

God Emperor 461

## Chapter 461: Condition

"I've failed!"

When the Orange Star Emissary uttered these words, the whole Coliseum of the Martial Market stirred up again.

"Zhang Ruochen, the king of the new generation, really lives up to his reputation. He defeated Lu Fantian in 11 moves and an Emissary of Black Market Excellence Hall in 10."

"He's too strong! The two battles will surely be published in the next issue of the *Eastern Region Report*."

At that moment, someone remembered the bet Zhang Ruochen and the Orange Star Emissary had made before the battle.

Duanmu Xingling stood up with a smile. "Orange Star Emissary, you said that if you're defeated by Zhang Ruochen, you would be at his disposal. Are you going to keep your word?"

The Orange Star Emissary took a long hard look at Duanmu Xingling. "I did say this. I won't go back on my words."

Everybody was curious about how Zhang Ruochen would dispose of the Orange Star Emissary.

After all, it was a great merit to catch an Emissary of the Black Market Excellence Hall. The Martial Market Bank and the Saint Academy would award huge prizes.

It was assumed that Zhang Ruochen would send the Orange Star Emissary to the Law Enforcement Hall of the Martial Market Bank and exchange her for merits.

TAP! TAP!

Just then, a loud noise came from outside the Coliseum.

A group of officers and soldiers in armor and tabard rushed in from outside.

They lined up in two columns. All had reached the Heaven Realm. Each had a strong murderous feeling.

A stout wild man walked out from the center of the two columns, with his hands clasped behind his back.

His eyes radiated vigor. He had a straight nose and prominent cheekbones. His facial features were as if they had been split and chiseled by knife and ax. He was very masculine.

It's Bu Qianfan, one of the Six Great Kings of the new generation.

"How can the sergeant of Tianwei Camp come to the Coliseum of the Martial Market?" A young handsome man glanced at the two lines of sergeants and immediately recognized their identities.

Tianwei Camp of the Ministry of War. Its name reverberated like thunder.

“Don’t you see that person walking in the forefront? He wears the Head of a Hundred Bannermen’s Silverfish Treasure Armor. He has an extraordinary temperament. He’s barely reached the age of 20.”

“Only Bu Qianfan could become the Head of a Hundred Bannermen of Tianwei Camp at 20 years old.”

“What? Bu Qianfan.”

“Probably, Bu Qianfan has come to the Coliseum of the Martial Market looking for Zhang Ruochen. How interesting! Both of them are kings of the new generation. A fight between them would surely be awesome.”

“In fact, Zhang Ruochen and Bu Qianfan have fought before on the Stairway to Heaven. Only at the time, they didn’t use their full strength, so the winner wasn’t identified.”

All the warriors present were excited. They were eager to watch a battle between Zhang Ruochen and Bu Qianfan.

Some young warriors admired Zhang Ruochen, while others worshiped Bu Qianfan, the young God of War.

Zhang Ruochen also saw Bu Qianfan come in. He quickly took out his sword and hit vital a point on the Orange Star Emissary’s nine Meridian acupoints to freeze her.

Although the Orange Star Emissary could not move, she showed a strange look when she noticed Bu Qianfan. Her eyes were squinted so tightly they nearly shut.

Bu Qianfan looked first at the Orange Star Emissary, then at Zhang Ruochen. “Zhang Ruochen, can I talk to you privately?”

Zhang Ruochen had an amazing observation ability. He was aware of the strangeness in Bu Qianfan’s stare.

Zhang Ruochen had a hunch that Bu Qianfan’s visit to the Coliseum had something to do with the Orange Star Emissary, rather than to challenge him.

“Of course.”

Zhang Ruochen nodded and stepped off the Coliseum.

Bu Qianfan took the initiative to walk up to him. A powerful Genuine Qi released from his body and formed a spherical domain enveloping the two men.

He transmitted sound with sound waves. He secretly said, “Zhang Ruochen, I’d like to save the Orange Star Emissary. What are your conditions? Just tell me.”

It was true.

Zhang Ruochen was not surprised. He looked Bu Qianfan in the eye. “Why?”

Bu Qianfan mused for a moment, there was a tenderness in his eyes. “Don’t you want to know why I was defeated by Di Yi? It’s because of her. She’s a flaw in my heart.”

“It turns out it was for a woman.”

Zhang Ruochen smiled, but he did not know whether he was laughing at Bu Qianfan or himself.

As the old saying goes, the hero is saddened by beauty!

Even Bu Qianfan, a strong-willed lion-hearted warrior, could be trapped in love.

Zhang Ruochen said, "Okay! I can spare her life, but I have a condition."

"What's your condition?" Bu Qianfan asked.

Zhang Ruochen said, "Source of Spiritual Fire, one of the Five Elements Spirit Treasures. If you bring it to me, I'll give her to you."

Zhang Ruochen had already obtained three of the Five Elements Spirit Treasures. With the addition of the Bloody Saint-cultivating Soil mastered by Duanmu Xingling, he only lacked the Source of Spiritual Fire.

Saint Bu Gentry had obtained the right to manage the Five Elements Primitive World. Bu Qianfan could certainly collect a large amount of the Source of Spiritual Fire. With his status, it would not be difficult.

Therefore, this condition put forward by Zhang Ruochen was not excessive.

Killing the Orange Star Emissary would bring Zhang Ruochen a few rewards at best. Those rewards were unlikely to be as precious as the Source of Spiritual Fire.

Moreover, with her status in the Black Market, there was sure to be a great power behind the Orange Star Emissary.

To kill her would mean offending that power. They would definitely eliminate him at all costs.

Since Bu Qianfan had volunteered to ask him, Zhang Ruochen did not mind doing him a favor at a small cost.

"How straightforward!"

Bu Qianfan breathed a sigh of relief. "I owe you a favor. In the future, if you need any help, please come to the Tianwei Camp of the Ministry of War to find me."

Having said this, Bu Qianfan recovered his Genuine Qi and took the sergeants of Tianwei Camp to turn and leave the Coliseum.

The Orange Star Emissary was Bu Qianfan's Martial Arts flaw. She was irreplaceable to him.

If Zhang Ruochen had asked him to exchange all Five Elements Spirit Treasures, he certainly would have not frowned, never mind one Source of Spiritual Fire.

If Zhang Ruochen had refused to release the Orange Star Emissary, Bu Qianfan would definitely have used force to take her.

"What happened? Why has Bu Qianfan left?"

"I can't believe Bu Qianfan left after saying a few words to Zhang Ruochen. This isn't his style."

"What exactly did they talk about?"

Everyone was very curious about what had happened.

They had used sound wave, so no one had heard their conversation.

Xie Yun'an came over and stood beside Zhang Ruochen. "Brother Zhang, do you want to put the Orange Star Emissary into the Deadlock of the Law Enforcement Hall now?"

Although the Orange Star Emissary had been caught by Zhang Ruochen, they were in the Coliseum of the Martial Market, within Xie Yun'an's jurisdiction. If the Orange Star Emissary was sent to the Law Enforcement Hall, Xie Yun'an would share the merits.

It was precisely because of this that he was extremely eager to behead the Orange Star Emissary.

Zhang Ruochen looked at Xie Yun'an. "Why should I put her into the Deadlock? I caught her, she's at my disposal."

"This..."

Xie Yun'an felt a little awkward and quickly said, "The Orange Star Emissary is an important person. The masters of the Black Market will not let this go easily. It's safer to send her to the Law Enforcement Hall. If they send someone to rescue her..."

Zhang Ruochen immediately interrupted him, saying, "Say no more. I have my own arrangements."

He took the Orange Star Emissary to leave the Coliseum of the Martial Market.

Xie Yun'an wanted to stop them, but he dared not offend Zhang Ruochen too much.

A warrior of the Martial Market Bank came over and stood beside Xie Yun'an, whispering, "Elder Xie, what should we do now?"

Xie Yun'an's eyes were sunken and he revealed a somewhat eccentric smile. "Zhang Ruochen is a hot-blooded young man. Although he's talented, he is still a man. He must take a fancy to the Orange Star Emissary and have wicked thoughts."

"An evil woman of the Black Market is extremely cunning. If Zhang Ruochen is tempted by her, she's likely to escape." The warrior was worried.

Xie Yun'an nodded and looked dignified. "We must not let that evil woman escape because of Zhang Ruochen's selfish desire. Go to the Law Enforcement Hall now and ask Master of the Hall to take the woman personally. Only he can suppress Zhang Ruochen. I'll immediately bring people to the Courier Station of Martial Market, where he lives. We can't allow that evil woman to escape."

"Yes, master!"

The warrior immediately jumped onto the back of a beast and whipped it. He rushed out heading toward the Law Enforcement Hall.

"Come with me."

Xie Yun'an brought dozens of warriors trained by the Law Enforcement Hall. They gathered around Zhang Ruochen and the Orange Star Emissary like an iron bucket, for fear that the evil woman would escape.

Duanmu Xingling also followed, watching from a distance. She was quite puzzled, "What on earth is the matter?"

People thought Zhang Ruochen was not sending the Orange Star Emissary to the Law Enforcement Hall because he coveted her beauty and was stirred with carnal desire.

But, Duanmu Xingling knew better. She knew Zhang Ruochen.

She knew that he was not such a person.

Back at the Courier Station of Martial Market, Zhang Ruochen brought the Orange Star Emissary to his room.

CREAK!

He closed the door and calmly sat on a chair. He glanced at the Orange Star Emissary and placed his finger in a random spot to unlock one Meridian seal.

The Orange Star Emissary regained feeling in her four limbs. She flexed her wrists and went to the window. She sneered. "What did he promise you?"

#### **Chapter 462: A Man Infatuated**

"You think you have the right to know? It's a deal between Bu Qianfan and me. You just need to stay here."

Zhang Ruochen paid no attention to the Orange Star Emissary. He put his hands together to practice the Scripture of Emperor Ming's Empty as if he was alone.

"Hmm! You can defeat me, but you can't detain me."

In an attempt to escape from the room, the Orange Star Emissary mobilized her Genuine Qi and displayed a bodily movement.

"Uh!"

But, when she began to run her Genuine Qi, she felt a deep chest pain.

The Genuine Qi inside began to reflux.

The Orange Star Emissary was in a lot of pain. She clutched her chest, sat on the ground, and breathed heavily.

Zhang Ruochen did not open his eyes. "I've sealed your nine Meridians. I only released one of them. You can't run Genuine Qi now. Otherwise, you'll suffer a backfire."

The Orange Star Emissary tightened her fingers and stared at him coldly. Her eyes were full of resentment.

At dusk, the sun was about to set.

Bu Qianfan came to the Courier Station of Martial Market with Source of Spiritual Fire and delivered it to Zhang Ruochen.

Zhang Ruochen held the Source of Spiritual Fire and examined it. When he was finished, he covered the box, saying, "You can leave!"

This was simply a transaction. Zhang Ruochen did not stand on ceremony with Bu Qianfan. Each took what he needed.

Since Bu Qianfan had come to save someone, he had to be well-prepared for everything. There had to be a way for him to take the Orange Star Emissary away.

As for Xie Yun'an outside and the warriors from the Law Enforcement Hall, they were not as strong as Bu Qianfan and the Orange Star Emissary. They could not keep them there.

"Thank you again."

Bu Qianfan clasped his hands together to salute Zhang Ruochen.

He took a golden metal mask from his sleeve and placed it over his face, showing only his eyes. He took the Orange Star Emissary and displayed a bodily movement to fly out.

The metal mask on his face was very similar to the one Di Yi wore.

"He really is infatuated. It seems that his martial flaw still exists. As long as there's such a flaw, he'll never be well-matched with Di Yi." Zhang Ruochen shook his head and sighed.

RUMBLE!

There was a fierce fight happening outside.

It didn't last long. Xie Yun'an and a group of wounded warriors rushed in and appeared before Zhang Ruochen.

Xie Yun'an's eyes were red. He was very angry. "Zhang Ruochen, was the Orange Star Emissary rescued?"

On his chest, there were three crimson gashes. The wounds were so deep that his white ribs could be seen.

Zhang Ruochen sat on the stone bench in the courtyard and responded calmly, "You've been hurt by the Orange Star Emissary's Hell Ghost King Claw. Obviously, she has run away."

Just glancing at it briefly, Zhang Ruochen could see that Xie Yun'an had been wounded by the Hell Ghost King Claw.

"Why? Why did you let her go?" Xie Yun'an yelled, holding his hands tightly.

Zhang Ruochen looked at him and said casually, "I didn't let her go. She was rescued. Besides, you, someone who has reached the First Change in the Fish-dragon Realm, and a large number of warriors from the Law Enforcement Hall, can't stop her. Is it that odd that she ran away from me?"

Xie Yun'an looked at the scars on chest and said angrily, "If it weren't for Di Yi, I wouldn't have been hurt by her."

Zhang Ruochen feigned ignorance, saying, "How do you know that it was Di Yi?"

"He wore a metal mask and displayed the Hades Sword Skill, the Black Market's unique skill. Who but he would do that?" Xie Yun'an said.

Zhang Ruochen knew the masked man had been Bu Qianfan, not Di Yi.

Of course, he did not reveal that.

A warrior who had attained the Completion of the Earth Realm quickly stepped in from the outside. He got down on one knee in front of Xie Yun'an. "Elder, Law Enforcement Master is arriving!"

Xie Yun'an's expression changed.

If the Orange Star Emissary had not escaped, he would have been awarded when Law Enforcement Master came, for rendering outstanding service.

Now, the Orange Star Emissary had fled, and Xie Yun'an would be guilty of a dereliction of duty.

He would have no merit, rather he would be in trouble.

A moment later, Shen Fengtian, Master of the Law Enforcement Hall, dressed in a dark black robe, walked in imposingly from the outside.

"Master of the Hall!" Xie Yun'an immediately bowed to him.

Because of the fear in his heart, Xie Yun'an's face was drenched in sweat and his eyebrows were soaked.

A Law Enforcement Hall was set by the Martial Market Bank in each district. Shen Fengtian was the Master of the Law Enforcement Hall in the Seventh District.

Both the Law Enforcement Hall and the School of the Martial Market belonged to the Martial Market Bank.

The School of the Martial Market trained qualified talents for the Martial Market Bank. Its training was conducted in the Outer Palace, the Outer Palace, and the Saint Academy. It carried out cultivation from childhood and had a perfect teaching system.

Those who could graduate from the Saint Academy would become high-ranking officials in the Martial Market Bank. They would have superior rights and a lot of resources.

The Law Enforcement Hall recruited talents for the School of the Martial Market.

In terms of talent, the entrance requirements for the Law Enforcement Hall were lower than that of the School of the Martial Market.

Any extraordinary warrior had a chance to enter the Law Enforcement Hall.

People in the Law Enforcement Hall had not been trained since childhood. Most developed profound martial cultivation before joining the Martial Market Bank.

The other people were not admitted into the Saint Academy for lack of exceptional talent. Thus, they had to join the Law Enforcement Hall.

Therefore, the Martial Market Bank laid more emphasis on the School of the Martial Market and input plenty of resources to it.

Certainly, warriors from the Law Enforcement Hall also had great rights. The Martial Market Bank assigned many shady things to them.

Shen Fengtian's face had a scar and a cold draught of air encircled his body. He glanced at Xie Yun'an. In a cold voice, without any emotional turmoil, he said, "Where is the Orange Star Emissary?"

Xie Yun'an shook and knelt down on the ground with a loud sound. "She... she has run away. Please spare my life, spare my life, Master of the Hall... It's none of my business. She was released by Zhang Ruochen."

Shen Fengtian's eyes turned green and he looked at Zhang Ruochen. He said, "Did you release the Orange Star Emissary?"

Xie Yun'an, who had reached the Fish-dragon Realm, was frightened to kneel down in front of Shen Fengtian. Shen Fengtian was a very powerful figure.

Zhang Ruochen on the other hand was fearless. He said calmly. "Of course not. The Orange Star Emissary was rescued by Di Yi. Elder Xie just said the same to me personally."

Shen Fengtian knit his brows and immediately turned back. He stared at Xie Yun'an, saying, "Did Di Yi come here?"

"Yes. He rescued the Orange Star Emissary," Xie Yun'an said. "I'm sure that it must have been him."

**BAM!**

Shen Fengtian flung up his arms and struck Xie Yun'an. Xie Yun'an was flung back and slammed against a stone wall.

"Crap, how dare you release both the Emissary and the young master of Black Market Excellence Hall!? I'll fix you when I return."

Although Shen Fengtian was yelling at Xie Yun'an, his eyes were fixed on Zhang Ruochen.

Zhang Ruochen stared fearlessly at Shen Fengtian, with a smile on his face.

Shen Fengtian snorted and swung his sleeves. He left to chase Di Yi and the Orange Star Emissary.

If he could get them, he would gain great merit.

Zhang Ruochen looked at the stone wall in the distance. Xie Yun'an climbed out from a pile of stones. He spat blood and glared at Zhang Ruochen. Then, he left.



The air was cold and there was a bright moon in the sky.

As if nothing had happened, Zhang Ruochen held the Abyss Ancient Sword and practiced Sacred Guiding Sword in the yard. He practiced and pondered this movement repeatedly, in an attempt to understand its quintessence.

A manor of Saint Bu Gentry in the Seventh District.

The Orange Star Emissary returned to her natural shape. She was dressed in an orange robe and wore a veil. She had a graceful figure and extraordinary temperament.

She stood in the air as if floating on a mass of mist. She looked at Bu Qianfan. "I'll pay you back for saving my life."

SWISH!

Her tender body glittered with brilliance. She flew out of the manor and disappeared into the night.

Bu Qianfan clasped his hands behind him and looked solemn. He glanced in the direction of the Orange Star Emissary's departure and stood still for a long time, as if he had become a sculpture.

"Young master, she is only an evil woman sent by Di Yi to disturb your heart state. If you keep being infatuated with her, you'll be defeated again the next time you meet him." A skinny elder came out of the darkness and spoke in a hoarse voice.

Bu Qianfan exhaled and withdrew his eyes. "I understand."

"Didn't you harden yourself against affection last time you went to the Death Primitive World?" The elder continued.

Bu Qianfan stayed silent for a long time before replying, "Tenth Uncle, I'm going to the Death Primitive World again. This time, I'll practice for half a year."

"Young master... You shouldn't be too impulsive," the elder advised. "The Death Primitive World is very dangerous. If you are careless, you could die. The last time you went there, you were almost..."

Bu Qianfan waved his hand. "I'm not being impulsive. I'm clear about what I'm doing. I not only want to practice the Iron and Blood Martial Classics, but also the Treasured Bodies of Double Spirits. Before breaking through the Fish-dragon Realm, I must accomplish Treasured Bodies of Double Spirits. Only in this way, can I compete with Zhang Ruochen in the future."

The elder breathed a sigh of relief and said to himself, "*Great! The Young Master isn't infatuated with that evil woman anymore. He's thinking about how to defeat Zhang Ruochen.*"

After watching the battle between Zhang Ruochen and the Orange Star Emissary today, Bu Qianfan was worried.

Zhang Ruochen had defeated the Orange Star Emissary in just 10 movements. He needed 100 movements to defeat her.

It meant that Zhang Ruochen was stronger than him.

He could only avoid being defeated by Zhang Rouchen if he practiced harder than him.

### **Chapter 463: Fighting With Kong Lanyou Again**

“Master of the Hall, I ordered all the masters from the Law Enforcement Hall of the Seventh District to block all passes and city gates and search for them all night. But, we haven’t found them. The Orange Star Emissary and Di Yi have probably escaped.”

Shen Fengtian, the Master of the Law Enforcement Hall, stood in the center of an empty street listening to the report from his subordinates. His face grew more and more solemn.

Shen Fengtian had tracked them through the night with no luck. Both of them had disappeared as if they had evaporated from the world.

“Damn! Di Yi and the Orange Star Emissary are key people from the Black Market. If I caught them, it would definitely bring great merit. I could go to practice in the holy meridian.”

He clenched his teeth. He could not be reconciled, saying, “Someone must have helped them, they couldn’t have left otherwise.”

The warrior got down on one knee. “Master of the Hall, do you mean Zhang Ruochen? Could it be that... he is a Black Market undercover?”

Shen Fengtian certainly did not think that Zhang Ruochen was a Black Market undercover.

To start with, Zhang Ruochen had once defeated Di Yi. It had been a hard hit on the Black Market. He had also thoroughly offended the Black Market.

Secondly, if Zhang Ruochen was a Black Market undercover, he would not have released the Orange Star Emissary openly. It went against his interests.

However, even if Zhang Ruochen was not a member of the Black Market, he should take full responsibility. This matter was related to him.

“Let’s go to the Courier Station of Martial Market. I want to ask him why he released the Orange Star Emissary. If he can’t give me an account, he can hardly absolve himself from blame. Even if he is a Saint.”

Shen Fengtian was furious. He stamped his feet and the flagstone ground below them cracked.

“Master Shen, even if you go to the Courier Station of Martial Market, you can’t do anything to him.” There was a young voice.

Shen Fengtian remained solemn. He looked toward the alley on the left side where the sound had come from. A tall thin figure came out. Gradually, a young and handsome face appeared.

After seeing the young man clearly, Shen Fengtian’s brows lifted slightly. “Xu Hai.”

Xu Hai was a descendant of Saint Xu Gentry, a Saint of the Saint Academy.

Xu Hai bowed to salute.

Both Saint Shen Gentry and Saint Xu Gentry were prestigious rich and powerful families in the Eastern Region. Moreover, they had been on friendly terms for generations and exchanged marriages. Shen Fengtian certainly knew Xu Hai. He was impressed by this nephew.

Shen Fengtian praised Xu Hai, saying, "You've made progress in your cultivation. You can show yourself from 33 meters away without a sound."

Xu Hai replied in a humble way, "Uncle, my cultivation is too far from yours. You were thinking about the Orange Star Emissary and Di Yi, so you didn't notice me."

Shen Fengtian said, "You said that I couldn't do anything to Zhang Ruochen. What do you mean? Is there an incredible individual behind him?"

Xu Hai laughed. "Headmaster Xuanji is ready to accept Zhang Ruochen as his apprentice. Is it appropriate for you to deal with him now?"

"What? Headmaster Xuanji." Shen Fengtian's facial expression changed.

Although the Law Enforcement Hall and the School of the Martial Market were relatively independent entities, Shen Fengtian wanted to handle matters without suffering the tempers of High-level from the School of the Martial Market.

However, Headmaster Xuanji was not an ordinary person. He ranked second among the top ten headmasters and was known as a "sword saint".

Throughout the Eastern Regions, there were only three people who could be called sword saints.

For a superior like Headmaster Xuanji, there were countless superior warriors among his disciples. His seniority was extremely high and he was highly respected. He was not only particularly influential in Martial Market Bank, but also in the entire Eastern Region.

Even if Shen Fengtian was as bold as brass, he dared not to offend him.

Xu Hai said, "The ancestor told me personally. It's absolutely true. Uncle, don't force the situation, you should be more patient."

Shen Fengtian said, "Hmm! So what if Headmaster Xuanji backs him up? As long as I find his vulnerable points, our Law Enforcement Hall can investigate and handle him accordingly."

"Who doesn't have a dark past? If we investigate, we're sure to find something."

Xu Hai laughed and bowed again. He left promptly after saying goodbye.

Xu Hai didn't think that Shen Fengtian could discover anything new about Zhang Ruochen. However, he was the Law Enforcement Master of the Seventh District. As long as Zhang Ruochen stayed in the Seventh District, he would not live comfortably.

"Zhang Ruochen, you killed my brother. Someday I'll pay you back for this!"

Xu Hai's eyes grew cold, with murderous intent in his pupils.

Over the next seven days, Zhang Ruochen went to the Coliseum of the Martial Market every day. He challenged 227 warriors listed on the Heaven Board.

Most warriors could not force him to display the power of Martial Soul. He mostly worked on perceiving sword comprehension.

Only four masters were able to force him to display his Martial Soul. Unfortunately for them, they all were defeated in three moves.

For half a month, no one on the Heaven Board could last more than 10 movements when he fought with them.

Word eventually spread in the Seventh District, "Only an outstanding figure can last ten movements from Zhang Ruochen."

When the news spread, countless young masters came to challenge him, including students from the Saint Academy and the Royal Academy.

Those who challenged Zhang Ruochen lined up and registered in the Coliseum of the Martial Market. Many people came not to defeat him but to withstand more movements.

In the following days, Zhang Ruochen fought nearly a hundred times every day. Of course, most people could not force him to use all his strength. He was still working on perceiving sword comprehension.

During the day, Zhang Ruochen fought like crazy and practiced his sword technique. In the evening, he practiced hard in the internal space of the Time and Space Spinel to improve his cultivation.

Half a month passed very quickly.

Zhang Ruochen could clearly perceive that his strength had improved considerably. Compared to half a month ago, it seemed he had changed a lot and reached a new level.

He had replaced the Orange Star Emissary and now ranked 643rd on the Heaven Board.

*"The Saint Academy opens tomorrow. I'll be an official Saint. My swordsmanship has improved so much over the last two weeks. I'm ready to fight with Kong Lanyou. Tonight."*

Zhang Ruochen did not care about the Half-Saint mansion he could win from Kong Lanyou. He was more concerned about his cultivation. Kong Lanyou's swordsmanship was the only way he could test if his sword technique had improved.

Zhang Ruochen went to the Half-saint mansion together with Nie Honglou.

Nie Honglou stood outside and Zhang Ruochen went into the bamboo forest alone.

Kong Lanyou still sat in the Bamboo Pavilion. Her white hair trailed along the floor. She held a yellowing xiao, a vertical bamboo flute. Her beautiful eyes were fixed on a brook nearby.

Upon hearing footsteps behind her, an emotional fluctuation appeared in her eyes. Without turning, she already knew who it was.

“Zhang Ruochen, you’re finally here.” Her voice sounded so nice, like water flowing over stones. Listening to her was delightful.

He stopped and stood 33 meters away. “Over the last two weeks, many people came to challenge me to test their swordsmanship. Now, I come to challenge you to test my swordsmanship.”

Kong Lanyou’s lips were bright red. The corners of her mouth curled up slightly. “If you can withstand my sword strikes three times, I’ll buy you a delicious drink. Of course, it depends on your ability.”

SWISH!

She shook her body and flew out of the Bamboo Pavilion, with her vertical bamboo flute in hand. She mobilized her Genuine Qi and quickly pointed to Zhang Ruochen’s left temple.

She flew 30 meters and stood before Zhang Ruochen.

It seemed that the vertical bamboo flute was sharper than a sword.

She controlled her cultivation at the Mid Stage of the Heaven Realm, three realms lower than Zhang Ruochen. Moreover, what she displayed was still Sacred Guiding Sword, the first movement of Sacred Sword Skill.

Zhang Ruochen had already released Spiritual Power. He observed Kong Lanyou every moment. Every time Kong Lanyou displayed sword movement, he had already conceived a solution to the problem.

However, struck by the vertical bamboo flute, Zhang Ruochen was still disturbed. He could not display his strength.

Seeing he would be beaten in one strike, Zhang Ruochen suddenly kicked up his heels and took the initiative to slam into her.

“Sacred Guiding Sword! ”

Zhang Ruochen put two fingers together and used them as a sword to hit Kong Lanyou’s right wrist.

“You’ve progressed considerably! Unfortunately, your movements are useless against me.”

Kong Lanyou moved swiftly out of sight.

Zhang Ruochen was suddenly overwhelmed with a strong sense of crisis. All his hair stood on end. Without hesitation, he turned and waved his arms to slash the figure above him.

His arm was like a sword.

“The second movement, Sacred Plenilune Sword.”

Kong Lanyou cut down with the vertical bamboo flute. It collided with Zhang Ruochen’s arms and uttered a loud blast of Genuine Qi.

Zhang Ruochen thought to himself, *“This is really dangerous. If I was just a little bit later, her vertical bamboo flute would have hit me in the head.”*

Because Kong Lanyou's cultivation was controlled at the Mid Stage of the Heaven Realm, it was her who was thrown out after one bout.

She defused his power skillfully. She fell to the ground. With a hint of surprise, she said, "Your strain capacity has improved a lot. You have a good comprehension ability."

Actually, Kong Lanyou was extremely shocked. When she was his age, she had been inferior to Zhang Ruochen, both in sword technique and strain capacity.

*"If my cousin was still alive, he would likely be a bit better than Zhang Ruochen at this age,"* Kong Lanyou thought.

In her mind, her cousin, who had lived eight hundred years ago, was the most amazing young talent, and no one could surpass him.

"The third movement, Sacred Wave Sword."

PHHF!

Kong Lanyou swung her arms in the air. Motivated by her Genuine Qi, all the bamboo leaves from the ground flew up and swirled in the air.

#### **Chapter 464: Blue Sky Herb**

Kong Lanyou rotated the vertical bamboo flute in her hands and stirred up a circle of Genuine Qi waves. She shook her arms and swung them quickly.

The bamboo leaves resembled flying swords. They flew toward Zhang Ruochen like drops of water.

WOO!

In Zhang Ruochen's eyes, they were not bamboo leaves but people with swords in hand. Like thousands upon thousands of horses and soldiers, they were murderous and mighty, uttering earsplitting whistles.

Kong Lanyou's swordsmanship was extremely powerful. She forced him to retreat back constantly.

"No, I can't retreat. My cultivation is higher than her and my strength is stronger than her. Why can't I fight with all my strength?"

Zhang Ruochen sank his legs and his feet stepped into the ground seven centimeters deep. He stopped retreating and held his sword with both hands, ready to slash.

Soul-repose Shadowing, one of the Thirteen Sword Techniques of Soul Chasing.

This sword technique was very powerful and overwhelming. The bamboo leaves were forced apart on both sides. Many were destroyed by sword Qi and turned into fine powder.

BANG! BANG!

Even so, there were still seven bamboo leaves. Under the control of Kong Lanyou's Genuine Qi, they cut through his Celestial Bodyshield, leaving seven wounds.

The wounds were small. The bamboo leaves were only a centimeter deep into the flesh at most. They were not vital wounds.

Kong Lanyou uttered a light “eh” and showed surprise in her eyes. “You can open up Chakras. This gets more and more interesting!”

The so-called “Chakras”, one of the extra meridians, was hidden in a warrior’s skin.

If a warrior practiced for a year, an extra layer of skin would grow. Thus, his defensive power would also increase. The way a warrior’s skin grew was kind of like growth rings inside a tree.

Zhang Ruochen had opened up the Chakras, so the wounds from the bamboo leaves did not go deep.

Of course, if Zhang Ruochen used the Dragon Pearl’s Divine Dragon Strength, he could ward off the bamboo leaves entirely without injury. But then, the battle between Kong Lanyou and him would be meaningless.

She controlled her cultivation at the Mid Stage of the Heaven Realm, three realms lower than Zhang Ruochen. Moreover, she only used sword techniques without any other means.

Zhang Ruochen would not use any other means either. He would only use his own power to deal with her.

SWOOSH!

Kong Lanyou launched another attack. She displayed the fourth sword technique.

Zhang Ruochen raised his arm once again to ward off his assailant. He wanted to keep fighting recklessly with her.

With a bang, the vertical bamboo flute she pointed passed through his right arm. It hit his shoulder and sent him flying through the air.

Zhang Ruochen had no feeling in his right arm and half of his body had become numb. Seeing that he was about to fall to the ground, he quickly ran his Genuine Qi, stretched out his left hand to hit the ground, and flew up to land upside down.

Before he could stand firm, Kong Lanyou had launched her fifth strike and hit his glabella.

Instead of dodging, Zhang Ruochen immediately pushed his left palm to hit her lower abdomen.

If she did not take back the vertical bamboo flute, her lower abdomen would be hit. A warrior at the Mid Stage of the Heaven Realm would definitely die after being struck by Zhang Ruochen’s palm.

Kong Lanyou snorted and turned her slender waist. Like a fish in the water, she quickly twisted up and avoided his movement.

She hit downward and pointed the vertical bamboo flute to the center of his back.

“Awful.”

Zhang Ruochen felt his back grow cold and knew that he could not avoid this movement. He immediately mobilized his Genuine Qi to form Celestial Bodysield and pushed it back.

The Celestial Bodyshield turned into a huge light ball, enveloping him.

The light ball lost its effect when Kong Lanyou's vertical bamboo flute hit its surface.

"Break!"

Kong Lanyou broke Zhang Ruochen's Celestial Bodyshield and hit him in the center of his back.

The Celestial Bodyshield, reduced the power of the vertical bamboo flute by half. It struck him with a crash. He was shaken to lunge forward, without any heavy injury.

Zhang Ruochen endured his burning back pain and turned. Just as he turned back, the vertical bamboo flute was pressed against his heart.

If it was a real life-or-death struggle, his heart would have been stabbed by the vertical bamboo flute.

Zhang Ruochen withdrew, saying, "I've failed!"

"I defeated you in six movements. You've progressed a lot in the last half a month. Your understanding of sword technique was far beyond my expectation."

Kong Lanyou took back her vertical bamboo flute and returned to the Bamboo Pavilion.

She waved her hand over the stone table and a pot of tea and two celadon cups appeared.

She blew a breath. The teapot slowly flew up and suspended in the air.

PHHT!

Kong Lanyou did not perform any other conjuring tricks. The Spiritual Qi between heaven and earth flew continuously into the teapot.

A section of Spiritual Qi flew into the teapot and blended with the water. Another turned into wisps of fire and coated the teapot.

Shortly afterwards, came the delicate fragrance of tea. It turned to wisps of white mist that pervaded the bamboo forest.

"Zhang Ruochen, I told you that if you withstood my strikes three times, I would treat you to a good drink. You can enter the Bamboo Pavilion," Kong Lanyou said calmly.

When he walked into the Bamboo Pavilion, the fragrance of tea was stronger.

Taking a deep breath, he inhaled the fragrance into his abdomen. All of a sudden, he felt a current of mighty Spiritual Qi flowing into his Blood Meridian. His blood seemed to be boiling.

Zhang Ruochen immediately ran the Scripture of Emperor Ming's Emyrean. Genuine Qi rapidly moved through the 36 Meridians in his body for a large cirde of vital energy.

Kong Lanyou took a deep look at Zhang Rouchen as he performed the Scripture of Emperor Ming's Emyrean. Her eyes were full of confusion and intricacy.

*"What on earth is inside that teapot? Why do I benefit so much by taking a deep breath? If I take a sip of tea, will I benefit even more?"* Zhang Ruochen said to himself.



Zhang Ruochen put aside his doubts temporarily. He went to the opposite side and sat down.

Kong Lanyou lifted her eyelids and stared at him. She said, "You're only a warrior of the Heaven Realm. How dare you sit opposite me to be on a par with me? You're quite unscrupulous!"

Zhang Ruochen remained relaxed. "Predecessor, you invited me to drink tea in the Bamboo Pavilion. Why can't I sit down?"

Even if Kong Lanyou had extremely high cultivation, Zhang Ruochen was not afraid of her. He treated her still as his cousin, without pressure.

After meeting her twice, Zhang Ruochen could tell that Kong Lanyou had no enmity toward him from 800 years ago. Moreover, she had been very concerned about him that year.

Even so, Zhang Ruochen did not intend to tell her the truth.

If she knew the truth, she would certainly plan his future. She would bring him back to Ming Hall, with her current cultivation, experience, status, and will.

If he returned to Ming Hall, how would he get along with her in the future?

How did Zhang Ruochen know that she was from Ming Hall? It was actually very simple. When he had gone to Sword Sanctum, Jade Saint had asked him if he was a member of Ming Hall. Now, Kong Lanyou was here again, and she was connected with Sword Sanctum. She had to be a member of Ming Hall.

He was only a young warrior in the Heaven Realm; she was an 800-year-old Saint from Ming Hall. The difference between them was huge. Kong Lanyou would not submit herself to him as she had 800 years before.

Moreover, Zhang Ruochen did not want to expose his identity. He was a proud person and had his own cultivation plan. He did not want to resort to Kong Lanyou and Ming Hall.

Tell her?

Or not tell her?

Suddenly, countless ideas flashed across his mind.

Kong Lanyou seemed to be thinking about something. She did not say anything and fell into silence.

Zhang Ruochen put his hands together. He swallowed and enjoyed the tea fragrance. He performed his exercises and quickly cultivated himself.

Zhang Ruochen's mind was empty after he inhaled the tea fragrance. His doubts about martial arts were settled in an instant.

"If I could keep inhaling and exhaling the tea fragrance and maintain my current status, I would be able to break through the Final State of the Heaven Realm within a month."

His Spiritual Power was strong; he had reached 41st level. He quickly did three things at once.

He swallowed and inhaled tea fragrance and performed exercises.

He recalled the process of fighting with Kong Lanyou to grasp the quintessence of her sword technique.

Meanwhile, Zhang Ruochen's Heart of the Sword changed into a human shape inside his Qi Sea. He exercised sword techniques repeatedly.

GURGLE!

The water in the teapot was boiling.

Under Kong Lanyou's control, the teapot flew to Zhang Ruochen. A full cup of jade-green tea was poured.

Then, the teapot flew back. Another cup of tea was poured for her.

Zhang Ruochen opened his eyes and looked at the tea before him. "Is it possible that this tea is boiled with the legendary holy medicine 'Blue Sky Herb'?"

"You're quite knowledgeable. There's a leaf of Blue Sky Herb in the teapot."

Kong Lanyou put the small delicate teacup to her red lips and gently took a sip.

In legends, Blue Sky Herb grew in the clouds rather than on the earth. It absorbed moisture and Spiritual Qi, collected the light of the sun and the moon, and finally formed into a grass-blade of holy medicine.

Such a treasure was more precious than Five Elements Spirit Treasure. If a Blue Sky Herb came on the scene, many Half-Saints would struggle to seize it.

Blue Sky Herb could not only help warriors to improve their cultivation but also help them to comprehend the Holy Road.

Therefore, Blue Sky Herb was extremely precious to a figure at the Ninth Change of the Fish-dragon Realm or a Half-Saint. It was extremely wasteful for a leaf of Blue Sky Herb to be used to make tea for a warrior of the Heaven Realm.

*"She treated me with Blue Sky Herb, such a holy medicine. Is it possible that she's recognized me?"*

Zhang Ruochen wondered.

Kong Lanyou put down her teacup and stared at Zhang Ruochen. She said, "If you stop drinking it, the efficacy of Blue Sky Herb will decrease."

Zhang Ruochen did not consider it anymore. He lifted his teacup and drank it to the last drop.

Then he almost dropped the teacup. He was frightened by her words.

Kong Lanyou watched him, saying, "You practiced Scripture of Emperor Ming's Emphyrean?"

#### **Chapter 465: The Past and Present of the World**

"You practiced the Scripture of Emperor Ming's Emphyrean?"

Kong Lanyou watched Zhang Ruochen with a pair of beautiful eyes, revealing a look of great anticipation.

A storm of emotion surged through him. However, he appeared very calm, saying, "Predecessor, you're really a master. I can hide nothing from you. You should have already known the exercises I practiced."

"As far as I know, only two people in Kunlun's Field have practiced the Scripture of Emperor Ming's Emyrean. One was Emperor Ming, one of the Nine Emperors eight hundred years ago. The other one was the son of Emperor Ming."

She paused and carefully observed his subtle movements. "One of them has been missing for years and his life is uncertain. The other has been dead for 800 years. Zhang Ruochen, don't tell me that you learned the Scripture of Emperor Ming's Emyrean by being awakened from the Ancient Abyss Sword."

Zhang Ruochen said firmly, "It's true."

Since he had already made a decision, Zhang Ruochen would continue to hide the truth. He still needed time to verify several things. He did not want anybody to know his true identity before he found the answers.

As long as he did not admit it, Kong Lanyou could do nothing, even if she had some speculation.

In fact, Kong Lanyou could forcibly take away his memory with Soul-finding Technique to find out the truth.

However, she was afraid that the man before her really did have an unusual relationship with the man 800 years ago. If she used Soul-finding Technique, his Martial Soul would be hurt with unrecoverable injuries.

What should she do?

As she contemplated, Zhang Ruochen began to practice.

He closed his eyes and spared no effort in playing the Scripture of Emperor Ming's Emyrean. His body was tightening up with a hundred thousand pores completely closed. His body became a space without leakage.

Blue Sky Herb took effect in a very short period of time. All his blood vessels and meridians were affected by its potency, which gathered in the glabella.

Zhang Ruochen became clearheaded as if the door of wisdom had been opened. He could comprehend sword technique more than ten times faster than before.

The Heart of the Sword was in his Qi pool. Zhang Ruochen's realm of sword technique enhanced considerably as he quickly practiced sword moves.

*"With the help of Blue Sky Herb, I will certainly improve my realm of sword technique. Perhaps, I will be able to withstand ten movements from Kong Lanyou tonight."*

He drove his Spiritual Power to the extreme and made every effort to comprehend the sword technique. He had to make the best use of this opportunity and avoid wasting the potency of Blue Sky Herb.

“My sword technique is from the heart, and my mind is clear.”

“Go with the wind and move with the clouds.”

“The sun and the moon have come out together and the universe is pervaded with sword technique.”

“The two opposing principles of nature are contained in Tai Chi and all skills derive from one sword technique.”

In Zhang Ruochen’s Qi pool, a little white man held a light sword and stepped on Genuine Qi to display sword practice, leaving illusory images of sword technique in his mind.

In an instant, he got a thorough understanding of difficult problems that he could not figure out before.

The sword technique method emerged from his mind and surged up as if it were flying out of his head.

Suddenly, he widened his eyes and shot a sharp look. He quickly attacked in the direction opposite Kong Lanyou, his hands shaped into a Finger Sword.

“SWISH!”

Kong Lanyou responded quickly. After he struck, she gained mastery by striking his wrists with the xiao.

Zhang Ruochen rotated his wrists and quickly changed movements. He stood up and stretched his arms straight to her chest, with an invincible sword breath.

“Bang! Bang!”

They displayed movements quickly and fought fiercely. Every time they launched an attack, it was as if two swords were colliding.

Zhang Ruochen attacked her from different perspectives. Sometimes he stood up and sometimes he sat down. Sometimes he even moved quickly around Bamboo Pavilion.

Kong Lanyou sat motionless as a statue, except for her constantly moving hands.

After about three breaths, Zhang Ruochen was thrown out of Bamboo Pavilion after being struck by the xiao again.

Zhang Ruochen sank his legs to keep his center of gravity. Then, he stood on his feet, so that he would not be too embarrassed. He rested one hand on his chest as if his body had been pierced by the xiao. He felt pain and exhaustion all over.

However, he wasn’t injured. It could be presumed that Kong Lanyou exerted her strength secretly.

“You’ve withstood 13 movements. You really are a genius,” Kong Lanyou praised.

Zhang Ruochen resisted the pain, saying, “It was your Blue Sky Herb. Without it, I wouldn’t have made such rapid progress.”

“Don’t be so humble. It depends on the ability of a warrior, not just the Herb. Although it’s helpful, it’s just a cup of tea.”

Kong Lanyou stood up and clasped her hands behind her. She displayed an overwhelming spirit, saying proudly, "Zhang Ruochen, are you interested in leaving the School of the Martial Market and becoming my apprentice? I can provide you the best cultivation environment, the best guidance, and the best panacea. I do not accept an apprentice easily."

*"As expected, she really wants to set the course of my cultivation. Fortunately, she doesn't know my true identity. Otherwise, she would definitely take me away without hesitation,"* Zhang Ruochen thought to himself.

Where you stood decided the way you thought.

Kong Lanyou thought that it was a gift for Zhang Ruochen to be accepted as her apprentice.

"Thank you for your kindness," he replied. "I've decided to practice in the Saint Academy. Moreover, I've promised to take Headmaster Xuanji as my master."

Kong Lanyou nodded as if she already knew this. "Elder Xuanji is one of top three sword saints in the Eastern Region. He's very powerful. It's good to apprentice with him. Since you've made your decision, I should leave and return to the Middle Region."

"Are you leaving?" Zhang Ruochen said.

Kong Lanyou sighed. "I came to the Eastern Region to meet you. Since you're not the person I'm looking for, I have no reason to stay here. 800 years! His bones have probably turned to ashes. But, I can't give up my obsession. I can't. You aren't him and you can't be him."

Her voice sounded sad. She didn't seem like an infinitely powerful Saint at all, but a delicate and passionate woman.

Zhang Ruochen also felt upset. He was not sure if he was grieving for Kong Lanyou's departure or the passage of time.

After 800 years, Zhang Ruochen was no longer the person he had once been. Similarly, Kong Lanyou had changed as well.

Everything had changed!

Time goes by quickly. Everything is always changing.

In retrospect, all things turn to ashes. Only the green hills remain unchanged.

You withstood 10 movements, so you should be at the Intermediate Stage of Heart Integrated into Sword. As agreed upon, the Half-Saint mansion is your private estate now."

When Kong Lanyou stood up, she showed her slender and beautiful figure. She walked out of Bamboo Pavilion and was about to leave.

Zhang Ruochen stared at her back. Finally, he could not help asking, "I heard you mention many times the son of Emperor Ming 800 years ago. Did you know each other?"

Kong Lanyou quivered and stopped, saying calmly, "We more than knew each other. He's irreplaceable in my heart forever. But, I was not in his mind. He had an affection for another woman. I could only

secretly watch them from afar. I watched them practice swords, play, and embrace under the moonlight.”

“And because I secretly watched him from a distance, I saw him get killed by that woman in one strike. I rushed out desperately to stop it. But I was too late. I was helpless as I looked at him lying in his blood.”

“Even though 800 years have passed, I can still remember the scene. Every time it flashes through my mind, I’m overwhelmed with sorrow.”

*“All of a sudden, we were forever separated from each other. Since then, my old friend has become a ghost.”*

For some reason, Kong Lanyou told the secret deep in her heart to a junior, whom she had only met twice.

Perhaps, she was very lonely. For 800 years, she had had nobody to talk to. Until she met Zhang Ruochen, and blurted out the thoughts that had been buried in her heart for 800 years.

A long sigh came out in the air.

When Zhang Ruochen heard this, his eyes grew moist with tears. He did not want to hide the truth. He wanted to tell her his true identity. He wanted to tell her that her old friend was not dead.

However, when Zhang Ruochen fixed his eyes and looked over, she had already disappeared. He had no idea when she’d left the Half-Saint mansion.

Zhang Ruochen rushed out and shouted with Genuine Qi, “Lanyou, Lanyou... ”

However, she had already left the East Region Saint City. She was 10,000 kilometers away and could not hear his shouting.

*“All of a sudden, we were forever separated from each other. Since then, my old friend has become a ghost.”*

Zhang Ruochen recited her words and closed his eyes. It was like he could feel her years of anguish.

Zhang Ruochen had always treated Kong Lanyou as a little sister. He had never known she had an affection for him.

If Zhang Ruochen had known this before, he would not have hidden from her. He should not leave her in guilt, sorrow, and hatred. She should be happier.

“In the future, there will be opportunities to meet her again. For now, I need to practice harder. When my cultivation is stronger, I will be able to do more.”

He put away the complicated thoughts in his mind and thought about how he could improve his cultivation quickly.

His enemy was the superior Empress Chi Yao. If he was not strong enough, he could not take revenge.

After drinking the Blue-sky Herb Tea, he had improved in both sword technique and martial cultivation. He had subtly contacted the threshold of the Final State of the Heaven Realm.

If he could break through the Final State of the Heaven Realm, his strength would be increased to a higher level. In that case, it would not be difficult for him to be ranked in the the top 30 on the Heaven Board.

### **Chapter 466: The First Day of School**

If he wanted to rapidly improve his cultivation, he could only resort to the Yin Yang Wooden Graph.

Only when the Yin Yang Wooden Graph absorbed enough Origin of Wood Spirit Qi, would the sacred prime tree be able to grow enough to hold up the inner world of the graph.

The time of internal space in the Yin Yang Wooden Graph was greatly different from that of the external world. Ten days inside was equal to one day outside.

In other words, if Zhang Ruochen could enter the Yin Yang Wooden Graph, his cultivation would speed up ten times.

“Tomorrow, I’ll go to the Book Collection Pavilion in the Saint Academy and find some books. I can probably find an Inferior Primitive World with a lot of Origin of Wood Spirit Qi.”

While considering the way to enhance his cultivation, Zhang Ruochen moved forward. He left the bamboo forest.

Nie Honglou stood outside the bamboo forest. When he saw Zhang Ruochen come out alone, he asked, “Where’s the predecessor?”

“She’s gone!” Zhang Ruochen answered.

Nie Honglou said, “Zhang Ruochen, I’m about to leave. Tomorrow when you enter the Saint Academy, I’ll go away.”

Over the past half a month, Nie Honglou had protected Zhang Ruochen at all times. Wherever Zhang Ruochen went, Nie Honglou would follow. He protected him wholeheartedly.

It was quite amazing for such a top master like him to make it this far.

Zhang Ruochen did not intend to persuade him to stay. After all, Nie Honglou also needed to practice. He still had his own path of cultivation. It was impossible for him to spend all his time on Zhang Ruochen.

Zhang Ruochen thought about it for a moment. He took out a jade box and passed it to Nie Honglou. He laughed. “Over the last two weeks, if not for your protection, I would have been assassinated by masters of the Black Market. Brother Nie, you must accept this gift.”

Nie Honglou was a powerhouse at the Sixth Change of the Fish-dragon Realm. His cultivation was much higher than Zhang Ruochen’s. He was too proud to accept Zhang Ruochen’s gift.

Just as he was going to turn it down, he suddenly stopped and observed a strange fluctuation in the box.

Was there an amazing treasure inside?

Curiously, Nie Honglou took the box and opened it.

Inside was a smooth black spinel with a thin layer of vapor. Using Spiritual Power to search, he found that pure Spiritual Qi of water was contained in the black spinel.

“This...this is the Black Glazed Spinel, one of the Five Elements Spirit Treasures, right?” Nie Honglou widened his eyes.

Zhang Ruochen nodded. “Yes.”

If it were any other treasure, Nie Honglou would definitely refuse it. But since it was a Black Glazed Spinel, there was no way he could turn it down.

He licked his lips, shook his head, and laughed. “Zhang Ruochen, you are making me owe you on purpose.”

Zhang Ruochen said, “If you don’t want it, I’ll take it back.”

“Yes, I definitely want it.”

Without hesitation, Nie Honglou took the Black Glazed Spinel.

With the Black Glazed Spinel, he could shorten his cultivation by ten years. It would be ludicrous to refuse such a treasure.

With the help of the Black Glazed Spinel, Nie Honglou was very confident that he would make further progress and realize the Seventh Change in the Fish-dragon Realm within a short time.

“Well, since you’ve given me this Black Glazed Spinel, I’ll protect you for another two weeks.” Nie Honglou did not want to owe him and intended to pay it back quickly.

Zhang Ruochen said, “Brother Nie, don’t hesitate. I am giving you the Black Glazed Spinel merely for being friend. I don’t mean anything else. Moreover, I am going to the Saint Academy tomorrow, so I don’t need your protection anymore.”

Nie Honglou laughed. “You really think that you’ll be completely safe once you enter the Saint Academy? The competition within the Saint Academy is more fierce than that in the external world. In particular, senior students take delight in bullying new students. And, descendants of Saint Gentries take delight in teasing juniors from humble families.”

“You rank first among the new students, so you’re in the teeth of the storm. Many people will want to achieve instant fame by bullying you.”

“With your strength, you don’t need to be afraid of any warriors at the Heaven Realm. However, you can’t deal with specially privileged people. They won’t dare kill you, but they can humiliate you. It’s hard to gain a firm foothold in the Saint Academy.”

Zhang Ruochen stared at Nie Honglou. “Why do you know the Saint Academy so well? Are you also a saint at the Saint Academy?”

“Sort of! But, I haven’t been back for more than ten years. Many people might have forgotten me,” Nie Honglou joked.



Why had Nie Honglou joined the Mercenary Group to carry out risky tasks, instead of practicing in the Saint Academy?

Zhang Ruochen did not ask this question. After all, everyone had their own choices. Nie Honglou probably thought it would be more helpful to experience the Mercenary Group than to practice in the Saint Academy.

Zhang Ruochen returned to the Martial Market Courier Station, and then brought Concubine Lin, Kong Xuan, Blackie, Han Xue, and the monster ape to the Half-saint mansion to help them settle in.

Si Xingkong, Chang Qiqi, Duanmu Xingling, and the others were saints at the Saint Academy, so they could live in the Saint Academy houses. It was unnecessary for them to live in Zhang Ruochen's mansion.

Zhang Ruochen did not go to bed until midnight.

With his current cultivation, he would not be tired, even if went without rest for ten to fifteen days. However, it was relaxing to sleep.

If a person was too stressed and exhausted, it was bad for cultivation.

The next morning, Zhang Ruochen got up and practiced sword technique before the day broke.

The Martial arts field of the Half-saint mansion was broad. It was 50 meters long and 40 meters wide. At its edge, a level five defense strategy was arranged. Zhang Ruochen was not worried about others getting injured accidentally by his sword breath.

He practiced sword techniques for an hour.

Finally, the sun rose. The sun's rays broke through the clouds and illuminated the earth.

Zhang Ruochen's robe was completely soaked with sweat.

He went back to the room and put on a military uniform specially made by the Saint Academy. He grabbed a token, walked out of the mansion, and went to the Saint Academy.

The military uniform of the Saint Academy was golden. Because it was knitted with specially made gold threads, it could not be damaged by ordinary knives or swords. It was comparable to a Level Six Genuine Martial Arms.

In the Martial Market Bank, only a golden-robed Elder was qualified to wear such a golden uniform.

In other words, a saint could enjoy the same treatment a golden-robed Elder did.

If a saint ranked among the top 100 on the Heaven Board, he or she could wear a purple robe and enjoy the even better treatment.

When Zhang Ruochen arrived at the Saint Academy, ornate carriages were parked inside and outside the building. All the young warriors getting out of the carriages were specially privileged people at the Heaven Realm.

This time, a total of 13,478 students were becoming saints. Thus, the Saint Academy was overcrowded with people and vehicles on the first day of school. Boys and girls could be seen chatting everywhere. It was full of youth and vigor.

Zhang Ruochen saw a familiar beautiful figure in the crowd. The figure was tall and long-legged. It was Huang Yanchen.

Huang Yanchen also wore a golden robe and had tied a belt around her slender waist. The belt was gold inlaid with jade. It accentuated her curvy figure. Her royal blue hair hung down behind her like a waterfall. The front of her hair was drawn into a bun and fixed with a jade hairpin.

When she walked down from her gorgeous carriage, many young warriors were attracted by her beautiful appearance. .

“Gorgeous. Who is she?”

A young saint held a folding fan and stared at Huang Yanchen with a look of obsession.

“She’s from the Chens of East Region Saint Mansions. You’d better stop dreaming. She’s engaged to an amazing fiancé.”

The young saint shook the fan, looking handsome and natural. He said in a haughty tone, “How amazing is he? If they aren’t married yet, I’ll be able to take her.”

“Haha! Her fiancé is Zhang Ruochen, one of the kings of the new generation of the Eastern Region. How do you dare to take his woman with your cultivation? Can you resist his ten strikes?”

“What? Her fiancé is Zhang Ruochen.” The young saint’s face changed, and he stopped coveting Huang Yanchen. He was no match for Zhang Ruochen.

Huang Yanchen felt a familiar aura. She immediately turned back and looked. At just the right moment, she made eye contact with her fiancée.

“Zhang Ruochen, you’ve become more and more famous. Have you already fought several hundred times in the Coliseum of the Martial Market? Do you want to fight with me? I’m curious about how many strikes I can resist. ”

Huang Yanchen straightened her chest and looked frosty. She walked towards Zhang Ruochen, who was being envied by a group of saints.

Zhang Ruochen said, “Senior sister apprentice Yanchen, why bother? If you’re confident in your strength, you can go to the Coliseum of the Martial Market and challenge all the masters.”

“Do you think that I’m not qualified to be your opponent?” she asked.

He smiled. “Senior sister apprentice, if you want to fight with me, I have no objection. However, today is the first day of school, so we’ll have a lot of things to do. We’d better have a fight later. Right?”

Huang Yanchen nodded. “Okay! Let’s sign up for the Sword Technique Department first.”

This year, the Sword Technique Department had recruited a total of 6,000 saints. It had the largest number of people. It was divided into a hundred groups, with 60 saints per group.

According to the three rounds of assessment results, they were ranked from the top down.

All the students ranked in the top 600 were in the Half-saint groups, that is to say, ten Half-saint groups.

Low-ranking students were divided into Fish-dragon groups, that is to say, 90 Fish-dragon groups.

In the so-called half-saint group, saints were imparted with the way of practice by Half-saints.

In the so-called Fish-dragon group, saints were imparted with the way of practice by practitioners of the Fish-dragon Realm.

All the instructors at the Fish-dragon Realm were top-notch masters above the Seventh Change in the Fish-dragon Realm. But in comparison with Half-saints, they were inferior.

Therefore, it was a great honor for the saints to enter the Half-saint group. If they performed well enough, they would have the chances to become descendants of half-saints.

#### **Chapter 467: The Battle over Group Leader**

Zhang Ruochen was assigned into the first of the Half-Saint groups. There were 60 Saints in his group, each of whom were elite men with cultivation exceeding the Dawn State of the Heaven Realm.

Moreover, all of them came from well-connected families.

Some were the descendants of the powerful Saint families, some the young masters of Suzerains, and others the children of imperial court officials.

The first group, also known as the “absolute Elite Group”, was composed of the 60 highest-ranked novices in the Sword Technique Department.

Duanmu Xingling was also assigned to the first group.

As for Huang Yanchen, she had ranked slightly lower after the three rounds of assessment. She was placed in the second group.

At the moment, everyone from the first group was gathered in an open martial-arts arena, standing neatly. They seemed youthful and energetic.

The men outnumbered the women; there were 38 men and 22 women.

“Look! It’s Zhang Ruochen, the young king of the new generation. It is said that few people are able to withstand three of his moves. If anyone survives ten of his attacks, he or she becomes famous overnight.”

“Is he really as strong as the rumors say?”

A glamorous woman with a pair of dragon horns on her head was gazing at Zhang Ruochen with doubt. She could not understand why he was so legendary.

Her name was Ao Xinyan, and she was a Divine Dragon half-human. She had a half-dragon body, meaning she had both the blood of human beings and the blood of the Dragon tribe. At the age of 24, her martial cultivation had reached the Final State of the Heaven Realm.

She had entered the first group in third place, next only to Zhang Ruochen and Duanmu Xingling.

However, it did not mean that Ao Xinyan was weaker than Zhang Ruochen or Duanmu Xingling. She just hadn't accumulated as many military merits as them during her experience in the Five Elements Primitive World.

Ao Xinyan had a perfect body. She had subtle curves and snow-white skin. Her head was dotted with colorful glazes and crystals. Even without running exercises, the mist between heaven and earth converged around her, making her appear infinitely pure like a holy jade lotus.

"Zhang Ruochen defeated the Sword Sanctum's Lu Fantian in eleven strikes, and the Orange Star Emissary of the Black Market Excellence Hall in ten. Don't you know that? That's quite the difficult achievement, even for his counterpart Luo Shuihan, a Saintly Being."

"Zhang Ruochen will definitely be the Group Leader of the first group. And from now on, he is not only a benchmark to fight against, but also an example to learn from."

The crowd was still bustling.

Ao Xinyan sniffed at this. A hint of cold sparkled in her eyes.

She had never seen Zhang Ruochen in battle before. She had no idea what his real power was.

But, she definitely believed in her own strength.

She had grown up never losing to her peers. Not even once. It was out of the question that she would show respect to them.

Over the years, in the Saint Academy, the Group Leader of the first group in the Sword Technique Department represented the highest level of disciples in their generation. Also, they had the opportunity to compete for the glorious position, "Young Master" of the Martial Market Bank.

The young master of the Martial Market Bank had a very high status and power. It was equivalent to that of the Demonic Son or the Saintess of the Moon Worship Demonic Sect. The young master dealt with worldly affairs on behalf of the Martial Market Bank.

Every season, the battle over Group Leader of the first group in the Sword Technique Department was always unprecedentedly fierce. Many people fought vigorously for the position.

This year, Zhang Ruochen completely outshone the other geniuses. No one dared to volunteer for the Group Leader.

However, there was one exception. Of course, it was Ao Xinyan.

Ao Xinyan walked up to Zhang Ruochen, puffing out her plump chest and raising her white chin. There was a callousness in her beautiful eyes. "Zhang Ruochen, if you want to be the Group Leader, you have to beat me first." She said.

Zhang Ruochen raised his head and stared at her.

It was true that Ao Xinyan possessed surpassing beauty. She had refined features and a voluptuous figure. In particular, the white skin exposed outside her clothes was as silky and supple as a nephrite.

Of course, Zhang Ruochen looked at her without carnal desire, only appreciation. "I have never said that I wanted to be the Group Leader. If you are interested, just go for it. I will never compete with you," he said.

Ao Xinyan sneered. "We all know the Group Leader of the first group has to be the strongest Saint. In other words, I can only be the Group Leader if I defeat you first. Enough talk, Zhang Ruochen! If you're a real man, draw your sword and fight with me."

"Today is the first day of school. I don't want to cause trouble," Zhang Ruochen responded.

If it they hadn't been meeting the lecturer of the first group, Zhang Ruochen would have already gone to the Pavilion of Book Collection. He would never stay here, wasting time.

"Admit it, you just don't have the guts to fight with me! You are afraid of losing to me and losing the opportunity to be the Group Leader," Ao Xinyan jeered, aiming to enrage him.

"You're right, junior sister apprentice Ao. He must be afraid of failure. That's why he won't fight with you." A meddlesome woman said in a voice dripping with mockery.

Zhang Ruochen looked in the direction of the voice. It was another beautiful woman. She was a disciple of Saint Xi Gentry, Xi Yunxi.

Zhang Ruochen had once played against her on the Stairway to Heaven.

She was an eminent God's favored daughter. She had a sanctified left hand and strong power. She could not be underestimated.

Zhang Ruochen was not surprised at all to see her here.

A male Saint stood beside her. His eyes were glittering with a gleam of light. "In the Divine Dragon half-human clan, Ao Xinyan is regarded as an once-in-a-century Genius. Her cultivation is very powerful, she even defeated a Monk in the Fish-dragon Realm." He laughed. "Maybe Zhang Ruochen really isn't as good as her."

He was also a successor to a powerful Saint family. Perhaps he was one of her suitors, for he stood really close to her.

Ao Xinyan gave a short, derisive laugh. "The so-called king of the new generation is nothing but a coward. How disappointing!"

"Whatever!" Zhang Ruochen responded indifferently.

Ao Xinyan had wanted to provoke him with her words. Unexpectedly, he ignored her completely and had no intention of fighting.

"Since you won't fight with me, from now on, you can't call yourself the king of the new generation in public," Ao Xinyan said.

Zhang Ruochen responded, "I never claimed to be the king of the new generation."

Ao Xinyan glared. She was getting angry.

BANG! She suddenly shook her fingers, mobilized her Genuine Qi and pulled out the Bluewater Dragon Patterned Sword. She whammed the sword towards his heart.

She had failed trying to force him to attack mentally. She had no choice but to irritate him physically.

She was going to compete with Zhang Ruochen today. Only by overcoming him, could she become the Group Leader.

SNAP!

A translucent strength flew from a distance and hit the Bluewater Dragon Patterned Sword.

It was so strong that the sword vibrated violently, causing her fingers to go numb. Like she had hit a curtain of light, she bounced back.

"Who?" Ao Xinyan huffed grimly.

SWISH!

Above the crowd, a strong white light emanated. It formed into a light column that dropped down connecting the heaven to the earth.

An 10-centimeter woman in red fell from the sky.

She levitated two meters from the ground with a Five-colored Auspicious Cloud under her feet. She exuded a sacred aura all over her body.

It was the Demi-saint Lingshu. Zhang Ruochen had met her before.

"Half-Saint."

All the Saints present knelt down on one knee, respectfully bowing to salute the Demi-saint Lingshu.

A Half-Saint was a kind of existence separate from mortals.

Even Monks in the Fish-dragon Realm needed to kneel and salute when encountering Half-Saints, not to mention these Saints.

"Half-Saint."

When Ao Xinyan realized it was actually the Half-Saint, she was shocked. She immediately knelt on one knee and stopped challenging Zhang Ruochen.

Demi-saint Lingshu gazed at the 60 Saints. "From now on, you are the Saints of the Half-Saint group of the Sword Technique Department. And I am your lecturer. You can call me Master Lingshu, or Demi-saint Lingshu."

"Yes, Master Lingshu," all the disciples shouted together.

Many of them were excited. From now on they would be Half-Saint students.

She continued, "Half-Saint groups are different from Fish-dragon Realm groups. Saints who make it to Half-Saint groups are the elite of the elite. You are the most outstanding people in the entire Eastern Region. Therefore, I won't do a step-by-step guide. It is more necessary for you to perceive and practice yourself. Of course, if you come across something intractable, you can always come to me."

"As Saints in the first group, you must be strict with yourselves."

"I have only two requirements for you. First, you must enter the top 200 of the Heaven Board within five years. Secondly, your cultivation must break through the Fish-dragon Realm within ten years. Those who cannot make it will be kicked out of the group."

BOOM!

Her words delivered a shocking blow that woke the Saints up completely.

Demi-saint Lingshu's two requirements were abnormally difficult.

The truth was, it was already extremely difficult to enter the top 200 on the Heaven Board, let alone to do it within five years.

Five years was either too short or too long.

Demi-saint Lingshu turned a blind eye to their anxious reactions. "Five years, it's long enough for you to fight into the top 200 of the Heaven Board. You have two choices. You can either go to the Coliseum of the Martial Market and challenge the top 200 masters on the Heaven Board. Or you can go to the Battlefield of the Primitive World and accumulate sufficient military merits. So choose."

"Of course, my requirements to the Group Leader will be more stringent. This person must enter the top 10 within three years. If you fail, I will find a replacement." She looked out over the Saints.

"Now, I want to know, who wants to be the Group Leader?"

#### **Chapter 468: Elder Xuanji, Imperial Edict**

The leader had to enter the top ten of the Heaven Board within three years.

Even Ao Xinyan, who was very confident about her own strength, would not dare to say that she could achieve the goal.

Other people were even less likely.

It was too difficult!

Demi-saint Lingshu glanced around. "Since none of you wants to be the Group Leader, I will appoint a leader for you. Zhang Ruochen, do you have confidence you will enter the top ten of the Heaven Board within three years?"

Zhang Ruochen answered, "Yes."

Demi-saint Lingshu nodded. "Great! Well then, you are the Group Leader of the first group from now on. When I'm away, you will take charge of all the Saints in the first group. Of course, as a leader, you should

really take the lead. Urge your group members to practice hard and provide guidance regarding their practice.”

Many of the Saints revealed looks of dissatisfaction.

Each of them was a God’s favored son. They were proud and not willing to obey anyone’s order. They were all aggrieved to hear that they had to follow Zhang Ruochen’s instructions.

Zhang Ruochen was only a bumpkin whose strength was slightly more powerful. How could he be compared with them?

However, none of them dared to be the Group Leader of the first group. If they objected to the appointment of Zhang Ruochen, Demi-saint Lingshu would definitely be unpleasant.

Therefore, they had to forbear their objection.

Demi-saint Lingshu continued, “Zhang Ruochen, come with me. The rest of you are dismissed. You can familiarize yourself with the Saint Academy or go to the Pavilion of Book Collection and read some rare books on exercises.”

Zhang Ruochen followed Demi-saint Lingshu to the center of the Saint Academy.

The students began to discuss what had just happened.

“I detest having to take orders from Zhang Ruochen. He is just a bumpkin from Omen Ridge. He’s nothing!” A rather unconvinced disciple of a Saint family complained.

His name was Zuo Qiuling and he was the disciple of Saint Zuo Gentry. His cultivation had reached the Final State of the Heaven Realm and his comprehensive strength ranked 17th in the first group. He was definitely an outstanding figure.

He was also one of Xi Yunxi’s pursuers. Therefore, he was quite hostile towards Zhang Ruochen.

Xi Yunxi stared at Zhang Ruochen’s back. “I think the reason Master Lingshu appointed him as the Group Leader is because she wants to take him as a disciple.”

“Definitely,” Zuo Qiuling agreed.

Among all the people present, only Duanmu Xingling, who remained silent, knew that the person who wanted to take Zhang Ruochen as his apprentice was not Demi-saint Lingshu, but the second headmaster, Elder Xuanji.

Demi-saint Lingshu was supposed to bring Zhang Ruochen to Elder Xuanji.

She took him to the center of the Saint Academy, Saint Mountain.

From afar, Saint Mountain was like a dark blue dragon lying on the horizon. It was 8,000 meters high. Numerous peaks stood among the mountain. The snow-capped and mist-shrouded mountaintop was like a retreat for immortals.

Zhang Ruochen felt an unusually rich Spiritual Qi blowing before he entered Saint Mountain.



“Saint Mountain is ahead. When you become a Half-Saint, you will be able to open up an abode to practice in Saint Mountain,” Demi-saint Lingshu explained to him.

Zhang Ruochen said, “Legend goes that a holy meridian that has been deposited for billions of years lies beneath Saint Mountain. The holy meridian releases thin Holy Qi. If a warrior in the Heaven Realm practices in Saint Mountain, his practice speed can be ten times quicker than usual.”

“That’s right. There is a holy meridian at the bottom of Saint Mountain. Tenfold speed is an exaggeration, but a warrior can expect his practice speed to increase at least five-fold.”

Demi-saint Lingshu stared at Zhang Ruochen. “Actually, saints of the Saint Academy can enter Saint Mountain to practice for one day if they accumulate 10,000 merits.”

“The merits can be exchanged with military merits. I suggest you gain experience in the Battlefield of the Primitive World for a period and try hard to reach the Ultimate Realm of the Heaven Realm.”

“Although the Battlefield of the Primitive World is extremely dangerous, it’s also a good place to exercise. Even if you can’t reach the Ultimate Realm of the Heaven Realm, getting some experience will also be beneficial for you to break into the Fish-dragon Realm.”

Zhang Ruochen replied, “Thank you Master Lingshu, for your advice.”

“You don’t have to call me master. Perhaps you will soon call me Senior sister apprentice. Let’s go. Follow me to Headmaster Xuanji.”

They entered Saint Mountain and came to a valley filled with pear trees.

The woods were filled with pear flower blossoms. The petals were white and flawless, emitting a light fragrance.

A thick layer of petals covered the ground like snowflakes.

Zhang Ruochen circulated his Genuine Qi into his leg Meridians. A Qi billow soon appeared under his feet. He stepped on it, just above the ground so as not to step on the petals. He looked at the surrounding pear trees in shock. “Are these pear trees the legendary Spiritual Crane Pear?”

Demi-saint Lingshu looked at Zhang Ruochen with surprise, then she smiled. “You do know something. Yes, the Spiritual Crane Pear Garden has 3,600 Spiritual Crane Pear trees in total.”

“The tree needs 300 years to blossom, 300 more years to bear fruit and another 300 years to ripen. Taking a Spiritual Crane Pear cannot only promote cultivation and open the spiritual intelligence of a Monk, it also adds 30 years of life expectancy. When I reached the Half-Saint realm, the Master gave me a Spiritual Crane Pear.”

Zhang Ruochen nodded, amazed.

There was an abundance of Spiritual Crane Pears in the Saint Academy. This was why the Martial Market Bank was far more powerful than other Suzerains and families.

Through the pear garden, a steep black cliff appeared in front of them. On the cliff was a waterfall, like an extremely long white silk leaping down from the Nine Heavens above.

Under the cliff, a white-bearded white-haired elder in a white robe sat cross-legged on an irregular stone table. His wrinkled and old hand was holding a bronze pen and writing something.

Demi-saint Lingshu knelt on one knee and bowed to the elder. "Master."

*"So this is the famous Elder Xuanji, one of the Three Great Sword Saints in the Eastern Region."*

Zhang Ruochen promptly knelt down and saluted Elder Xuanji. He did not dare to be disrespectful.

"Haha! Get up!"

Elder Xuanji laughed brightly and stopped writing.

He seemed to make Zhang Ruochen and Demi-saint Lingshu stand up automatically without showing any means.

SWISH!

When he stopped writing, the sheet of silk cloth on the stone table began to give off a dazzling light and turned into an imperial edict.

This was a real imperial edict. It contained the Saint Power of the Saint and represented the volition and decision of the Saint.

Elder Xuanji looked at Zhang Ruochen and nodded with a smile. He said, "Great, absolutely great. Your sword technique realm has almost reached the Intermediate Stage of the Heart Integrated into Sword."

Demi-saint Lingshu knew that Elder Xuanji did not compliment disciples easily, but today, he had praised him twice. This showed that Zhang Ruochen's talent was indeed brilliant.

Zhang Ruochen just stood and listened quietly.

Elder Xuanji suddenly became serious and asked, "I have accepted five disciples. Even Ling Shu, whose cultivation is the weakest, has already reached the Half-Saint realm. Zhang Ruochen, would you like to be my sixth disciple?"

"I would."

Zhang Ruochen did not refuse. He knelt down again and kowtowed to Elder Xuanji. "I bow to my Master," he said.

Elder Xuanji stood up. He laughed loudly and said, "Since you agree, take the edict."

With a sweep of the arm, the blue imperial edict flew from his hand and landed in front of Zhang Ruochen.

Zhang Ruochen stretched out both hands to receive the imperial edict, then held it in his hands.

The imperial edict recorded that Elder Xuanji would formally accept Zhang Ruochen as his apprentice. The words on it glittered. They contained the volition of a Saint.

Accepting an apprentice was not a simple process; it was a very important decision for a Saint. He needed to issue an imperial edict to affirm the identity of the disciple.

Only Monks who had the imperial edict could be called “disciples of Saints”.

The imperial edict proved the identity of the disciple.

Elder Xuanji smiled. “The imperial edict contains a stream of my Saint Power. If you meet any danger that you cannot deal with, unfold it and the Holy Qi will carry you away thousands of kilometers, providing you an escape route.”

“Of course, if you use up the Holy Qi, it will lose its effect. Therefore, unless there is no other way, you should try your best to overcome difficulties on your own first.”

“I’ll follow your advice,” Zhang Ruochen said.

Elder Xuanji said, “Until you reach the Half-Saint realm, your fifth Senior sister apprentice, Ling Shu will replace me to teach you the means of practice. What do you think?”

Zhang Ruochen glanced at Demi-saint Lingshu. “The fifth Senior sister apprentice has profound cultivation. Her sword technique realm has far exceeded mine. I will surely learn a lot from her.”

Elder Xuanji nodded. “Since it is so, you may leave. If you have anything important, you can hold the imperial edict and meet me at Saint Mountain. No one will stop you.”

Zhang Ruochen suddenly felt that Elder Xuanji had just hinted something.

*“Right! He said that I can enter Saint Mountain freely with the imperial edict. Did he mean that I can enter Saint Mountain anytime to practice?”*

Zhang Ruochen was happy. He suddenly felt it was extremely worthwhile to be Elder Xuanji’s disciple.

Other Saints needed to accumulate 10,000 merits to practice a day in Saint Mountain. He could enter Saint Mountain anytime to practice without any merit. What a gain!

When Elder Xuanji saw Zhang Ruochen’s eyes change, he knew that Zhang Ruochen understood his meaning. He really was a smart young man, well worth teaching.

“Ling Shu, stay here. I have something to tell you.”

Demi-saint Lingshu stayed with Elder Xuanji. Zhang Ruochen stepped out of the Spiritual Crane Pear Garden and walked toward the outside of Saint Mountain.

Just as he was leaving Saint Mountain, he ran into the God’s favored daughter of Divine Dragon and half-human clan, Ao Xinyan.

Ao Xinyan had been accepted as a disciple by a Half-Saint. She was also on her way out.

When she saw Zhang Ruochen, she quickly chased him and shouted from a distance, “Zhang Ruochen, fight with me. Today, one of us must win.”

**Chapter 469: Martial Soul of Divine Dragon**

Zhang Ruochen stopped and looked at Ao Xinyan. Then he smiled. "I'm the Group Leader of the first group now, and you are a Saint of the first group. Is it suitable that you call me by my name?"

Ao Xinyan's bodily movement was very skillful. She barely touched the ground as she walked through the air. When she was 33 meters from Zhang Ruochen, she stopped. "If you can't defeat me, I will not accept you as my Group Leader and I will not follow your orders."

Zhang Ruochen did not really want to fight Ao Xinyan, but she was insistent. She was a real headache.

A man's voice suddenly sounded from a distance.

"Great. Strength is the most important thing in the Saint Academy. Zhang Ruochen, is your strength really that powerful?"

Another four men appeared.

Three of them were familiar to Zhang Ruochen, Xu Hai of Saint Xu Gentry; Xi Yunxi of Saint Xi Gentry; and Zuo Qiuling of Saint Zuo Gentry.

Zhang Ruochen did not recognize the other person.

However, he could feel his strong aura. Obviously, the man was a master.

It was Xu Hai who had spoken.

Zhang Ruochen glared at the four men. "The power of my strength is none of your business."

Xi Yunxi smiled charmingly. "We are all Saints of the Sword Technique Department. And you are the Group Leader of the first group; you represent our Sword Technique Department. If you are weak, every Saint in the Sword Technique Department will lose their pride."

Xu Hai nodded and said, "Junior sister apprentice Ao is the princess of the Divine Dragon and half-human clan. She has a half-dragon body and her sword technique realm is profound. I think she is qualified to fight with you. Zhang Ruochen. You are looking down on her if you refuse."

Ao Xinyan said, "Zhang Ruochen, if you can defeat me, I will accept your position as Group Leader and follow your orders without a word of complaint."

Zhang Ruochen stared deeply at Ao Xinyan and sighed. "Alright! Since all you want is a fight, let's fight."

Ao Xinyan was too simple-minded. She did not know that she was being manipulated by the disciples of powerful Saint families.

Zhang Ruochen had to fight with her, lest she continued to be used by them.

Her beautiful face revealed an expression of joy. She immediately circulated her Genuine Qi and pulled out the Bluewater Dragon Patterned Sword. She pointed it at Zhang Ruochen who was standing opposite.

The Bluewater Dragon Patterned Sword appeared to be made of green crystal. The whole sword was transparent and green. Pieces of Dragon Scales on the surface of the blade made it unusual.

Zhang Ruochen did not despise Ao Xinyan. She had been able to enter the first group of the Sword Technique Department in third place. It showed she had powerful strength.

CLANG!

The Abyss Ancient Sword lew out of its sheath with a black light. It suspended in front of Zhang Ruochen.

Ao Xinyan's eyes constricted. *"He really has reached the realm of Heart Integrated into Sword."*

Ao Xinyan activated inscriptions in the Bluewater Dragon Patterned Sword. Suddenly, waves appeared from the center of the sword and swooshed like a stream flowing around her body.

*"From Sky to Earth."*

She jumped and crossed the water curtain. Her sword broke through the air and attacked towards Zhang Ruochen's glabella.

She was displaying an Inferior Class Ghost Level sword technique, the Sky sword technique. It could be seen from the power of her sword movement that her Sky sword technique had already reached the succeed.

The power she showed was as strong as that of Lu Fantian and the Orange Star Emissary.

Zhang Ruochen looked very calm. With a flick of his arms, the Abyss Ancient Sword flew out.

SWOOSH!

The sword movement seemed to be casual. Yet, it actually took a mysterious sword technique skill that brought out the 36 sword shadows of sword Qi. Each shadow was a variable, which meant the sword itself contained 36 sword technique variations.

Zhang Ruochen broke Ao Xinyan's Sky sword technique.

Zhang Ruochen did not stop. He immediately executed a second sword technique.

He took a step forward. The Abyss Ancient Sword was already at Ao Xinyan's chest. It was easy to see the sharp sword Qi on its tip.

Ao Xinyan's facial expression changed. She immediately unleashed her Martial Soul.

*"AWOO!"*

A loud dragon's roar came from her body.

A blue light column rushed out of her head. It condensed into a dragon-like illusory image. Like a blue mountain, it wrapped around behind her.

Ao Xinyan's Martial Soul turned out to be the "Divine Dragon Martial Soul".

Only a dragon from the Divine Dragon clan could cultivate a Divine Dragon Martial Soul.

It was impossible for the Divine Dragon or half-human clan to cultivate the Divine Dragon Martial Soul. And only a few from the half-human clan could practice the Flying Dragon Martial Soul or the Earth

Dragon Martial Soul and cultivate it. Therefore, the power of Ao Xinyan's Martial Soul was incredibly unusual.

*"What a powerful Martial Soul. Her Martial Soul is as powerful as the Martial Soul of a Monk at the Fifth Change of the Fish-dragon Realm. Lu Fantian's Martial Soul and the Martial Soul of Sacred Tree are both weaker than hers."*

The blue dragon, more than 100 meters long, was lying behind her. It had a giant dragon head, sharp claws and ferocious eyes. Every respect of it radiated a strong and unparalleled momentum.

In the distance, Xi Yunxi and Zuo Qiuling were both shocked by the Martial Soul Ao Xinyan unleashed. They retreated backwards.

Xu Hai's eyes lit up. "It's the Divine Dragon Martial Soul. No wonder Ao Xinyan is called the Genius of the Divine Dragon and half-human clan that only appears once in a blue moon. It's possible she could defeat Zhang Ruochen."

The Saint standing beside Xu Hai seemed to have reached his 30s. His face was pale and sallow. He said coldly to Xu Hai, "She can practice her Martial Soul into a level comparable to the Martial Soul of a Monk at the Fifth Change of the Fish-dragon Realm. It's really remarkable. When I was in the Final State of the Heaven Realm, my Martial Soul gained the power of the Fourth Change in the Fish-dragon Realm and reached its limit."

"It's said that Zhang Ruochen's Martial Soul is also powerful. Whose Martial Soul is stronger?" Xu Hai asked.

They stopped talking and watched the battle. They wanted to see if Ao Xinyan could force Zhang Ruochen to use all his strength.

"Traceless in the Sky."

Ao Xinyan leapt up more than 33 meters. She held her sword with both hands and slashed ruthlessly to Zhang Ruochen.

The Bluewater Dragon Patterned Sword made a harsh sound and its blade lengthened almost hundred meters. The giant blade seemed ready to tear the earth apart.

The giant blue dragon lying behind her also made a sudden attack. Its claw overlapped with the blade.

The scene before Zhang Ruochen vanished. He heard the sound of waves, like a sea of water was crashing over him. A blue Divine Dragon was swimming in the water brewing storms in rivers and seas. The dragon waved its claws to attack his head.

SWISH!

Zhang Ruochen released his Martial Soul.

His Martial Soul suspended above his head and mobilized the Heaven and Earth Spiritual Qi. The Spiritual Qi gathered into his Martial Soul.

"Soul-slaying Sword."

Zhang Ruochen had not practiced any Ghost Level sword techniques, so he could only use a Spiritual Stage Superior class sword technique, the Thirteen Swords Technique of Soul Chasing to defend against Ao Xinyan's attack.

Luckily, he had already practiced the Thirteen Swords Technique of Soul Chasing to the Perfection of Martial Arts, so he did not take a beating on sword movement.

"Zhang Ruochen is using a Spiritual Stage Superior class sword technique to defend against a Ghost Level Inferior Class Sky sword technique. The two sword techniques are not on the same level at all..." Xu Hai said.

Yet before he finished speaking, Zhang Ruochen had already broken Ao Xinyan's sword movement. Then he launched a head-on attack at Ao Xinyan. Turning his sword, he attacked Ao Xinyan's waist.

Ao Xinyan was surprised. She immediately erected her sword to block him.

CLANG!

The clash of the two swords broke into energy ripples. They turned into Qi billow and poured out in all directions.

Ao Xinyan flew back and fell to the ground. She continued to slide backwards, leaving a deep groove that stretched more than 33 meters.

Everyone was stunned.

The Spiritual Stage Superior class Thirteen Swords Technique of Soul Chasing had broken the Ghost Level Inferior Class Sky sword technique. It proved Zhang Ruochen's strength indeed exceeded Ao Xinyan's.

"Zhang Ruochen can't be this strong just relying on the Heart Integrated into Sword," Xu Hai exclaimed. "Is... is Zhang Ruochen's Martial Soul stronger than Ao Xinyan's?"

The man standing beside Xu Hai carefully observed Zhang Ruochen. "I can't see through Zhang Ruochen's true cultivation."

Xu Hai also shook his head. "I can't see it either. He is so unfathomable in the Heaven Realm. If he breaks into the Fish-dragon Realm, he will be even more incredible."

As the two men discussed his abilities, Zhang Ruochen quickly caught up with Ao Xinyan. He displayed seven sword techniques simultaneously, giving her no opportunity to breathe.

Ao Xinyan could only see sword radiance so dazzling that she could not open her eyes. She could only rely on her Spiritual Power to feel his sword movement.

Suddenly, Zhang Ruochen stopped his sword movement. His sword tip pierced through her Celestial Bodyshield and stopped in front of her heart.

Ao Xinyan was bound. Her body appeared to be sealed by the sword Qi; she could not move. She still refused to admit that she had lost to Zhang Ruochen, so she took steps to quickly retreat back.

The sword in Zhang Ruochen's hands was like a spiritual snake, always pointing at her heart.

If he wanted to, he could use the sword at any time to penetrate her heart.

In the end, Ao Xinyan realized the huge gap of power between her and Zhang Ruochen and she stopped dodging. She sighed. "I lost! I could only endure nine techniques. Am I weaker than both the Orange Star Emissary and Lu Fantian?"

Zhang Ruochen withdrew his sword. He realized that Ao Xinyan must have never failed. She also lacked control over her own volition, as she was extremely upset.

When such a person failed, they were unlikely to bounce back.

Zhang Ruochen was after all the Group Leader of the first group. He did not want to see a dimming Genius.

So he comforted her. "Actually, your strength is not weaker than that of the Orange Star Emissary or Lu Fantian. Your strength is stronger than theirs. But, I encountered something recently, so my sword technique and Martial Arts have improved since I fought with them."

What Zhang Ruochen said was true, he wasn't lying to her.

Zhang Ruochen's strength had increased considerably after drinking the Blue-sky Herb Tea.

#### **Chapter 470: The Pavilion of Book Collection**

Ao Xinyan shook her head and sighed with a struggling look. Obviously, she could not accept her failure.

She had always been highly praised as the best Genius. It was incredibly painful to taste failure for the first time. She even doubted her strength.

Zhang Ruochen did not say anything more.

There was something wrong with Ao Xinyan's mindset, and she had to overcome it herself. When it was all said and done, there was nothing else Zhang Ruochen could do. It was up to her to vanquish her inner devil.

If she could walk away from the shadow of failure, her Heart State and Martial Arts would surely scale new heights

However, if she could not step out of the shadow, the speed of her next cultivation would certainly be slowed down. What's worse, she might not be able to reach the Fish-dragon Realm.

Suddenly, a sound came out just as Zhang Ruochen was about to leave, "Hold on."

Zhang Ruochen turned and looked where the words came from. The man who had been standing by Xu Hai before came to him.

The man looked rather mature. He was tall and thin, and seemed to be in a poor mood. He faced Zhang Ruochen and said, "Junior fellow apprentice Zhang, my name is Pei Ji. I also want to try your sword techniques."



“Pei Ji, such a familiar name, you’re 41st on the Heaven Board, aren’t you? The Bloody Butcher?” Zhang Ruochen was slightly surprised.

“That’s me,” the man answered.

Zhang Ruochen carefully scrutinized Pei Ji. He had trouble associating the man before him with the “Bloody Butcher”. He looked more like a weak scholar.

Pei Ji, had earned an illustrious prestige in the Eastern Region, for making it as the 41st master on the Heaven Board.

Like Xu Hai, Pei Ji was also a returning student. He had been practicing in the Saint Academy for 10 years.

Even Ao Xinyan, who stood to the side in a daze, was shocked. She did not expect that Pei Ji, such a master who had been famous for years, would take the initiative to challenge a new generation Saint.

*“Although Zhang Ruochen is very strong, he could never match a top master like Pei Ji.”*

Ao Xinyan strongly suspected that Zhang Ruochen could be a match for Pei Ji.

There was a hint of complacency in Xi Yunxi’s eyes. “Xu Hai even sent for Pei Ji. Zhang Ruochen is going to have a rough time!”

“Within the boundaries of the Eastern Region, there are only a few people under the Fish-dragon Realm who can rival Pei Ji. Zhang Ruochen is nothing,” Zuo Qiuling concurred. He stood by, ready to watch with his arms crossed.

SWISH!

Behind Pei Ji, an illusory image of a scarlet demon began to form. It was about ten meters high and had three heads and six arms. Each of the heads began to roar, suddenly forming a fierce Fengxuan.

It was not Pei Ji’s Martial Soul, but a Ghost Level martial technique, the Blood-devil Image.

During the competition between Zhang Ruochen and Ao Xinyan, Pei Ji had seen that Zhang Ruochen’s Achilles’ heel was that he had not practiced Ghost Level martial techniques.

No matter how exquisitely the martial techniques of Superior class Spiritual Stage were performed, they were not comparable to those of Ghost Level. Once Zhang Ruochen encountered a real superior, he would suffer considerably.

And Pei Ji, obviously, was a real superior.

“Blood-devil Image, Destruction of All Living Creatures!” Pei Ji shouted.

He stood in the distance, twisting his back and raising his arms. He struck a blow in the air with all his bones humming.

The Blood-devil Image, guided by his power, threw a huge scarlet punch. It was like a blood cloud sweeping towards Zhang Ruochen.

Though the force of the punch hadn't arrived yet, a hurricane was already sweeping through. It was so violent, it seemed like it would blow Zhang Ruochen away.

SWOOSH!

Suddenly, Nie Honglou flew in from afar and landed in front of Zhang Ruochen. He quickly stretched out his right arm and let out an energetic growl, "Break!"

The Blood-devil Image was instantly shattered by a powerful force. It turned into wisps of blood fog and returned into Pei Ji.

Pei Ji could not help but retreat 14 steps before barely steadying himself. He stared at Nie Honglou and said in a cold voice, "Who are you?"

Meanwhile, Xu Hai walked toward Nie Honglou. "Sir, your cultivation is powerful. But even so, you shouldn't intervene in this matter. It won't do you any good."

Nie Honglou's lips curved, "What a shame! Senior Saints fighting with a new one; the big, strong and numerous bullying the small, weak and solitary. I'm certainly going to help him."

Xu Hai laughed, "Pei Ji and Zhang Ruochen are both in the Heaven Realm. Why not?"

"Pei Ji entered the Saint Academy 10 years ago. He is nearly 50. Zhang Ruochen, on the other hand, just entered today and is only 20. Such a clean match!" Nie Honglou answered in utter scorn.

"Mind your own business."

Xu Hai's eyes were suddenly covered with a cold fury. He took out the two swords on his back and mobilized his Genuine Qi into blades.

The two combat swords contained different power; one emitted a glow of a flame and the other sent out a freezing Icing air. These two forces combined to form a giant sword technique circle aimed at Nie Honglou.

Xu Hai had broken through the warriors' limit and reached the First Change of the Fish-dragon Realm, Innate Embryonic Breath.

The sword technique he was performing was of the Inferior Class Ghost Level. However, the power it carried was more powerful than Ao Xinyan's sword technique.

This did not mean the Sky sword techniques could never measure up to those Xu Hai performed, but her cultivation was not as strong as his.

Sword techniques of the same Inferior Class Ghost Level were different based on the performers' cultivation.

Nie Honglou shook his head gently and reached out his glossy hand. He mobilized his Genuine Qi and then shot it out.

BOOM!

Xu Hai spat out a mouthful of blood and hurtled backwards.

With a bang he fell more than 33 meters away. His whole body in was in pain.

His skin even cracked, bursting out more than a dozen long cuts. If Nie Honglou had attacked just a little bit harder, he might have been crushed.

Pei Ji, Xi Yunxi, and Zuo Qiuling all changed their faces and stared at Nie Honglou with shock.

They had no idea of Nie Honglou's strength, but they did know Xu Hai's.

Xu Hai had entered the top 100 on the Heaven Board when he was still in the Heaven Realm. Now that he had broken into the Fish-dragon Realm, his cultivation must have been even more unfathomable.

However, Nie Honglou had just defeated him. Easily.

It was too difficult to guess the upper limit of his strength.

Nie Honglou withdrew his hand and stared at Xu Hai, who was trembling and twisting on the ground. "You are not qualified to fight with me. Unless the Saintly Being of Saint Xu Gentry releases himself from refining, you'd better restrain yourselves. Next time, I won't let you go."

"You... who the hell are you?" Xu Hai struggled to his feet with both hands supporting the ground.

"Nie Honglou." He responded.

Nie Honglou and Zhang Ruochen turned and left.

"Nie Honglou... Nie Honglou... Is it him?"

Pei Ji grew pale. He turned and made eye contact with Xu Hai.

Xu Hai nodded with one hand on his chest. "In view of such a powerful strength, it must be him! He was one of the last Saints. 20 years ago, even though he was the youngest Saint in the first group of Sword Technique Department, he could already rank in the top 10 of the first group. It's said that he left the Saint Academy over a disagreement with the Group Leader. I can't believe he's back!"

Xi Yunxi asked, "Elder brother Xu, what should we do now? If Nie Honglou is helping him, no one in Saint Academy can take Zhang Ruochen down."

"There is nothing to worry about," he replied. "The Saintly Being of our Saint Xu Gentry is going to release himself from refining. By then, even 10 Nie Honglou will fail to protect Zhang Ruochen. For now, even if we cannot kill Zhang Ruochen, we can humiliate him severely. At that time, what qualification will he have to compete for the Young Master position?"

"That's great!" Pei Ji said. "I heard that the Saintly Being of Saint Xu Gentry is secluding himself for refining, trying to attain the Ninth Change in the Fish-dragon Realm. Once he succeeds, he will definitely be invincible among Saints."

"Xi Yunxi, Zuo Qiuling, you two keep monitoring Zhang Ruochen's every move." Xu Hai added, with gloomy seriousness, "I assume that Zhang Ruochen will surely go to the Battlefield of the Primitive World and strive for the Ultimate Realm of the Heaven Realm. If we can take this opportunity to eliminate him, why even bother the Saintly Being?" #

Xi Yunxi and Zuo Qiuling nodded and left immediately.

Zhang Ruochen left Saint Mountain for the Pavilion of Book Collection in the Saint Academy.

Instead of joining him, Nie Honglou went to visit some old friends in the Saint Academy.

They parted temporarily.

The Pavilion of Book Collection was built underground as an inverted tower. It had 13 floors.

The Pavilion of Book Collection had a long history and various books. Its countless collections included books on multifarious materials, such as bones, iron rolls, Jade Books, bamboo slips, and so on.

Rare books such as ones about exercises, unique martial techniques, a Catalogue of Arrays, methods of controlling beasts, human geography, all could be found here.

Zhang Ruochen did not come here for these rare exercises books or unique martial techniques, but for books about the Primitive World.

This kind of book was filed under Human Geography on the first floor of the Pavilion.

There were many new Saints in the Pavilion of Book Collection with a strong desire for knowledge.

However, they were looking for books on unique martial techniques. Most of them went directly to the second or third floor. Only a few would stop on the first floor.

After all, books here were mostly about basic knowledge.

There was the *Ten Forbidden Areas of Kunlun's Field*, the Collection of Overseas Islands, the *Eight Sacred Earth Aristocratic Families in the Middle Ages in the Eastern Region*, and so on.

Zhang Ruochen searched for about an hour and finally found a copy of the *Brief of the Three-thousand Primitive Worlds*.

The book was quite thick, and the text was very small. If you did not infuse Genuine Qi into your eyes beforehand, you could only see black dots on the pages.

Obviously, the predecessor who wrote this book was also an outstanding master.