

Immortal 1621

Chapter 1621: Unjustified Enmity

"I don't need your help!" Chu Chuyan quickly raised her voice, seemingly quite shaken up. She realized that it was quite different from how she usually spoke, so she continued, "Actually, the Heavenly Sorrow Sect's Zhi Yin also arrived, and then you showed up as well, which caused some disruption in my mental state. If senior brother wishes to help me, then please leave as quickly as possible." She seemed to be gritting her teeth and speaking with great difficulty.

Lou Wucheng was stunned. He knew that Sect Master Yan's Unshakable Daoist Manual was a skill that would easily encounter trouble if one felt emotions too strongly. He quickly cupped his hands and said, "So junior sister was cultivating! It is all that brat Zhi Yin's fault. Senior brother will deal with him now. We still have a lot of time, after all, so we can find a different day to explore this place together."

He quickly left afterward. Zhi Yin, who was outside the courtyard, felt a bit nervous at first. However, when he saw Lou Wucheng emerge alone, he immediately felt much more confident.

I knew Fairy Chu wouldn't follow any man out. Look, didn't you just end up embarrassing yourself?

When he saw Lou Wucheng rush at him angrily, Zhi Yin couldn't help but say smugly, "Who was it who appeared to be making a solemn vow? And yet look at you now; you've come out all ashen-faced and alone."

"You bastard, you actually have the nerve to say something like that?" Lou Wucheng cried, sending his fist directly at Zhi Yin. This guy had almost caused his junior sister to go through cultivation deviation!

Zhi Yin erupted into fury, retorting, "You're the one who messed up after shooting your mouth off; why are you venting your anger on me? Do you think I'm scared of you?"

The two of them quickly clashed. Fortunately, both of them knew how far to go and only used their fists and feet without any ki. Otherwise, if others found out, their qualifications for the tournament would be endangered. However, after fighting for a while, they only got angrier. They unwittingly began to use their combat skills.

Suddenly, a voice chastised them, barking, "What are you all doing? Cease at once!"

Unfortunately, the two of them were already fully committed. They were already at a point where they had to beat the living daylights out of the opponent even if they had to lose their qualifications.

Suddenly, a cold harrumph resounded. It was as if a bucket of ice water had been poured over them. They saw a trace of white cloth sweep outward from the corners of their eyes, and they were completely separated. Furthermore, in that instant, all of their meridians were frozen so they couldn't keep fighting at all.

Lou Wucheng was the first to recognize the person. He quickly said, "I greet Sect Master Yan!"

Only then did Zhi Yin notice that there was now a white-clad woman in front of him. Even though she was masked, there seemed to be a dreamy halo surrounding her. He actually started to feel a hint of inferiority when he saw her. He said, "This junior greets Sect Master Yan."

At the same time, he was horrified. Even though Yan Xuehen was known to be a grandmaster, the fact that she could stop the two of them with a single move was just too ridiculous, right? After all, whether it was Lou Wucheng or the younger generation's other most outstanding disciples, they wouldn't even lose against some of their elders, let alone with two of them at the same time!

"What are the two of you doing? Do you want to be disqualified from the Great Sects Competition?" Yan Xuehen snapped coldly. Her gaze landed on Lou Wucheng.

She didn't really care about Zhi Yin, seeing as he was from Heavenly Sorrow Sect, but Lou Wucheng was the White Jade Sect's seeded player. If he really ended up disqualified because of this, that would seriously harm the White Jade Sect.

Other than when she was in front of Zu An, she actually commanded a lot of respect. These two who considered themselves unequaled in the world didn't even dare to breathe too loudly before her.

When she saw that the two of them remained silent, Yan Xuehen couldn't help but call Lou Wucheng out, asking, "Wucheng, why don't you tell me what happened?"

"It's all his fault; he came in the middle of the night to disturb junior sister Chu. She was cultivating at the time, and she almost went through deviation because of him," Lou Wucheng said, giving Zhi Yin a hateful glare.

Zhi Yin was completely stupefied. He immediately retorted, "Nonsense! Fairy Chu was clearly still fine when I left; it was you who went to disturb her. What are you blaming me for?!"

This thick-browed guy usually looks pretty honest. Why is he so shameless right now?

The two were about to fight again when a white figure flickered away. Yan Xuehen was nowhere to be seen. Only a faint cold fragrance filled the evening air.

Previously, Yan Xuehen had already started to panic. Wang Wuxie had made such a huge fuss when personally coming down to Golden Peak. As one of the most influential individuals among the nine sects, how could she not know which person he was receiving?

She hadn't expected that even though she had tried to avoid him and left Yi Commandery to come to Violet Mountain, he would follow right behind them! She couldn't even shake him off. In that instant, she had even had a strange thought. Could it be that there really was some sort of great string of fate binding them together?

Still, she had quickly stopped herself. In order to clear away her messy thoughts, she had found a quiet place in Violet Mountain to meditate in. And yet, right after she finally got herself under control, she heard that had something happened to Chuyan. How could she not be shocked?

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Meanwhile, after Lou Wucheng left, Zu An asked unhappily, "Why are there so many men looking for you in the middle of the night?"

That chicken brother was one thing, but Lou Wucheng was also a disciple from the White Jade Sect, Chu Chuyan's proper senior brother. He was someone she likely interacted with quite a bit normally, so Zu An suddenly felt a sense of danger.

“How could I know they would suddenly go crazy today?” Chu Chuyan replied, then suddenly grinned. “Actually, there have always been a lot of people pursuing me. If you don’t treat me well, be careful or... Ah!...” She quickly gave in and pleaded, “I was joking! I normally only focus on cultivating! Other than you, I don’t bother with anyone else!”

Zu An finally felt a bit of satisfaction. In truth, he understood Chu Chuyan’s nature better than anyone else. Just then, however, his instincts as a man made it so that he couldn’t help but assert his dominance on her body.

Chu Chuyan sounded as if she held a small grudge as she said, “Ah Zu, you hurt me just now.”

“Sorry,” Zu An said apologetically and gently kissed her. After the storm came warm sunlight.

Chu Chuyan moaned, then wrapped herself tightly around her lover. After everything that had happened, she was already fully invested.

Suddenly, Yan Xuehen hurriedly called out from outside, “Chuyan, what’s wrong?”

Both people inside the room trembled. Chu Chuyan’s entire body stiffened. As for Zu An, he couldn’t help but...

Chu Chuyan’s head went completely blank. She couldn’t help but let out a loud and clear cry like that of a phoenix.

Yan Xuehen’s expression quickly changed multiple times. In the past, perhaps she would still have been a bit confused, but after that experience, how could she not know what was happening?

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She didn’t know why she was so angry either. Was she really angry for her disciple’s sake, or was it for something else?

“How is junior sister (Fairy Chu)?” came two voices. As it happened, Lou Wucheng and Zhi Yin hadn’t been in the mood to keep fighting once Yan Xuehen left. They had also been worried about Chu Chuyan, so they had followed along. Still, the two of them were much slower than Yan Xuehen and had only arrived now.

“Get lost!” Yan Xuehen yelled, her voice carrying the force of an unmelting avalanche. With a wave of her hand, a powerful force swept outward, instantly sending both of them several li away.

When they crawled back to their feet, both men were terrified and left in a sorry state. After all, even though Yan Xuehen was normally cold and aloof, she had always carried herself well. No one had ever even heard her speak any vulgar words, and yet now, she was clearly extremely angry. They naturally didn’t dare to continue pushing their luck and could only return with heavy moods.

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Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan knelt on the ground, looking embarrassed and ashamed as she asked Yan Xuehen for forgiveness. “Master, I was wrong.”

Yan Xuehen gave her a look. At that moment, Chu Chuyan's face was completely red, and her normally neat and tidy hair was a mess. Her clothes had also been put on hastily, but she didn't look sloppy at all. On the contrary, compared to her usual cold appearance, she now had a hint of lazy charm. Even as a woman, Yan Xuehen was a bit moved. She had to admit that a beauty like this really was blessed by the world.

Still, when she saw that Chu Chuyan's body was still shaking uncontrollably underneath her spacious clothes, and smelled the lingering scent in the air, she suddenly felt incredibly annoyed and frustrated but had nowhere to vent it. She hissed, "Where is that Zu bastard? Why isn't he coming out to meet me?!"

Chu Chuyan still looked down in shame. She thought, How could Ah Zu possibly dare to stay behind? Wouldn't you tear him apart?

But that rascal really did run quickly. I wonder if he even put his clothes on properly.

Yan Xuehen was about to unleash another rebuke when she saw Chu Chuyan kneeling pitifully in front of her. Her eyelids couldn't help but twitch. Even though she was angry, she still helped Chuyan back up and said, "I know what you're usually like. It was probably that stinky brat who forced you. You should get some rest. I'm going to find him and teach him a proper lesson." She started to grit her teeth as she spoke.

Chu Chuyan jumped up in alarm. She knew her master's nature and was scared that Yan Xuehen would just kill Zu An out of anger. She quickly clung to her master's legs and said, "Master, all of this was voluntary! It doesn't have anything to do with him!"

Yan Xuehen's face turned white and red. Countless thoughts surged within her. In the end, she sighed and said, "What unjustified enmity!"

Chu Chuyan was a bit confused, thinking, Why is this called unjustified enmity? However, when she thought about how her actions were practically inexcusable by the standards of the White Jade Sect, she didn't dare to say anything else.

A while later, Yan Xuehen looked at her disciple coldly and asked, "Do you know why I disallowed you from staying with him for the time being?"

"Disciple knows that master was worried that my mood would change greatly, which would affect the Unshakable State and possibly cause me to lose to the Devil Sect's Saintess," Chu Chuyan replied, a hint of guilt appearing in her eyes. She really had been too willful today and betrayed her master's expectations, as well as the White Jade Sect's nurturing.

As if seeing through her thoughts, Yan Xuehen shook her head and said, "Actually, it wouldn't even matter that much if you lost to the Devil Sect's Saintess. I don't care all that much about the White Jade Sect's prestige. However, even if you can lose to the Devil Sect's Saintess, you definitely can't lose to Qiu Honglei!"

Chapter 1622: Rumors and Slander

"Why?" Chu Chuyan asked. Perhaps due to the excitement she had just experienced, her thoughts were fuzzy. She had always thought that her battle with Qiu Honglei was tied to the pride of the White Jade

Sect and the Devil Sect, to the extent that it even touched on the clash of good versus evil. As such, she didn't dare to treat the matter carelessly. However, who would have thought that her master would actually say that those things weren't important?

"Silly child," Yan Xuehen said with a sigh. "You know about Qiu Honglei's relationship with Zu An too, don't you? If you lost to her, wouldn't you be beneath her for the rest of your life?"

Chu Chuyan's face reddened. She said weakly, "I know Qiu Honglei, and I don't think it'll be like that..."

Her voice became softer and softer. She realized that emotions weren't something that followed logic at all. If she really lost to Qiu Honglei, perhaps she really wouldn't be able to raise her head ever again in front of her rival for the rest of her life. She would always be suppressed by Qiu Honglei...

"Even if Qiu Honglei doesn't understand that now, she will in the future," Yan Xuehen said, giving her disciple a look. "Furthermore, she is Yun Jianyue's disciple. Yun Jianyue has always wanted to climb atop me her entire life, but she has unfortunately never succeeded. If there is a weakness to exploit in her disciple, she will definitely begin to provoke Qiu Honglei. She will only be able to satisfy that laughable desire for victory through her disciple suppressing mine.

"Yun Jianyue is the Devil Sect Master, so she has always achieved her goals through means fair or foul. Qiu Honglei is studying under her, so she will definitely use all kinds of methods to subdue you. She might even take your place and make you serve her. Eventually, you might not even have the face to remain at Zu An's side anymore. Could it be that you really want things to reach that point?"

The blush on Chu Chuyan's face disappeared, replaced with an incredible pallor. She realized that such a situation really did have a high chance of happening.

"So, this battle is not for the White Jade Sect's sake, but rather for yours. And yet, for a moment of pleasure, you... How could your master not be angry?" Yan Xuehen said resentfully. However, the one who angered her the most was still that rascal. You clearly promised me that you wouldn't come and disturb Chuyan, and yet you went back on your word!

"Master, I know I was wrong," Chu Chuyan said, taking a deep breath. Her expression gradually became steady as she continued, "I won't meet with him again for the meantime, and will focus all of my attention on the competition."

Yan Xuehen nodded in appreciation and said, "As long as you understand. With your intelligence and cultivation, it will not be too late even though you have only realized this now."

"Thank you, master," Chu Chuyan said, although she felt a bit strange. Her master was really different from before. In the past, she definitely wouldn't have cared about such romantic matters. But now, her master was giving advice for her future battles in the harem?

However, when she saw that her master was still angry, she didn't dare to keep asking about such things. Inwardly, she was still really moved. Master probably really sees me as a daughter. That must be why she's thinking about things in such detail for my sake.

When she saw Chu Chuyan recover her usual calm, Yan Xuehen felt relieved. When she looked at the messy bedding and smelled the lingering scent in the air, she felt a bit too embarrassed to stay. She thus left with a scowl.

Chu Chuyan was left in the room alone with her hands covering her face. She murmured, "Ah... that was so embarrassing..." When she thought about being seen by her master, she wanted dig a hole in the ground with her toes out of embarrassment.

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As Yan Xuehen left the room, she resembled a white cloud. She quickly arrived outside Zu An's residence and said coldly, "Mister Zu, get out here right now."

"Who dares to speak such words of disrespect toward our General Zu?!" Zhang Zijiang exclaimed, thinking to himself, What a great opportunity to get on Zu An's good side! He excitedly picked up his weapon and ran out, making sure that Zu An could hear his expression of loyalty. And yet, before he could even see who the enemy was, he saw a white blur in front of him. Then, his body rolled back into his room and he fainted on the spot.

The other soldiers in the rooms were a step too late. They just happened to see an exceptional beauty gently wave her sleeve, and were horrified. However, as they still had their duty to carry out, they still mustered the courage to raise their blades. Unfortunately, all of their hands trembled.

"Ahem, it doesn't have anything to do with you guys. All of you can return," Zu An said just then, emerging and sending the soldiers back.

The soldiers felt as if they received a great pardon. When they returned to their rooms, they were all filled with admiration. As expected of Sir Zu! He's able to remain calm and composed even in front of a woman with such terrifying strength! He really is profound and unfathomable.

When the others returned to their room, Zu An greeted Yan Xuehen. "Big sis Yan, it has been a long time, but your grace is still as elegant as before."

Yan Xuehen retorted coldly, "Who is your big sis?"

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Zu An didn't feel embarrassed at all as he replied, "You, of course. I still can't forget the scene of how we fought side by side back then..."

"I didn't come here to reminisce about the past," Yan Xuehen said, directly interrupting him. This rascal never had anything good to say. Who knew what he was really talking about when he said 'battle'? She retorted, "You know what you did, and yet you still have the guts to face me right now?"

Zu An looked completely innocent as he asked, "What did I do? I've been here the entire time. Is there some kind of misunderstanding? Big sis Yan, if you don't believe me, you can ask anyone here."

Yan Xuehen sneered. "Oh? Then what you are saying is that another man stormed into Chu Chuyan's room?"

Zu An was speechless. This woman normally looks as if she doesn't care about anything, and yet she's so fierce when she attacks.

Seeing as it was now related to Chuyan's reputation, he had to admit, "Uh... it was my fault earlier. But I didn't know that you would just happen to come back at that time either."

"Oh? So it's my fault in the end?" Yan Xuehen retorted, so angry that she was brought to laughter.

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"That's not what I'm saying. But seeing as Chuyan and I are married to begin with, even if we get a bit worked up, it's not some unforgivable thing, right?" Zu An replied helplessly.

"The two of you have already divorced," Yan Xuehen corrected Zu An, leaving him speechless. However, she felt that pretext was a bit of a stretch, so she could only continue, "You clearly promised me that you wouldn't approach her for some time as it would affect her condition. Could it be that you actually want that Devil Sect witch to win instead, so you're deliberately messing with Chuyan?"

"Of course not!" Zu An quickly explained, "I just... just couldn't hold back my emotions."

"Couldn't hold back your emotions..." Yan Xuehen felt all sorts of things when she heard those words. When she finally sorted out her thoughts, she said, "On top of that, you actually bullied Chuyan while Lou Wucheng and Zhi Yin were outside. Do you realize that Chuyan's reputation will be completely ruined if this is exposed?"

Zu An was left in an awkward position. He really had acted a bit too impulsively back then.

Yan Xuehen also felt a bit strange discussing such things. She said with an unnatural expression, "I came to once again warn you not to disturb Chuyan again. Otherwise, don't blame me for breaking all ties with you." She didn't wait for him to respond and flew away.

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Zu An was a bit annoyed at first. Suddenly, however, he realized something and a smile spread across his face.

When Zu An returned to his room, Xie Daoyun emerged, looking worried and wrapped only in a coat. She asked, "Big brother Zu, what did Sect Master Yan say to you? The pressure she gave off just then was so scary!"

Zu An's conversation with Yan Xuehen had been blocked off by a powerful wall of energy. No one apart from them had been able to hear what they were saying.

Zu An smiled and said, "It's nothing; it was just a bit of a misunderstanding. Things have already been cleared up."

Xie Daoyun was really impressed, saying, "Big brother Zu, you're so amazing! You're able to remain calm even in front of an angry grandmaster! There's no way I could do something like that."

"For better or for worse, Sect Master Yan and I are acquaintances. It's different from when you faced the libationer," Zu An said to console her, then said, "Alright, you should go to sleep. It's already quite late."

He noticed that his bed was still neat and orderly, which meant that she hadn't actually gone to sleep. He knew she was shy, so he didn't force the issue. Furthermore, now that he had returned, it would seem a bit suspicious for him to call her over to sleep in his bed. He was worn out from constantly

running back and forth, and the great battle he had just experienced with Chuyan. Thus, he was fast asleep as soon as he hit the bed.

Xie Daoyun was in the room right next to him. As she heard his breathing, she found it hard to fall asleep.

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Another night quickly passed just like that. However, the next day, all sorts of rumors suddenly spread all across Violet Mountain. All of them said that the White Jade Sect's Fairy Chu had actually already gotten married before, and her husband was Zu An, who was currently on the mountain. The stories were told in vivid detail, shattering countless people's hearts. All of Violet Mountain was thrown into a commotion.

Chapter 1623: Disturbance

"Have you heard? The White Jade Sect's Fairy Chu actually got married before!"

"There's no way that's true, right? She looks so aloof and extraordinary like a goddess, and yet she's already a madam?"

"She looks so pure and incorruptible normally. I hadn't expected her to have lost her maidenhood a long time ago."

"You really can know someone for a long time without knowing their true nature... She looks so proud and cold on the surface, but she might have already done all kinds of things with her man behind the scenes."

"That's probably just slander, right? I don't believe that such a lofty and unsullied fairy would be that kind of woman."

"You can deceive others, but please don't deceive yourself. I have a friend from the White Jade Sect who has reliable news. Fairy Chu indeed got married before she entered White Jade Sect."

"Ah... My heart is about to break."

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Zhang Zijang proudly reported the news to Zu An early in the morning. "Sir Zu, I thought that you were profound and unfathomable before, but today, I must truly prostrate myself in admiration toward you! Even a goddess such as Miss Chu from the White Jade Sect was actually your woman! My respect for Sir Zu gushes forth relentlessly like a river..."

"Sir Zhang, you already recovered from being knocked out by Sect Master Yan so quickly?" Xie Daoyun asked when she saw Zu An's expression growing more and more unpleasant, quickly stopping him from saying any more.

"It's nothing, I'm tougher than I look. If I hadn't gone out too quickly without trying to evade, not even Sect Master Yun would be able to make me faint so easily," Zhang Zijang said without even feeling the slightest bit of shame.

Zu An asked, his expression darkening, "Is that what everyone outside is talking about?"

"It's not everyone," Zhang Zijiang began. He thought to himself for a bit and said, "Some people are loyal supporters of Fairy Chu and feel that these things are all just rumors. Some people stepped forward and explained that Fairy Chu actually only married you in name and that they weren't truly husband and wife. Not long after you got married, you were captured by the court, while Fairy Chu was taken in as a disciple by the White Jade Sect. The two of you had already been divorced by then. In my opinion, those people really don't know anything. How could they understand Sir Zu's charms? How could the two of you only be husband and wife in name?"

"Sir Zhang!" Xie Daoyun cried as she saw Zu An's expression grow darker and darker. She couldn't help but warn Zhang Zijiang not to continue.

Zhang Zijiang was stunned. Then, a 'knowing' expression appeared on his face. He was talking about another woman in front of Lady Xie, so of course she wouldn't be too happy about that.

Zu An felt as if his lungs were about to explode. He naturally didn't feel that his relationship with Chu Chuyan was anything embarrassing. However, for this information to be exposed at the present time, it was clear that the one who had started it had impure motives.

People loved gossip, and once gossip started, it was easy to add fuel to the flame. A single mistake and Chu Chuyan's reputation would be completely ruined. Furthermore, her battle with Qiu Honglei would happen soon. If she ended up being affected by this situation, things would become really troublesome. Furthermore, the Unshakable Daoist Manual she cultivated had all kinds of restrictions too.

When Zu An thought about those things, he couldn't just stay still anymore. In a flash, he rushed toward the White Jade Sect's courtyard.

"Who is that Zu An? He was actually Fairy Chu's man? I really envy every single moment of his life..."

"You still don't know? He's an important official of the court. The State Teacher even came out personally to welcome him a few days ago."

"Damn it! It seems even an eminent and unapproachable goddess in our eyes is nothing more than a toy in the hands of those with authority."

Discussions filled the air all around Zu An. He thought, It seems the way young people think is similar no matter where you go...

However, he wouldn't stoop so low as to fight with ordinary people. He headed straight for Chu Chuyan's courtyard in alarm. Right as he approached, he saw Yan Xuehen come out.

When she saw him, Yan Xuehen's expression darkened as she snapped, "You still have the nerve to come here? Did you forget what I told you yesterday?"

Zu An panicked and said, "Big sis Yan, I didn't come here to anger you on purpose. It's just that I heard too many rumors surrounding Chuyan and was worried that something would happen to her. That's why I came here to take a look."

"Did you spread those rumors on purpose to confirm your relationship?" Yan Xuehen asked, staring at him.

Zu An sighed and asked, “Big sis Yan, could it be that I’m such a disgraceful and shameless person in your eyes?”

Yan Xuehen’s expression eased a bit as she replied, “You are disgraceful and shameless, but I believe that you weren’t the one who did this.”

Zu An was speechless. Are you praising me or cursing me here?

“Don’t worry. Chuyan is tougher than you think. Her only weakness is you. Rumors spread by others won’t be able to affect her,” Yan Xuehen said calmly.

“Can I meet with her?” Zu An asked worriedly.

“Meeting her will only cause her emotions to stir, so it’s better if she remains alone,” Yan Xuehen said bluntly. “Don’t forget what I told you yesterday.”

Zu An’s expression changed several times. In the end, he could only sit down on the steps in frustration.

When she saw his dispirited appearance, Yan Xuehen’s expression shifted a bit. After a moment, she asked, “Do you have any idea just who spread these rumors?”

Zu An shook his head. He looked really puzzled as he replied, “There aren’t many who know about my relationship with Chuyan, and practically none of them are here on Violet Mountain. I really can’t be sure who did this. But I do have a suspicion...”

Then, he told her about the two mysterious waves of killing intent and the warning Chuyan had received on the slip of paper from the previous night.

Yan Xuehen said grimly, “I believe the one who left that message for Chuyan is the same as the one who spread the message. The other party is not only aware that you and Chuyan were married, but they also know that the two of you still share feelings. That is why they tried to send Chuyan to catch... hmph, catch a vixen.[\[1\]](#)”

Zu An rolled his eyes, saying, “Lady Xie and I are innocent. I don’t care too much about myself, but aren’t you tarnishing her reputation by saying that?”

Yan Xuehen thought, You’re defending her right now, and yet you still claim you’re innocent?!

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Zu An was stunned. What did she suddenly get angry for?

However, after ‘that’ had happened, it was to be expected that Yan Xuehen was angry. Zu An said, “I was the one being careless that night and didn’t think of this possibility.”

Yan Xuehen suddenly said, “Why do I have a feeling that a certain female friend of yours is doing this out of jealousy?”

Zu An’s face heated up. He had actually suspected that at first too, but it hadn’t seemed that plausible when he thought about it. None of his female friends were here, and it couldn’t be Xie Daoyun, could it?

Yan Xuehen opened her mouth. She wanted to say that this style was a bit similar to Yun Jianyue's. But Yun Jianyue was a senior and not one of his girls, so there was no reason for her to do something so senseless.

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Achoo!

Meanwhile, in Emptiness Isle's courtyard, Yun Jianyue sneezed. She said with a smile, "That stone cold woman is definitely pissed off right now! Even though I can't see it myself, just thinking about it makes me feel great."

Inside the same room, Qiu Honglei said a bit worriedly, "Master, isn't this a bit too much? It's too shameless."

"Hey, young lady, aren't you making a mistake here? We're the Devil Sect witches! Aren't we supposed to be despicable?" Yun Jianyue retorted, rolling her eyes.

Qiu Honglei said somewhat awkwardly, "But this will completely offend Chu Chuyan... how are we supposed to live together in the future? Furthermore, if Ah Zu finds out, he'll definitely blame me."

Yun Jianyue harrumphed. "You still want to have a good relationship with her? The two of you are in complete opposition against each other. Could it be that you want to play a game of fake sistership?" She gave her disciple a serious look and continued, "Only one of you has to become the winner, while the other can only bow down as the loser. I definitely don't want the loser to be you."

If she becomes the loser, then what will I become? She chased that thought away as soon as it appeared. Hmph, I'm only doing this for my silly disciple's sake.

Qiu Honglei muttered, "Why do I feel as if master cares more about the harem's struggles than even I do?"

"What did you say?" Yun Jianyue snapped, raising a brow.

"Nothing," Qiu Honglei quickly answered. She grabbed her master's arm and said, "But master! Isn't the highest level of charm techniques about seizing the heart of a man? If I fight with Chu Chuyan like this, I'll only make Ah Zu feel disgusted with me if I go too far. Even if I win, what meaning will there be left?"

"Don't worry. I'll deal with that brat. Either way, I was the one who did all this. If he wants to blame someone, he can just blame me," Yun Jianyue said proudly. Inwardly, however, she was a bit worried. She had indeed gone a bit too far this time.

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Meanwhile, in Jadedfall Palace's courtyard, Pei Mianman finished her cultivation for the day. She looked out the window at the gossiping disciples and couldn't help but ask curiously, "Master, what are those disciples chatting about? It seems to be noisier than usual today." In order to satisfy her master's wishes, she had spent all her time cultivating bitterly. She didn't know what was happening outside at all.

Elder Huo Ling waved her hand, and a wave of energy shut out the outside world. She said coldly, "Just some senseless things not worth mentioning. Compared to those chief disciples, you have a disadvantage in terms of cultivation time, so you need to seize the time before the great battles. You are almost at your bottleneck, so you cannot slack off."

"Okay," Pei Mianman replied with a nod. She wiped away the fine sweat from her chest.

I definitely can't lose to Chuyan...

As the disturbance continued to get more and more intense, the nine daoist sects' great competition drew near.

Chapter 1624: Uproar

Even though the drama surrounding Fairy Chu was quite intense, the Great Sects Competition was more important. The disciples who were qualified to come with their seniors to Violet Mountain were either outstanding individuals handpicked by their sects, or they were reserve forces the sect considered to have great potential and sent to gain experience. Regardless of which kind of disciple they were, they cared a lot about the competition.

Today was to be the first day of the competition. The matches would occur on Violet Mountain's main peak, Crouching Tiger Mountain's Golden Peak. The reason it was called Golden Peak was that whenever the sun came out and the sunlight scattered across the mountain, the entire mountaintop would be tinted gold, creating a beautiful sight. Additionally, unlike most mountaintops, Golden Peak had a wide, flat plateau rather than a normal pointed peak. Apart from the Pure Sun Palace Wang Wuxie lived in and some other important buildings of the sect, it held a large plaza that could be used for martial arts.

Normally, Golden Peak was a restricted area in the Righteous Sun Sect. Only the sect master and the elders of the great peaks, as well as certain important inheritors, could enter freely. The other disciples could only go there briefly during important ceremonies. The reason for that was because, apart from looking golden, Golden Peak had another special use; rich violet ki filled the entire place at sunrise, which was extremely beneficial to cultivation. Such a precious cultivation resource naturally couldn't be unconditionally released to the public. For example, even though disciples had gathered from many different places for the Great Sects Competition, they still hadn't been able to enter the peak at sunrise.

Today, however, as the Great Sects Competition that happened only once every ten years finally began, the Righteous Sun Sect opened Golden Peak up for the first time, using it as the location of the competition.

The disciples of the different sects were naturally extremely excited. They began to use their own cultivation skills to greedily absorb the rich violet ki around them. Their spirits all felt extremely refreshed, and their cultivation progressed many times more quickly than usual. They were all overjoyed, wondering just how shocking their cultivation would grow if they could cultivate here long-term.

The sect masters and elders were also filled with admiration for the mysterious violet ki around them. They thought to themselves, This Wang Wuxie really is quite generous, actually letting us all enjoy this place.

...

Zu An said to Xie Daoyun, "Little sis Ling'er, you should look around to see if there are any formations while everyone's distracted."

They hadn't found anything when they looked around together, but they hadn't gotten a chance to visit a restricted area such as Golden Peak then. At present, the sects' disciples were all focused on absorbing the violet ki, inevitably leading to some disorganization. It was the perfect opportunity for Xie Daoyun to look around without being noticed. Thus, Xie Daoyun voiced her agreement and quietly blended into the crowd.

Zu An began to absorb the surrounding violet ki to see what it was all about, and he was soon stunned. This violet ki was extremely similar to his primordial ki, but it was much thinner. Even so, it was still much higher-quality than normal ki. No wonder everyone present looked so infatuated.

In the Heavenly Sorrow Sect's group, Guan Chouhai couldn't help but give his complacent disciple a look, saying, "Zhi Yin, the great battle is about to begin, and yet you still look so dispirited. It is just a woman; is there a need to go that far?"

At the moment, Zhi Yin was no longer in his previous high spirits. He even had a thin layer of unshaven stubble growing on his chin. That was something completely unheard of for someone such as him, who cared a lot about his appearance. Additionally, his eyes were strangely unfocused.

Guan Chouhai was a grandmaster, so he naturally knew that one's vitality was the best reflection of one's strength and condition. Zhi Yin likely wasn't even at seventy percent of his best condition. He would definitely pay the price for that during the great competition. And yet, Zhi Yin was the seeded player of Heavenly Sorrow Sect, someone who represented their sect's pride. How could Guan Chouhai not be worried?

Zhi Yin said helplessly, "That's easy for master to say. If you found out that Sect Master Yan actually had a man, I don't believe you could remain that calm either."

The surrounding disciples were all shocked. They thought to themselves, Has Zhi Yin gone mad? He actually dares to speak like this to the sect master?

However, Guan Chouhai didn't get angry and simply laughed, saying, "Fairy Yan is different from other women. She is a cold and aloof woman who seems to have come from the starry streams of heaven; why would she like a man from the secular world? If there really were a man for her in this world, it would be none other than me, Guan Chouhai."

Zhi Yin rolled his eyes. He really didn't even feel like retorting anymore. Master, just where do you get your confidence from?

Guan Chouhai patted his shoulder to encourage him. Then, he glanced at the nearby Zhao Xiaodie and asked, "What is wrong with you, Xiaodie?"

Zhao Xiaodie was alarmed. She forced a smile and said, "Something's wrong with me? Not at all."

“Not at all?” Guan Chouhai sneered. “You have been acting strange for a few days. Compared to how you usually are, aren’t you a bit too quiet? Sometimes, it almost looks as if you are shedding silent tears, while other times, you have a dumb smile on your face, as if someone broke you.”

“Master~” Zhao Xiaodie cried, feeling extremely embarrassed. However, the memory of Zu An beating her viciously couldn’t help but appear in her mind again. Her legs couldn’t help but close tightly.

“All of you had better readjust your condition quickly. The great competition will begin soon. Your matches during the first day should not be too hard, so use this chance to the fullest,” Guan Chouhai said, his smile fading. Apart from Zhi Yin, Zhao Xiaodie was the second most important disciple to him. Furthermore, it was because of her special identity that he cared more about her than others. And yet, they had both ended up like this somehow. If he didn’t know any better, he would almost have thought that they had recently broken up or something.

“Understood!” both disciples replied. Even though Guan Chouhai was rather tolerant, he was still quite frightening whenever he became upset. The two of them could only force themselves to focus.

...

Meanwhile, within Jadedfall Palace’s ranks, Wan Guiyi retracted his gaze and said with a sneer, “Heavenly Sorrow Sect’s Zhi Yin has such a huge reputation, and yet all I see is trash. On top of that, the White Jade Sect’s Lou Wucheng looks half dead too. I refuse to believe that a swordsman can be anything special if they’re in low spirits, even if he has his Immortal Sword.”

Wan Tongtian said seriously, “The two of them seem to have suffered an extreme emotional blow recently, but you cannot be careless. It is not entirely impossible that this might end up being an opportunity for them. It would be one thing if they remain trapped by their feelings, but if they break free, they might reach a higher level.”

“It’s just a woman, and yet they look as if they’re about to die. How can women be as interesting as cultivation?” Wan Guiyi remarked disdainfully. “The classics have stated that when you cultivate the sword, the first thing you need to sever is love. If you don’t have a woman in your heart, your sword will be divine!”

Elder Huo Ling laughed coldly and remarked with a furious expression, “Not bad, Mister Wan. So this is the kind of thing you taught him all this time? So that is what you thought back then.” Next to her, Pei Mianman’s expression didn’t look much better; she was also a woman after all.

Wan Guiyi harrumphed. He looked away and ignored her. As a son, he naturally didn’t carry any good impression of this woman who was rumored to have been his mother’s love rival.

On the other hand, Wan Tongtian quickly apologized while wiping some cold sweat. He said, “Junior sister, I really did not teach him that way. This child has become so extreme that I am even a bit worried that he might end up alone his entire life and end my lineage entirely.”

“You should have been the one to do that,” Elder Huo Ling retorted as a parting shot, then dragged her disciple off to the other side of the group.

Wan Tongtian was left all alone in the wind.

...

Elsewhere, two monks, one old and one young, silently watched everything that was happening. The chubby little monk said with a sigh of amazement, "The daoist sects are so lively! Every single one has so many powerful people. Master, do you think it's because they're allowed to have wives and get married?"

The old monk struck his head with a wooden fish and retorted, "Are you saying that you want us Buddhists to allow marriages and children too?"

"That's not what I meant. I was just wondering what Sect Master Wan meant when he talked about ending their lineage," the chubby little monk asked curiously.

"It refers to not having a wife and fathering a son, leaving no one to carry on your ancestral line. At that point, you will naturally be without any successor," the old monk explained.

The chubby little monk voiced his surprise, asking, "Then, doesn't that mean every single person in our Buddhist sect is going to have their lineage ended?"

The old monk's breath stopped for a moment, and only after a while did he exhale, saying, "Jie Se, you are quite intelligent, as expected."

The two monks were naturally Tranquility Temple's Master Jian Huang and the little monk Jie Se.

"I think so too," the chubby little monk said, sticking out his chest. "Master, what do you think about women?"

"Jie Se, that is not something you should be concerned with," the old monk said seriously. "You only need to remember that women are like tigers, that's all."

The chubby little monk grumbled, "Tigers eat people; don't tell me women do too? Their mouths are so small, so how can they even eat that?"

What he got in return was another strike from the rod. The old monk sounded a bit angry as he remarked, "Just what kind of nonsense do you think all day long?"

The little novice monk looked at him with a simple and honest expression, saying, "Master, I feel that you are the one whose thinking has deviated."

The old monk was stunned. Then, he brought his hands together and said, "Amitabha Buddha, I have committed a sin."

...

After the disruption caused by so many people trying to make the most out of the violet ki, Wang Wuxie saw that it was about time and stepped forward. He didn't even have to say a word for everyone present to calm down. All of them felt a mysterious pressure that made them reflexively fall silent.

The sect masters of the other sects frowned slightly. Wang Wuxie's cultivation seemed to have advanced again. Clearly, Violet Mountain was a precious place, as expected.

“The sects should already have emphasized to all of you what the significance and reward of this competition are, so I will waste no time on repeating that. I will only reaffirm one thing. Any act intended to take another’s life will result in immediate disqualification,” Wang Wuxie said. His voice wasn’t that loud, but those present all heard him extremely clearly.

Wan Guiyi suddenly said, “The competition ought to be one where everyone goes all out. Blades don’t have eyes, after all, so how can a judgment be made if someone unintentionally wounds their opponent?”

All of the disciples felt admiration inwardly. This guy actually dared to directly challenge Wang Wuxie! Just where did he get the guts to do so?

Jie Se, the little monk, said with a sigh of amazement, “Master, that person is really fierce.”

Master Jian Huang didn’t respond to him at all. He only closed his eyes while muttering the sutras, as if he needed to purify the impure thoughts he had just had.

Wang Wuxie gave Wan Guiyi a deep look, then replied, “There is no need for everyone to worry about that. I have invited sect masters and elders to serve as judges. Apart from that, I have even invited Tranquility Temple’s prestigious Master Jian Huang to serve as a witness. Also...” His expression suddenly became a bit unnatural as he said, “We also have the court’s Sir Zu as a special honored guest. Together, we should be sufficiently capable of judging the fairness of every fight.”

As soon as he said those words, the place immediately erupted into a commotion again.

Chapter 1625: I Will Testify

After all, mere moments before, Wang Wuxie had introduced the White Jade Sect’s Yan Xuehen and Elder Li, the Heavenly Sorrow Sect’s Guan Chouhai, Jadedfall Palace’s Palace Master Wan Tongtian and Elder Huo Ling, the Kunlun Void Sect’s... Which one of them wasn’t extraordinary? Among them, only Emptiness Isle’s Elder Peng wasn’t very famous. However, as someone who was capable enough to become a sect elder, she was definitely extraordinary in her own right. Apart from that, Tranquility Temple’s Master Jian Huang was a legendary figure too. Strictly speaking, quite a few of the daoist sects’ upper level figures were his juniors. And yet, a brat like Zu An had ended up being mentioned on the same level as them?

Furthermore, just two days prior, it had been exposed that he and Fairy Chu had previously been husband and wife, making him the target of many people’s envy. This time, he had even become an esteemed guest judge! It was like adding a drop of water to a pot of oil, making it explode.

...

Zu An looked at the explosive amount of Rage points that rushed in. He thought to himself, If Yan Xuehen’s relationship with me were revealed now, would the Rage points double?

However, when he thought about how these sect masters had been Yan Xuehen’s pursuers for so many years, and that he wouldn’t necessarily be able to leave the mountain alive if they found out, he could only give up on that thought.

Amid Emptiness Isle's ranks, Qiu Honglei secretly tugged on Yun Jianyue's sleeves and said, "Master, the rumors we spread a few days ago have already gone into effect. Ah Zu is now a public enemy and hated by everyone. Will he be in danger?"

"Don't worry, he's the court's Imperial Envoy right now. Whether it's Wang Wuxie or the other sect masters, none of them would dare to let anything happen to him," Yun Jianyue said. She paused for a moment, then added, "Furthermore, even if they didn't bother, not even all of these youngsters added up together would be a match for him."

Qiu Honglei sighed in relief when she heard that. At the same time, she found it a bit strange. Why did she feel as if her master had more confidence in Ah Zu than she did?

...

Over on Jedefall Palace's side, Pei Mianman's eyes shone brightly. She had never expected to run into Ah Zu here! The heavens have really pitied me! Is this the so-called 'decree of fate'?

Elder Huo Ling noticed her disciple's excitement and asked in confusion, "What is it?"

"It's nothing. I just got a bit excited when I thought about the upcoming competition," Pei Mianman said. She didn't dare to tell the truth. She knew that her master hated men due to her past trauma. If she told her master about her relationship with Ah Zu, it could cause quite the dispute.

Suddenly, a tall figure stood up from the Heavenly Sorrow Sect's side and protested, "I'm opposed to this!"

The eyes of many female disciples lit up as they thought, This senior brother is so handsome!

After asking around, they quickly learned that he was none other than the glorious Zhi Yin. Furthermore, he had been left in a very dispirited state because of the rumors surrounding Chu Chuyan. They all felt heartbroken. Big brother Zhi Yin, hurry and come into my arms!

At the same time, they were really upset. Isn't Chu Chuyan too scheming? She's clearly already been married, and yet she always pretends to be some pure young lady, seducing all of the sects' young men.

Chu Chuyan was famous for being the idol of the daoist sects. Many martial brothers liked her. Normally, because Chuyan was just too beautiful and she carried herself like an immortal, everyone else simply felt a bit ashamed of their inferiority. Now that they knew that she had been married, however, all of them suddenly gained confidence. Ignoring everything else, at least they were still virgins, right? At least they had that edge over her. Once they got the impression that they were at the same starting line, they all began to hate Chu Chuyan out of envy.

"What are you opposed to?" Wang Wuxie asked, his expression turning a bit unpleasant. He was being interrupted by these juniors one after another! Do you think I don't care about dignity?

Zhi Yin took a deep breath, then pointed at Zu An and said, "All of the others are seniors of virtue and prestige in the world of warriors, so we naturally accept them wholeheartedly as judges of this great daoist competition. But Zu An isn't even as old as us, and his cultivation seems ordinary. How can he stand side by side with the seniors and be a judge?"

"I agree!" Lou Wucheng added as he suddenly stood up. "I feel that Zu An lacks the qualifications to act as a judge of this competition."

Previously, he had always been annoyed whenever he saw Zhi Yin's pretty boy face. Today, he actually felt a bit of admiration for the other man's courage.

Zhi Yin also gave him a look, thinking to himself, Why do I suddenly find the sight of him so pleasing? The two of them even felt as if they were kindred spirits.

The White Jade Sect's Elder Li secretly frowned. He naturally knew that his disciple liked this junior sister of his, but he hadn't expected that Lou Wucheng would act out of jealousy in his love rivalry. He couldn't help but feel a bit disappointed. Of course, he knew having some kind of drive was important when cultivating the Immortal Sword, so he couldn't really speak up and decrease his disciple's spirits. He could only patiently watch as things developed.

Zhi Yin said loudly and clearly, "As long as Sir Zu can win against me or Brother Lou, I will be convinced and believe that he has the qualifications to judge this competition. I will also apologize to him."

Lou Wucheng nodded, adding, "Right. I will even let him give me three strikes first!"

Both of these men had already been beyond frustrated and furious when they thought about how the woman of their dreams was already in the shape of another man. They wanted to take the chance to properly discipline that pretty boy piece of trash. That way, Chuyan would also see just how worthless her man was.

Wang Wuxie was a bit troubled. To be honest, he also felt that Zu An wasn't worthy, but he was a guest who had been personally invited. These juniors didn't have any right to intervene.

He was about to speak up when Zu An leaned casually into his chair and said contemptuously, "Even people such as you think you're worthy of facing me?"

The entire place rose up into a commotion. Many people even cursed Zu An for being shameless.

Pei Mianman was worried and anxious. She thought, What's wrong with Ah Zu? Why can't I sense any ki aura from him? With his previous strength, it shouldn't have been a problem for him to win against Zhi Yin and Lou Wucheng, but now...

Her expression suddenly grew resolute. If these two went too far, she had to protect Ah Zu even if she had to suffer her master's punishment afterward.

Wan Guiyi laughed and said to Wan Tongtian, "Father, I'm a fan of that guy's personality."

Wan Tongtian had a strange expression as he replied, "This young man is indeed bold. But even if you want to boast, you need the strength to back up your words."

Wan Guiyi said seriously, "Even though he looks ordinary, he's still able to remain so calm in this kind of situation. If he really were ordinary, he definitely wouldn't be able to do this. I believe he definitely has a trump card."

Wan Tongtian nodded in appreciation, saying, "You have good judgment. He is better than those two fools, Zhi Yin and Lou Wucheng."

Pei Mianman felt a bit of relief when she heard the two of them talk. She felt that she really had been worried over nothing just now. When had Ah Zu ever been on the losing end of this kind of situation?

...

Meanwhile, on Tranquility Temple's side, the little chubby monk Jie Se couldn't help but say to the old monk next to him, "No wonder master let me experience the world. This world has so many spectacular things in it!"

Master Jian Huang was still paying no attention to outside matters. He continued to mutter to himself, "I have sinned, I have sinned..."

When she heard the discussions of everyone around her, Qiu Honglei wanted to stand up and speak up for Zu An. However, Yun Jianyue grabbed her and stopped her, hissing, "What are you doing? Are you going to expose yourself here?"

Qiu Honglei said angrily, "That Zhi Yin and Lou Wucheng are going too far! I can't keep watching this."

"Don't worry. That kid isn't so easily bullied. You just need to sit back and enjoy the show," Yun Jianyue said, not looking worried at all. Considering everything they had gone through, what did this trifling conflict count as?

...

When he saw how the entire crowd was mocking his superior, Zhang Zijiang realized that now was his moment to shine. He stood up and called out, "What do you babies know? Our Sir Zu's cultivation is profound and immeasurable! He wiped out a powerful army with a single sword before. The two of you really don't have the qualifications to face him!"

The entire place fell silent. Then, laughter erupted. Even the sect masters had strange expressions. Wiping out an entire army alone... Some of them could do that, but there were many prerequisites for that to happen. For example, the enemy army couldn't be made up of too many elites, they couldn't excel in formation skills, and they couldn't be too numerous... Zu An was just a young man; how could he have such strength?

"An army? Are you messing with me right now?" Zhi Yin retorted mockingly. "Then may I ask which army Sir Zu wiped out? Please tell us so that we can worship him."

"It was..." Zhang Zijiang choked, because he remembered Zu An had given him the order not to publicly disclose the matter of the Twin Dragon Mountains' Scarface Yang Shen. Military orders had to be obeyed. If he went against that, he could end up losing his head before he earned any brownie points with Zu An.

When he saw that Zhang Zijiang was hesitating, Zhi Yin sneered and continued, "What, you went too far with your boasting and got exposed? If you don't have the skill, you can only use lies to make yourself sound better. At that point, you can only use even more lies to fill in the holes."

Zhang Zijiang's face became completely red. Just how many years had it been since he felt so wronged?

While he was feeling at a loss for what to do, a cold voice suddenly called out, "I can vouch for Sir Zu. He definitely has the qualifications to judge this battle."

The entire place fell silent once more. That was because the one who spoke was the Snow Queen Yan Xuehen.

Now, even Wang Wuxie and Guan Chouhai, two older generation figures who had just thought they were watching something interesting, looked at her in shock. They understood Yan Xuehen's nature better than anyone. Why would she speak up for another man so enthusiastically?

Chapter 1626: Sign of Big Disaster

Is she acting this way because of Chu Chuyan and Zu An's relationship? A sort of 'love me, love my dog' thing?

But that doesn't make sense either! With her usual nature, it would already be quite tolerant of her to not try to break up Chu Chuyan and Zu An after their marriage. How could she go so far as to protect that man?

People all had different suspicions. The big shots of the different sects barely remained calm, but the younger generation was left in absolute disarray.

After all, Zu An and Chu Chuyan's relationship had really raised a storm two days prior. Now, Sect Master Yan was even expressing such a stance. Didn't that mean she approved of their relationship?

Ahhh! Just what kind of superpower does that pretty face have?!

You have successfully trolled the disciples for +233 +233 +233...

Amid the crowd, Qiu Honglei said to Yun Jianyue in dissatisfaction, "Master, it looks like our previous plan isn't going to work."

Furthermore, judging from Yan Xuehen's appearance, it even seemed she was actually pretty satisfied with Ah Zu as a son-in-law. If she acted as a matchmaker between Zu An and Chu Chuyan, everything they had just done would only amount to shooting themselves in the foot!

Yun Jianyue was also a bit confused, wondering, "What in the world is going on with that stone cold woman? This doesn't match her personality at all!"

She had fought against Yan Xuehen for countless years, and probably understood her better than anyone else. No matter which direction she looked at it from, there should have been no reason for Yan Xuehen to speak up for Zu An.

Could it be that after all of that in the Fiend race territories, she really does treat Zu An as a friend already?

...

Just then, Wang Wuxie cleared his throat and said, "Sir Zu naturally has the qualifications to be a judge; it has already been decided. There is no need for further discussion. Everyone should focus on the competition to come."

He thought to himself, Seeing as Yan Xuehen is covering for Zu An, I have to show her some consideration.

Huh? Wait, is she covering for Zu An for my sake?

After all, I was the one who proposed to have Zu An as a judge.

When he thought of that, his resolve became firmer. He even felt a bit absentminded for a moment.

Zhi Yin and Lou Wucheng opened their mouths, but in the end, they didn't dare to say anything else. Such huge backers as Wang Wuxie and Yan Xuehen had already spoken. If they continued to press the issue, that would seem way too rude.

Zu An didn't even move his fingers during the entire process, but he earned a huge batch of Rage points nonetheless. He thought, Big sis Yan still cares about me after all. She isn't going to stand around and let others bully me.

Wang Wuxie sat down. He allowed the masters of the other peaks to introduce the details of the competition.

As there were nine sects, they had decided to have nine groups. The group stage would have them fight against each other in a rotation. The winners would obtain three points, while ties would result in one each. The losers would obtain zero points. In the end, only the first place of each group would automatically receive the qualification to enter the daoist sects' secret dungeon. The rules were quite strict, so none of the disciples wanted to lose. Otherwise, they wouldn't necessarily even have a chance of getting one of the spots.

Of course, for the sake of fairness, the greatest disciples of each sect were put into different groups to prevent them from meeting too early and causing someone weaker to become the leader of their group.

Apart from that, the top eight in every group would be part of an elimination competition against each other. Four of them would then enter together with the previous first placers, granting a total of thirteen individuals the qualification to enter the secret dungeon. To a certain degree, the elimination competition would be the most bitter fight, because that would be their last chance.

The rules were actually quite lax compared to before, however. In the past, apart from the nine first placers in the group stage, only a single winner among the others had qualified, leaving only ten people who had the right to enter the secret dungeon. As such, each time, several people had always lost their limbs or even become cripples. The elimination round had always been more intense than the fight to become number one in the group stage.

This time, however, the great sects had decided that leaving open a single slot for everyone else was just too cruel. In order to encourage the other outstanding disciples of the sects, they had decided to increase the number of slots to four.

...

When he heard these familiar rules, Zu An was a bit dazed. The structure was practically the same as it had been in the sports competitions of his previous world.

The national soccer team doesn't have much time left...

Fortunately, he didn't have to waste any more energy on calculating the odds of the national soccer team.

Just then, Watchful Heart Peak's Feng Wuchang took out a transparent crystal and said in a bright and clear voice, "For the sake of encouraging the disciples of the nine sects and increasing people's competitiveness, come and have your cultivation tested according to the list. Then, we will start dividing everyone into groups."

Every great competition would only have a bit over ten slots at most. Most people were doomed to only make the winners look better. No matter how hard they tried, there was no way they could defeat the legendary representative disciples of each sect. As such, there hadn't been all that many who wanted to participate, and even if they did, they had often held back without going all out.

That wasn't what the elders of the nine sects wanted at all. They wanted their disciples to cultivate earnestly. Thus, someone had thought of a solution, which was to test the disciples' cultivation before they participated. Even though one's cultivation rank didn't represent one's real strength, they were still correlated in most cases.

With that vague 'ranking' list, the disciples would be motivated. Even if they couldn't win against those bastards who were blessed by the heavens, they could still fight against those in another sect whose cultivations were around the same as theirs, right?

Some people's cultivation ranks turned out to be quite high. Others had lower cultivation ranks, but they were still quite young and were better than others at their age... In either case, it was something to be proud of. Even though classical literature always said to not care too much about fame and profit, wasn't that what all those who lived in this world cared about? Who didn't want to brag in their circles?

Furthermore, if they had a good showing in the test, even if they couldn't get one of the quotas, they could still catch the attention of their sect's leaders. Then, they stood a chance of getting more cultivation resources. Even though they couldn't compare to the representative disciples now, who said they would never catch up?

Don't look down on the poor and young now!

When they saw the disciples' eager expressions, the sect masters all nodded in appreciation. Only by stirring their disciples' enthusiasm would their sects prosper.

Of course, there was another reason for the test. That way, when they divided the disciples into groups, the distribution would be more even. Otherwise, the strongest people could accidentally end up being put in the same group, causing the leading candidate of that group to waste too much energy and make it unfavorable for them later when they had to strive against the best of the other groups.

As for whether or not those representative disciples would make it out of the group stage, they didn't even consider that possibility. Anyone who could become one of the most important disciples was definitely far above their peers. There was no way they wouldn't be able to make it out of the group stage.

"Righteous Sun Sect, Zhang Xi!" Feng Wuchang began, calling out the names on the list. As the ones hosting this event, they naturally had to be the first ones. Furthermore, it couldn't be someone who was too weak, or else it would hurt their sect's reputation; however, they couldn't immediately bring out their trump card Wu Xiaofan. As such, Zhang Xi from Watchful Heart Peak was their best candidate.

Zhang Xi sorted out his clothes. He walked toward the stage with a composed expression. Because he had been the one receiving guests by the entrance, practically everyone recognized him.

The result quickly came out: Eighth rank!

A small commotion broke out in the plaza. The Righteous Sun Sect really was powerful now; even the disciple who watched the entrance was at the eighth rank! After all, over half the people present were far from his level.

Zhang Zijiang's expression turned grave. He said quietly to Zu An, "This person's strength is already enough to make him a city lord. I hadn't expected the disciples of these sects to have already reached this level! We'll have to make a report once we go back. If this trend continues, that won't be a good thing for the court!"

What the f*ck is this? A young disciple's cultivation is already almost at my level! That's unforgivable!

Zu An said calmly, "Don't worry. These sects have limited resources and can only produce a few elite cultivators. Their foundation and reserves are too sparse compared to the court's."

Zhang Zijiang thus felt a bit more relieved.

Zhang Xi vaguely picked up on the surrounding discussions. He couldn't help but stick out his chest proudly. He thought, I should be able to get the attention of many junior sisters like this, right? But my heart still belongs to Fairy Chu and Fairy Pei.

Suddenly, he remembered the rumors surrounding Chu Chuyan. His expression darkened. Forget it, it looks like Fairy Pei is my true love in this life.

...

Then, the other disciples went onto the stage one after another. Their cultivation ranks were much lower. Most of them were around the sixth or seventh rank.

Zu An couldn't help but sigh when he saw that. Sixth rank was already enough to make them a publicly known genius in Brightmoon Academy, and yet it was the lowest level here. Still, he understood that quite well. In his previous world, if one were to pick anyone from a provincial-level prestigious high school in China's experimental program, they would basically be equivalent to a top student from rural towns and counties. Even if the worst student of Peking University were pulled out, they would most likely be equivalent to a top scorer in some cities.

"Jadefall Palace, Pei Mianman." Feng Wuchang continued to call for disciples to check their cultivation ranks.

Zu An suddenly raised his head when he heard that name. At the same time, all around him, people audibly swallowed their saliva. Forget about the younger disciples, even the elders of the sects couldn't help but give her a few extra looks.

Calmness Temple's Master Jian Huang even forgot his chanting of 'I've sinned, I've sinned'. He couldn't help but raise his head to look. What replaced his muttering was 'the sign of big disaster, big disaster!'.[\[1\]](#)

Chapter 1627 – Envy, Jealousy, and Hatred

A beautiful figure in a red and black dress walked onto the stage. Her stunning eyes and enthusiastic smile gave people a good impression of her from the very first glance. However, the most eye-catching thing about her was still the waves that rippled when she walked. It made people wonder just how that thin cloth was able to hold it all in.

Zu An was shocked and overjoyed. He had actually been a bit upset when the emperor sent him to Violet Mountain. And yet, not only had he been able to meet Chuyan and Yan Xuehen, now, he could also meet Pei Mianman! It really was unexpected and happy.

Even Yan Xuehen couldn't help but give the young lady a second look. As Chuyan's master, and after all of the things that had happened with Zu An at the Fiend King Court, she had needed to look into Zu An's history. As such, she naturally knew of Pei Mianman's existence. She had to admit that this girl was the polar opposite of Chuyan. One was as cold as ice, while the other was enthusiastic like fire. She wondered just how these two had ended up becoming such close friends.

If not for the fact that Chuyan was cultivating on her own and hadn't come along, Yan Xuehen would have lectured her a bit on her choice of acquaintances. Isn't becoming close friends with this kind of woman just inviting a wolf right into the house?

When she saw Pei Mianman's dynamic figure, she couldn't help but furrow her brows. She's still so young; just what in the world did she eat to grow so big?

...

"Huh? Why is she also part of the nine sects?" Qiu Honglei cried out in surprise with a strange expression. Another familiar person had shown up, adding another variable to worry about.

"Is that girl from the Cow race or something?" Yun Jianyue muttered, feeling strangely vexed. She was usually quite confident in 'that' respect, and yet now, it seemed there were horizons beyond horizons. "Why do you have so many love rivals, and why do they only ever seem to grow more and more powerful?"

Having talked to her disciple all the time, and with Honglei not holding much back, Yun Jianyue already knew practically everything Qiu Honglei knew about Zu An. She naturally knew who Pei Mianman was. Upon finally seeing her for herself, even though she was the Devil Sect Master, Yun Jianyue could still feel a mysterious pressure.

"I'm pretty helpless here too..." Qiu Honglei said, propping up her chin with her hand. "But if you look at it from another perspective, that just means Ah Zu really is charming and I didn't choose the wrong person."

Yun Jianyue couldn't help but turn around and stare at her, muttering "Why did I raise such a dumb disciple?"

This girl is normally pretty smart, but why is she becoming dumber and dumber? She isn't even on guard against me at all and tells me everything.

Qiu Honglei giggled and said casually, "Isn't it great that I have a smart master to take care of those things?"

Yun Jianyue suddenly asked, "Then what if one day, your master becomes your enemy too?"

Qiu Honglei was stunned. However, she quickly shook her head and said, "That won't happen. No matter what kind of situation we're in, I'll stand on the same side as master."

Yun Jianyue was speechless.

...

Meanwhile, the other disciples' reactions weren't any less intense. They all began to ask about the identity of this woman, whose beauty wasn't inferior to Chu Chuyan's, and whose chest was just too impressive. When they learned who it was, many of them stated that they would become Miss Pei's dogs in the future, and that following Fairy Chu or whatever was just heresy.

Because she had already gotten married before, Chu Chuyan's reputation among the daoist sects had already suffered. However, some people not only felt that there was nothing wrong with her being previously married, but even became more excited.

Despite that, Pei Mianman's breathtaking entrance suddenly made her even more popular than Chu Chuyan.

"I think I'm really in love with Lady Pei. Her smile is so big... Ahem! I mean, so round... Wait, no! So warm."

"Is that even love, or are you just after her body? What a pervert."

"What, are you not the same?"

"My feelings for her are different from yours!"

...

However, their discussions were soon replaced with sighs of admiration, because Pei Mianman placed her hand on the measuring crystal.

A dazzling light appeared as the ranking was announced: Ninth rank!

This delicate and pretty woman was actually at the ninth rank! Many of the arrogant sect disciples all felt their souls leave their bodies. What the hell had they spent all those damn years of cultivation for?

Even Wang Wuxie and the other sect masters couldn't help but give her a second look. Apart from Wan Guiyi, Jadedfall Palace actually had such an outstanding disciple? Could it be that in the future, Jadedfall Palace would become the number one daoist sect?

Only Huo Ling raised her chin proudly, enjoying the looks of jealousy she was receiving from the different powers.

Qiu Honglei couldn't help but mutter, "Master, is there something wrong with our Holy Sect's Heavenly Devil Temptation?"

Yun Jianyue replied in confusion, "Of course not. Why are you asking that?"

"I spent so much time in seclusion for the sake of cultivation before, and I couldn't even be around big brother Zu. On several occasions, my cultivation almost deviated; only then did I reach my current level of cultivation. She doesn't seem to have gone through much, and yet she easily reached roughly the same level," Qiu Honglei said, starting to wonder whether the Holy Sect's spiritual cultivation method was inferior to those of the orthodox sects.

Yun Jianyue almost died from anger right there and then. She said, "First of all, her cultivation isn't at your level. Second, she definitely has to have encountered some opportunities to have cultivated so quickly. This cultivation speed definitely isn't something those Jaded Palace disciples can reach."

Those like Wan Guiyi, who had been nurtured with the entire sect's best resources, could naturally reach that level. However, it hadn't even been that long since Pei Mianman had joined Jaded Palace. Normally, there should have been no reason for her to have advanced so quickly. That meant the only explanation could be that she'd had some special encounters.

"Oh~" Qiu Honglei said with a deep sigh, clearly not too convinced by the explanation.

...

None of the disciples who followed could surpass Pei Mianman in cultivation. That continued until the Heavenly Sorrow Sect's Zhi Yin.

"Peak stage of the ninth rank!"

Even Watchful Peak's master, Feng Wuchang, gave him another look. Even though this youngster looked like a pretty boy, his talent was quite high. Apart from Wu Xiaofan, no one else in the Righteous Sun Sect even came close to him.

"As expected of a representative disciple!"

The disciples were all excited and began to discuss who would win the competition.

"I support big brother Zhi Yin!"

"I think Lou Wucheng has a higher chance. He obtained the true inheritance of the Immortal Sword. We can personally witness the power of the Immortal Sword now."

"Wu Xiaofan should be the number one among the daoist sects' younger generation, right?"

"Tsk, isn't that only because the Righteous Sun Sect is now the strongest, and that's what they've been bragging about? In my opinion, Wan Guiyi from Jaded Palace isn't inferior to him."

...

Soon afterward, the representative disciples of the nine sects came out one after another.

White Jade Palace's Lou Wucheng, peak stage of the ninth rank;

Kunlun Void Sect's Liang Ling, peak stage of the ninth rank;

Mount Luofu's Luo Dongjiang, mid stage of the ninth rank;

Purity Temple's Qiu Chanzi, mid stage of the ninth rank;

Emptiness Isle's Peng Wuyan, mid stage of the ninth rank;

Supreme Mystery Cave's Shi Dingtian, mid stage of the ninth rank.

...

Among them, Emptiness Isle's Peng Wuyan drew quite a bit of attention. Normally, because cultivators gathered the natural ki of the world into their bodies, their skin was normally in excellent condition. Even if the cultivator wasn't ridiculously handsome or beautiful, they definitely wouldn't be ugly. However, this Peng Wuyan was exceptionally ugly, to the extent that others wouldn't want to give her a second glance.

In the meantime, everyone had already gotten used to seeing the White Jade Sect's Fairy Chu and Jedefall Palace's Lady Pei. The Heavenly Sorrow Sect's Princess Butterfly was also present. They were all top-tier beauties. When they saw Peng Wuyan now, they all felt a stark contrast, almost as if it hurt their eyes.

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Zu An was a bit confused. He had noticed Peng Wuyan sneaking a few secret looks at him. He clearly didn't have anything to do with her, so why would she pay attention to him?

Could it be because I'm handsome?

Shortly after, however, a cry of alarm rang out, because Righteous Sun Sect's Wu Xiaofan stepped forward to test himself. Wu Xiaofan had thick eyebrows and big eyes. He looked very ordinary as well, just like any normal, honest person.

However, his cultivation wasn't ordinary at all: Master rank! He was so young, and yet he had already reached the master rank! His cultivation speed had to be unprecedented, right?

The sect masters and elders all offered Wang Wuxie their congratulations. Their overwhelming jealousy was evident.

Wang Wuxie had a humble expression, as if to downplay the situation. Inwardly, though, he felt ecstatic, only hoping they would praise him more.

Only Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue had ordinary expressions. In the past, the two of them would have been shocked by such cultivation speed. But after seeing a monster like Zu An, they could only conclude that this Wu Xiaofan was still far too lacking. The two couldn't help but give Zu An a look.

Meanwhile, Zu An was secretly comparing these elites with the Fiend races' younger generation. The Fiend races' cultivation ranks were a bit higher. At the very least, master rank wasn't something to be that happy about. However, the Fiend races relied on awakening their bloodlines to a certain extent, so the rate at which their strength increased was faster than it was for humans to begin with. In contrast, the humans relied on studying and slowly accumulating their strength. At first, they wouldn't necessarily be able to compare to the Fiend races, but in the upper bounds of the later stages, they could actually reach higher peaks.

Suddenly, more people gasped. As it happened, Jedefall Palace's Wan Guiyi's cultivation was shockingly also at the master rank.

Wu Xiaofan had previously been assumed to be the number one among the younger generation. That was why his being at the master rank wasn't too big of a surprise. However, what no one had expected was that there was actually someone else on par with him. Now, this competition would be even more interesting to watch.

It was now Wan Tongtian's turn to stick out his chest in pride as he received everyone's seemingly enthusiastic, but inwardly envious, congratulations. I don't care! The more jealous you are, the happier I am!

Even Wang Wuxie was feeling a bit jealous. Wan Tongtian gave birth to a good son! If Xuehen and I had ended up together in the past, our child's talent would definitely be even higher than Wan Guiyi's.

He couldn't help but feel a bit downcast when he thought of that. He reflexively glanced at Yan Xuehen, and was stunned by what he saw. She seemed to be staring at Zu An absentmindedly.

Chapter 1628: Danger

Could it be that she really is satisfied with this martial son-in-law?

But that doesn't match Yan Xuehen's nature at all! Isn't she supposed to be the type who tells all men to get lost? Just sparing his life alone should already be tremendous mercy. How could she possibly allow him to stay around her disciple?

What was even harder for him to understand was the expression in Yan Xuehen's eyes. There almost seemed to be something different in her eyes when she looked at Zu An, an expression he had never seen before. He couldn't really understand what that look meant, but it made him a bit uncomfortable.

However, he quickly laughed at himself. What in the world am I thinking? I'm actually jealous of some young junior.

...

The cultivation rank test concluded shortly after. Some were happy, while others were not. There were well-known representative disciples, such as Wu Xiaofan; there were also dark horses that made a sudden appearance, such as Pei Mianman. People all wondered who would win, and who could get second place in their groups... They all tacitly agreed that the first place belonged to the representative disciples of the nine sects, but as for the other spots, they didn't even dare to speculate.

When it was time to divide everyone into groups, the sects' seniors gave their members a final speech before the competition began.

Guan Chouhai told Zhi Yin, "Wu Xiaofan and Wan Guiyi breaking through into the master rank is a bit unexpected, but you do not need to feel too discouraged. Cultivation rank does not represent your ultimate strength, which also depends on your battle skills, adaptability, mental state, and other such things. You are just one step away from master rank yourself, so the difference between you is not that significant. As long as you deal with the situation appropriately, you will still have a chance to win."

“Thank you for your teachings, master!” Zhi Yin replied with a nod. Fighting spirit burned in his eyes once more.

He was Heavenly Sorrow Sect’s most outstanding disciple, after all. Even though he felt discouraged because of Chu Chuyan, love wasn’t his entire world. After being spurred by Wu Xiaofan and Wan Guiyi’s results, he had gradually awakened his pride again. Weren’t all his years of bitter cultivation precisely to shine in this great competition?

The lot drawing quickly concluded, and the Watchful Peak Master declared the official start to the great competition. The nine groups would start their competition at the same time.

The Righteous Sun Sect had already divided up the different areas of Golden Peak to set up competition stages. Fortunately, Golden Peak was extremely large, so it wasn’t too difficult to hold everyone. Every single elevated stage had formations put in place by Righteous Sun Sect’s peak masters and elders in order to prevent the disciples’ battles from damaging the place.

One after another, the disciples got on stage to compete according to the order in which they had drawn lots.

Meanwhile, Xie Daoyun returned to Zu An’s side and shook her head slightly. She hadn’t noticed any signs of killing formations when she looked around. She had been worried that perhaps it was because her own cultivation wasn’t high enough, and thus used a special method her teacher taught her. However, there was still no reaction.

Zu An told her with a smile, “That’s a good thing. You can just enjoy your vacation now, as well as this competition between the nine sects. Who knows, you might even be able to learn a bit through them.”

Xie Daoyun voiced her agreement and obediently stood at his side. Even though the Royal Academy’s teachers had abundant resources, she still lacked real fighting experience. Otherwise, she wouldn’t have been in such a sorry state after leaving the capital and running into the Twin Dragon Mountains.

The competition soon began. Xie Daoyun had thought that the battles would be spectacular and brilliant, but they often ended with just a few moves.

When he saw her disappointed expression, Zu An explained with a smile, “Battles are often decided quickly when there’s a difference in strength. Those situations where both parties are completely evenly matched are a rare sight.”

“Ah, I see,” Xie Daoyun said, shivering. As she watched more closely, however, she gradually picked up more things. The two fighters tried to sound each other out at first, and then whenever there was a chance, they struck like lightning. She could sense that she was learning some things she hadn’t known before.

Meanwhile, Zu An’s attention was mainly on Pei Mianman. He didn’t really care if anyone else won or lost.

When Pei Mianman’s turn finally came, however, the audience all gasped in surprise. This woman was just too much for the eyes. Most importantly, not only were ‘they’ big, she also had such a beautiful face and charming smile. It was difficult for others not to have a good impression of her.

“Purity Temple, Yuan Kun. Please... Please exchange some pointers with me,” a young disciple said, cupping his hands toward her. His voice trembled a bit; it definitely wasn’t because of fear, however, but because he was too moved. After all, facing a beauty like this on the same stage meant that they couldn’t help but make physical contact. If they managed to hit it off on stage and could become friends after, perhaps things would even be able to develop a stage further...

“Jadefall Palace’s Pei Mianman. I hope that senior brother will be lenient,” Pei Mianman said with a smile. When he saw her smile, Yuan Kun immediately felt dizzy.

“Miss Pei really is pretty, and her smile is so beautiful,” Xie Daoyun said. Even as a woman, she couldn’t help but sigh in praise.

Zu An couldn’t help but chuckle. Big Manman was always like this, showing anyone a big smile. But if one really had any untoward thoughts about her, one would probably pay the price.

Sure enough, when Yuan Kun heard Pei Mianman ask him to be lenient, even though he continuously told himself to calm down, his heart began pounding so hard his soul felt as if it would leave his body. Even though her cultivation was high, his wasn’t that low either. Furthermore, he didn’t think a dainty-looking junior sister such as her could be that great at fighting. He thought of letting her make three moves first so she could sense his generosity, and they could also interact with each other longer. Then, in the end, he would look for an opportunity to defeat her so she could admire his strength...

However, as soon as that thought emerged, he sensed a black flame sweep toward him. He was horrified, and quickly raised his sword to defend himself. But who would have thought that the black flame would be so powerful, it burned his sword directly to ashes?

He was greatly alarmed and quickly used all sorts of cultivation skills and methods to get rid of the black flames. No matter what he did, though, the black flame just wouldn’t leave him. Feeling helpless, he could only tear off his sleeves and leap off the stage. Only then did the black flames retreat.

Pei Mianman cupped her hands and said with a smile, “Senior brother let me win.”

Yuan Kun’s expression was a bit awkward. He looked as if he wanted to cry, but couldn’t. Previously, he had felt that her smile was bright and beautiful. Now, he only felt that it was a little scary.

He actually hadn’t brought out too many of his trump cards, and yet he had already been forced off the stage before even touching the corners of her clothes. How could he say anything in front of the crowd? He cupped his hands and left in a sorry state.

Many spectators were in an uproar. They hadn’t expected this delicate and pretty flower to be so formidable! Furthermore, it was clear that she had a lot of fighting experience. Now, none of them were willing to judge her by her appearance anymore.

“Miss Pei is so amazing,” Xie Daoyun said, her little mouth hanging wide open.

Zu An was also a bit surprised. Big Manman’s cultivation had increased by a considerable amount! It seemed that Jadefall Palace wasn’t known as a large and powerful sect for nothing. They had quite the resources backing them.

Meanwhile, Qiu Honglei said with a sigh, "I heard about her amazing talent when I was back in Brightmoon City. Now that we've met, she doesn't seem to be worse than me."

"She is indeed no worse than you. She's still hiding her strength," Yun Jianyue said, feeling a headache coming on. "Why are all of the women at that brat's side such monsters?"

Qiu Honglei said proudly, "My Ah Zu is just that amazing."

Yun Jianyue was speechless. Sigh, this stupid disciple of mine. Is that something you should be feeling happy over?

...

Meanwhile, Yan Xuehen's eyes also narrowed. She naturally noticed that something was different. She was a bit worried. The Devil Sect's Qiu Honglei was already a formidable opponent. She hadn't expected Pei Mianman to also be so powerful.

A hint of surprise flickered through Wang Wuxie's eyes as well. Soon after, however, his expression turned pensive. Either way, this female disciple wasn't in the same group as Wu Xiaofan, which meant he had a good show to enjoy now.

Nothing too interesting happened in the matches afterward, but there were still some small dark horses. Even though their cultivation ranks were lower, they still won against opponents at higher ranks. However, it was only a single rank at most. Trying to challenge anything more than that was practically impossible for them.

When it was time for the seeded players to come out, their opponents all had ugly expressions. Most of them chose to concede on their own. At any other time, perhaps some strong fighters would muster the courage to fight it out. Even if they lost, the experience of fighting would be invaluable. However, in this competition, apart from the top scorer of each group making it in for certain, the next eight would still have to take part in a cruel elimination tournament.

Not only would they have to obtain as many victories within their groups as possible to ensure that they could enter that tournament, they also had to prepare for the elimination round itself. Furthermore, the battles would all take place in the span of a few days. If they exhausted too much strength while fighting against the representative disciples, there would be a high chance of it costing them later on in the knockout competition.

However, that didn't mean no one wanted to give it a try. For example, Peng Wuyan had an opponent. Perhaps because Emptiness Isle had always been in the last place among the nine sects and Peng Wuyan's reputation wasn't that high, her opponent decided to give it a try. After all, as long as he could win against this weak-looking representative disciple, he would be able to make it out of the group stage and wouldn't even have to join the bitter elimination tournament.

Unfortunately, reality was cruel. He was quickly beaten off the stage by Peng Wuyan, and his injuries were quite severe. It was obvious that he couldn't continue fighting for a while, thus losing any chances of making a comeback.

This ugly woman really is vicious!

The surrounding disciples' eyes were full of fear as they looked at the woman on the stage.

Zu An understood why she would be so ruthless here; it was clearly to serve a warning to the others. Otherwise, they would think that she was easy to bully and come to challenge her one after another. Even if she could defeat them, she would end up wasting a lot of strength. That would definitely cost her later on when she had to face the other representative disciples, so it was better to just get it over with now. As for the seriously wounded disciple, he deserved it. As he had been willing to make the gamble, he should have been prepared for the consequences.

However, the wounded disciple's sect didn't think of it that way. Someone from Mount Luofu called the fight into question, protesting, "This Lady Peng was too vicious, and that clearly goes against the competition's rules. She ought to have her participation qualification revoked!"

Yun Jianyue had felt really refreshed after seeing her precious disciple deal with a daoist sect's elite so easily. When she heard that, she couldn't help but erupt into fury, retorting, "Disgraceful! His skills were too weak; what does it have to do with my disciple?!"

The elder from Mount Luofu, Elder Xu, couldn't just sit still any longer after being lectured that way and retorted, "Previously, Sect Master Wang told us that the fights needed to be carried out within certain parameters. Your disciple clearly could have won easily, and yet she decided to be so merciless and crippled our disciple to the point that he cannot participate in the competition anymore. That clearly goes against the rules and she should be punished."

On the stage, Qiu Honglei felt a bit alarmed. She did come from the Devil Sect, after all, and had instinctively used this person as an example for the others. She hadn't expected the daoist sects to have so many rules! If this really got out of hand and her identity got exposed, she would be in danger.

Chapter 1629: Stumbling Block

Yun Jianyue immediately cursed Mount Luofu's Elder Xu loudly. Elder Xu didn't want to be outdone, so the two immediately began to berate each other.

When had the disciples ever seen such a thing? It was just like students encountering teachers fighting. They all watched with great interest.

Meanwhile, the sect masters had strange expressions. They had already known about the temper of Emptiness Isle's Elder Peng for some time. Now, it seemed that was indeed the case.

Yun Jianyue was getting more and more worked up. It was one thing for Qiu Honglei, seeing as she didn't have too much experience in such a situation, but who was she? She was the Devil Sect Master who had walked through mountains of corpses and seas of blood! Even if her identity got exposed, who could keep her here? Even though she couldn't win against them if they joined hands, with her cultivation, she could still get away without a problem.

As for Qiu Honglei, she wouldn't be able to get away, but Yun Jianyue didn't believe that they would make things difficult for her. Otherwise, these sect masters had their own wives and children back at home, right? Even though someone like Wang Wuxie didn't have wives or kids, he had his precious disciple. Furthermore, the Righteous Sun Sect was so large. If Yun Jianyue really went crazy, it would all

go to the afterlife with her. As such, she had nothing to fear at all, let alone considering the fact that their side hadn't even done anything wrong this time.

Mount Luofu's Elder Xu discovered in disappointment that he couldn't beat his opponent's argument. He gave Wang Wuxie a look and requested help, asking, "Sect Master Wang, you need to uphold justice for the seriously wounded disciple below!"

Wang Wuxie, who had just been watching the show with great relish, froze up. But he quickly nodded and looked at the other sects, asking, "What does everyone else think of matter?"

Guan Chouhai, Wan Tongtian, and the others cursed him for being an old fox. He had tossed a hot potato straight to them. No matter which side they stood up for in such a situation, they would end up offending one side!

Even though Mount Luofu and Emptiness Isle were both near the bottom in terms of rank, so the other sects weren't too scared of offending them, speaking up would just be adding an enemy for themselves where there was no reason for them to get involved in the first place. As such, they all looked away, waiting for someone else to be the first to speak. Only then would they try to smooth things over. That way, they wouldn't offend anyone and everyone would be happy.

Unfortunately, all of them were smart, and none of them wanted to be the idiot who began this conversation. As for Yan Xuehen, she was rather cold to begin with. No one even considered that she would say anything from the start.

When it seemed almost as if the awkward silence was going to persist indefinitely, Zu An called out in a frivolous tone, "If I recall correctly, the rules were that you couldn't kill on purpose, nor were you allowed to cripple someone. That little bro down there might be injured, but there's no danger to his life, and he'll be as good as new after resting for a while. We can't really call that crippling him, no?"

"If your Mount Luofu is willing to take out some treatment medicine, he might even be able to participate in the latter half of this competition. That's why Emptiness Isle's Lady Peng here didn't violate any rules, in my opinion."

The onlookers had strange expressions. They hadn't expected it to be this brat who would take the hit! But that was fine too, because his opinion was actually in line with what they were all thinking. However, if they had said so, they would end up offending Mount Luofu. Now, all of Mount Luofu's hatred was focused on this kid instead.

Yan Xuehen reflexively glanced at Peng Wuyan. Hmph, her appearance is less than impressive, so I don't think Zu An is doing this out of lustful intentions.

This kid is actually pretty righteous, hm?

Qiu Honglei, who had felt a bit restless, was now happy. I didn't expect Ah Zu to still help me even though I look like this! Is this the sign of two hearts beating as one? He still cares about me after all!

Even Yun Jianyue became a bit absent-minded. After so many years, she had already gotten used to always being the one to deal with everything herself and having to shield others. That was why she hadn't held back at all as she berated Elder Xu. She had even been prepared to unleash a great slaughter

upon Violet Mountain. But now, a man had suddenly helped her take on a share of her burden. Such a feeling really wasn't bad...

Pah pah pah! What am I thinking right now? He doesn't even know who we are, and Honglei looks like that right now. This perverted guy clearly isn't doing this for the sake of beauty, but to uphold justice.

If our Devil Sect's witch ends up with a man full of righteousness, won't we become a total laughingstock...

Elder Xu shouted, "What does someone without an ounce of cultivation like you know?!"

Their disciple could perhaps be able to continue fighting with treatment, but what meaning would there be left? After being forced to forfeit so many rounds, there was already no chance of him obtaining a slot in the competition.

This disciple was a candidate Mount Luofu cared quite a bit about, too. They had initially wanted to see whether they could use the chance to get another slot. Now that they had lost the opportunity, Mount Luofu was naturally unhappy.

Zu An's expression grew cold as he replied, "I am the court's Imperial Envoy. Can I interpret this as you looking down on the court?"

Elder Xu's expression changed. Even though Mount Luofu was long-established in terms of history, its strength was far from that of the court. How could they dare to offend them? He could only reply, "Hmph, this is a competition between our daoist sects, part of our internal affairs. Why are you bringing in the court?"

Zu An shrugged and replied, "Because I am a judge, and I am also the Imperial Envoy. Similarly, Sect Master Wang is the host, but he is also the State Teacher."

Wang Wuxie hadn't expected to be dragged into this battle. Zu An's implication was clear: Both of them were working for the court, so they had to stand on the same front.

Even though he was unhappy, he could only helplessly accept this reality. He coughed and was about to smooth things over when Yan Xuehen suddenly said, "I feel that what Sir Zu said is reasonable. Even though this disciple's injuries are serious, it has not reached the level of permanent damage. Furthermore, Emptiness Isle's Lady Peng was only acting out of consideration for the following competition. Being a bit swifter in defeating her opponent than usual is pardonable."

Yan Xuehen's prestige was very high. When she spoke up, the others quickly chimed in as well.

Wang Wuxie was stunned. Is this still the Yan Xuehen I know?

When did the woman who was as arrogant and cold as a frozen mountain suddenly become so warmhearted and understanding?

Something is strange!

Unfortunately, he couldn't figure out what was wrong no matter how he thought about it, so he could only deal with the problem right in front of him for the time being. He was worried that Mount Luofu would direct their anger at Yan Xuehen, so he spoke up to console Elder Xu. At the same time, he used

his identity to bring out a bottle of medicine for that disciple's injury. Only then did he barely appease Mount Luofu's dissatisfaction.

When Qiu Honglei returned to her camp, she secretly told Yun Jianyue, "Master, I think Sect Master Yan is actually a pretty good person."

"Hmph, she always puts on that fake and superficial air of self-righteousness. It's nothing more than an attempt to bribe the hearts of others," Yun Jianyue said with a hint of envy when she saw how enthusiastically those sect masters treated Yan Xuehen.

Master, you're just jealous... Qiu Honglei thought. She opened her mouth, but she was worried that she would be beaten, so in the end, she didn't say anything.

...

Then, the groups continued their fights. With that pitiful contestant from Mount Luofu as an example, almost no one challenged the representative disciples again; instead, they tried to win a few more fights against others to get the best chance of seizing the number two spot.

Zhao Xiaodie was one of them. She was unlucky enough to have ended up in the same group as Wu Xiaofan, so she sensibly admitted defeat. However, she didn't hold back against anyone else, always dispatching her opponents cleanly and swiftly. Most of the time, her Rainbow Butterfly Steps were enough to defeat her opponents. Against the stronger ones, once she brought out her poison, her opponents often had no choice but to concede. Of course, right after her victory was decided, she quickly provided the antidote, so there were no debates about fairness the way there had been with Qiu Honglei.

Because she had felt ill at ease, she had previously stayed inside and rarely left. As such, this was the first time the other disciples had seen her. They were all surprised by her beautiful appearance, making her resemble a colorful butterfly. Furthermore, because she was really strong and had only lost to Wu Xiaofan, she had become even more popular.

Many people began to privately ask about who this beautiful woman was. When they learned that she was actually King Qi's daughter, quite a few men's eyes began to shine. The look in their eyes was a sort of 'I don't want to work hard anymore' expression. For all sorts of reasons, she had become a goddess on the same level as Chu Chuyan and Pei Mianman in this competition.

Zhao Xiaodie definitely noticed the enthusiastic expressions. At any other time, she would have felt extremely proud of herself, but she didn't care about any of it at all. She only glanced toward a certain figure on the stage from time to time.

"There's definitely a scandal here!" Yun Jianyue suddenly remarked with a snort.

"What scandal?" Qiu Honglei exclaimed, jumping in fright.

Yun Jianyue nudged her chin toward the butterfly-like woman and said, "Something has definitely happened between Zu An and that woman. Look at that resentful expression; it's full of strong feelings of love and hate."

“Really? Why can’t I see anything?” Qiu Honglei replied, giving her a doubtful look. She continued, “Master, I’ve discovered that ever since you came back from the Fiend races’ territory, you’ve become an expert at romance.”

Yun Jianyue was alarmed. She replied without batting an eyelid, “I was the one who taught you those charm skills. What’s so strange about me knowing about these things?”

“Is that so?” Qiu Honglei replied skeptically.

Meanwhile, Yan Xuehen also had doubts. She had also keenly sensed the way Zhao Xiaodie looked at Zu An. She thought, Wasn’t King Qi’s relationship with Zu An bad? The two of them even had some conflict when they were at King Yan Manor last time...

...

Meanwhile, Zu An’s attention was completely focused on Pei Mianman. Big Manman won several victories in a row. Unfortunately, she was about to face another opponent who was on a win streak: Heavenly Sorrow Sect’s Zhi Yin!

Chapter 1630 – Push of the Iron Mountain

Zhi Yin shook his snow-white cloak when he got on the stage. Between that and his handsome smile, the women who were watching the battle all screamed.

“Big brother Zhi Yin is so handsome! I’m going to die~”

“We have to protect the world’s greatest big brother, Zhi Yin, together!”

“Big brother, you can do it!”

...

When he heard the female disciples’ encouragement, Zhi Yin’s previously gloomy mood due to Chu Chuyan’s situation finally eased a bit. He looked at the woman across from him and suddenly became a bit absentminded.

He had thought that Chu Chuyan was the world’s prettiest woman, but he hadn’t expected there to be someone else who wasn’t inferior to her at all. The woman in front of him had a beauty that was entirely different from Chu Chuyan’s. Every frown and smile she made seemed to tug at his very soul! Of course, the most alarming feature she had was the movement of her chest. It really made one’s eyes and heart jump along with it.

He took a deep breath and secretly warned himself not to do anything that would let down Fairy Chu, reminding himself that he was fully devoted to her. Only then did he say to Pei Mianman, “Lady Pei, you should forfeit. With your strength, you absolutely have the qualification to become the second place in our group. Obtaining a spot in the quota shouldn’t be too difficult of a matter for you.”

Pei Mianman sorted out her hair, which had become a bit messy due to the wind. She said with a smile, “Thank you for your reminder, senior brother. However, I still want to give it a try.”

Zhi Yin's smile froze when he heard the response. Just then, a strange silence fell. Ever since that Mount Luofu disciple who had overestimated his own abilities and was seriously injured as a result, Pei Mianman was the first one who had challenged a representative disciple. Many people were worried for her. After all, this was such a pretty woman with such a big smile, so how could they not have a good impression of her?

The sect masters exchanged a look. Apart from Heavenly Sorrow Sect's Guan Choutian, whose expression was a bit ugly, the others all nodded.

Wang Wuxie couldn't help but say in praise, "As cultivators, we should be facing challenges head-on like this and strive to be number one."

The others immediately surrendering as soon as they encountered a representative disciple really weren't what the leaders had had in mind when they planned the Nine Sects Great Competition. This competition was supposed to forge the disciples into something stronger.

Guan Chouhai thought, This guy sure speaks nice words, but isn't this only because she isn't challenging your Wu Xiaofan?

He naturally wasn't worried that Zhi Yin would lose, but Pei Mianman's cultivation wasn't low. After fighting with her, he will definitely be a bit worn out. Then, once the first-place participants from each group fought, it would be disadvantageous for him.

Mount Luofu's Elder Xu had an even unhappier expression. Earlier, why hadn't there been any words of praise when their disciple challenged Peng Wuyan? Wasn't it all because Pei Mianman was pretty?

Yan Xuehen gave Pei Mianman a careful look and nodded inwardly. This woman's talent wasn't bad, but her steadfast will and courage were even rarer traits. It was a pity that Yan Xuehen hadn't met her earlier; if she could have taken Pei Mianman as a disciple too, her achievements would definitely have been on par with Chu Chuyan's.

However, she suddenly remembered her relationship with Zu An; in that case, both of her disciples would have been swindled by that brat Zu An! She practically wouldn't even be able to sleep at night from anger.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +20 +20 +20...

...

Meanwhile, Qiu Honglei tugged at Yun Jianyue's sleeves, asking, "Master, who do you think will win?"

Yun Jianyue thought to herself for a bit and replied, "It's hard to say. That big-boobed woman was holding back before, but that pretty boy is Heavenly Sorrow Sect's representative disciple. He's definitely a tough opponent."

Qiu Honglei was speechless. Her master's habit of giving people nicknames hadn't changed, but they really were big...

...

On Tranquility Temple's side, the little monk Jie Se asked a similar question. "Which benefactor below does master think will win?"

Master Jian Huang had a profound look as he replied, "Who do you want to win more?"

"I hope Lady Pei wins. Her courage in facing a challenge is admirable," Jie Se reflexively replied.

"Is her bravery what you admire?" Master Jian Huang harrumphed. "Copy our tenets a hundred times when we go back, then write the heart sutra from memory a hundred times."

Jie Se was speechless.

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...

Xie Daoyun secretly asked Zu An, "Big brother Zu, can Miss Pei win?" After all, they had been fellow students before at Brightmoon Academy, so she naturally felt closer to Pei Mianman than Zhi Yin.

"I'm not sure," Zu An said with a frown. Then, he sent Pei Mianman a ki transmission, saying, "Big Manman, there's no need for you to take the risk here. Second place is already practically yours."

That pretty boy Zhi Yin was Heavenly Sorrow's representative disciple, after all. With Big Manman's previous cultivation, she definitely wouldn't have been his match, but he didn't know how much she had improved since then.

Pei Mianman had a huge smile as she replied, "You know, I was a genius before I met you. I don't want to lose to anyone." If she didn't even dare to face Zhi Yin, how was she going to beat Chuyan?

When he sensed the firmness of her resolve, Zu An couldn't really try to convince her further. After remaining silent for a moment, he said with a smile, "Then Big Manman can just fight to your heart's content. If there are any consequences, I'll help you cover it up."

A bright and beautiful smile appeared on Pei Mianman's face. The two of them were already connected in body and spirit, so there was no need to say too many words of gratitude.

Meanwhile, Zhi Yin only felt everything in front of him blur. This Lady Pei's smile really was beautiful! He thought, I should be a bit more lenient later. I can't make her loss look too ugly.

As such, he gestured for her to start in a noble manner, saying, "Lady Pei, please make your move."

His confident appearance left many young ladies star-struck.

"Big brother is so handsome!"

"As expected of Heavenly Sorrow Sect's noble prince!"

...

Pei Mianman didn't decline and slowly drew her longsword, replying, "I'll be offending big brother."

Then, her longsword thrust toward her opponent, unleashing a wildly powerful wave of energy. The longsword clearly looked graceful and thin, and yet it unleashed incredible power when it was thrust

forth! Her fighting style really was ferocious. Most importantly, every single slash contained an extremely vicious power, as if she were a general who had survived battles involving thousands of people. The disciples nearby with low cultivations even found it a bit hard to breathe.

The expressions of the disciples from the nine daoist sects changed. The competitors who had lost to her before fully accepted their defeat. Previously, they had felt that this woman just relied on that strange black flame of hers and that her true strength wouldn't have been sufficient to win against them, but at this moment, they all subconsciously thought that she hadn't been using her full strength before at all.

A reminiscent smile appeared on Zu An's face. In the Yinxu secret dungeon, Pei Mianman had lived for many years as the war goddess Fu Hao, someone who left enemies terror-stricken on the battlefield! That level of boldness had already been etched into her bones. If anyone mistook her for some dainty flower vase, they would pay a big price for that error in judgment.

Sure enough, Zhi Yin hadn't expected her attack to be so overwhelming. He couldn't help but become a bit flustered. Fortunately, his movement technique was profound, and he was always able to just barely avoid the attacks. However, he had already long forgotten his previous thoughts of going easy on his opponent. On many occasions, he wanted to counterattack, but now that he had lost the initiative, seizing it back wouldn't be so easy.

Sword ki flew across the battlefield and their clothes fluttered around. The surrounding disciples were dazzled by the battle, shocked by Pei Mianman's ferocious attacks and in awe of Zhi Yin's advanced movement skill. This was the first time they had seen a representative disciple put in such a tough situation.

Suddenly, with a loud and clear sound, a white cloth fluttered through the air. It turned out that Zhi Yin hadn't evaded in time, and Pei Mianman's sword had sliced through the cloak he was wearing!

The entire battlefield erupted with gasps. They hadn't expected that the first one left at a disadvantage would be Zhi Yin! Could it be that a representative disciple was going to lose for the first time?

In the previous daoist sect competitions, there had been instances of representative disciples experiencing upsets, but it was extremely rare. Only three or four instances had ever been recorded. Every single one had been used by the sects as teaching material for their disciples. Those individuals had practically been nailed to a pillar of humiliation for over a thousand years. Could it be that Zhi Yin was going to become the new laughingstock?

However, others had deeper insights. Jaded Palace's Wan Guiyi sneered and said, "That was only because Zhi Yin was trying to act handsome, always wearing that hindrance of a cloak. Now, he has paid the price for it. But now, he has obtained an opportunity."

Sure enough, after losing his cloak, Zhi Yin's movements became much more agile. After avoiding the sword strike, he brought his knee downward. When his foot made contact with the ground, it struck with enough force to produce cracks. Borrowing that force, he leaned into his opponent's sword.

Pei Mianman's blade immediately bent like a crescent moon, groaning under the pressure. Fortunately, her reaction was extremely quick. She did several somersaults backward, all the way to the edge of the

stage; only then did she finally neutralize the tremendous force. Even so, there was still an unnatural blush on her face. She was clearly injured.

“Push of the Iron Mountain!” those who knew the skill shouted.

The other representative disciples also narrowed their eyes. This was Zhi Yin’s ultimate skill. It used his entire body as a conduit to transfer the force of the earth. Its power was rumored to feel like the weight of a mountain. They had finally seen it for themselves today! As expected, its strength was exceptional.

Zhi Yin didn’t press the attack, instead saying elegantly to Pei Mianman, “The fact that you were able to pressure me this far is already something to be proud of. However, if you still refuse to use your black flames, you might not have another chance.”

His gestures and movements made a group of female disciples scream again.

“He’s so good! I really...”

Of course, the male disciples next to them all wrinkled their noses and rolled their eyes.

“Then senior brother needs to be careful,” Pei Mianman said. At the same time, a ring of raging black flames surrounded her entire body.