworld. Time to go to hell!"

He pulled out his blade and swung towards Zhang Ruochen's neck.

Zhang Ruochen then generated the power of the space warp and switched the direction of the blade. The flying green blade glided right next to Zhang Ruochen's face and hit the black tentacle.

"Clash!" The blade pierced three inches deep and became embedded in the tentacle.

The reason Zhang Ruochen's Snow Dragon Sword had failed to pierce through the tentacle was that his arms had been restrained and he was unable to utilize the power of his body, and could only use the power of his five fingers.

Without sufficient power, the force was not enough to penetrate the carapace.

Not only had the flying green blade obtained a powerful force but it also had a high speed. He had only harmed its antenna.

The monster hiding in between the crevice let out a loud screaming noise after suffering from great pain. The thick stone wall had been shattered hard and the breach was even wider.

"Waaa!"

A second tentacle appeared from the crevice and whipped Lang Xin. Its powerful force knocked him far away out. Fortunately, his arms warded off the tentacle. He used a sixth-class Genuine Martial Arm arm-shield to hold off most of its power.

Otherwise, the attack could have battered him brutally and caused serious injury.

"*What kind of monster is this?*" Lang Xin looked at his arms where the blood was flooding out and stared at the widened stone wall in shock.

He was even stronger than the masters at the Mid Stage of the Earth Realm with his current ability. Yet, he had been whipped by a tentacle and was seriously injured. It indicated clearly how powerful the monster hiding in the stone wall was.

Lang Xin went out of focus for a second, and the third tentacle flew out from the crevice. It wrapped him up and dragged him over the crevice.

He instantly transferred his Genuine Qi into his arm shield and activated the Inscription of Fire Series.

His arms were burning. There was a glowing red light that emitted from the shield's surface. The tentacle started loosening up.

"Slap!"

Another tentacle appeared and lashed the top of his head. Fresh blood dripped down all over his face. His cheekbones were broken, his mouth was bleeding profusely, and his teeth were spewing out.



The tentacle smacked him again and cracked his skull, which split open, and his head was badly mutilated.

Lang Xin was struggling to get rid of the tentacle and suddenly, the splendor shining on the shield went out and turned gloomy.

When Zhang Ruochen saw how badly Lang Xin had been knocked down, he let out a long gasp. If he did not find a way to escape from the tentacle, his situation would be even worse.

The two tentacles dragged the dead body of Lang Xin into the crevice.

Then, there was a chewing sound “Baji, Baji!” from the crevice.

How pathetic it was that a Martial Arts master of the Earth Realm had become monster food in merely a moment.

Zhang Ruochen was scared. Cold sweat covered his forehead. Lang Xin was dead, and he was afraid that he would become the monster’s next meal.

*“I’ve got it!”* An idea suddenly flashed in Zhang Ruochen’s mind.

He quickly activated his Genuine Qi and transferred into the Time and Space Spinel in order to open up its internal space.

“Waaa!”

The white light of the Time and Space Spinel flashed and drew Zhang Ruochen into the internal space.

Outside of the Time and Space Spinel, the body of Zhang Ruochen disappeared from the hand of the black tentacle swiftly, leaving a White Spinel behind on the ground.

When the White Spinel touched the ground, Zhang Ruochen jumped out from the Spinel, picked it up, and ran towards the exit as fast as he could.

“Awoo!”

The monster in between the crevice roared loudly when it discovered that he was getting away. It quickly stretched out three tentacles and attacked towards Zhang Ruochen.

Since Zhang Ruochen had already been tied up once, he was cautious this time. As the three tentacles extended out, Zhang Ruochen turned into four shadows, appearing in four different directions. He shuffled in between the breach of the tentacle and got away.

“I’m going to chop you off!”

Zhang Ruochen thrust against the ground and jumped up high. He activated the inscription carved on the Snow Dragon Sword and swung towards the tentacles with both hands.

“Pfff!”

Zhang Ruochen cut off a two-meter-long black tentacle. It fell to the ground.

The monster was frightened. It groaned thunderously and retreated its three tentacles back into the crevice.

“Boom!”

All of a sudden, a thunderous rumble burst out from inside the crevice. Tiny crackles appeared on the stone wall.

*“Oh god! If that stone wall is broken down, the monster will no doubt kill me!”* Zhang Ruochen turned around and escaped at once. Suddenly, he noticed that there was a fragmentary savage beast graph on the ground.

Such a savage beast graph had likely fallen out of Lang Xin’s sleeves.

Zhang Ruochen picked it up and rushed down the stone stairs towards the magma river and fled far away.

“Boom!”

The 80-meter-high stone wall had fallen down and produced a deafening crackling sound as if the mountains were falling and the earth was splitting apart.

A massive black monster clambered out from the stone wall and began to run in the direction where Zhang Ruochen had escaped.

The monster was more than 30 meters tall and covered with a thick carapace all over its body. It had eight tentacles that were more than 50 meters long each. It crawled towards Zhang Ruochen rapidly at a shockingly high speed.

*“This savage beast was probably born underground. It is at least a third-class medium-level or superior-class savage beast.”*

According to Zhang Ruochen’s observations, the fighting force of this monster had reached at least the Advanced Stage of the Earth Realm, or possibly even higher.

“The Wings of Wind.”

Struggling to escape from the monster, Zhang Rouchen suddenly remembered the Wings of Wind. He instantly injected Genuine Qi into them. The wings transformed from two pieces of a palm-sized iron wing to metallic filaments. They started flowing from his arms and condensed up to his back where two splendid wings were formed.

With his Genuine Qi revolving, Zhang Ruochen sprinted out at 100 meters per second as if he had turned into a striking arrow.

The black monster was just as fast as Zhang Ruochen. It was trailing closely behind him. It roared aggressively while spewing out green bile.

The road in front of him was sealed by a colossal architectural stone door.

The beam on the door had a carved inscription: “Magma Purgatory”!

The inscription was incomplete as it was weathered due to disintegration from the ages.

*"There's no other way to go!"* Zhang Ruochen's countenance changed.

To the left of the stone door was an amber magma river flowing down while a dense stone wall stood on the right.

Zhang Ruochen stopped under the archway and thought, *"Is this the prison where they locked up the assassins of the Black Market?"*

Zhang Ruochen wondered whether he should release the assassins in order to be shielded from the black monster.

Unfortunately, the colossal door was sealed. He could not open the door if he did not know how to dispel the seal.

"Awoo!"

The black monster noticed in the distance that Zhang Ruochen's pathway had been sealed off by the stone door. Adrenaline coursed through its body in excitement, granting it extra speed. It was rapidly gaining upon Zhang Ruochen. The monster was eagerly anticipating devouring its victim as Zhang Ruochen had nowhere to escape to.

### **Chapter 163: The Underground Mountain**

*"What I can do is endure until the arrival of senior sister apprentice Duanmu and Blackie. By that time, we will be strong enough to kill it."*

According to Zhang Ruochen's estimates, Duanmu Xingling and Blackie would probably need quarter hour or so before reaching Magma Valley.

Could he manage to stall the monster in black for a quarter with his level of cultivation?

While Zhang Ruochen was wondering how to make it happen, the monster in black stretched out two 10-meter-long tentacles and swayed towards him.

He immediately displayed the power of the space warp, which hid him and made him disappear.

"Bang! Bang!"

The two tentacles of the monster in black smashed on the stone wall severely, shattering the stone wall that tiny pieces of broken stone fell off onto the ground.

When it found that Zhang Ruochen had escaped and disappeared, the monster in black let out a sharp groan. A wisp of Genuine Qi condensed around its body where a mass of vermilion appeared on his stomach. The vermilion dashed up from its stomach, through its neck, and exploded from its mouth.

A crimson flame had covered the entire space. It forced Zhang Ruochen, who had turned transparent, to leave the space warp.

He quickly shrank the Space Domain and restrained it to cover the area of 10 meters around him. By generating the power of the Space Domain, he finally blocked the fire that spat out from the monster in black.

By reaching the Final State of the Black Realm, Zhang Ruochen's Space Domain was able to cover an area of 80 meters at most. The wider space that the Space Domain had, the weaker the power was; while when the space it covered was smaller, the power would be stronger.

"Sacred Sky-piercing Sword!"

Zhang Ruochen thrust against the ground and jumped up high. He swayed the Snow Dragon Sword towards the head of the monster in black.

When Zhang Ruochen was about to release the sword, there was a biting icy air exposed by the sword. Suddenly, snow appeared and flowed around Zhang Ruochen's body, covering the space of 33 meters around him.

He condensed snowflakes within a 100-foot radius.

Yet, before a snowflake even dropped on the ground, the high temperature of the magma river had evaporated the snow and turned them into wisps of white smoke.

When it realized that Zhang Ruochen was swinging his sword over, the monster in black shifted all eight tentacles at the same time and attacked toward him. It had protected itself solidly.

It was challenging facing the eight tentacles at once. Even though the speed of Zhang Ruochen was exceptionally fast, he was almost caught by a tentacle every time.

*"No way, this is not going to work! Its power is too strong. His one tentacle alone possesses the power of the Earth Realm. Let alone all eight tentacles attacking together, which will be forceful enough to kill a group of Martial Arts masters of the Earth Realm."*

Zhang Ruochen was frustrated about what to do. He retreated back at a high speed by utilizing Shadow of the Royal Wind Dragon after throwing a Thunder Pearl out.

The power of the Thunder Pearl was magnificent. Zhang Ruochen retreated back and stood next to the stone door. Then, he transferred his Genuine Qi and activated the inscription carved on the Ice-fire Kylin Armor.

A sound of Kylin roaring went off. The lights of vermilion and fresh blue were exposed on Zhang Ruochen's body, where an illusory image of a massive Kylin was condensed. The Kylin had Zhang Ruochen protected under its illusory image.

"Boom!"

The Thunder Pearl exploded underneath the monster in black and released the terrifying power of a thunderbolt.

Strands of white lightning extended like a sky sword to more than 33 meters and sent out the sound of thunder.

Numerous thunderbolts then dashed out from the Thunder Pearl as if it was a tiny snake line and completely wrapped up the monster in black.

The body of the monster in black looked burnt and it emitted wisps of blue smoke. There were three bowl-sized wounds that were split open by the power of the thunderbolt. Shockingly, the wounds were burnt black without any blood dripping out.

“Awoo!”

After a short while of paralysis caused by the thunderbolt, the monster in black roared aggressively again. Its colossal eyes had turned bloody-red and it struck out toward Zhang Ruochen.

It was extremely furious!

*“It surely has strong vitality. How can it still be alive after being hit by the Thunder Pearl?”*

Since the monster in black had already been hit by the Thunder Pearl, it would be more cautious. Even if Zhang Ruochen threw another Thunder Pearl out, it would be impossible to hurt it now.

Moreover, if Zhang Ruochen threw the Thunder Pearl out within such a close distance, he would get himself killed before killing the monster in black.

When the eight tentacles of the monster in black were swayed down, Zhang Ruochen quickly opened the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel and hid inside.

Zhang Ruochen once again disappeared right in front of the monster and left a date-sized crystal on the ground.

“Boom!”

The monster in black was annoyed. Its eight tentacles smashed on the stone door of the Purgatory of the Red River. A loud noise broke out and the stone wall slightly trembled.

The monster in black stopped and fell into deep thought. He was trying to look for a trace of Zhang Ruochen, staring at the crystal that was dropped on the ground. It used one of its tentacles and picked up the Time and Space Spinel. It looked around and swallowed the Spinel down its throat.

Then, it stared deeply at the stone wall before heading to the depths of Chikong Secret Mansion.

An hour later—

A sexy woman with a tiny figure, who was wearing a light blue dress with long hair and slender legs, rushed towards Magma Valley where Zhang Ruochen had just fought.

The pretty woman frowned her umber-black eyebrows and exclaimed, “The fight is over.”

Beside her was a giant cat with wings expanded and, rolling its eyes around, it said, “Don’t tell me Zhang Ruochen was killed by Lang Xin...”

Undoubtedly, the beautiful woman with the scandalous figure was Duanmu Xingling, who rushed towards Magma Valley with Blackie in order to help Zhang Ruochen.

Duanmu Xingling shook her head and said, "If Lang Xin had killed Zhang Ruochen, the stone door of the Purgatory of the Red River would have been opened and the heretics of the Black Market would already have been released. Moreover, even though Lang Xin has already broken into the Earth Realm, he is not able to display such destructive power. I guess Zhang Ruochen has encountered an absolutely terrifying underground savage beast. If that is the case, I doubt if he is still alive..."

Blackie ground his teeth as if an idea had entered into his mind. He laughed. "Well, he seems to be one of those who possesses a long life. I think he's escaped from the beast instead of being killed."

If Zhang Ruochen was indeed dead, the power of the Yin Yang Wooden Graph would definitely pull Blackie back into the graphical world.

Since he was still standing next to Duanmu Xingling, he was confident that Zhang Ruochen was still alive.

Duanmu Xingling rubbed her titling jaw slightly. She stretched out her tiny soft hand and tapped on Blackie's fluffy head. She said, "Don't worry, Blackie! If Zhang Ruochen is dead in Chikong Secret Mansion, I'll still take care of you for him and won't let you become a homeless street cat."

Blackie's eyes widened. The black hair on his body flared up and he exclaimed, "I'm the King of Slaughter! How dare you compare me with an ordinary cat? When I shocked the world, your ancestors were not even born. I specialize in 3,000 martial techniques... Hey, stop! I haven't finished yet..."

Duanmu Xingling ignored Blackie. She stretched herself with a yawn, exposing her snow-white flat stomach and tiny waist. Additionally, she grabbed an ancient sword, and walking back and forth, responded, "Ahem... Slaughter... King, keep up with me. If you get lost, you'll surely be a street cat!"

Blackie's claws scratched fiercely on the ground. His round ears erected and rushed towards Duanmu Xingling. He walked side by side with Duanmu Xingling and continued, "I specialize in 3,000 martial techniques so I'm able to absorb the essence of the sun and moon, and induce the light of stars. I once conquered the entire Kunlun's Field and no one was capable of beating me."

Duanmu Xingling lifted her eyelids and poked gently on Blackie's head. She responded, "Not bad! Being a savage beast, you're able to speak our language as well as talk trash. Zhang Ruochen is indeed a good teacher!"

Blackie jiggled his head, stared coldly at Duanmu Xingling, and said, "How could Zhang Ruochen, such a petty little doll, be able to teach me? Despite my exceedingly high ability of martial cultivation, I'm proficient in array formations, pill and weapon refining, beast training, summoning wind and calling for rain, divination..."

Duanmu Xingling put up a smile on her rosy cheeks with her red lips slightly aroused. She felt like Zhang Ruochen's giant cat was indeed very interesting and he was even funnier than a human, especially when it spoke.

...

Standing inside the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel, Zhang Ruochen was able to sense what was happening outside.

*"I can't believe the monster in black has swallowed the crystal down its throat."*

Before Zhang Ruochen had been taken down into the monster's stomach, he was thinking of how to kill the monster in black. Yet, it was going to be extremely easy now. Zhang Ruochen would only need to throw a Thunder Pearl out and let it explode inside the monster in black's stomach. By that time, the monster in black would have no other way to survive.

However, Zhang Ruochen was not eager to kill the monster in black right away. Since Chikong Secret Mansion was exceptionally dangerous, staying inside the monster in black's body would be a lot safer than walking outside. Therefore, he decided to withhold killing the monster for now.

It would be amazing if he could enter the depths of Chikong Secret Mansion through the body of the monster in black.

In fact, Zhang Ruochen was interested in where the monster in black wanted to go.

He released the Space Domain, which covered the space of 80 meters around, blended the Martial Soul into the Space Domain, and observed the situation outside.

The monster in black crawled in between the stone breaches at a high speed and reached the bottom of the massive underground mountain.

The underground mountain might not seem massive on the ground. Yet, it looked exceptionally magnificent below the surface. Who could have anticipated that there was a mountain here below the ground?

The entire mountain was covered by colorful miasma in which a toxic gas was suffusing in the air. Yet, a jade-white clover grass was growing in the crevice.

Every plant of the clover grass displayed a faint white light, permeating a rich fragrance. Compared to the surrounding miasma, a sharp contrast was formed.

The monster in black straightened out its tentacle, pulled out one of the plants of clover grass from the stone breach, and swallowed it down.

"Boom!"

The potency of the clover grass was relatively vigorous. When it was swallowed down into the monster in black's stomach, it turned into a jade-white liquid immediately and assimilated with its body.

"Three Leaf Holy Clover!"

Although Zhang Ruochen was standing in the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel, he could sense the flavor of the Three Leaf Holy Clover, which made him wildly excited. None of the sparse Three Leaf Holy Clover could be found in Yunwu Commandery and yet, there was plenty of it here.

If he could collect 10 Three Leaf Holy Clover plants, breaking through to the Completion of the Black Realm would be an easy task.

If he did collect enough Three Leaf Holy Clover, not only could he break through to the Completion of the Black Realm, there was a chance for him to refine to the Ultimate Realm of the Black Realm.

Thinking of how significant the Three Leaf Holy Clover was, Zhang Ruochen could not wait to take out a Thunder Pearl. He opened a tiny breach of the Time and Space Spinel and injected Genuine Qi into the Thunder Pearl.

With the surge of Genuine Qi, the inscription carved on the Thunder Pearl had been activated. Zhang Ruochen flicked his finger and threw the Thunder Pearl out from the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel.

“Phew!”

The Thunder Pearl was rolling in the monster in black’s stomach. A wisp of the power of thunderbolt had been displayed.

### **Chapter 164: Three Leaf Holy Clover**

The black monster was walking, looking for another Three Leaf Holy Clover.

All of a sudden it stopped, let out a piteous whine and glowed with a bright light from the cracks in its carapace.

“Boom!”

The bang came suddenly. The black monster was split into pieces of burnt meat and flew in all directions.

Lightning floated above the pieces of burnt meat and wreaked of black smoke.

A powerful underground savage beast had died.

“Waaa!”

Zhang Ruochen flew out from the Time and Space Spinel and fell to the ground. He took a breath and felt a sharp pain in his belly. A roar surged through his head, making him giddy.

The miasma in the air was so much stronger here that he couldn’t resist the toxicity, even if he took an Anti-Poison Pearl.

“Time and Space Domain!”

He released the Space Domain which covered a space of 10 meters around him and forced the miasma away.

He took a Detoxification Pill and ran his Pure Jade Genuine Qi three circulations to refine the miasma he had absorbed.

Zhang Ruochen’s face regained its color. He took a deep breath and said to himself, “The toxicity was so fierce. A warrior at the Final State of the Black Realm would have died if he had gone into this miasma.”

Even a warrior at the Completion of the Black Realm would die if he went here without a special treasure to withstand the miasma.



The black monster was torn into pieces of charred remains by the Thunder Pearl's power. Zhang Ruochen smelled a faint fragrance of meat amongst the remains.

He followed the smell and searched for its origin.

He stopped at the remains of the black monster and took out his Snow Dragon Sword and pushed aside its hard black shell.

“Waaa!”

A strong fragrance of meat was coming from the remains.

A piece of snow-white Spiritual Brawn was emitting a soft bright light in the crack made by his sword.

He dug up the Spiritual Brawn. It glittered and was the size of a human's head, around 15 pounds and had a strong scent. It was as pure as a beautiful jade inside a stone.

*“This Spiritual Brawn from the third-level savage beast is indeed better than that of the second-level savage beast. If I eat it I should get a stronger effect.”*

He took out a jade vessel and put the Spiritual Brawn inside.

Spiritual Brawn had different qualities. The Spiritual Brawn from a third-level savage beast tasted better and had more Spiritual Qi making it much better for warriors.

In the market, the price of Spiritual Brawn from a third-level savage beast was 10 times higher than that of a second-level savage beast.

Covered by the Time and Space Domain, he began to look for the Three Leaf Holy Clover.

He quickly found a Three Leaf Holy Clover sending out a white light in the swallet 100 meters away.

He dug it up and put it carefully into the jade box.

The Three Leaf Holy Clover could only be found in places where Half-Saints and Saints had passed away.

The power of Half-Saints and Saints was so great that the Spiritual Qi didn't dissipate even after 1000 years.

Their Spiritual Qi melted into the earth. In time when nature had its course, Three Leaf Holy Clovers would appear.

Three Leaf Holy Clovers were very precious because they could improve the cultivation and boost the power of warriors.

Instead of eating it right away, he kept searching for other Three Leaf Holy Clovers.

He must find all the Three Leaf Holy Clovers before others arrived.

*“This place belongs to Chikong Secret Mansion, they probably won't arrive any time soon.”*

There were many Three Leaf Holy Clovers at the bottom of the mountain. Zhang Ruochen had picked up eight during the course of an hour.

If he wanted more he would have to go deeper into the mountain.

He could only see a faint outline of the mountain, the rest was concealed in the colorful miasma.

He felt a dangerous breathing deep within the mountain and couldn't help but shudder a little.

He quickly took out a broken map made of skins, spread it on the ground and looked at it carefully.

The skin map Lang Xin had dropped recorded the terrain of Chikong Secret Mansion. But it was fragmented and not all locations were visible on the map.

After carefully reviewing the terrain he finally knew where he was and pointed to the map, *"I'm here... Haunted-mist Mountain!"*

There was an introduction to Haunted-mist Mountain in the map: Haunted-mist Mountain, the place where Golden Cloud Half-Saint passed away. The Half-Saint fought to the death and became a mountain. His Spiritual Blood became a haunted mist that hasn't dissipated for over 500 years.

Zhang Ruochen was moved by this. He looked far into the distance and thought, *"The mountain is the grave of the Half-Saint."*

Golden Cloud Half-Saint was an extremely powerful man. He died there when he fought against the Four-winged Earth Dragon 500 years ago. His body had turned into a mountain and his Spiritual Blood had formed the eternal Haunted-mist miasma.

*"Will there be any strange creatures here? After all, this is the place where the Half-Saint passed away."*

Having put the map away, he stared at the Haunted-mist Mountain.

If his cultivation had reached the Heaven Realm, he would have to go immediately to Haunted-mist Mountain and seek the treasures the Half-Saint had left behind. However he was only in the Black Realm's Final State, he would surely die if he entered before he was ready.

Two students of Nothern Campus rushed towards Haunted-mist Mountain.

Yue Linchong ranked top seven on Nothern Campus, looked 20 years old with black eyebrows and a strong body. He held a map made of skins in his hand and said excitedly, "Sister Han, according to the map, Haunted-mist Mountain is just ahead, that's the place where Golden Cloud Half-Saint passed away. There will be many Three Leaf Holy Clovers. All of them could equal many years of cultivation."

Lu Han ranked top 10 on Nothern Campus, had snow-white skin and a standard oval face. Although she wasn't as beautiful compared to Huang Yanchen and Duanmu Xingling, she was still very pretty indeed. Many geniuses fought for her attention in Nothern Campus.

In order to win Lu Han's heart, Yue Linchong told her the secret of Haunted-mist Mountain.

So they came there to find Three Leaf Holy Clovers.

With them they could enter the internal school of the School of the Martial Market and become masters.

"I've got the highest quality Anti-Poison Pearl ready, it can withstand the miasma of Haunted-mist Mountain."

Lu Han took out two white Anti-Poison Pearls. She ate one and handed the other to Yue Linchong.

Yue Linchong took it and looked towards Haunted-mist Mountain. All of a sudden he frowned and said coldly, "Someone is one step ahead of us and has taken all of the Three Leaf Holy Clovers at the foot of the mountain."

Seeing Zhang Ruochen's back through the miasma, Lu Han pulled out a long sword and shouted, "Who are you? Give us the Three Leaf Holy Clovers! As we are students of the School of the Martial Market, I will spare your life."

Yue Linchong grabbed his bow and a Carriage Breaking Arrow and aimed at Zhang Ruochen who was standing about 150 meters away.

Zhang Ruochen looked back and glanced at Yue Linchong and Lu Han. "Why should I give them to you, it grew there for anyone to pick."

Yue Linchong squinted his eyes slightly and said, "It's you, Zhang Ruochen, the No.1 of the freshman in the four-campus'."

"Do you know me?" Zhang Ruochen asked and tried to recall who he was. He could not remember.

"Two months ago I went to Western Campus and saw you fight on the Challenging Platform. With the power you had then you could have challenged the Warrior of the Division Profound. Give us the Three Leaf Holy Clovers and I will let you go," Yue Linchong said.

"Nonsense! So what if he is Zhang Ruochen, we're in Chikong Secret Mansion. The presbyter will never find out that we killed him." Lu Han stared at the jade box Zhang Ruochen was holding with a murderous look in her eyes.

Neither Yue Linchong or Lu Han was Warriors of the Division Profound. They had no ability to defeat Zhang Ruochen until they had broken through to the Earth Realm.

But after entering Chikong Secret Mansion they had reached the Earth Realm.

With their current power, they naturally looked down upon Zhang Ruochen.

Hearing what Lu Han had said, Yue Linchong eyes turned cold and he released the Carriage Breaking Arrow. It made a whistling sound as it travelled through the air and headed toward Zhang Ruochen like a fireball.

Zhang Ruochen frowned and immediately displayed Shadow of the Royal Wind Dragon, dodging the Carriage Breaking Arrow as he moved seven steps to the right.

"Boom!"

The Carriage Breaking Arrow hit the ground behind him and created a large hole. The inscription on the arrowhead released a flame, burning the ground.

When Yue Linchong shot the arrow, Lu Han dashed out hard at a speed of 66 meters per second.

Within three seconds she was in front of Zhang Ruochen and stabbed towards his heart with her cold sword.

Zhang Ruochen bent his knees to keep his balance, held his sword firmly and unleashed Sacred Water-breaking Sword.

“Boom!”

The Snow Dragon Sword struck the blade of Lu Han’s sword with Icing air and changed the direction of her attack.

Lu Han was shocked. She jumped up into the air, rotated and stabbed 17 strikes towards Zhang Ruochen’s vulnerable points.

### **Chapter 165: Promoting One’s Cultivation**

“Bang! Bang!”

Zhang Ruochen’s body blurred like a mirage as he stepped with nimble footwork. Though he was forced to fall back, he managed to withstand Lu Han’s attack.

In a few brief seconds, the two of them exchanged more than 20 strikes.

Lu Han’s cultivation was inferior to that of Lang Xin, but she was still much stronger than a Warrior of the Initial Stage of the Earth Realm. She unleashed a mid-class Spiritual Stage sword technique, an attack so powerful that Zhang Ruochen was nearly stabbed several times.

Even with the power of his Space Domain, Zhang Ruochen was barely able to withstand her.

*“The top 10 students of the four campuses truly are geniuses among geniuses. Their breakthroughs into the Earth Realm are quite impressive. Common warriors of the Earth Realm wouldn’t hold a candle to them.”*

Out of the corner of his eye, Zhang Ruochen saw Yue Linchong rushing towards him.

*“I can barely handle Lu Han with my current level of cultivation. If they join forces to fight me, I’ll lose for sure.”*

“Sacred Guiding Sword!”

Zhang Ruochen swung and hurled a seven-meter slash of Sword Breath to Lu Han, forcing her back.

“Come and kill me on Haunted-mist Mountain if you can!”

Zhang Ruochen used Shadow of the Royal Wind Dragon to transform himself into nine shadows. In the blink of an eye, he’d already fled 500 meters away and disappeared into the miasma.

Lu Han, extremely annoyed, stamped the ground over and over.

She had broken through into the Earth Realm. She could slay a warrior from the Initial Stage of the Earth Realm with a single strike. Despite that, she couldn't keep a single fledgling from fleeing; this irritated her beyond belief.

Lu Han brandished her sword, readying to go hunt down Zhang Ruochen.

"Sister Han! Don't charge towards Haunted-mist Mountain so rashly. According to the map, unknown creatures lurk there, creatures so powerful that even Earth Realm warriors would die at their hands. By entering Haunted-mist Mountain region, Zhang Ruochen has sealed his fate."

Yue Linchong, ever the cautious one, stepped in front of Lu Han. "Zhang Ruochen is a minor nuisance," he went on to say. "What could he do to shake things up? We should focus first on gathering Three Leaf Holy Clover."

Lu Han's eyes were filled with doubt. "Zhang Ruochen may just be a fledgling," she said, "but his fiancé Huang Yanchen is tough. If he tells her what happened here, we'll be in big trouble."

"Once we gather enough Three Leaf Holy Clover," Yue Linchong replied, "won't we make great strides in our cultivation? At that point, why would we need to fear Huang Yanchen? Besides, we can keep watching outside the miasma: once Zhang Ruochen emerges, we can take care of him at our leisure."

"Fine! Let's harvest the Three Leaf Holy Clover first," Lu Han said.

Though Zhang Ruochen had gathered all the Three Leaf Holy Clover plants that grew in the boundary, there was more Three Leaf Holy Clover in the shadow of Haunted-mist Mountain. Even more Clover grew halfway up the mountain slopes.

Of course, the closer one got to Haunted-mist Mountain, the stronger the toxic miasma grew, as did the possibility of dangerous encounters.

Yue Linchong and Lu Han's Anti-Poison Pearls could only sustain them up to the base of the mountain. If they went any further, they would definitively die from poisoning.

Still, even the base of the mountain had 10 times the number of Three Leaf Holy Clover that grew in the boundary.

At that time, Zhang Ruochen had fled to the base of Haunted-mist Mountain. His protective Space Domain had shrunk to five meters in diameter.

*"I probably shouldn't head up the mountain without practicing here first. Besides, I have eight Three Leaf Holy Clover plants to refine."*

Zhang Ruochen found a secluded location at the base of the mountain and entered the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel. The moment this happened, the Spinel fell into the crack of a boulder and vanished from sight.

Before refining the Three Leaf Holy Clover, Zhang Ruochen took out a piece of Spiritual Brawn and cut it into 10 pieces with his Snow Dragon Sword.

To his surprise, he discovered a fire-nature Spiritual Crystal inside one of the pieces of Spiritual Brawn. This beautiful, quality crystal was glittery, translucent and saturated with Spiritual Qi— more so than any other Spiritual Crystal he'd seen before.

*“This one chunk must be worth at least 50 common Spiritual Crystals!”*

Spiritual Crystals were divided into four groups based on their level of quality: there were average Spiritual Crystals, medium level Spiritual Crystals, high grade Spiritual Crystals, and at the top, first class Spiritual Crystals.

Higher level Spiritual Crystals were 10 times more expensive than the Spiritual Crystals ranked immediately below them.

For instance, a first-class Spiritual Crystal could be exchanged for 1,000 average Spiritual Crystals.

The Spiritual Crystal in Zhang Ruochen's hands could be divided into five medium level Spiritual Crystals, each of them worth 50 average Spiritual Crystals.

Average Spiritual Crystals were so plentiful that warriors used them as a currency for trade.

Medium level, high grade and first-class Spiritual Crystals were all very rare and hard to find on the market.

Generally speaking, only the most destitute warriors of the Low Realm practiced with average Spiritual Crystals. Nearly all the warriors in the High Realm purchased medium level Spiritual Crystals for their practice.

Zhang Ruochen set aside the huge medium stage Spiritual Crystal, took a one-pound chunk of Spiritual Brawn and quickly devoured it.

This Spiritual Brawn came from a third-level savage beast. A single pound was equal to 20 pounds of Spiritual Brawn from a second-level savage beast. It was filled with more power and provided greater benefits to warriors.

Afterwards, Zhang Ruochen swallowed another stem of Three Leaf Holy Clover and began to refine it.

The Three Leaf Holy Clover was much easier to absorb than the Half-Saint's Essence. Once it reached Zhang Ruochen's belly, the herb immediately melted into a white liquid that permeated his body, seeping into his blood and five internal organs.

In just half a day, Zhang Ruochen had completely absorbed the efficacy of the Three Leaf Holy Clover. By that time, the one-pound Spiritual Brawn had also merged with Zhang Ruochen's power.

*“No wonder they call this the Three Leaf Holy Clover. In just half a day, the Genuine Qi in my Qi Lake has tripled.”*

Satisfied by this thought, Zhang Ruochen began to refine the seven remaining Three Leaf Holy Clover plants. At the same time, he swallowed the other nine pounds of Spiritual Brawn.

The Saint Power of the Three Leaf Holy Clover and the power of the Spiritual Brawn quickly spread through Zhang Ruochen's body, floating around inside of him like 16 balls of light. Even though Zhang Ruochen had opened 36 of his meridians, he could only absorb so much power at once.

Wisps of white Genuine Qi emanated from his pores, completely saturating the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel.

Zhang Ruochen eagerly drank in the torrents of Saint Power and Spiritual Power: he felt like his body was floating on the cloud.

As all of this energy circulated through his 36 Meridians, the Genuine Qi in his Qi Lake would vastly increase.

Four days passed before Zhang Ruochen finished refining the seven Three Leaf Holy Clover plants and the nine pounds of Spiritual Brawn. Every cell in Zhang Ruochen's body was brimming with Genuine Qi. His cultivation had reached a perfect threshold, the Final State of the Black Realm; just one step further, and he would break through into The Completion of the Black Realm.

Instead, Zhang Ruochen suppressed his Realm and kept himself from breaking through.

He had eaten eight Three Leaf Holy Clover plants and ten pounds of Spiritual Brawn: he couldn't finish absorbing all that Saint and Spiritual Power in just four days.

By his reckoning, he should just absorb a fifth of the Saint Power and Spiritual Power, then secrete the remaining Power somewhere in his body where it wouldn't be absorbed.

If he wished, he could break through into the Completion of the Black Realm right this instant. However, if he did that, he wouldn't be able to reach the Ultimate Realm of the Black Realm.

If he could instead restrain his Realm, suppressing his breakthrough until he finished absorbing the remaining four-fifths of his Saint Power and Spiritual Power, his physical quality would definitively reach new heights, giving him a huge advantage in his struggle to reach the Ultimate Realm of the Black Realm.

*"Based on my current cultivation, I should be one of the top 50 ranked names on the Profound Board."* Zhang Ruochen sensed that his current strength was not inferior to Huang Yanchen's.

If the two of them fought now, it would be very hard to predict the outcome.

Of course, Huang Yanchen could have already broken through into the Earth Realm and reached the next level of cultivation. If that was the case, Zhang Ruochen could only defeat her by breaking through into The Completion of the Black Realm.

*"Still, with my current power, I've no reason to fear those two Northern Campus students."*

Zhang Ruochen unleashed his Genuine Qi upon the Time and Space Spinel, causing it to leap out of the crack in the boulder and fall to the ground.

With a flash of white light from the Time and Space Spinel, Zhang Ruochen re-emerged at the base of Haunted-mist Mountain.

Cloaked in the field of his Time and Space Domain, Zhang Ruochen started searching for Yue Linchong and Lu Han.

*“Did they just leave after taking all of the Three Leaf Holy Clover?”* The four days Zhang Ruochen spent practicing in the Time and Space Spinel totaled up to just one day in the outside world.

Surely they wouldn’t leave so quickly...

At that moment, Zhang Ruochen saw the figures of Yue Linchong and Lu Han off in the distance. They stood by the mountain entrance, seemingly in the middle of a quarrel.

Ducking behind a blood-red rock, Zhang Ruochen channeled Genuine Qi through his ear veins to eavesdrop on their conversation.

Yue Linchong had a bulging bundle on his back, stuffed with dozens of Three Leaf Holy Clover plants. “Sister Han,” he said in a soothing tone, “we’ve already gathered 98 Three Leaf Clover plants from the bottom of the mountain. That’s more than enough for us to make great strides in our cultivation. We don’t need to risk our lives on Haunted-mist Mountain anymore.”

Lu Han gave him a withering look with her beautiful eyes. “You think 98 Three Leaf Clover plants are a lot?” she asked. “At best, they will elevate our martial practice to the Advanced Stage of the Earth Realm. We want to reach the Heaven Realm and become martial arts legends: how long will it take us to reach that goal with this measly pile of plants? I, Lu Han, refuse to be married off to a piece of cr\*p! For the last time, are you coming or not? If you aren’t, I’ll go by myself!”

Yue Linchong, his teeth clenched, grasped Lu Han’s wrist and pulled her back. After a moment of struggle, he finally made up his mind. “Sister Han,” he said, “Haunted-mist Mountain is too dangerous! Stay here and I’ll go by myself! I’ll give you half the Three Leaf Holy Clover I gather.”

Having said that, Yue Linchong unflinchingly strode towards Haunted-mist Mountain.

Lu Han stared at Yue Linchong’s back, eyes fixed on the bundle he carried. A cold smile spread across her beautiful face. In a movement as fast as lightning, her sword pierced Yue Linchong’s back.

“SHUNK!”

The blood-red sword emerged from Yue Linchong’s chest.

Drops of hot blood dripped from the sword’s point and splattered on the ground.

“W... Why?” Yue Linchong rasped, body trembling as despair and outrage blended together in his voice.

“SWISH!”

Lu Han, her expression cold, planted her foot on Yue Lin Chong’s back and kicked him off her sword. Yue Linchong fell to the ground.

She walked up to Yue Linchong, pulled the bundle off his back and opened it. Gazing at the dozens of Three Leaf Holy Clover plants stuffed inside the bundle, she let out a satisfied laugh.

Lu Han re-sealed the bundle and glanced over where Yue Linchong lay in a pool of his blood. She sneered. “You thought I didn’t know how dangerous Haunted-mist Mountain is?” she said. “Going there



is a death sentence. If you're going to die anyway, why shouldn't you die on the edge of my sword? At least this way your Three Leaf Holy Clover won't go to waste."

### **Chapter 166: Half-Saint's Light**

Yue Linchong's heart had been pierced. The blood kept gushing out of his chest despite him having sealed the Blood Meridian with his Genuine Qi. His robe was soon blood red.

"I... I'll give you... everything... including the Three Leaf Holy Clovers... as... as long as you ask..." Yue Linchong was in great pain as he pressed his hand to his chest. His face grew paler.

Lu Han took out a white silk handkerchief and wiped the blood off her sword. With a sarcastic smile on her face, she said, "Yue Linchong, your silliness amuses me. Do you really think I'd fall for you? Among my admirers, there are at least five men who are more talented and powerful than you."

"PUFFT!"

Yue Linchong died with his eyes wide open and blood gushing out of his mouth.

Whether he died of anger or blood loss, no one would ever know.

Lu Han took the bag off her back and put all of the Three Leaf Holy Clovers from their two bags into hers. There were a total of 98, all emitting opal lustres.

Just smelling the fragrance of the Three Leaf Holy Clovers made the Genuine Qi inside her body move faster. A delighted smile showed on her beautiful face. *"My cultivation will definitely grow greatly if I refine all these Three Leaf Holy Clovers. Even if I'm promoted to the inner palace I can still be one of the strongest."*

Suddenly there was a voice behind her.

"I could see that he was truly into you. Why did you kill him?"

"Who's that?"

Lu Han was so shocked that she turned around at once and held her sword transversely to defend herself.

Zhang Ruochen stepped out of the blood-red rock and stared at Lu Han. "Are all women heartless and good at pretending? Can they truly kill men who love them and feel nothing?"

Lu Han reminded him of Princess Chi Yao.

Lu Han was certainly far beneath Princess Chi Yao.

Lu Han relaxed when she saw it was Zhang Ruochen. From her point of view, as powerful as he was, he was still merely a freshman and no threat to her.

She snorted. "Zhang Ruochen, killing Yue Linchong has nothing to do with you. Maybe I wouldn't have been able to find you had you chosen to hide, but since you have shown yourself, you have to die!"

She practiced a fast martial technique and her slender body became a series of blurs. She dashed towards Zhang Ruochen and stabbed at his glabella.

Zhang Ruochen stood still. With just a twist of his feet, his body was five steps away and easily evaded her attack.

She was a little shocked. A shadow flashed in front of her eyes before she could react.

He stood facing her and attacked with a palm.

“Dragon and Elephant Returning to Earth!”

Feeling the tremendous force of the strike, her face changed. There was no time for her to dodge. She held her sword transversely to counter his attack.

“Boom!”

She flew back more than 10 meters, like a leaf in a storm.

She tripped backwards and fell to the ground, leaving deep footprints with her every step.

Her chest hurt badly and it felt like all her organs were damaged by the blast. Her Spiritual Blood and Genuine Qi circle were in chaos.

*“How could he be that much stronger in just one day?”*

When she had fought him the day before, she could’ve defeated him. Yet she was almost seriously injured by his one movement.

Above all, he was incredibly fast.

Leaving her no chance to recover, Zhang Ruochen rushed at her as fast as he could. He gathered all of his power and attacked her again.

“Blood Qi Condensing Soul!”

Lu Han activated the power of her Blood Meridian immediately. A medium-sized Bloody Wave with a five-meter radius appeared under her feet, an illusory image of a three-headed Blood Bird and a Blood Sword appeared behind her back. Together they formed a unique picture of the Spiritual Blood.

Lu Han’s power grew fast and was soon doubled.

Her reaction speed had also increased.

She triggered the illusory image of the Blood Bird to rush towards Zhang Ruochen and counter his attack.

“Boom!”

Zhang Ruochen crushed the illusory image with just one palm and melted it into pieces.

With the sound of the wind, Lu Han performed a movement of the sword technique in the low-class of Spiritual and struck at Zhang Ruochen’s neck.

He intelligently stepped back to evade it.

“Blood Qi Convergence!”

Zhang Ruochen also activated the power of his Blood Meridian. With a boom, a Blood Wave with a nine-meter radius appeared under his feet and spun quickly threatening to engulf Lu Han.

“This... this is a Divine-stage Blood Wave...”

She finally understood why he was so powerful, he was able to practice a Divine-stage Blood Wave. Only the warriors with the talent to become a Saint could have a Blood Meridian that powerful.

She was totally suppressed by his Divine-stage Blood Wave. She didn’t stand a chance.

Within only three movements he struck her right shoulder.

“Boom!”

Her shoulder was broken by his powerful attack and she spat a mouthful of blood, flew backwards and fell to the ground.

The sword that she was holding flew out of her hand and fell to the ground.

Zhang Ruochen waved his arm in the air and the sword on the ground was in his hand. He pointed it at her neck and said, “Women like you who have beauty but no gratitude deserve no mercy.”

Laying on the ground with terror in her eyes Lu Han begged. “Please, don’t kill me. I’ll do anything you want. I’ll be your woman or your slave, just let me live!”

A cruelty flashed in her eyes and she suddenly took out a Thunder Pearl and threw it at Zhang Ruochen.

She hit the ground with one palm to send her body sliding back three meters. She jumped to her feet and started to run away.

Zhang Ruochen wasn’t worried at all facing the Thunder Pearl. He shook his fingers to form a circle with the sword in his hand, wrapped the Thunder Pearl with his Genuine Qi and threw it 100 meters away.

“Boom!”

The Thunder Pearl exploded above Lu Han, emitting a bolt of lightning blasting her back right under Zhang Ruochen’s feet.

“PUFFT!”

He immediately stabbed her between her glabella, leaving a red scar. A drop of red blood fell from the wound.

There was no sign of life in her motionless body. She was a pretty corpse.

He used his Sword Breath to break through her skull in one movement.

It had broken Lu Han’s soul yet left only a tiny wound.

Zhang Ruochen looked at the sharp sword in his hand, nodding slightly. "A fifth level Genuine Martial Arms. It'll fetch a good price."

He reached for the two bags on Lu Han's back after putting the sword in his Spatial Ring. Not only were there 98 Three Leaf Holy Clovers but also pills and treasures that she and Yue Linchong had brought to Chikong Secret Mansion.

He put them all into his Spatial Ring to look at them later.

He stored all the Three Leaf Holy Clovers in jade containers.

*"With the help of these Three Leaf Holy Clovers, there's an even better chance for me to break through to the Ultimate Realm of the Black Realm!"*

He raised his head and glanced at Haunted-mist Mountain. He saw that there were more Three Leaf Holy Clovers on the cliff of the mountainside than at the foot of it.

He shook his head slightly and let go of his greed. He said to himself, "No need to risk my life for it."

Haunted-mist Mountain was so dangerous that even the warriors of the Earth Realm only had a small chance to walk away from it alive.

He was lucky enough to have gained so much where he was.

He was about to leave before he felt that something was missing.

He stopped and looked at the ground carefully, only to find that Lu Han's body was nowhere to be found.

He remembered clearly that her body had been on the ground less than 10 meters away. How could it just disappear?

*"Even warriors of the Earth Realm couldn't have silently stolen the body."*

All of a sudden he felt a chill behind him. A cold delicate hand seized him by the throat before he could attack.

"Freeze!"

A hoarse voice spoke behind him.

The person behind him was ice cold, freezing the air around him and turning the sweat on his back to ice. He felt like his blood was about to freeze.

He tried his best to remain calm. Without turning his head around, he asked, "Who are you?"

"Me? Who am I? Who... am... I?" The voice sounded lost.

Although hoarse, the voice sounded familiar to him. It sounded somewhat like Lu Han.

The hand on his throat suddenly loosened its grasp. The person stepped back and asked emptyly, "Who am I? Who am I..."

He dashed forward fast as soon as it let him go. He didn't turn around until there were 30 meters between them.

It was indeed Lu Han who had seized him by the throat. To be precise, it was Lu Han's dead body.

*"How could it be? How could she come back to life? That's impossible! I broke her soul with my Sword Breath."*

Zhang Ruochen stared at Lu Han standing in the distance. Suddenly, he realized his mistake.

There was a golden halo above her head.

The golden halo emitted a strong Saint Power. It formed thick ice on the ground dozens of meters around and kept Zhang Ruochen from approaching.

*"It's the Half-Saint's Light. How could Lu Han have it?"* Suddenly he realized something and became quite serious.

A warrior of the Heaven Realm could practice his soul to Martial Soul if he used Genuine Qi to nourish it.

A Half-Saint could use the Saint Power to nourish the Martial Soul to Divine Soul.

After a Half-Saint fell, his Saint Soul would scatter and disappear. Yet in special circumstances, a few Divine Souls wouldn't disappear and instead transformed into the Half-Saint's Light, wandering the graveyards.

*"Haunted-mist Mountain was where Golden Cloud Half-Saint fell. Could his Saint Soul have transformed into the Half-Saint's Light and entered Lu Han's body?"*

Zhang Ruochen regretted that he hadn't cut off her head. If he had done that, there wouldn't be a terrible monster in front of him now.

Lu Han was indeed a non-human and non-corpse monster now. No one knew what would happen next.



## **Chapter 167: The Bottom of Haunted-Mist Mountain**

The Half-Saint's Light on Lu Han's head glittered as if it were grains of a golden-light rain, which continually fell down and blended with her body.

Eventually, a faint golden light was shining on Lu Han's skin. Her pupils had also turned golden as if a blazing fire was burning in her eyes.

Moreover, every Blood Meridian and the Meridian in her body had turned golden, in which each of the inscriptions could clearly be seen.

Her breath was getting more powerful!

Zhang Ruochen held his breath and moved his body carefully, trying to seize the opportunity and escape from Haunted-mist Mountain.

Suddenly, Lu Han turned around and stared at Zhang Ruochen with her golden eyes. Her lips slightly lifted, exposing two sharp teeth. She let out a creepy giggle and said, "Blood... fresh blood!"

Then, Lu Han's legs thrust out like a cold wind and dashed toward Zhang Ruochen.

"Phew!"

Every step Lu Han made had caused a thick layer of frost on the ground. The icy air on her body was getting denser.

Zhang Ruochen had once read an ancient booklet about the Half-Saint's Light. It stated that if a dead person integrated with the Half-Saint's Light, it required plenty of fresh blood in order to enhance the power of their bodies.

The martial cultivation of Lu Han was at the Initial Stage of the Earth Realm.

Her body was incomparable to the body of a Half-Saint. If she wanted to withstand the power of the Half-Saint's Light, she needed to absorb a large amount of blood, so she could refine her dead body.

"Waaa!"

Shortly after Zhang Ruochen transferred his Genuine Qi into the Wings of Wind, a pair of wings appeared on his back. He rushed backward at the speed of a hundred meters per second.

Behind him stood Haunted-mist Mountain.

Lu Han was chasing after Zhang Ruochen and he had nowhere to escape to, so he sprinted toward Haunted-mist Mountain.

If he hesitated for a second, his blood would have been all drawn, thus, he would have died.

Lu Han had only integrated a small part of the Half-Saint's Light rather than fully mastered its power. Therefore, her speed was just slightly faster than Zhang Ruochen's.

She trailed closely behind Zhang Ruochen and was rapidly gaining upon him.

Seeing that Lu Han was just a few steps away from him, he threw a Thunder Pearl out toward Lu Han.

"Boom!"

The Thunder Pearl cracked open and turned into strands of lightning.

Such a powerful destructive force exploded right in front of Lu Han that struck her far away.

Since she was protected by the Half-Saint's Light, the Thunder Pearl did not harm her at all. She quickly jumped up from the ground, letting out a long, aggressive roar and continued chasing after Zhang Ruochen.

Zhang Ruochen turned around and looked back. He was moaning in his heart, *“I can’t believe that even the power of the Thunder Pearl isn’t strong enough to harm her. The Half-Saint’s Light is indeed incredible. If I could obtain the Half-Saint’s Light, I’m sure it’ll save me 10 years of practice.”*

To a certain extent, the Half-Saint’s Light was equivalent to the legacy of the Half-Saints.

Even though warriors could not turn into a Half-Saint right away after absorbing the Half-Saint’s Light, they could still enjoy numerous benefits. Their speed of cultivation would be far better than those at the same age.

Due to the compression of miasma at Haunted-mist Mountain, even if Zhang Ruochen possessed the Wings of Wind, he was not able to fly. He could only rush to the mountaintop as fast as he could.

While he was rushing to the hillside, he suddenly stopped. The cold sweat on his forehead dripped as if it was raining.

Around 10 meters in front of him lay a green scorpion which was more than 10 meters long with a body full of sharp thorns. It exposed its two blue eyeballs and stared deadly at Zhang Ruochen.

The Gigantic Cyan Scorpion was settling next to a pond that was around 10 meters long and wide. Along with its edge, both green and black toxic grasses.

The water in the pond had an extremely fishy smell that emanated a strong poison. The bones of human bodies floated in the water, which looked like they had been dead for years.

When the Gigantic Cyan Scorpion caught sight of Zhang Ruochen, it was excited and exuded a weird sound.

“Waaa!”

It swayed both of its sharp claws with its tail sliding on the ground. It bumped hard into the massive stones that released a metallic sound and emitted a shower of sparks.

At the same time, Lu Han had caught up to Zhang Ruochen and was getting close to him at a high speed.

Having a toxic savage beast in front of him as well as a heretic dead body at his back, it seemed that Zhang Ruochen had nowhere to escape to.

However, Zhang Ruochen was not desperate. He took two Thunder Pearls out at the same time, throwing one out toward the Gigantic Cyan Scorpion in front of him and one toward Lu Han at his back. Then, he instantly displayed Shadow of the Royal Wind Dragon, went through a deep cliff, and escaped in another direction.

Although Lu Han was relatively unconscious, she was able to ward it off when Zhang Ruochen threw out the Thunder Pearl the second time. She turned into a shadow immediately and clambered out behind him.

Her hands had turned into claws with which she wanted to grab onto Zhang Ruochen’s shoulders.

At the moment when Lu Han’s claws were about to tear into Zhang Ruochen’s shoulders, the space behind him distorted. Lu Han was shocked and stopped her claws in the air.

“Crash!”

Lu Han’s claws had torn the clothes off of Zhang Ruochen’s back and left 10 red scratches from his shoulders to his back. Drops of blood were dripping out from the claw marks.

Zhang Ruochen endured the icy cold pain on his back and continued to strike forward.

“Awoo!”

After Lu Han slightly licked the blood left on her finger, she erupted an aggressive roar and chased after it.

At the same time, the Gigantic Cyan Scorpion was diving toward Zhang Ruochen from the other direction. The Thunder Pearl he threw out earlier did not kill it but had greatly irritated it.

The Gigantic Cyan Scorpion spat out some toxic air where it condensed into a pillar-shape. It looked like a light beam and was streaking toward Zhang Ruochen.

When Zhang Ruochen was about to hide inside the Time and Space Spinel, all of a sudden, he recognized that there was a hole in the ground with an entrance that was only the size of a bowl. It looked deep and quiet as if it could access to the underground.

Zhang Ruochen’s face brightened. He quickly activated his Genuine Qi and opened the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel.

“Phew!” Zhang Ruochen disappeared in Haunted-mist Mountain and entered the internal space of the Spinel within a second.

At the same time, the Time and Space Spinel fell accurately into the hole as if he were falling down into a deep abyss.

Lu Han and the Gigantic Cyan Scorpion rushed toward the hole simultaneously. However, the hole in the ground was too tiny, so neither of them could squeeze in.

“Boom!”

The Gigantic Cyan Scorpion utilized its giant claw and cracked on the hole, trying to enlarge the hole so that it could chase after Zhang Ruochen.

Such a powerful force had successfully broken down the stones around the edge of the hole. Yet, the stones had blocked the hole up.

“Blood... fresh blood...”

Lu Han stared at the massive Gigantic Cyan Scorpion. She stretched out her claws, bounced on the Gigantic Cyan Scorpion and tore off its crust. Blood gushed out from the Gigantic Cyan Scorpion’s body and covered Lu Han’s entire body to a bloody red.

The originally pretty, dead body suddenly turned ferociously terrifying.

...

Since the hole went downward vertically, Zhang Ruochen had no idea where it would lead him to.



The Time and Space Spinel had been rolling down for quite a while before finally reaching the ground.

Zhang Ruochen endured the pain on his back, transferred his Genuine Qi into the Vessel of Spirit, and stimulated his Martial Soul. With the power of his Martial Soul, Zhang Ruochen was able to peek out from the Time and Space Spinel.

With the Time and Space Spinel being the center, 80 meters around it was a patch of darkness, where no breath of life could be found at all.

*"I guess I've reached the bottom of Haunted-mist Mountain. Well, it's not too bad. At least I'm safe for now. Both the Gigantic Cyan Scorpion and Lu Han cannot quickly break into such a tiny hole."*

Zhang Ruochen was not in a rush to leave the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel at all. He thought he should better heal the wounds on his back rather than go out with an injured body.

There was not a lot of Genuine Qi left in Zhang Ruochen's body. He took a healing Pill and started refining in order to recover from the injury.

Two days later, his injury was more or less healed while his Genuine Qi had returned to its peak condition.

"Waaa!"

The light of the Time and Space Spinel flashed. Zhang Ruochen left the Spinel, arriving at this underground world full of darkness.

While other places inside Chikong Secret Mansion were boiling hot, the underground of Haunted-mist Mountain was extremely cold as if it were an underground icehouse.

Zhang Ruochen picked up the Time and Space Spinel on the ground and squeezed it tightly in his hand. He smiled and exclaimed, "Luckily, I own the Time and Space Spinel. Otherwise, I would have died twice in Chikong Secret Mansion."

However, he noticed that the Time and Space Spinel seemed to have become smaller.

*"Looks like the spiritual power of the Time and Space Spinel has also been consumed. One day, it's going to be completely gobbled up."*

The Time and Space Spinel allowed Zhang Ruochen to practice three times faster than ordinary warriors, which was the advantage of Zhang Ruochen. Even if he lost the Time and Space Spinel, Zhang Ruochen was confident and determined to become a real and powerful warrior.

Zhang Ruochen stored away the Time and Space Spinel. He took out a Spiritual Crystal with fire nature from the Spatial Ring and injected Genuine Qi in it. "Phew!" The Spiritual Crystal was burning like a fireball.

The fire had lit up the dark space and revealed the complete view of the underground world. It had been covered by a natural stone wall that did not leave a trace of digging by human beings.

The stone wall and the ground had been covered by a white layer of frost where all sorts of shapes of Ice Crystals had been formed.

Zhang Ruochen stepped on the ice and strolled a hundred meters forward. Suddenly, he found a palm-sized broken piece of metal under the thick frost.

“Bang!”

He unleashed a palm out and shattered the frost. He straightened out his hand and picked up the piece of metal.

“It’s really heavy! It weighs at least 250 kilograms.”

Zhang Ruochen found it incredible that a tiny piece of metal was so substantial. He wondered what material had been used to produce it.

When he looked closer at the metal piece, he noticed that there was a tiny inscription carved onto it as if it were a broken piece of armor.

He also could not imagine how massive the power must have been in order to break such powerfully built armor into pieces.

A number of inscriptions had been carved on the interior part of the metal piece. Unfortunately, the inscriptions had all been fragmented. so that there was no way for it to be activated again.

Zhang Ruochen put down the piece and kept going forward.

When he had almost reached the end of the underground, there was a 60-meter-diameter pit in front of him. The surface of the ground was hollowed out while the surrounding area was buckled up. It looked like an aerolite had fallen down, causing the natural landscape.

At the bottom of the pit lay the bones of an elderly man, whose body had been fully sealed with frost.

The armor on his body had been broken into pieces, his chest had been pierced through, and his body had fallen apart. However, the body, which had been dead for hundreds of years, was still able to emit such a dense breath that an underground frosty world was built.

Zhang Ruochen was under huge pressure. He stared at the dead body and asked, “Perhaps he is Golden Cloud Half-Saint?”

Only warriors who had reached Half-Saint possessed such a massive breath of power after they had died.

500 years had passed and still the body of Golden Cloud Half-Saint did not decay.

Looking at the dead body, Zhang Ruochen was not afraid. Rather, he was delighted that he had finally figured out how to contend with Lu Han, or even remove her Half-Saint’s Light.

### **Chapter 168: Nine-Folds of Elephant Power**

Half-Saint’s Light was indeed the soul of a Half-Saint.

When the Half-Saint was still alive, he could control the Divine Soul through his body. After he died, he could then utilize the blood of the Half-Saint and retrieve the Half-Saint’s Light.

In fact, even if Zhang Ruochen obtained the blood of the Golden Cloud Half-Saint, it was not an easy task to reclaim the Half-Saint's Light inside of Lu Han's body. He would need to apply secret spell.

In general, only warriors of the Heaven Realm could assemble the Half-Saint's Light with the help of the Half-Saint's Blood. The reason behind that was that it would need to employ the power of the Martial Soul during the process of displaying the secret spell.

Only warriors whose martial cultivation had reached the Heaven Realm would be able to practice the Martial Soul.

Since Zhang Ruochen had opened up the Vessel of Spirit, he could perform the power of the Martial Soul by communicating with it. Therefore, he could also function the secret spell.

Zhang Ruochen placed the Spiritual Crystal with fire nature on the ice surface.

He injected Genuine Qi into the Spiritual Crystal, which started burning right away and evolved into a massive fireball. Under the high temperature of the blazing fire, the ice melted unceasingly.

Two hours had passed. Merely a thin layer of Ice Crystals left on the bones of the elderly man.

Zhang Ruochen retrieved the Spiritual Crystal and released a palm toward the bones. The surface of the Ice Crystals had cracked out tiny fine lines.

"Boom!"

The Ice Crystals were shattered.

A substantial Saint Power descended from the body of the elderly man. It hurled Zhang Ruochen out that he fell 30 meters away.

Such dense Spiritual Blood spewed out from the elderly man's body and it formed a blood cloud. Every wisp of Spiritual Blood looked like a scaly snake sliding in the air as it let out a deafening sound.

The Blood Meridian of the Half-Saint was extremely forceful as if the Saint Power had melted into the blood. Even though 500 years had passed, none of its activity had been lost.

*"That is undoubtedly the skeleton of Golden Cloud Half-Saint."* Zhang Ruochen stared at the Spiritual Blood flowing in the air, and he could finally figure out that the identity of the skeleton was Half-Saint of the Human Clan who had died 500 years ago.

He took out a jade bottle and placed it on the ground.

At the same time, he released the Space Domain, which covered an 80-meter space around him. It completely engulfed all the Spiritual Blood and condensed into drops of blood.

A wisp of Spiritual Blood condensed into one drop of the Half-Saint's Blood.

Zhang Ruochen spent exactly three days in order to compress every drop of Spiritual Blood. In the end, he compressed the Spiritual Blood into 64 drops of Half-Saint's Blood, which he stored inside the jade bottle.

The value of one drop of Half-Saint's Blood was 10 times greater than one drop of Half-Saint's Essence.

Undoubtedly, having 64 drops of Half-Saint's Blood was regarded as a massive fortune.

If other people rumored that Zhang Ruochen owned such large amounts of Half-Saint's Blood, it was definitely going to get him killed. Even the warriors of the Heaven Realm would make every effort to kill him.

*"500 years have passed. Most of the blood inside Golden Cloud Half-Saint's body has already decayed, leaving only 64 drops of blood with strong activity. I guess if I didn't compress the last 64 drops, it would all be decayed in 10 more years."*

After gathering the Half-Saint's Blood, Zhang Ruochen saluted out of courtesy toward the skeleton of Golden Cloud Half-Saint in the giant pit.

Then, Zhang Ruochen buried the skeleton of Golden Cloud Half-Saint and made a gravestone out of the massive stones. He carved: "The grave of Golden Cloud Half-Saint".

He did not plan to leave now and decided to stay at the bottom of Haunted-mist Mountain. He thought that it might be a good idea to leave after elevating his martial cultivation to the Completion of the Black Realm.

Zhang Ruochen had eaten eight Three Leaf Holy Clover plants and 5 kilograms of Spiritual Brawn before falling down through the hole, so he had only refined one-fifth of the Saint Power and Spiritual Power.

In order to break through to the Completion of the Black Realm, he would need to fully refine the remaining Saint Power and Spiritual Power and assimilate them into his body to empower his physical strength.

Dragon and Elephant Prajna Palm was being practiced.

*"When I'm practicing Dragon and Elephant Prajna Palm, I have to mobilize the power of every inch of my muscles and bones. My body will only absorb the Saint Power and Spiritual Power at its fastest speed under constant vigorous exercise."*

Zhang Ruochen had already practiced the first four palms of the Dragon and Elephant Prajna Palm to the Realm of the Succeed. He could start practicing the fifth palm, Nine-folds of Elephant Power.

Nine-folds of Elephant Power was even more powerful and incredible compared to the first four palms.

If Zhang Ruochen stroked out a palm with full power now, it was equal to the full power of an ordinary warrior at the Mid Stage of the Earth Realm.

If he practiced Nine-folds of Elephant Power to the Succeed and released nine palms in a row, he could accumulate the power of nine palms and explode an attacking power that was nine times stronger.

When Zhang Ruochen practiced this palm technique to the Succeed, Dragon and Elephant Prajna Palm would be advanced to the martial technique at the mid-class of the Spiritual Stage. Moreover, the power this palm technique erupted was classified as a martial technique of the Superior class of the Spiritual Stage.

Indeed, it was so difficult to practice Nine-folds of Elephant Power that it required days of continuous practice.

Standing in the pitch-black underground, the Genuine Qi in Zhang Ruochen's body was running rapidly, forcing the power of each of his Meridians and Blood Meridian, every inch of muscle, and every piece of bone to all surge toward his arms.

The power of his entire body gathered at his arms, which were completely covered by the Genuine Qi and had been turned white.

"Nine-folds of Elephant Power!"

Zhang Ruochen stroked out nine consecutive palms and maintained his arms on the same horizontal line.

The nine palms were combined into one strand, struck out at the same time, and hit the thick stone wall.

"Bang! Bang!"

The sound of nine palms smacking arose and left a nine-inch-deep palm impression in the stone wall.

The power of the nine palms was totally separated so that none of them overlaid one another and, therefore, nine sounds of loud smashing were sent out. If they had overlapped each other, only one striking smash would have broken out.

*"It's going to be very hard if I want to overlap the power of the nine palms together and combine them into one! No, I can't do it! If I keep practicing under this condition, I'll never practice Nine-folds of Elephant Power."*

*"Let's try to combine the first two palms together."*

Zhang Ruochen once again activated his Genuine Qi and struck two palms out in a row at his fastest speed.

"Bang! Bang!"

The sound of two palms resounded and left a two-inch-deep pit in the stone wall.

Although the prints of both palms were scattered, the streaking time between the two palms prints was extremely subtle. Without listening carefully, it sounded like it was combined.

Zhang Ruochen continued practicing.

He knew that he had found the correct way to practice the technique. If he kept up the good work, he would successfully practice Nine-folds of Elephant Power.

On the first day, Zhang Ruochen struck out 2,000 palm prints, while the Genuine Qi in his body had been consumed six times.

Every time his Genuine Qi was consumed, he entered the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel straight away in order to recover his Genuine Qi in the shortest period of time and then he continued practicing.

On the second day, he struck out 3,000 palm prints and his Genuine Qi had also been consumed six times.

On the third day, 4,000 palm prints were struck out. Once again, six times his Genuine Qi had been consumed.

The capacity of Genuine Qi in Zhang Ruochen's Qi Lake remained the same. Yet, the Genuine Qi in his body became more concise, purer, and denser. Therefore, he was able to strike out more and more palm prints with the same consumption of Genuine Qi.

Every time that he finished practicing, his body was in such great pain that he felt like it was tearing apart, whereas his arms felt like they were broken off.

After refining the Pure Jade Genuine Qi, his pain completely vanished overnight. Once again, he returned to his best condition both mentally and physically.

According to Zhang Ruochen's observations, it seemed that it was the obscure Saint Power and Spiritual Power inside his body that facilitated him to recover from the wounds and injuries. Together with the efficacy of the Pure Jade Genuine Qi, his body genuinely returned to its peak state the next day.

Zhang Ruochen had been practicing seven days in a row without any rest and struck out 100,000 palm prints in total. Finally, he made it to the Beginner Level of Nine-folds of Elephant Power.

"Nine-folds of Elephant Power!"

Standing 10 meters away from the stone wall, Zhang Ruochen struck out two palms as fast as lightning.

The two palm prints overlapped together and smashed on the stone wall at exactly the same time. A deafening sound broke out and there was a nine-inch deep palm pit smacked in the stone.

Be mindful that the power of a single one of his palms alone left a one-inch-deep pit in the stone wall. He had to release nine palms in a row so as to leave a nine-inch-deep palm pit.

As of now, Zhang Ruochen had just practiced Nine-folds of Elephant Power to the Beginner Level. Yet, he was able to double up the power of two palms and produced a nine-inch palm pit in the stone wall.

The power of this one palm was as strong as the power of nine palms.

*"Erupting out twice as much power is the Beginner Level while erupting out three times as much reaches the Small Success."*

If Zhang Ruochen wanted to explode out three times as much power, he had to overlap the three palms together.

*"By striking 100,000 palm prints, I reached the Beginner level. I guess if I strike out palm prints a million times, I'll reach the Small Success very soon."*

After seven days of intense practice, Zhang Ruochen had fully stimulated the obscure Saint Power and Spiritual Power inside his body. He had only absorbed a quarter of it and the power of his body had greatly increased.

If he continued to practice the palm technique, he was confident that he would completely absorb the remaining Saint Power and Spiritual Power.

When Zhang Ruochen had practiced Nine-folds of Elephant Power and reached the Beginner Level, he entered the Time and Space Spinel and started practicing.

Inside the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel, Zhang Ruochen struck at least 15,000 palms prints every day.

After three months of practice, he had stroked out 1,700,000 palm prints and elevated Nine-folds of Elephant Power to the Small Success. The hidden Saint Power and Spiritual Power in his body had been fully absorbed into his blood and transformed into his own power.

At the same time, the purity and concision of the Pure Jade Genuine Qi within his body had doubled up.

Currently, Zhang Ruochen was able to, at most, strike out 20,000 palm prints each day.

“Nine-folds of Elephant Power!”

Zhang Ruochen stood 10 meters away from the stone wall as usual, with his arms straightened, he released three palm prints consecutively.

The three palms overlapped as expected and erupted three times as much of power.

“Boom!”

The stone wall slightly trembled. A 27-inch-deep palm pit, which was three times larger than Zhang Ruochen’s palm, appeared on the wall.

*“Is my palm three times more powerful? I’m afraid I can seriously harm the warriors at the Mid Stage of the Earth Realm with this palm!”*

He was relatively joyful and satisfied with his results after months of practice.

Although Zhang Ruochen had already practiced in the Time and Space Spinel for three months, it was only a month in the real world.

The Intermediate Relic Exploration Test took place in three months and only a month and 10 days had passed. Zhang Ruochen still had plenty of time to break through to the Completion of the Black Realm.

*“I’d better start breaking through to the Completion of the Black Realm.”*

Then, he entered the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel, sat cross-legged, and took out the jade bottle where he stored the Half-Saint’s Blood and lifted it in his hand.

*“I think I only need to refine one more drop of Half-Saint’s Blood to break through to the Completion of the Black Realm.”*

He opened the jade bottle as his palm waved. A red Half-Saint’s Blood flowed out from the bottle, glittering a glowing red light as if a tiny red sun was floating on his palm.

Chapter 169: The Return

The Genuine Qi surged aggressively out of Zhang Ruochen's palm, where he had injected the drop of the Half-Saint's Blood.

"WHOOSH..."

The Half-Saint's Blood immediately formed a one-meter long Spiritual Blood snake that flew around Zhang Ruochen.

Zhang Ruochen took a deep breath and inhaled the Spiritual Blood snake into his body.

"Boom!"

After entering his body, the Spiritual Blood Snake burst out Saint Power as if it was on fire. It caused unimaginable pain to Zhang Ruochen's five internal organs. The blood in veins felt like it was boiling.

Zhang Ruochen had prepared an Icing Meridians Pill that he quickly swallowed.

The Icing Meridians Pill transformed into frost and flowed into Zhang Ruochen's body. It protected his five internal organs, Meridians, and Blood Meridian.

"Sacred Purifying Jade!"

Zhang Ruochen referred to the way of practice of the second level as recorded in the Scripture of Emperor Ming's Emphyrean. He activated the 36 Meridians in his body to quickly absorb the Spiritual Blood and Saint Power embedded in the Half-Saint's Blood.

Spiritual Blood fountained out of his body. It coagulated into a massive, three-meter diameter blood cocoon around Zhang Ruochen.

Three days later, Zhang Ruochen had fully absorbed the Frosty Pill Spirit of the Icing Meridians Pill. The burning power of the Half-Saint's Blood exploded again, threatening to burn Zhang Ruochen into ashes.

Zhang Ruochen took the second Icing Meridians Pill, and another frosty blast poured into his body. Once again, it helped Zhang Ruochen resist the heat of the Half-Saint's Blood.

Another three days passed. Zhang Ruochen took the third Icing Meridians Pill.

Zhang Ruochen had been constantly absorbing the Spiritual Blood and Saint Power in the Half-Saint's Blood. Every cell inside his body was filled to bursting.

The martial cultivation of Zhang Ruochen's martial cultivation had reached a critical point.

"Boom!"

The Qi Lake between his eyes roared aggressively, shaking Zhang Ruochen's entire body.

The capacity of his Qi Lake was expanding like the opening of a wider world.

His Genuine Qi, which had nearly burst open his body, had found an output and dashed towards Qi Pool insanity. The intolerable sense of swelling eventually disappeared, replaced by an unspeakable comfort.

The capacity of his Qi Lake was 21 times larger.



The Qi Lake of other warriors who had passed from the Final State to the Completion of the Black Realm would usually only enlarge 10 times.

“I think the Saint Power of the Half-Saint’s Blood caused an enhancement in my Qi Lake. Therefore, my Qi Lake was able to grow 21 times larger.”

Indeed, the greater the Qi Lake expansion, the harder it became to refine Genuine Qi.

When Zhang Ruochen was breaking through realms, the capacity of the Genuine Qi inside his body had doubled up. Yet, it was only one-tenth of the capacity of his Qi Lake. He would need to refine nine times more Genuine Qi to fill his newly-expanded pool.

After breaking through the realm, Zhang Ruochen continued sitting cross-legged on the ground and refining the remaining Saint Power and Spiritual Blood in his body.

He spent another five days transforming all the Saint Power in his body into Genuine Qi.

Zhang Ruochen lifted up his hands, drew a circle, and absorbed the blood cocoon that was wrapping around him into his body. The blood light completely disappeared after flashing on his skin.

“I’ve just broken through to the Completion of the Black Realm, so my realm is not stable yet.”

After his realm upgrade, Zhang Ruochen could clearly feel a great elevation of his power. However, he was not strong enough to master such power at the moment.

Anyhow, Zhang Ruochen had not refined the Saint Power and Spiritual Blood himself. Even though he had transformed them into Genuine Qi, it was still relatively hard for him to master the power. He would need to spend some more time to polish up the power and allow the newly added Genuine Qi to blend with his body as a whole.

He spent another three months training in the Time and Space Spinel, mostly practicing the palm technique. By utilizing the palm technique, he was able to stimulate all the obscure power inside the Half-Saint’s Blood.

At the same time, he refined his Genuine Qi in order to stabilize his realm.

While he was practicing his palm technique, Zhang Ruochen ingested and fully refined the remaining 10 drops of Half-Saint’s Essence and four Icing Meridians Pills.

Zhang Ruochen did 30,000 repetitions of the palm technique every day.

After three months had passed, his Nine-folds of the Elephant Power had been elevated to a new height.

He stood 10-meters away from a stone wall and activated his Genuine Qi one-handed. The Genuine Qi was flowing all around Zhang Ruochen’s body. It condensed towards his palm.

“Nine-folds of the Elephant Power!”

Zhang Ruochen executed four palm techniques, which condensed into a Genuine Qi palm shadow. With a roar of breaking wind, it slammed into the stone wall.

“Boom!”

The stone wall and the ground shook so severely that pieces of crushed stone fell down.

A half-meter giant palm print was left sunken into the stone wall. Numerous tiny cracks appeared all around the palm print.

Zhang Ruochen had stood a full 10 meters away from the stone wall to release this powerful palm strike.

If he struck his palm on the stone wall itself, the destructive power would be massive.

“This is a palm technique with quadruple power? Now I want to see how strong Nine-folds of the Elephant Power will be if I practice until I reach nine times power.”

Zhang Ruochen was extremely excited to think that if he encountered a black underground savage beast with eight tentacles, he would be able to confront it.

After the practice of the last three months, Zhang Ruochen’s Genuine Qi filled 30% of his Qi Lake. His Genuine Qi had increased six times before he broke through to a new realm.

“I’ve been in Chikong Secret Mansion for almost two months now. It’s time to go out and retrieve the Half-Saint’s Light.”

Even though he had spent only two months in the Mansion, in fact, Zhang Ruochen had completed six months worth of practice.

He walked towards the hole that he had fallen through and tried to dig out the crushed stones that were blocking it.

After two days of digging, Zhang Ruochen finally crawled out from underground and reached the side of Haunted Mist Mountain.

Next to the cave there was a dead body of a Gigantic Cyan Scorpion. Its blood was completely gone, leaving behind pieces of cyan shell.

Zhang Ruochen sighed with relief. “I can’t believe how terrifying Lu Han is. After confining the Half-Saint’s Light, she even absorbed the blood of the savage beast.”

If she absorbed enough blood, her cultivation would be continuously enhanced.

If her power had reached the Heaven Realm, even if Zhang Ruochen acquired the blood of the Golden Cloud Half-Saint, it would be difficult to capture her Half-Saint’s Light.

If so, the monks and savage beasts inside Chikong Secret Mansion would probably become her next targets.

Then, Zhang Ruochen rushed down from the mountain. Along the way, he saw the dried dead bodies of savage beasts that had all been sucked dry of blood.

“I need to find her immediately and stop her from fully developing.”

Zhang Ruochen dashed down from Haunted Mist Mountain as fast as he could.

He followed the blood trail left by Lu Han when she set off, looking for her footprints.

By reaching the Completion of the Black Realm, Zhang Ruochen was able to dash at 75-meters per second, which was faster than the No.1 warrior of the Profound Board. Meanwhile, his fastest speed had also exceeded Zhang Tianguí's when he was at the Completion of the Black Realm.

Most importantly, he still had lots of room for the improvements he would gain when he broke through to the Ultimate Realm of the Black Realm.

Suddenly, Zhang Ruochen's ears moved slightly. He heard the sound of people fighting from the rock cave.

"Perhaps it is Lu Han fighting."

He became cautious instantly. He took out one drop of Half-Saint Spiritual Blood, wrapped it with Genuine Qi, and walked closer to the cave while squeezing it tightly in his hand.

Inside the rock cave. [REMOVE]

Inside the cave, Zi Qian was wearing a white fighting robe that matched her snow-white skin. Her dark hair flowed like a waterfall down her slim, willowy body. Her long, slender legs were moving at a high speed as she used a foot technique.

"PFFFF!"

She whipped out the fish intestines sword hidden in her sleeve and pierced the chest of a shriveled elder. Then, she retreated quickly and hid in a corner of the cave.

Without blinking, Zi Qian stared at the three elderly men gathered around at the entrance of the cave.

Four dead bodies were lying in the rock cave, all killed by her. Some had been stabbed in the heart, others between the eyes, and some had their throats slashed.

Zi Qian was also seriously injured. A streak of blood dripped from the corner of her mouth. The white robe on her back had been torn by a palm strike, exposing a large patch of her soft white skin.

However, a bloody handprint stained her skin. Drops of blood oozed from the wound, completely reddening her back.

If the seven heretics caught her alive, what she would suffer would be way more severe than getting injured.

Of the seven heretics, four of them were dead. That left three Martial Arts masters of the Earth Realm.

"How dare such a pathetic bitch killed four of us? If I catch her, I'll ravage her to death!" A middle-aged man with a scar on the corner of his eye said cold-bloodedly.

His tanned arms were two times thicker than normal and brimming with power. He walked towards Zi Qian and said, "I'll spare you from death if you hand over the eighth-class Genuine Martial Arms."

Zi Qian held her sword up and bore the pain on her back. The three Martial Arts masters of the Earth Realm stood like three impassable mountains. She was scared and growing desperate.

How could she escape the wall of the three masters?

Escape was impossible.

When the end came, she would bite the poisonous pill in her mouth. She could never be caught alive. The consequences would be much worse than putting herself to death.

Zi Qian looked grim. She said, "Tu Yun, I'm also a member of the Hades Department. You dare to steal the treasure I found... Aren't you scared that the Hades Department will seek revenge?"

Tu Yun, the middle age man with a scar, was one of the heretics of the Black Market.

He had killed more than a hundred citizens of Flame Dragon Commandery 10 years ago and destroyed seven properties of Martial Market Bank. Eventually, he was caught by an internal student of the School of the Martial Market. Since then, he had been imprisoned in Purgatory of the Red River in Chikong Secret Mansion.

Not long ago, a member of the Black Market went undercover as a student of the School of the Martial Market. He had been assigned a mission to open Purgatory of the Red River and release all the heretics and assassins.

The other two people who were standing next to Tu Yun were called Huo Gang and Chen Lidao.

Tu Yun had reached the Mid Stage of the Earth Realm while Huo Gang and Chen Lidao were at the Initial Stage of the Earth Realm.

Chen Lidao sneered and responded, "Do you think I'll believe that you're one of the assassins of the Hades Department? We recognize that you're wearing the robe of the School of the Martial Market which means you're a student of the School."

Huo Gang had a dirty, evil smile on his face. He said, "I feel sick looking at her clothes. I wonder how she would look if all her clothes were taken off? Haha!"

Tu Yun nodded and laughed. "I've been imprisoned in Purgatory of the Red River, and I haven't touched any woman for 10 years. I can't believe that I encountered such a beautiful woman right after I escaped. I don't care if she is the daughter of the suzerain of the Hades Department, I want to play dirty with her! Worst case scenario, we kill her and no one knows we did it."

"Since my brother has already decided, let me catch the beauty for you! I can't wait to see what is underneath her clothes. Haha!" Huo Gang stared at Zi Qian's chest and narrowed his eyes to tiny slits.

Chapter 170: You Wouldn't Mind

Though unshaven and rat-faced, Huo Gang was still a master of the Earth Realm. In the blink of an eye, he had darted right up to Zi Qian.

His claw-like hand rent the air as he swiped at Zi Qian's chest.

Zi Qian's expression changed as she immediately started to perform an uncanny sword technique. Eight sword shadows suddenly appeared before her and thrust towards Huo Gang from different directions.

Thanks to Zi Qian's triumphs in Chikong Secret Mansion, her cultivation had broken through into the Completion of the Black Realm. However, her unhealed wound lowered her usual speed and introduced flaws into her technique.

"Your sword technique is full of hollow moves. It's useless against true power!"

Huo Gang guffawed. Genuine Qi covered his fingers, giving his knuckles an illusory metallic luster.

"Boom!"

He smashed all the sword shadows to pieces with just a single swipe from his hand.

The metallic hand seized Zi Qian's waist. With a ripping sound, he tore off a large piece of her robe.

Her skin stretching from beneath her left breast to her waist was exposed. The three heretics from the rock cave who had just escaped the rock cave stared at her shapely, creamy skin with smoldering eyes.

Zi Qian covered her exposed skin with her hand.

Huo Gang held the piece of the severed white robe to his nostrils and sniffed. "How fragrant!" he said.

"Go to hell!"

"God Slayer — The First Style!"

Zi Qian's sword stabbed towards Huo Gang's heart like a lightning bolt as she executed a sword technique from the lower class Spiritual level.

Huo Gang's mouth twisted into a cruel grin. He quickly dodged Zi Qian's attack then jabbed at her slender neck to seal the Meridians on her lips.

After that, he went on to strike seven other Meridians, sealing off Zi Qian's Genuine Qi flow.

Zi Qian was paralyzed, her sword frozen in place, unable to move even an inch.

"Pretty girl, I know you could end your life by simply biting down on the poison in your mouth. But how can you bite down with all your Meridians sealed? Ha-ha!" Huo Gang shook with excitement as his feverish eyes ran over her slender figure.

Zi Qian had run out of options. She should have given up her false hope and committed suicide from the very beginning.

There was nothing she could do but await the living hell she would endure once those three heretics laid hands on her.

As a former member of the Black Market, she was all too familiar with the ways of their heretics.

For some reason, the image of Zhang Ruochen came to her mind. "Why think about him now?" she thought, scolding herself. "Even if he was here, he couldn't beat these three heretics."

As this thought went through her head, she heard a shrill scream.

"Boom!"

Huo Gang flew backward. His body slammed into the rock wall, slumped and went still. His eyes were frozen wide in death.

A thumb-sized stone had slammed into Huo Gang's chest, the sheer impact leaving a hole the size of a serving bowl in his chest.

Zi Qian, who lost all hope, suddenly turned her eyes towards the mouth of the rock cave.

"Tap! Tap!"

They heard the sound of footsteps slowly drawing closer.

It was none other than Zhang Ruochen, dressed in a white robe. He was a tall, handsome youth whose upright bearing embodied all the grace of the Royal Family.

He walked into the rock cave and moved directly towards Zi Qian upon noticing that her Meridians were sealed.

"You there, boy! Are you a student from the School of the Martial Market?" Chen Lidao asked coldly.

When Zhang Ruochen ignored him, Chen Lidao grew so angry that he attacked the boy with a palm strike.

Chen Lidao didn't dare take this enemy lightly. This boy had killed Huo Gang with a measly stone, which testified to his power. He channeled all his Genuine Qi into an overwhelming attack; with a loud thunderclap, he launched a lightning bolt from the center of his palm.

Zhang Ruochen halted mid-step. He backhanded Chen Lidao like someone swatting a mosquito, hurling him more than 10 meters away.

"Boom!"

Chen Lidao hit the stone wall and spat out a mouthful of blood. His body fell to the ground, limp as a piece of paper.

There was a human-sized crater left in the stone wall.

Chen Lidao lay limp on the ground, unable to muster the strength to rise. All his bones had been crushed by that slap. He would have already died were it not for his strong vitality as a warrior of the Earth Realm.

Tu Yun stared at the boy in white with great shock and started backing away. Throughout his years in the Martial World, he had encountered many strong warriors and built a reputation as a ruthless man. However, he had never met someone so young with such a terrifying martial cultivation.

Zi Qian was just as shocked as Tu Yun.

She never thought Zhang Ruochen would be powerful enough to send a master of the Earth Realm flying back with just a casual wave of his hand.

Tu Yun, though shocked, had already seen many strong warriors in his life, so Zhang Ruochen didn't terrify him that much.

He plucked the Fish Intestine Sword from Zi Qian's hand and held it to her throat. "You'd better leave the rock cave if you want her to live," he said, staring coldly at Zhang Ruochen.

"You're in no position to offer terms," Zhang Ruochen replied, staying right where he was. "Release her now and I'll spare your life. You still must return to the Purgatory of the Red River and atone for your crimes there as a prisoner, though."

"Ha-ha! You must be kidding! How could I go back there after working so hard to escape?" Tu Yun said with a sneer.

Zhang Ruochen shook his head slightly. "Are you really going to turn down this chance to survive?" he asked.

Tu Yun moved the Fish Intestine Sword closer to Zi Qian's throat. "You think I won't kill her now if you don't let me leave?" he hissed between clenched teeth.

"I will not let you leave, and I doubt you'll be able to kill her either," Zhang Ruochen replied, casually strolling towards Tu Yun.

The distance between them grew shorter and shorter.

Tu Yun started losing his nerve as Zhang Ruochen approached. He moved to slit Zi Qian's throat and lash out at Zhang Ruochen.

Zhang Ruochen was just a teenager, after all; how powerful could he be?

He, on the other hand, was a warrior from the Mid Stage of the Earth Realm. Even if he could not beat Zhang Ruochen, he should at least be able to escape.

Just as Tu Yun made the decision to kill Zi Qian, he realized he couldn't move a single part of his body; it was as if he had been icing cold.

"How... How could... this... be...?" Tu Yun could only make gargling noises as he struggled to open his mouth.

Zhang Ruochen had employed a Space Domain technique called Spatial Freezing.

Zhang Ruochen could solidify the air within his domain like water to freeze a Cultivator dead in their tracks.

If the enemy had a strong enough cultivation, they naturally could cut through the Space Domain and escape from the Spatial Freezing effect.

Since Tu Yun lacked that kind of power, he was completely defenseless against Zhang Ruochen's Space Domain.

Zhang Ruochen walked right up to Tu Yun. "You had your chance," he said, taking note of the terror on Tu Yun's face, "and you blew it."

He placed his hand over Tu Yun's heart and channeled frost Genuine Qi into his chest cavity.

"CRACK!"

The frost Genuine Qi froze Tu Yun's heart, turning it into a mass of blood-red Ice Crystals.

His body convulsed as his muscles contracted. Eventually, he stopped breathing, his body going as rigid as an ice sculpture.

It was quite a graceful way to kill someone that did not even shed a single drop of blood.

Zhang Ruochen took the Fish Intestine Sword from Tu Yun's hand and tapped the bridge between Zi Qian's eyes. Powerful Genuine Qi poured into her Qi Lake.

This Genuine Qi circulated through the Meridians of her body.

All her sealed Meridians were unlocked.

Zi Qian's limp body fell into Zhang Ruochen's arms. "Thank you," she whispered feebly.

Soon after saying these words, Zi Qian passed out.

When she woke up, she was lying on a stone bed within the rock cave, her injuries already mostly healed.

The six dead bodies had been removed, leaving only the badly injured Chen Lidao; he was dazed and on the brink of death.

Zhang Ruochen sat cross-legged on the ground, seemingly in the middle of cultivation practice.

The moment Zi Qian woke up, Zhang Ruochen opened his eyes and looked at her. "Are your wounds healed?" he asked.

Zi Qian looked down at her brand new robe, a blush creeping across her motionless but beautiful face. "Did you change my clothes?" she asked, keeping her head lowered.

Zhang Ruochen, ever the unflappable one, gave her a simple nod. "That's my robe," he said. "It's a little big for you, but it will suffice."

Zi Qian quickly stood and fastened the belt on her robe. "How shameless! Don't you have any sense of propriety towards a woman?" she shouted, biting her red lips as she glared at Zhang Ruochen.

"What does that have to do with anything?"

After a brief pause, Zhang Ruochen continued talking. "I've seen you naked before, so I thought you wouldn't mind this minor lapse in propriety. Your injuries were clearly severe and needed immediate healing. After tending to your wounds, I saw that your clothes were tattered, so I put a new robe on you. Now that you've recovered, my work here is done."

After saying his peace, Zhang Ruochen turned and left the rock cave, leaving Zi Qian standing there in a daze.

"I... wouldn't mind?" Zi Qian repeated, acting as if she just heard the most intolerable remark of all time. She grabbed her Fish Intestine Sword from the side of the stone bed and chased after Zhang Ruochen.

When she walked past Chen Lidao, her eyes grew cold. Her Fish Intestine Sword flew out from her sleeve.



“SNICK!”

The sword flashed with light.

Chen Lidao died instantly as his head was severed from his neck.

Zi Qian left the rock cave, chased Zhang Ruochen down and stood in his path. “Zhang Ruochen!” she shouted, pointing her sword directly at him. “What did you mean when you said ‘You wouldn’t mind?’ ”

A puzzled look appeared in Zhang Ruochen’s eyes. He thought a while before replying. “How unreasonable can you get?” he said. “Why would I want to ogle your body when your life needed saving? I saved you because you’re my friend, Zi Qian; I swear to god, I’m not interested in you that way.”

If any other man had made that statement, Zi Qian would have already stabbed 100 bloody holes into his flesh.

But when she looked into Zhang Ruochen’s clear, stark eyes, she knew he was telling her the truth. He had no other intentions beyond a desire to save her.