

## Immortal 1651

### Chapter 1651: An Unexpected Weapon

Zu An suddenly sounded a bit shy as he replied, "How can I accept that? But if big sis Yan is willing, I'm not entirely opposed to it..."

Yan Xuehen was speechless. She almost laughed out of irritation from how shameless this guy was. She had never expected him to say that!

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +444 +444 +444...

She took a deep breath and reminded herself to retain an emotionless state, and that she couldn't get angry. Then, she suddenly revealed a hint of a sweet smile and said, "With my relationship with Chuyan, there is no way that could happen. I will give you one final chance. If you had to pick one between the two of us, who would you pick?"

She thought to herself, If this guy picks me, that means he's a fickle person. In that case, even if it meant she was hated by Chuyan, she would still have to end their relationship. She couldn't let this scoundrel deceive her.

If he picks Chuyan... Isn't that just how it should be? I'll properly congratulate them, and my heart should be able to become completely calm, like before.

"If I chose you, would you start a relationship with me?" Zu An suddenly asked as he looked at her pure, snow-white features.

"I would," Yan Xuehen said, although her heart gradually became ice-cold. Hmph, he is filth who forgets about his past relationships as soon as he sees a new person. He would definitely make the choice that pleased another woman most the moment he met them too.

Zu An looked at her for a while, then said, "Only a child would make a choice. An adult... would want it all."

Yan Xuehen's eyes widened. She had never expected him to say such a shameless thing in such a righteous way!

"Get lost!" she snapped as she stormed off angrily. For some reason, however, she sighed inwardly in relief.

When he saw her leave with a cold expression, Zu An realized that he really had provoked her too much this time. Sigh, I'm really not good at speaking against my conscience. If I had known it would be like this, I should have just said I'd choose her to make her feel better.

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Time quickly passed, and the semifinals arrived.

The judges sat down one after another. After the previous few days, even though they were still unfamiliar with each other, they at least knew who the others were. They all nodded toward each other with a smile.

Heavenly Sorrow's Guan Chouhai suddenly asked with a chuckle, "Who do you all think has a higher chance of winning in the first round?"

Previously, Zhi Yin's loss had made him lose a lot of face. However, due to the events of the past few days, especially the upsets that had occurred, his mood had gradually improved.

Wan Tongtian said with a chuckle, "It will be Wu Xiaofan, of course. He was able to win against Mount Luofu's representative disciple Luo Dongjiang effortlessly, while Wan Guiyi had so much trouble against Purity Temple's Qiu Chanzi."

Mount Luofu's Elder Xu and Purity Temple's Vice Temple Lord gave him an angry look. They both thought, Thank you oh so much for reminding us of that.

Zu An thought to himself, This Wan Tongtian's emotional quotient really is low. No wonder even though he and Elder Huo Ling had feelings for each other, they ended up hating each other instead.

Wang Wuxie said with a chuckle, "Brother Wan speaks too harshly. Xiaofan was just lucky in that round. Worthy nephew Luo is not so weak; it might just be that their styles were just a poor match, so nephew Luo could not bring out his full strength. As for Purity Temple's Qiu Chanzi, the Winter Cicada's Cries impressed even us judges, so few among his peers could win against him to begin with. Worthy nephew Wan's ability to win proves that his sword intent has already reached a level that follows his very heart's desires. That is why his chances of winning this match are quite high."

Elder Xu and Purity Temple's Vice Temple Lord's expressions immediately became much better. Receiving the recognition of Wang Wuxie made them both feel great. Even Wan Tongtian had a grin on his face. This mister Wang was handsome and spoke well; he was indeed someone worth getting to know.

Meanwhile, Zu An had a strange expression. He remembered how, in his previous world, students would all encourage each other when they were about to take a test; he hadn't expected the people of this world to be the same!

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The Righteous Sun Sect Elder who was presiding over the tournament officially declared the start of the competition. Wan Guiyi and Wu Xiaofan were already standing to either side of the stage. When their eyes met, the very air around them seemed to grow still.

Apart from the Righteous Sun Sect and Jadedfall Palace's disciples, the other spectators were also clearly divided into two sides.

One group supported Wu Xiaofan. After all, he had the greatest reputation and treated others with warmth and respect. It was hard for others to dislike him.

However, a large group of people supported Wan Guiyi. There were more female cultivators among them. Even though Wan Guiyi had a bit of 'eighth-grade syndrome' and was a bit haughty, he was handsome. Due to his looks, his 'chuunibyou[1]' and arrogance actually gave him a unique charm.

Wan Guiyi saw that Wu Xiaofan was empty-handed. He frowned and asked, "Are you not planning to use any weapons even against me?" At the same time, inwardly, he cursed Luo Dongjiang ruthlessly

again for not even bringing out any of Wu Xiaofan's real strength. He didn't even know what kind of weapon his opponent used.

Wu Xiaofan had a gentle expression as he replied, "All of my skills are in these hands of mine. Whether or not I have a weapon does not make a big difference."

Wan Guiyi harrumphed. He didn't say anything else. His finger flicked toward his sword, which quickly left the scabbard. It was as if a streak of lightning had appeared on the stage.

Gasps filled the air all across Golden Peak, because most of the students hadn't even clearly seen him draw the sword.

Qiu Chanzi also suddenly got up. He noticed that Wan Guiyi's sword was actually a bit faster than when they had faced each other. He thought, So he was still holding back his strength and is only going all out against Wu Xiaofan... He suddenly looked a bit dejected when he thought of that. He couldn't help but scratch his head, turning his hair all messy like a bird's nest.

"This Wan guy's sword isn't bad. Give him another ten years to grow and he'll definitely become a great enemy of our Holy Sect," Yun Jianyue said with a sigh.

Qiu Honglei was startled, asking, "Master, you're not thinking of getting rid of him, are you?"

There were daoist cultivators everywhere. If they went after an important disciple like Wan Guiyi, their identities would easily be put at risk.

"What are you thinking? Your master isn't one to bully juniors," Yun Jianyue said. "That's a fight between you guys. I won't take any part in it."

Qiu Honglei realized that even though her master came from the Devil Sect, she had always been proud. She had never stooped so low as to do such despicable things. From a certain perspective, she was more upright than some of these righteous sects' people.

Meanwhile, intense waves of ki emanated from the battlefield. Wu Xiaofan had seen Wan Guiyi's sword-drawing skill before, however. Even though it was even faster this time, to his surprise, he didn't panic. He sent a palm forward; the wind it emanated clashed with the sword energy, producing a powerful blast wave. The tough stage surface started to shatter, and the pieces were sucked up by the wind, sending sand and stone everywhere.

Watchful Heart Peak Master Feng Wuchang's eyes twitched. He was the one in charge of the stage preparation. Only the most precious stone materials were used to make the stages, and there were even defensive formations applied to them. And yet, these little monsters were getting more and more ridiculous with their fights, destroying a stage every round.

This is all money being thrown away! The State Teacher isn't the one managing these things, so of course he doesn't care! When he thought about the expenses they had incurred, Feng Wuchang felt as if he was about to cry.

"Huh? Wan Guiyi is actually taking the advantage!"

Many disciples were incredibly shocked. Most of them had favored Wu Xiaofan more, but Wan Guiyi was the one who was heavily pressuring his opponent.

Wan Guiyi's body had already turned into several afterimages, not once touching the ground from start to finish as he spun around above Wu Xiaofan's head. Countless copies of him attacked Wu Xiaofan from time to time.

Meanwhile, Wu Xiaofan sent endless palm strikes above his head, forming a terrifying storm in the air and neutralizing Wan Guiyi's attacks again and again.

However, the more experienced spectators could tell that Wu Xiaofan's position was extremely unfavorable. After all, if one always remained on the defensive, one would eventually slip up. He had spent the entire match defending and rarely had a chance to attack. If he showed any openings, it would quickly cause issues for him.

Sure enough, the glint of a sword's edge suddenly flashed out of the endless sword shadows. Wan Guiyi's real body rushed forth, unleashing a stunning strike toward Wu Xiaofan's ribs. It cut through the ki around Wu Xiaofan at a visible rate, thrusting toward his ribs.

However, Wu Xiaofan reacted quickly too. His palm slammed against the side of the sword, redirecting it to one side. Then, he kicked into the air, widening the gap between them.

Wan Guiyi didn't chase after him, instead standing in place with his sword. He said coldly, "You won't be my match if you still refuse to use a weapon."

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Qiu Honglei couldn't help but say mockingly, "Master, I've discovered that these disciples all have something wrong with their heads. They clearly have the advantage, and yet they don't press the attack and just love to show off. It's so inflexible and stupid."

Yun Jianyue replied, "That might be true for the others, and if they waste their chances and die as a result, they deserve it. But this Wan Guiyi is fully devoted to the sword. He looks down on winning through flukes, which is what makes his sword so formidable, and his future achievements potentially limitless. Of course, he has his flaws too. If he encounters a Devil Sect opponent, he'll just die prematurely without fully realizing his talent."

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Back on the stage, Wu Xiaofan sighed and said, "Previously, I felt that because Brother Wan was injured, it wasn't too appropriate for me to use a weapon. However, I didn't expect you to be so strong, leaving me at a disadvantage as a result."

As he spoke, he suddenly lowered his palms, before slowly raising them again. A golden light flew out from his abdomen. When the light scattered, it revealed a toothpick floating in front of him. It was pointing in Wan Guiyi's direction.

Wu Xiaofan said with a serious expression, "Mine is very big. You'll have to endure it."

Chapter 1652: It's Really Big

Zu An, who had been sipping on some tea, spat out everything in his mouth. He thought, What the hell?

The disciples were also stunned. Isn't it just a toothpick? How is it big?

However, when they remembered Wu Xiaofan's reputation, they wondered whether maybe there was something about the situation they just hadn't comprehended yet.

Wan Guiyi's expression was grave; naturally, he took the situation seriously, because he could feel that he had been locked onto by a mysterious energy.

"Brother Wan, please be careful," Wu Xiaofan reminded his opponents. Then, he pushed his hands together. The toothpick-like object turned into a small streak of light and flew toward his opponent.

Wan Guiyi got on his guard, and quickly used his movement skill to evade to one side, but he was still a moment too late. Blood erupted from his arm as the toothpick rushed past. He suddenly turned around to see that, after the toothpick passed by him, it turned around again like a pocket-sized flying sword. More importantly, it moved unpredictably, and it was extremely fast, almost as if it didn't follow the laws of physics.

Thus, he didn't dare to dodge anymore; instead, he brought his sword down toward the toothpick-like needle.

Clang!

A loud and clear noise resounded as Wan Guiyi accurately struck the toothpick.

The crowd erupted with cries of alarm; they were all filled with admiration, as Wan Guiyi had been able to hit such a small toothpick precisely even in such a situation. After all, they couldn't even see it clearly because of how fast it was, let alone intercept it.

The toothpick was knocked away, but it quickly attacked again from a different angle. Thus, Wan Guiyi's expression changed, and he brought out all of his sword skills. The entire stage flickered with cold flashes of light, and sword ki flew all around the place.

However, the toothpick was even more strange and unpredictable. It moved so quickly, it formed a visible trail due to the friction as it moved through the air. It practically formed a spherical cage around Wan Guiyi as it attacked him from all kinds of different directions.

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In the elevated judges' area, Guan Chouhai's expression changed. He muttered, "Is this a sword control skill?"

A true sword control skill was something only those at the life soul stage could use. Once one cultivated a yin soul, it could be attached to an object. Then, a cultivator could truly behead someone from a thousand miles away.

Of course, there were a few exceptionally talented individuals who could perform a simplified form of a flying sword technique within a shorter range. However, even a simplified sword control technique was extraordinary, and would be very difficult to defend against. Every single person who could do such a thing was a truly outstanding genius.

Wang Wuxie said humbly, "It cannot be considered a true sword control skill. It is nothing more than his own soulbound magic weapon." Even though he downplayed it, the others could still sense the pride in his voice.

They all looked at Wan Tongtian, feeling curious as to why, even though his son was in such a disadvantageous position, the father didn't seem worried in the slightest. Could it be...

Soon after, they received their answer. Wan Guiyi no longer brandished his sword against the toothpick, but instead held it in front of him. Then, a shockingly large wave of sword ki arose. With him at the center, a large projection of his sword appeared on the stage. Now, no matter how tricky and difficult to deal with the toothpick was, it bounced off whenever it made contact with the longsword projection.

Wan Guiyi's eyes widened as he said with a sneer, "If we're talking about swords, I'm the expert here!" As he spoke, he brought the sword in his hands down. The massive blade of sword ki came crashing down on Wu Xiaofan.

Wu Xiaofan's eyes rapidly contracted. A barrier of light instantly gathered around him. The sword ki struck the barrier, causing an enormous explosion. Smoke and dust soared into the air. The entire stage was cleaved in two!

Watchful Peak's Feng Wuchang's eyes twitched. All of this is money!

Aside from him, however, everyone else was more concerned with who had won and who had lost. Countless pairs of eyes stared at the debris-filled ruins.

Wu Xiaofan's figure gradually emerged. Unlike before, his clothes were already in tatters. He had clearly been wounded by the sword ki, and his face was covered in dirt. This was the first time he had been left in such a sorry state.

"You actually stopped it?" Wan Guiyi exclaimed, stunned. "But it doesn't matter. Let's see how many you can take!" Another massive blade of sword ki slammed down as soon as he finished his sentence. It had already completely locked down on his opponent; there was no way for Wu Xiaofan to avoid it.

Wu Xiaofan's expression turned grave. With a wave of his hand, the toothpick stopped its futile attacks and returned to him.

Wan Guiyi sneered. Are you going to use something so delicate to stop my massive sword? I'll just cut that sword, and you with it!

Earlier, he had been very frustrated by the toothpick's flexibility and unpredictability. Now that he finally had a chance to fight against his opponent head-on, how could he not be excited?

However, his smile quickly froze on his face. His eyeballs almost popped out of their sockets.

"It really is so big!"

No one knew who first said those words, but the attention of all those present was drawn to the item in Wu Xiaofan's hands.

The once-delicate toothpick seemed almost as if it had consumed some miracle drug. It began to grow until it became a thirty-meter-long staff. It was no smaller than the opposing giant sword at all; in fact, it was likely even a bit bigger!

Wu Xiaofan roared and swept the giant staff toward the sword.

A deafening explosion resounded as both sides' ki destroyed each other! Both combatants staggered, a bit of blood trickling out from the corners of their mouths. They had both received considerable injuries from the exchange.

Wan Guiyi finally realized why Wu Xiaofan had said 'Mine is very big. You'll have to endure it.' Even so, a vigorous fighting spirit ignited in his eyes. He raised his giant sword and brought it down, calling out, "Again!"

Wu Xiaofan also roared endlessly, no longer appearing as calm and composed as before.

The massive staff and the giant sword clashed countless times. The terrifying ki that erupted from the collisions actually required many of the judges to work together to control the stage area and prevent the surrounding spectators from getting injured.

The disciples of the nine sects were horrified. If any of them had to face such terrifying power directly, wouldn't they be instantly crushed into meat paste?

Lou Wucheng, Zhi Yin, and the other proud disciples all had ugly expressions. They knew that they would have been in quite the difficult situation if they were the ones fighting instead.

Just then, Jade Fall Palace's people all got up and cried out in alarm. They saw Wan Guiyi being knocked down by a strike. He struggled to crawl to his feet, his entire body dripping with blood. Unfortunately, his injuries were too severe, causing him to fail again and again. Eventually, he stabbed his sword into the ground, clenched his teeth, and barely managed to stand up.

Meanwhile, Wu Xiaofan slowly descended from the air. His clothes were already tattered like a beggar's, and his body also dripped with blood, clearly as a result of his opponent's sword ki. However, he could still stand calmly. Victory and defeat had already been decided.

Wan Guiyi was unwilling to give up. He tried to attack with his sword again, but the movements that normally seemed so easy now seemed impossible.

Wu Xiaofan sighed and said, "I had an unfair advantage in today's fight. If Brother Wan hadn't been injured before this fight, I might not have been able to win today."

The spectators all approved of those words. Wu Xiaofan was the one people all publicly acknowledged as being number one in the younger generation, after all. Whether in terms of his cultivation or temperament, those were both great enough to convince them all.

However, some sharp-eyed spectators noticed that his hands, which were both behind his back, trembled continuously. Wu Xiaofan was definitely in extremely poor condition. Thus, he was likely telling the truth. If the two of them had fought at their peak, it would indeed be hard to say who was stronger.

Wan Guiyi remained silent for a while. Eventually, he harrumphed and said, "A loss is a loss. Why bother making excuses?" Then, he used his sword as support and walked toward the edge of the stage, one step after another.

Wan Tongtian felt really sorry watching his son, and quickly flew over to help him.

"Father, sorry," Wan Guiyi said, unable to hold on. He fell straight into his father's arms.

Wan Tongtian's eyes were full of tears as he replied, "No, my child. You've already done extremely well."

The distant Elder Huo Ling snorted as she saw the scene. Then, she said to Pei Mianman, "You have to win next time, and let these daoist sects see just who is more reliable from our Jedefall Palace."

Even though Pei Mianman's foundation was weaker, after two byes in a row, she would likely have the advantage after saving her strength for two rounds. Taking the final victory wasn't entirely out of the realm of possibility.

Pei Mianman said helplessly, "Senior brother fought for the glory of our Jedefall Sect. There's no reason to throw stones at him while he's down, is there?"

Master's resentment toward the palace lord really is too much...

"A loss is a loss; what glory is there from that?" Elder Huo Ling harrumphed. She felt extremely irritated, but she also gave up on her thoughts of going over and ridiculing the other side.

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Tranquility Temple's Master Jian Huang suddenly released a deep sigh.

"What is it, master?" the little monk Jie Se asked curiously.

"I feel that our Buddhist sect's prospects are worrisome," Master Jian Huang said with furrowed brows.

"Why do you say that?" Jie Se asked as he rubbed his bald head, feeling a bit confused.

"Look at these daoist sect disciples, and how abundant in talent all of them are. Then, look at our Buddhist sect's inheritors," Master Jian Huang said as he gave Jie Se a look. He shook his head while sighing and looked extremely downcast.

Jie Se was speechless. Why did I even bother trying to start a conversation with master...

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Watchful Heart Peak Master Feng Wuchang quickly declared Wu Xiaofan the winner of the first round. Then, he began the next competition. Emptiness Isle's Peng Wuyan would fight Supreme Mystery Cave's Shi Dingtian.

He gave the destroyed stage a look and thought to himself, Thank goodness I was prepared and had several reserve stages ready.

Before Qiu Honglei went on stage. Yun Jianyue said with a serious expression, "Be careful up there. These daoist sects are full of tricks."

After witnessing Wu Xiaofan and Wan Guiyi's fight, her previous contempt was now gone. Qiu Honglei couldn't use her charm skill in front of so many prying eyes, and many of her other skills couldn't be used either. There was a chance that she wouldn't win.

Chapter 1653: All's Fair in War

Qiu Honglei nodded. Then, she kicked off and landed gently on the stage.



Many people nodded to themselves when they saw that. Even though this woman was a bit ugly, her etiquette in her actions was still top-tier. They wondered just how she had managed to merge two completely contradictory characteristics into one person.

Shi Dingtian walked over with his characteristic simple and honest expression. He scratched his head from time to time, which drew quite a few amused looks.

Compared to the crazy affair that was the last battle, this fight would definitely be much more mediocre. If they had found out that these two would be the ones fighting before the competition, not many spectators would have bothered showing up to watch. Even so, the combatants' performances as dark horses made those present look forward to the battle.

The disciples speculated as to who would win the fight among themselves. The overwhelming majority supported Shi Dingtian. After all, Peng Wuyan was quite unattractive, and the way she fought was a bit too ruthless. As such, most of the people present didn't really like her. In contrast, Shi Dingtian had an honest and straightforward nature that made it hard for others to dislike him. Seeing as they had to root for someone, he naturally gained more support.

Meanwhile, in the judges' section, Zu An was leaning more toward Peng Wuyan. For some reason, he felt a mysterious sense of intimacy with the woman.

What the heck is wrong with me? Is there something wrong with my perception of aesthetics?

He began to even question life when he realized that.

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After Watchful Heart Peak Master Feng Wuchang declared the start of the fight, the formations around the stage lit up to prevent the battle's effects from harming the spectating disciples.

Shi Dingtian had a blade in hand as he greeted Qiu Honglei. The weapon was something Supreme Mystery Cave had specially prepared for him. Judging from the aura it was giving off, it was clearly a heaven-grade weapon.

Tranquility Temple's Jian Huang and Jie Se both sighed inwardly. As expected of the daoist sects! Even Supreme Mystery Cave, which was in dire straits, had such resources to spare. It was easy to imagine just how powerful they had been in their most glorious era.

Qiu Honglei didn't reply to the greeting; instead, she said unhappily, "You didn't even use a blade against other opponents, so why are you using it against me? Is it because you think I'm ugly, so you're not holding back at all?"

When they heard those words, many of the female disciples felt a bit of sympathy as well. The way they looked at Shi Dingtian became a bit strange.

Yun Jianyue inwardly gave her a thumbs up. As expected of my most talented disciple of the past few decades! Even with such an ugly face, she can still turn it into an advantage.

Shi Dingtian's face immediately turned entirely red. He quickly tried to defend himself, protesting, "That's not it at all! It's because Cave Master Mu told me that I'd be looking down on my opponent if I appear barehanded, so I should use all of my strength now as a sign of respect for my opponent!"

Many of the sect leaders in the judges' area looked at Cave Master Mu. Cave Master Mu was a bit embarrassed. He knew that his disciple was simple and honest, and any other explanation would have been hard for him to understand. He had to use that explanation to 'trick' Shi Dingtian into being a bit more serious. However, even if he could deceive that silly disciple of his, how could he deceive these old foxes?

Qiu Honglei sneered. Shi Dingtian was ill at ease and quickly said, "Then I just won't use it, okay?" He put the blade away.

Cave Master Mu almost vomited blood when he saw that. He had finally managed to make that foolish disciple of his use the blade, and yet, after just a single sentence from this woman, Shi Dingtian had discarded that advice!

Qiu Honglei nodded in satisfaction, saying, "That's more like it. I'm about to start, so you have to be careful."

"Thank you... Thank you for your reminder, miss," Shi Dingtian said, feeling really moved. Even though this girl does look a bit fierce, she's the first one to worry about me. She's really a great person!

Qiu Honglei chuckled. Then, she raised her hand and fired a shining sphere. Shi Dingtian was surprised and quickly dodged. He had seen her use the move before, so it wasn't too big of an issue or anything. Qiu Honglei didn't give him a chance to react, however, continuously launching shining spheres of light at him.

Shi Dingtian dodged from side to side. However, he eventually started feeling that avoiding the spheres was too troublesome and decided to just hit them. His fists unleashed ferocious winds with each strike, and always managed to knock the spheres of light away.

Meanwhile, Kunlun Void Sect's Liang Ling watched the battle. He thought that Peng Wuyan was just wasting her ki for nothing, and wondered when she would use the move that had taken him out before.

Sure enough, after several rounds of fast light spheres, several massive light bullets followed. If Shi Dingtian took them head-on, he would probably be seriously injured.

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In the judges' area, Cave Master Mu stroked his beard with a smile. He had previously advised Shi Dingtian on how to deal with that attack.

Sure enough, when Shi Dingtian saw the massive projectiles, he didn't wait for them to get close and simply jumped, choosing to attack Qiu Honglei from above. Two massive fists slammed down toward where his opponent was standing. The entire stage shook violently.

Feng Wuchang's eye twitched. It seemed this stage probably wouldn't last long either.

"Huh?"

However, not only Shi Dingtian was stunned; even Cave Master Mu stood up straight. Qiu Honglei had already disappeared! The next second, she appeared behind Shi Dingtian, as if she had already anticipated his reaction.

“How fast!”

Countless people cried out in alarm. Only then did they remember that the legendary light element excelled in speed.

The short swords in Qiu Honglei’s hand lit up. Shi Dingtian suffered several dozen strikes aimed toward his vitals in an instant.

Liang Ling gritted his teeth. He had almost been chopped into pieces by that very same attack! The other spectators also remembered that scene. Could it be that this round would be decided just like that?

However, their eyes soon widened, because Shi Dingtian was sliced to shreds by the blades...

And yet, it was just a substitute! His true body was already more than thirty meters away.

The spectators finally realized that Shi Dingtian was of the wind element, so he could keep up with his opponent’s speed!

Qiu Honglei harrumphed. With a flash, she instantly appeared next to Shi Dingtian and attacked again.

Shi Dingtian could face others bare-handed, but he was at a significant disadvantage against his opponent’s sharp blades. His arms were quickly drenched with blood.

Cave Master Mu looked extremely anxious and nervous. He couldn't help but call out, “Hurry and use your weapon!”

However, Shi Dingtian didn’t seem to have heard him and stubbornly refused to bring the blade out.

“A true gentleman doesn’t speak during a match,” Yun Jianyue remarked, unhappy with Cave Master Mu’s mid-match coaching.

“It’s your disciple’s fault for tricking him into not using a weapon!” Cave Master Mu retorted, fuming.

“Even then, that’s something the combatants on the stage have decided on. What’s a senior like you getting involved for? Mister Wang, are you going to turn a blind eye to this type of behavior?” Yun Jianyue immediately shot back angrily.

Wang Wuxie had a strange expression. He had never expected to be caught up in this too. Even though he looked down on Qiu Honglei’s actions a bit, the rules were the rules, so he could only remind Cave Master Mu, “Judges are not permitted to interfere.”

Cave Master Mu’s face turned entirely red. He wanted to say something, but Zu An couldn't help but say with a chuckle, “There is no need for Cave Master Mu to be too upset. Suffering a bit on stage might serve as a solid reminder if he ends up facing some despicable individuals in the future. At the very least, no lives will be lost on this stage. I feel that this Lady Peng’s choice is quite wise.”

Cave Master Mu was stunned when he heard that, but he felt that it made some sense. If that foolish disciple of his encountered the Devil Sect’s monsters in the future, there was no way they would follow the rules. Rather than suffering then and bringing about a huge disaster, Shi Dingtian would be better off gaining some experience here. The thought calmed Cave Master Mu down, and he no longer argued with Yun Jianyue.

Yun Jianyue shot Zu An a smile. This kid understands us after all. Even if we change our appearances, he actually still stands on our side. Doesn't that mean it's fate?

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Meanwhile, several new developments had occurred during the match. Shi Dingtian realized that he couldn't win against his opponent like this, so he turned around and ran. He was also quite fast, being of the wind element. He turned into a wisp of smoke, and using a special movement skill, he avoided Qiu Honglei's attacks one after another.

"What kind of movement skill is that? Why is it so incredible?"

The disciples in the audience all talked among each other. Even Supreme Mystery Cave's disciples were stunned, because none of them recognized it.

The White Jade Sect's Lou Wucheng had been feeling a bit unhappy that he lost to Shi Dingtian. He had thought that it was simply because he had been too emotional and thus revealed too many openings. However, he now realized that if Shi Dingtian had combined such a mysterious movement skill with blade ki, he could well have lost even without making those mistakes.

This Miss Peng was a bit too despicable, actually preventing Shi Dingtian from using a blade through her words!

Still, it really was weird. Even though Lou Wucheng had lost to Shi Dingtian, he was actually hoping for him to win now. After all, the stronger the one he had lost to was, the more that proved his own strength. Otherwise, if Shi Dingtian ended up being eliminated easily, wouldn't he look even worse?

Kunlun Void Sect's Liang Ling had similar thoughts. When he saw Qiu Honglei battering Shi Dingtian with attacks, he felt rather pleased. He actually hoped that she would take the crown, because that would mean he had only lost to the final victor.

Meanwhile, Qiu Honglei gritted her teeth as she discovered that her attacks couldn't hit the erratically moving Shi Dingtian. If she could use her Empress Lantern, she would already have frozen this stupid kid a long time ago. Why would she have to go through so much trouble?

As such, she gave up on her attacks and roared angrily, "Hey, brat, are you only going to run? Can you even call yourself a man?"

Shi Dingtian scratched his head and said, "But you're too strong. I can't win against you..."

"Then just admit defeat if you can't win." Qiu Honglei harrumphed.

"But Cave Master Mu will scold me if I do that..." Shi Dingtian replied, scratching his head.

"Then just how many months and years will this fight continue for if you just keep running like this?" Qiu Honglei shouted angrily.

"Then I won't run anymore, okay?" Shi Dingtian replied after thinking for a bit.

Cave Master Mu spat the tea he had been sipping out of his mouth. Even this kid wasn't usually so stupid, right?

Shi Dingtian added, "But you can't use that flashing skill either. My eyes can't handle that." Qiu Honglei's blinding attack scared him quite a bit. What if she used that when they were fighting up close?

Cave Master Mu finally nodded in appreciation. This silly disciple of his had finally grown up and learned how to negotiate.

"Fine!" Qiu Honglei replied with a nod.

Shi Dingtian sighed in relief. Then, he charged with a shout, his entire body surging with ki. His eyes were wide open, making him look even more imposing than before.

Qiu Honglei grinned. Suddenly, a blinding sun appeared on the stage.

#### **Chapter 1654: Something Fishy**

"Ah!" Shi Dingtian exclaimed. He had never expected her to actually do that! He clutched his eyes and screamed miserably.

Forget about him, even the spectators clutched their eyes in pain. Ah, we're going freaking blind!

Qiu Honglei seized the chance to attack. Shi Dingtian was blinded and in intense pain. He could only instinctively brandish his fists to protect himself, but how could that kind of passive defense be enough? He quickly suffered several attacks from Qiu Honglei before ultimately, a ball of light slammed into his body with a huge explosion. He could no longer hold on and fell from the stage.

The whole sequence of events happened too quickly. By the time the spectators recovered from the powerful light, they saw Shi Dingtian lying on the ground. Everyone on Golden Peak was speechless. They had expected an evenly-matched competition and hadn't expected it to be decided so quickly. However, this Peng Wuyan's way of winning was just too... despicable.

Sure enough, Cave Master Mu couldn't take it anymore. He slammed the table and got up, glaring furiously at Qiu Honglei as he screamed, "Shameful! How can you fight like that?!"

Qiu Honglei said disapprovingly, "I was already lenient, or else his injuries would be more serious."

She had actually held back because of this foolish kid's simple nature, deciding to strike with her fists instead. Otherwise, there wouldn't be a single shred of skin intact on Shi Dingtian's body, and he would be just like Liang Ling from a few days prior.

Cave Master Mu choked. He naturally knew that she had held back, but he was more concerned about what she had done beforehand. He said, "You already agreed to not use that blinding skill, so why did you immediately use it to trick him?"

Before Qiu Honglei could speak, Yun Jianyue quickly stepped forward to protect her disciple. She retorted, "Don't you know that all's fair in war? Who cares whether you believe them or not on the battlefield? You'd just end up dying without even knowing how."

Cave Master Mu shouted angrily, "This isn't the battlefield, but an arena!"

“See how dumb your disciple looked? He’d probably be the same on the real battlefield too. Suffering a bit and learning a lesson today is better than him losing his life in the future, right?” Yun Jianyue said, clearly not agreeing with Cave Master Mu’s logic.

“You’re making such a despicable thing sound so proper and up right. Are you part of the righteous sects or the Devil Sect?!” Cave Master Mu roared angrily.

Yun Jianyue was clearly upset as she shot back, “A loss is a loss; if you can’t take it, then don’t compete! The junior loses, so the elder steps forward? You’re even beneath the Devil Sect at this point!”

Now, Guan Chouhai, Elder Xu, and the others’ expressions became unpleasant. Why the heck are we getting caught up in the collateral damage too?

Cave Master Mu slammed the table and got up, yelling, “Peng, I’ve already endured you for a long time!”

Yun Jianyue also erupted with fury, shooting back, “What, do you want to fight? This old one will keep you company!”

Both of them began rolling up their sleeves. The disciples below didn’t really mind, as they weren’t involved and actually wanted to see the elders really start fighting.

However, as the official host, Wang Wuxie couldn’t let that happen. He quickly stepped forward to say, “Please calm down, both of you. Harmony is a virtue, harmony is a virtue.”

Cave Master Mu said, “Brother Wang, you have to distinguish between right and wrong here! Isn’t this one from Emptiness Isle going too far?”

“Uh...” Wang Wuxie trailed off. He also felt that Peng Wuyan’s actions were a bit despicable. However, there was nothing in the rules prohibiting what she had done, so he couldn’t really openly condemn it. After some time, he looked toward Tranquility Temple’s Master Jian Huang and said, “Master, you are a person of virtue and prestige. What does your distinguished self think about this matter?”

Blame can never catch up to me as long as I shift it fast enough!

“Amitabha buddha~” Master Jian Huang said as he brought his hands together. “This is an internal dispute within the daoist sects. This old one belongs to the Buddhist sects, so I fear that it is not my place to intervene.”

What, do you think I don’t know how to shift the blame too?

Wang Wuxie cursed him for being an old fox. He could only ask the other judges now. However, no one present was stupid. They had just been watching the drama; which one of them would want to draw all of the hate?

Wang Wuxie started to feel a headache coming on. If the others didn’t say anything, he would have to. In the end, he would be the one to draw ire.

However, his gaze suddenly landed on Zu An. His eyes couldn’t help but light up as he asked, “Sir Zu, do you have any opinions on this matter?” This kid still looks young and vigorous. He’s not as cunning as those old foxes. Can’t I just use him as a shield?

Zu An looked at all the other judges. He sneered, as he could more or less guess what they were all thinking. However, he wasn't scared of things getting out of hand. When he heard that, he replied, "Lady Peng was indeed a bit shameless earlier."

Cave Master Mu immediately stuck out his chest when he heard that. For the first time, he felt that this kid didn't look so gad.

Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei's expressions changed a bit. Could it be that Zu An was going to speak for the other side?

Before they could even get mad, however, Zu An already seemed to have changed his perspective, continuing, "Still, the rules are still in place and nothing has been violated. So, even though it doesn't really align with the nobility of the daoist sects, nothing about it deserves punishment. As such, there's nothing I can do to reprimand her either. In fact, Cave Master Mu should be more concerned with something else. It's a good thing that Shi Dingtian's nature is pure and honest, but those who are too pure can easily be exploited."

Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei's feelings changed from worry to joy. They thought to themselves, As expected of the one we favor! He always takes our side no matter what.

Zu An couldn't help but feel a bit of regret when he sensed the passion in their eyes. Is my charm a bit too great? If I help them, what if they can't help but fall in love with me?

Sigh, I just can't seem to learn how to keep some distance from women.

When he heard Zu An support Emptiness Isle, Cave Master Mu surged with anger. However, when he heard the rest of the statement, he had a pensive expression. This was indeed a big problem... That child Dingtian was too simple.

Meanwhile, Wang Wuxie tried to appease Cave Master Mu, speaking up about some of Shi Dingtian's outstanding points to flatter him. When the others heard that, they also pitched in some words of praise. Cave Master Mu's anger thus gradually settled.

...

As the day's fights had concluded, Feng Wuchang gave a small speech, then declared that the next round would be held on the following day. However, before then, they would draw the lots for the battle.

There was only one winner, and there were three people left. Both Righteous Sun Sect and Emptiness Isle's disciples hoped to get the bye. If they got it, they would have more time to rest, and they could only use Pei Mianman to wear out the last opponent.

As for Pei Mianman, they all already assumed that she would have to fight. After all, competitors who got the bye twice in a row were already rare in the history of this daoist competition. Getting it a third time was even more unheard of.

Even Pei Mianman thought the same way. Elder Huo Ling even helped her analyze her opponents, and they discussed whether Wu Xiaofan or Peng Wuyan would be a better opponent for her.

Wu Xiaofan was likely stronger, so their first thought was that Peng Wuyan would be a better choice. However, considering that Peng Wuyan was of the light element, which could counter the darkness element a bit, facing her wouldn't be that easy either.

In contrast, Wu Xiaofan and Wan Guiyi had really beaten each other up badly today, so it was more important to eliminate Wu Xiaofan before he recovered. Otherwise, even if Pei Mianman won against Peng Wuyan, she would have to face Wu Xiaofan later, who would practically have recovered after some rest. That made victory seem more difficult.

Pei Mianman nodded, feeling that defeating the seriously injured Wu Xiaofan would be better. Apart from that, she had a strange sense that this Peng Wuyan seemed to have some mysterious hostility against her. She had never met that woman before, nor had they ever interacted before meeting at Violet Mountain. She couldn't have offended Peng Wuyan in any way, right?

If she hadn't seen the other woman's looks, she would have suspected that Peng Wuyan had a thing with Zu An. However, no matter how much of a skirt-chaser Ah Zu was, his standards were rather high. He wouldn't stoop so low as to have a relationship with that kind of person...

She walked onto the stage, and was just about to draw her next opponent when she ran into Zu An.

"Lady Pei, you should eat the other half of this pill too," Zu An said as he unfolded his hand and handed her the other half of the Fortune Pill with a smile. After all, the pill had a time limit. It had likely already passed over the course of the two fights, so Pei Mianman had to take it again.

Pei Mianman was stunned. However, she didn't doubt him and ate it.

Elder Huo Ling was too late to stop her. She couldn't help but give her disciple a glare. Does this stupid lass have no memory? Why is she eating whatever a man gives her again? Then, she gave Zu An an unkind look and asked, "What did you give her now?"

The others also looked at Zu An curiously. Why was this Zu An always feeding Pei Mianman things to eat? More importantly, why was Pei Mianman playing along so obediently?

"Treatment medicine. Didn't I already tell you earlier?" Zu An replied with a smile.

Elder Huo Ling frowned and asked, "Didn't she already eat it once?"

"This medicine of mine is a bit special. It needs to be eaten in multiple doses within a short amount of time. That's why I broke it in half earlier," Zu An lied without batting an eyelid.

Wan Guiyi almost choked on his own breath when he heard the explanation. What the hell was I thinking before? That he would give me the other half?

Hmph, this bastard is definitely after junior sister Pei's beauty. Still, can looks put food on the table? Being strong is the most important thing! I suddenly feel that Peng Wuyan is much more attractive than junior sister Pei.

Elder Huo Ling was also left speechless by Zu An's reply. She couldn't find anything else to retort with and could only harrumph. She stood by her disciple to prevent him from feeding her any other strange things.



The drawing of lots quickly concluded. When the results came out, there was another uproar.

Pei Mianman had actually drawn another bye!

"There's definitely something wrong!" Yun Jianyue cried out as she slammed the table and stood up. She quickly shifted her focus and glared at Zu An, asking, "Just what did you feed that woman?"

### **Chapter 1655: Hidden Room**

Forget about Yun Jianyue, even Wang Wuxie and the other sect masters looked at Zu An with wide eyes. They had carried out this great competition countless times, but such a thing had never happened before.

After all, these representative disciples were the best of the best. To become the best, apart from talent, they had to have incredible luck too. Those who advanced further in the competition all had astonishing luck. They all kept each other in balance, so there was no way someone could draw byes the entire time. As such a thing had never happened before in history, that meant there was definitely something weird with the drawing of lots.

Still, they had all been watching the entire process carefully. If something really had been done, how could it escape their notice? The only suspicious part was that Zu An had fed Pei Mianman a strange pill right before she went up to draw her position.

"It's just healing medicine," Zu An said with a shrug. He thought to himself, This damned woman really forgets favors. I even helped their Emptiness Isle before.

Yun Jianyue frowned and remained silent. She felt as if he had done something, but she couldn't figure out what it was no matter how she thought about it.

"Take out that pill you used earlier and let us take a look to see if there's anything strange about it," Guan Chouhai harrumphed. Even though Heavenly Sorrow had already lost their candidate early and their reputation had fallen a grade, he and this brat had already come into conflict several times.

Previously, a sect master like him wouldn't have cared all that much if a youngster clashed with him. But for some reason, he just felt really annoyed whenever he saw Zu An, as if the younger man had stolen something he really cherished.

Wang Wuxie felt a similar sensation. Even though Zu An's strength had won his respect, after the past few days of interactions, he inexplicably disliked the other man.

The world was just that strange sometimes. Often, people just subconsciously disliked someone from their first meeting. There wasn't necessarily much meaning behind it either.

"I don't have any more. That pill was pretty precious, so I only had one," Zu An said, refusing.

"Then what are the medicinal ingredients? What are the effects? There's no lack of pill experts here. I'm sure we can reach a fair assessment," Guan Chouhai continued.

Zu An's expression suddenly turned serious. He retorted, "Sect Master Guan, do you not feel that asking for someone's pill prescription is an extremely disrespectful thing?"

In this world of cultivation, whether it was cultivation texts, formations, or medicine prescriptions, they were all secrets that a sect would never let outsiders know.

Guan Chouhai became embarrassed. He had indeed overstepped his boundaries. Thus, he quickly explained, "I want to figure out how you were able to make Miss Pei draw three byes in a row."

Zu An laughed and replied, "Could it be that you really believe it's possible to make someone draw three byes in a row by eating a pill? Is there really something like a fortune pill in this world?"

"You...!" Guan Chouhai exclaimed, stunned. He discovered that others were looking at him as if he were mentally deficient now. His face inadvertently heated up..

Elder Huo Ling cried furiously, "Are you done yet? All of you questioned Manman when she won the match, and you're even doubting her for pulling a bye? What, can only good things be enjoyed by your sect, and if anyone else gets anything, then there's something wrong?"

"Elder speaks too seriously."

Wang Wuxie and the others wiped away their sweat. They didn't dare to have such a reputation attached to their names. In the end, as they couldn't find any concrete proof, they could only accept the result. Pei Mianman had gotten byes all the way to the finals.

...

The disciples dispersed, discussing the dazzling details of the fights. However, the most-discussed topic was Pei Mianman pulling three byes in a row. They also wondered whether Zu An had helped her or not.

Some people concluded that he hadn't. After all, they were total strangers and he didn't need to take such a big risk. Furthermore, there were so many powerful cultivators there. If he really had done something, he would definitely have been found out.

However, others concluded that he had. They felt that Zu An must have thought that Pei Mianman was just too big and too pretty, and had thus bent the rules out of a desire for her body. How contemptible!

"Ahhh! I'm so angry! The others might not know anything, but I know that damn brat definitely did something," Yun Jianyue said. She was still upset even after drinking two cups of tea in a row.

Qiu Honglei smiled and filled her cup again, saying, "But you didn't act up on Golden Peak."

"That kid has some kind of way to sense others' anger. I'm scared of exposing us, okay?" Yun Jianyue said angrily. After going on so many adventures with Zu An, she knew a bit about his abilities.

"Alright, master. I'm the one who has to fight, but I'm not even that upset." Qiu Honglei said as she walked over and massaged her master's shoulders. "Besides, what could he even do in front of so many people? You were watching too. Don't tell me you really think he could escape your detection?"

"If it were anyone else, then no. But that kid has created too many miracles. He definitely has a way," Yun Jianyue harrumphed. She felt really annoyed as soon as she recalled how he and that big-boobed woman had been exchanging looks.

“Huh? Master, you’re making Zu An sound as if he’s omnipotent! Even I didn’t know he was that great,” Qiu Honglei said with a chuckle. However, the higher the status of her lover was in her master’s mind, the happier she became.

Sensing that a misunderstanding was on the verge of happening, Yun Jianyue was startled and said, “I’m doing all this for you, of course! Right, we can’t only be worried about the competition. How is the investigation going?”

Qiu Honglei put away her smile and began, “I started looking around and saw...”

Yun Jianyue nodded as she listened. Her expression became a bit more grave.

...

Meanwhile, people were still wondering just what Zu An had done. Pei Mianman was naturally no exception. After all, she knew that her injuries had already been completely healed. Making her eat some kind of medicine was clearly an excuse Zu An had made up on the spot, so it was probably related to the lot drawing.

In the end, she couldn't suppress her curiosity and found a chance to secretly ask Zu An, “Ah Zu, just how did you do it?”

Zu An smiled and replied, “I already told all of you the truth, didn’t I? That thing is called a Fortune Pill, but none of you believed it.”

Pei Mianman exclaimed in shock, “Is there really something that incredible in this world?”

“Do you still remember the seven and a half million silver I won in Brightmoon City from the casinos?” Zu An replied with a grin.

“That was also because you ate one of those?” Pei Mianman asked. She naturally knew about that event, as it had caused such a stir across the entire city. People had all wondered how Zu An had done it. She hadn’t expected to receive the answer today!

Seeing Zu An nod, she exclaimed with a huge smile, “Ah Zu, you’re so good to me!” If there hadn’t been so many disciples around them, she would already have leapt into his arms.

Yan Xuehen was also curious as to how Zu An had done such a thing, and intended to ask him while pretending to have just been in the area coincidentally. However, when she saw the two of them flirting with each other, she turned around and left.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +55 +55 +55...

Wang Wuxie had wanted to find a chance to start a conversation with her, but when he saw her darkneedy expression, he swallowed and didn’t look for trouble.

Why is Fairy Yan upset? Could it be because the White Jade Sect’s competitor didn’t make it to the finals? But that’s Li Changsheng’s disciple...

Zu An was startled when he saw the Rage points. He quickly turned around and saw Yan Xuehen departing.

Just then, someone let out a cold snort. It turned out Elder Huo Ling was nearby. She gave Zu An a vigilant look and said, "Sir Zu, Manman still has an important match to prepare for. Please do not disturb her and cause her to be distracted." As soon as she finished speaking, she took Pei Mianman and left after.

Zu An was speechless. This damn spinster is acting like the damn school directors of my previous world. She's making things difficult for me and Manman for no reason!

Helpless to do anything else, he could only return to his residence. He intended to find Yan Xuehen to see what was going on, but his expression suddenly changed and he took out the Embroidered Envoy's golden tile. There was a row of characters on it, which said that the Envoys in Yi Commandery had already obtained information on where King Yan Manor's account book was stored.

As such, he left behind a note informing Xie Daoyun

### **Chapter 1656: Six Major Barriers**

"On my Wind Fire Wheels, I'm drifting through my youth... Drifting, drifting, it's so thrilling..." Zu An sang as he rushed to Yi Commandery. However, his entire demeanor immediately turned serious as soon as he landed. After all, it was still better to have a bit of a leader's awe in front of subordinates.

Zhang Zitong, Xiao Jianren, and the others were already waiting at the secret location they had decided on beforehand. In order to maintain secrecy, they hadn't even brought any of Yi Commandery's Embroidered Envoys for fear of King Yan noticing anything. They were discussing something among themselves.

Zu An had to admit that Zhang Zitong's legs were just too eye-catching, especially when she was offset by Xiao Jianren and the others' less desirable figures. It gave him the impression of a 'crane among chickens'. After a while, he coughed lightly.

"We greet Sir Eleven!"

Zhang Zitong and the others started to feel excited when they noticed his arrival. They all bowed down to greet him.

Zu An tried to think of some words of encouragement the way people in his previous world would to improve their rapport, but he couldn't think of anything after a long time. At that moment, he felt that he really wasn't suited to acting like a leader; he could only clear his throat and go straight to the point, asking, "Have you already found where the secret account book is kept?"

"Indeed," Zhang Zitong replied as she opened a map. "According to our investigation over the past few days, we've noticed that there are six major barriers to securing the account book."

Zu An nodded and gestured for her to continue.

In summary, the map was an outline of King Yan Manor's territory. The dark areas were places they didn't have any intelligence on, but overall, the map was still pretty complete.

Zhang Zitong pointed at some black marks on the map and said, "The first barrier is King Yan Manor's guards. The patrol is a three-shift system. Judging from our observations as of late, they're all quite good at what they do and don't leave any gaps during shift changes. Furthermore, there are all kinds of

hidden alarm systems in the manor. Even though we've observed them for years and found some, there are definitely some we don't know about. The reason I was caught when I infiltrated the king manor was precisely because I tripped one of those alarms."

Zu An said seriously, "Even if there are practically no gaps in the shift changes, there are still openings that can be exploited. For the Embroidered Envoy, that shouldn't be an issue. As for the hidden alarms, we should just deal with them accordingly when we encounter them."

He had come and gone as he pleased through all sorts of Imperial Palace areas for quite some time without much danger, so he already understood how such alarms worked like the back of his hand. He was confident that they wouldn't be an issue.

When she heard how relaxed Sir Eleven sounded, Zhang Zitong thought, As expected of a Golden Token Envoy; he's much more formidable than I am. As such, she continued, "The second barrier is that even if we avoid the patrols around the manor, some guards always remain outside of King Yan's study without moving at all. All of them are elites. Even if we could defeat them, it would alert the other forces all across the manor."

Even though the patrols around the perimeter were strict, they followed a set path around the manor, so there would be opportunities there. If they ran into a guard, they would just have to find another path. However, King Yan's study was their main destination, so they couldn't avoid it.

Xiao Jianren then said, "Sir, we've tried to think of various feasible plans of action before you arrived, but no matter what we use, whether it's poison or a surprise assault, we have no confidence that we won't disturb the others in the manor. So, this is the step we're stuck on."

"How many guards are there in the study?" Zu An asked.

"Around thirty to forty. All of them are the best among the guards," Zhang Zitong replied. She only had rough estimates for that kind of top-secret information.

Zu An thought to himself for a bit and said, "It's fine, I'll deal with them."

The Silver Token Envoys' eyes immediately widened. They really couldn't figure out how Sir Eleven could so easily deal with something they had been stuck on for so long. However, as he wasn't talking about it in detail, they couldn't ask how he would take care of it either. They once again sighed in amazement at how mysterious and incredible Sir Eleven really was.

"The third barrier is that there is a special formation around the study, which only King Yan can activate. Any other attempts will alert him, and as King Yan is a grandmaster, we will immediately be done for if he is alerted," Zhang Zitong said worriedly.

In her eyes, a grandmaster was an unmatched being. Even though Golden Token Eleven was formidable, there was definitely some distance between him and a real grandmaster. After all, even the Chief Commander Zhuxie Chixin was rumored to still be half a step away from grandmaster rank. There was no way his subordinate could be more formidable than him, the leader, right?

Zu An thought to himself for a bit, then said, "That shouldn't be too big of an issue. We just need to draw King Yan away. As long as he can't return for some time, whether we alert him or not makes no difference." Even though he didn't fear King Yan, there was no need to face him directly.

“Sir’s plan is incredible!” Zhang Zitong exclaimed excitedly. As expected of Sir Eleven, he was able to deal with something that had troubled them for so long. “But how can we draw King Yan away?”

Zu An thought for a bit before saying, “Yi Commandery’s Governor Zhang and King Yan don’t seem to get along with each other. Is that so?”

He still hadn’t spent much time in Yi Commandery. What he had seen with his eyes wouldn’t necessarily be true. However, Zhang Zitong was an Embroidered Envoy from Yi Commandery, so she would definitely know the real relationship between the Governor Manor and King Yan.

Zhang Zitong nodded and said, “Indeed, they don’t get along.”

Zu An nodded and said, “Then we’ll ask the governor to please make an appearance and lure King Yan away.”

“But even if King Yan leaves, the formation will remain. That’s something King Yan spent a large sum on a formation master to create. We definitely won’t be able to crack it!” Zhang Zitong replied. After some hesitation, she continued, “I’ve heard that an outstanding disciple of Master Yan from the Royal Academy is following the Imperial Envoy Sir Zu. Is there a way to ask her for help?”

Zu An was stunned. Hearing someone talk about his other identity right in front of him really felt strange. He said, “I’ll try to find a solution to the formation.”

He could ask Xie Daoyun, but he didn’t really want to involve her in something so dangerous. After all, she wasn’t a fully independent individual; she had the Xie clan and Royal Academy behind her. She would most likely have her own misgivings.

“The fourth barrier is that there are all sorts of mechanisms and traps in the study, as well as a special secret path. Without knowledge of their principles, not only would it be extremely dangerous, it would likely be impossible to get past them,” Zhang Zitong said, her expression grave.

Zu An asked, “Isn’t that something the Embroidered Envoy should specialize in? Don’t tell me you can’t find a suitable person to deal with that?”

“The one who was best in that field was Sir Seven...” Zhang Zitong said with an awkward expression. She continued, “But I followed him in some missions and received some of his pointers. I can give it a try then.”

Zu An nodded. As Zhang Zitong was a Silver Token Envoy, she had to be reliable in that field. After all, she had even dared to barge into the king manor on her own.

“The fifth barrier is that once we break into the secret room, we’ll encounter a special area of absolute darkness, filled with four dark deathsworn soldiers that King Yan raised through a lot of effort. Such places are extremely difficult for a normal cultivator to do much in, so they definitely wouldn’t be a match for those deathsworn soldiers,” Zhang Zitong explained.

Zu An was a bit surprised. He asked, “How do you know so much about the inside of that secret room?”

“In the past, the building of these secret rooms needed a lot of skilled workers. Even though King Yan Manor went through great efforts to hide it, there were still some clues. Our Embroidered Envoy was

able to investigate all sorts of things,” Xiao Jianren said, finally seeing a chance to show off. He was quite proud as he spoke those words. After all, that information was the result of his investigation efforts.

Zu An nodded and gave him a few words of encouragement. Between that and Zhang Zitong’s look of admiration, Xiao Jianren felt even more proud.

Zu An sank into his own thoughts. A place of absolute darkness... He certainly wasn’t unfamiliar with such things. He thought back to Peng Wuyan from the daoists’ competition. If he had the help of her skills, those dark deathsworn soldiers would simply be a joke.

However, he started to feel a bit worried. Peng Wuyan’s light element seemed as if it could counter Big Manman and Fu Hao’s Owl Statue.

“Sir Eleven? Sir Eleven?” Zhang Zitong called out in confusion. After all, Zu An’s mind seemed to be wandering.

“I’ll take care of that. What’s the sixth barrier?” Zu An replied. However, the entire room fell silent, leaving him confused. He asked, “What is it?”

Zhang Zitong looked at him with a conflicted expression, saying, “It’s just that we’ve discussed these issues for a long time, and yet they all seemed insurmountable to us. However, for Sir Eleven, they don’t seem to be that big of a deal.”

Zu An chuckled and said,, “Leave the flattery until after we’re done. What’s the sixth barrier?”

Zhang Zitong replied, “The sixth barrier is that the small box in which the account box is stored has a lock on it that’s extremely hard to open. Furthermore, if the account book is removed, that will trigger the activation of another mechanism, which will make the entire room self-destruct. The account book and the person in the room will thus be completely destroyed.”

“Hm? Why do I feel as if your tone is a bit more relaxed now than when you were talking about the other things?” Zu An asked, noticing the small change. This woman isn’t thinking of relying on me for everything, is she? I’m not omnipotent.

“I actually have a solution for that problem. I have some past experience and I’m quite good at dealing with locks,” Zhang Zitong said a bit shyly.

Zu An was stunned. He asked, “What did you do in the past?”

“In the past, I wandered through the streets, committing some petty theft. When I encountered Sir Seven, he saw that my talent wasn’t bad, so he took me in as an Embroidered Envoy...” Zhang Zitong said, sounding embarrassed.

“So Miss Zhang had such a difficult life when you were younger. It’s a sad story,” Xiao Jianren couldn’t help but say considerately.

Zhang Zitong nodded toward him out of respect, but her gaze remained calm.

Zu An said seriously, “No wonder you wanted to get revenge for Sir Seven.”

Zhang Zitong’s eyes immediately became wet. It’s still Sir Eleven who understands me best.

## Chapter 1657: A Condition

After discussing some details of the plan with the Silver Token Envoys, Zu An then left quickly. However, he didn't return directly to Violet Mountain, instead paying the governor manor a visit. He had to admit that the manor's security was a bit tighter than that of other governor manors. He wondered if that was because of King Yan's influence.

Of course, the guards were still far inferior to those of King Yan Manor. Between that and the fact that Zu An was already a long-time expert in such infiltrations, he quickly arrived outside Governor Zhang's room.

"Who is it?!" Zhang Jie called out. He was the governor of the commandery, after all. Furthermore, Zu An had deliberately avoided hiding his presence, so Zhang Jie instantly leaped out of bed and looked at the window in alarm.

Zu An saw the pretty woman at Zhang Jie's side and thought to himself, This fella really knows how to play, huh?

Then again, which authority figure in this world didn't have a few concubines in their harem? As such, he didn't really pay it any mind and replied seriously, "Golden Token Eleven!"

Zhang Jie was shocked and quickly got up, saying, "Please wait just a moment, Sir Eleven."

The concubine was a bit annoyed that she had been woken up in the night, but she didn't dare to say a thing when Zhang Jie shot her a look.

Zu An didn't go inside, and instead admired the moon outside the courtyard. Fortunately, Zhang Jie didn't have him wait for too long; he quickly draped a coat over himself and came out, asking carefully,

"May I ask what honorable intent Sir Eleven has for visiting us so late at night?"

Zu An didn't give a direct reply, instead asking, "How does Sir Zhang really feel about King Yan?"

After some hesitation, Zhang Jie replied, "King Yan is devoted to the empire and guards these lands in the court's place..."

Zu An sneered when he heard those half-hearted, cliched words. He said, "But according to my investigation, it seems that you and King Yan haven't gotten along with each other for quite some time. Doesn't that imply you aren't loyal to the court, and that you're even dragging down King Yan, who is fully devoted?"

Zhang Jie became a bit alarmed. He replied, "This humble official is left in fear! In truth, King Yan is arrogant and despotic, overstepping his authority all over this region. This humble official is loyal to his majesty and cannot tolerate that, which is why we have engaged in many conflicts."

Even though his official rank was higher than Zu An's, Golden Token Envoys often represented his majesty's own intentions. As such, there was no way he wouldn't be scared, making him refer to himself as a humble official.

"What kind of overstepping? Why don't you tell me a bit about that?" Zu An asked, sounding unconvinced.



Zhang Jie was a bit hesitant as he asked, "Sir Eleven, could it be that his majesty also plans to censure King Yan?"

"Don't ask things you shouldn't be asking," Zu An said bluntly. The Embroidered Envoy had a special status, so explaining the situation was sometimes inappropriate.

Sure enough, Zhang Jie wasn't surprised. He respectfully told Zu An about the things King Yan had done over the years to abuse his authority.

"Do you have any proof?" Zu An asked.

Zhang Jie shook his head and said, "There are some witnesses, but that isn't enough to convict King Yan of any crimes. On the contrary, it would only worsen the relationship with King Yan Manor and make future work more difficult."

Zu An had an ambiguous smile as he said, "It looks like Governor Zhang really wants King Yan to be convicted of a great crime."

"This humble official doesn't dare!" Zhang Jie exclaimed, wiping away cold sweat from his forehead in alarm.

"Find a reason to meet with King Yan tomorrow. The farther away it is from the king manor, the better," Zu An said, finally expressing his true intentions after having sounded out Zhang Jie for a while.

Zhang Jie was alarmed. An old fox like him could naturally guess what was happening, though. Didn't that mean Sir Eleven was going to enter King Yan Manor? Still, after his earlier lesson, he didn't dare to ask any further. He could only say with a miserable expression, "Sir Eleven, this humble official doesn't have a good relationship with King Yan. I might not be able to bring him away..."

Zu An said indifferently, "You're the leader of a commandery and haven't backed down against King Yan after all these years. Don't tell me you don't have any methods."

Zhang Jie took out his handkerchief and wiped the sweat from his temples again. He said, "This humble official will think of a way; I will do my best..."

Zu An knew that if an old fox was saying such things, that meant they had already agreed. He nodded and disappeared into the night.

As he watched Zu An leave, Zhang Jie muttered to himself, "Golden Token Envoys really are profound and mysterious. This Sir Eleven is even more so..."

...

After leaving the governor manor, Zu An hurried to Violet Mountain. He had too many things he had to deal with today. Even with the Wind Fire Wheels, it was already late into the night by the time he returned.

He didn't go back to his own residence; after some hesitation, he went to Yan Xuehen and Chu Chuyan's place. However, he couldn't just announce himself at the front entrance with how late it was, or else it would only create more rumors. As such, he snuck in instead.

As soon as he opened the window, an ice-cold sword appeared in front of his throat. A cold voice said, "How brazen!"

Zu An instinctively moved backward. The other person was surprised by his quick reaction and thrust the sword forward.

Zu An dodged backward while quietly stating his identity, saying, "Big sis Yan, it's me!"

The longsword froze briefly when Yan Xuehen heard his voice. She exclaimed, "It's you?" Then, she snapped coldly, "Shameless!"

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +777 +777 +777...

Yan Xuehen had felt very restless after the tournament. As such, she had started to meditate. However, just now, she had sensed someone's presence. She had thought that it was some daring scoundrel from the nine sects who was up to no good, but it was actually Zu An.

This guy had come for Chuyan so furtively in the middle of the night, and furthermore, he had even arrived when most people were supposed to be asleep! It went without saying what kind of motives he had.

"You misunderstood! I didn't come for Chu Chuyan, but for you!" Zu An said as he looked at Yan Xuehen. As the moonlight scattered across her white clothes, it seemed to surround her in a hazy veil. He had to admit that his big sis Yan was really pretty even when she was angry.

Yan Xuehen was stunned when she heard that he had come for her. She was immediately filled with embarrassment, snapping, "Why would you look for me in the middle of the night? Get lost!" She turned around and tried to walk back in afterward.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +77 +77 +77...

When he saw how she was trying to create some distance between them, Zu An panicked and quickly grabbed her, saying, "I have something to say to you."

"There's nothing to say between us," Yan Xuehen snapped. She flung his hand away and coldly said, "I believe I already explained it clearly to you before."

"I really do have something important to say this time!" Zu An replied, briefly at a loss for what to say.

For some reason, both of them had tacitly agreed to speak very softly, as if they were scared that someone else would hear them.

Yan Xuehen gave the surroundings a look. After some hesitation, she said, "We'll talk outside." Afterward, she walked outside.

Zu An felt happy and followed her. They quickly arrived at a bamboo forest outside the courtyard, where Yan Xuehen stopped and said, "Speak. What is it that you need to find me in the middle of the night for?"

Zu An had a strange expression as he replied, "You weren't thinking that I came here to assault you in the middle of the night, right?"

A trace of redness flashed across Yan Xuehen's face as she said, "If you have something to say, then say it. Otherwise, I'm leaving."

Zu An quickly said, "Actually, I wanted to ask for your help." Then, he told her that he needed an expert in formations to help him with King Yan Manor's study.

Compared to Xie Daoyun, Yan Xuehen was a more qualified candidate. After all, they had already worked together several times and couldn't be more familiar with each other. Furthermore, both she and Yun Jianyue knew about his Embroidered Envoy identity.

"You're going to go against King Yan?" Yan Xuehen asked with a frown.

"It's not that I'm out to take him down, but Golden Token Seven died and I need to investigate something," Zu An said seriously. "Back then, Golden Token Seven helped me once. Even though we weren't friends, I can't just stand by and do nothing now that he's died mysteriously."

Yan Xuehen remained silent for a moment before saying, "King Yan's status is special. Even with my identity as the White Jade Sect Master, just a bit of carelessness would result in tremendous danger."

When he heard how apathetic her tone was and how she seemed to be refusing him the same way she would refuse anyone else, Zu An couldn't help but feel downcast. He said, "In that case, I won't force you either. I'll try to think of another way." He turned around to leave afterward.

Yan Xuehen said calmly, "King Yan Manor study's formations are definitely troublesome. Where would you be able to find another way in such a short time?"

"Sect Master Yan doesn't need to trouble yourself over that," Zu An said. He waved his hand and didn't even stop.

When she felt the lack of emotion in his tone, Yan Xuehen trembled. She bit her lip and had a troubled expression. In the end, as she saw him recede into the distance, she couldn't help but say, "It's not as if I said I wouldn't help!"

This damn kid didn't even speak any more flattery when asking me for a favor, and now he's already leaving!

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +222 +222 +222...

Zu An was stunned. He turned around in disbelief and asked, "You're really willing to help me?"

Besides, if she was agreeing to help, why did she seem a bit angrier than before?

Yan Xuehen harrumphed. "I can help you, but I have a condition."

"Forget about one condition, I'll agree to even ten conditions. I can even devote my whole body to you!" Zu An replied. He was overjoyed by the turn of events and ran back.

"Keep dreaming." Yan Xuehen harrumphed. She felt her heart beating a bit faster than normal for some reason. She asked, "How did you make Pei Mianman draw a bye today at Golden Peak?"

Zu An was stunned, replying, "That's it?"

“Is that not enough?” Yan Xuehen asked, furrowing her brows slightly when she recalled that scene. It had been bothering her all day, but she hadn’t been able to bring herself to ask.

Meanwhile, in a distant tree’s shadow, Wang Wuxie had an expression of utter shock. He muttered to himself, “Why are the two of them together?!”

### **Chapter 1658: Semi-Finals**

Wang Wuxie had needed a lot of willpower to finally cut off all of his feelings. Even though he had known that Yan Xuehen was coming to Violet Mountain, he had remained calm, and even restrained himself from visiting her.

However, after sharing the judges' section for several days, and seeing her beautiful figure every day, he couldn't help but reminisce about his past. When he saw that Yan Xuehen now seemed even prettier than before, she had become the only thing on his mind whenever he returned to his Pure Yang Palace.

Tonight, he got even more carried away by a sudden impulse. This night, he couldn't sleep at all, so he decided to come and see if he could see her.

Of course, he still knew not to go too far and didn’t dare to get too close. After all, if he were somehow misunderstood as a pervert, he would be forever done for. Not only would his own reputation be completely swept away, Yan Xuehen’s impression of him would also be utterly ruined.

As such, he had just given her residence a look from a distance. All he wanted was to sense her presence a bit. The wind would carry a bit of her scent, too. For him, that was already enough.

And yet, as soon as he arrived, he was met with a strange scene. His goddess was actually meeting privately with another man in the middle of the night!

However, when he saw that it was Zu An, his horrified and broken heart gradually calmed down.

There’s no way anything would happen between the two of them. Yan Xuehen probably just sees him as a nephew.

Still, he felt really annoyed somehow. He perked up his ears to listen in on their conversation, but he discovered that there was a sound barrier around them so he couldn't hear anything at all!

A man and a woman are meeting alone in the middle of the night, and even made sure others can't overhear them. This is a bit suspicious!

He dismissed that thought as soon as it appeared.

I know Xuehen’s nature better than anyone. She has always been indifferent to anything worldly. There’s no way she would be the type of woman who would meet a man in the middle of the night!

It’s probably related to her disciple Chu Chuyan. That should be the only topic those two would talk about.

...

In truth, Zu An was explaining the Fortune Pill’s effects to her. Yan Xuehen was incredibly shocked, exclaiming, “There is actually a pill like that in this world?”

"It is pretty amazing, but I don't have any more of them. I'll give you one if I can get my hands on it again next time," Zu An said with a smile.

"Who wants something like that from you?" Yan Xuehen replied with a nonchalant expression. However, the grin on her mouth gave her real thoughts away.

"So that seven and a half million silvers you won in Brightmoon City was because of this thing?" she continued. She was smart and had quickly made the connection.

It was now Zu An's turn to be surprised. He replied, "You even knew about that?"

Yan Xuehen's face heated up. Recently, she had talked to Chuyan about all sorts of things related to him. In order to make sure her master wouldn't have any prejudices against Zu An, Chuyan had willingly shared everything she knew about Zu An. In the past few months of interaction, apart from bedroom matters, Chuyan had told her pretty much everything.

Yan Xuehen had felt a guilty conscience, but hadn't been able to hold her desire for gossip back either. In the end, she had listened to all of it.

"You are Chuyan's husband, so of course I have to look into your background a bit," she said. Both of them became quiet.

Zu An practically felt as if his head would explode. This wasn't something strength could help deal with. Can any transmigrators come and help me out right now?

Yan Xuehen felt a bit uncomfortable. She tried to sound calm as she said, "Anyway, I've already agreed to it. Just look for me when you need my help." After a pause, she added, "And make sure you don't bother Chuyan."

Zu An nodded and replied, "Alright."

Both of them stood there a bit awkwardly for a moment. Why did it feel as if they were doing something behind Chuyan's back? More importantly, everything had gone so smoothly too.

Yan Xuehen couldn't stay any longer and turned around to return.

Zu An also felt a bit restless. He knew that trying to make her stay was meaningless, so he left in a heavy mood.

...

Wang Wuxie released a long sigh of relief when he saw that the two of them hadn't engaged in any intimate interactions in the end. I was just going to say, how could Fairy Yan have that kind of relationship with a man?

In particular, when he saw Zu An leave with an expression full of worry, he secretly felt refreshed. Fairy Yan probably hadn't agreed to him being with Chuyan.

And what is with this brat? Do you think that a disciple of White Jade Sect is that easy to pursue? In the past, even someone as outstanding as me only wasted my efforts.

Perhaps because he saw Zu An dejected, or because Yan Xuehen was still as pure as before, Wang Wuxie's mood improved. As he returned, his gait was even a bit lighter than usual.

...

The next day, the exciting competition continued. Even though there was another competitor, people all believed Pei Mianman's success was all down to good luck, and that she wasn't really stronger than the other two.

The other disciples took a seat excitedly, but on the Heavenly Sorrow Sect's side, Zhang Xiaodie couldn't help but ask Zhi Yin beside her, "Senior brother, who do you think will win today's competition?"

As of late, the usually high-spirited Zhi Yin had always been in a poor mood. He hadn't even shaved the beard stubble that was growing on his face. Guan Chouhai was worried about his condition, so he had told the other disciples to talk to Zhi Yin whenever possible to help him escape the shadow of defeat.

"Normally, with Wu Xiaofan's strength, Peng Wuyan wouldn't have a chance at all. But Wan Guiyi was unexpectedly strong and inflicted him with serious injuries. Even though the Righteous Sun Sect definitely spent a lot of effort and used a lot of medicines to help him recover, there hasn't been much time. It's hard to say who will win," Zhi Yin explained, although he only felt more dejected.

I was supposed to be the one up on the stage talking cheerfully right now! Ahhhhh!

Zhao Xiaodie said with a sigh, "Senior brother has penetrating insight, as expected. This is indeed an evenly matched fight."

She couldn't help but give Zu An on the elevated seats a glance. What is with me these past few days? That scoundrel bullied me like that back then, and I'll definitely make him pay for it one day.

...

When Wang Wuxie arrived at the elevated stage, he reflexively glanced at Yan Xuehen and Zu An. When he saw that they weren't giving each other looks, he sighed in relief. After greeting the sect masters, he cleared his throat and got up to make some opening remarks. Then, after speaking about some things to take note of on the stage, he declared the formal start of the competition.

Qiu Honglei spun some small curved blades on her fingers as she got on stage. Her steps were light and quick, showing how relaxed her mood was.

Many people even felt as if they were seeing things incorrectly. With the incredible confidence Peng Wuyan was showing off, she came off like an incredibly stunning young lady.

Comparatively, Wu Xiaofan's attitude was much more grave. He had already brought out the extraordinary toothpick ahead of time. It floated in front of him, ready to attack at any time.

Qiu Honglei couldn't help but laugh when she saw that. She remarked, "Isn't this going a bit too far, Brother Wu? At first, Senior Brother Wan didn't even use his weapon against me, and yet you've already taken it out. Could it be that you feel like I'm even stronger than Senior Brother Wan?"

Jadefall Palace's Wan Guiyi harrumphed when he heard that, looking a bit annoyed. However, he didn't carry any ill will toward Peng Wuyan. On the contrary, he felt that the sense of power she gave off was beautiful.

Other candidates often supported the one who had defeated them, as the further their opponent went, the more their own strength would receive recognition. However, Wan Guiyi was different. He was hoping for Peng Wuyan to win more because of his belief in the will of the strong.

Wu Xiaofan slowly replied, "Both you and Brother Wan are extremely strong, so this one wouldn't dare to underestimate you. Furthermore, I am still wounded, so I must go all out. I hope junior sister Peng can forgive me for this."

...

Under the stage, Cave Master Mu couldn't help but smack Shi Dingtian in the back of his head, saying, "Look at how he deals with this situation. He's nothing like how stupid you were, just giving up on your weapon."

Wu Xiaofan from the Righteous Sun Sect was also known for being too simple and honest, but compared to him, their brat seemed even dumber.

Shi Dingtian grumbled, "But it's hard for me to control myself if I use a weapon. I didn't even want to use a weapon in the beginning... Also, didn't we already get the highest place in quite a few years? I'm already pretty satisfied."

Cave Master Mu was a bit annoyed at his disciple's uncompetitive nature. This kid actually would have had a chance of winning it all!

...

On the stage, Qiu Honglei said, "Since you're still injured, I'll give you three moves. You can attack first."

This was part of the battle plan Yun Jianyue had set for her. The opponent was injured, so the longer the fight went on, the more advantageous it would be for her. Furthermore, it would be easy for her opponent to reveal openings due to his injuries while attacking.

However, Wu Xiaofan shook his head and replied, "You have come from afar as a guest, so it is already improper for me to use weapons against you. How can I let my junior sister show me such consideration? Junior sister should make the first move."

"Everyone always says you're rather slow, but I don't quite think so," Qiu Honglei said with a chuckle. Seeing as he hadn't fallen for it, she didn't say anything else. With a shout, she fired a round of light bullets. Lights of many different intensities flew forth in an interweaving pattern.

"It's the same thing again," many people below grumbled. This girl always uses the same move. Don't you get tired of the same thing?

However, Liang Ling and the others were watching carefully to see how Wu Xiaofan would deal with the attack.

Wu Xiaofan didn't jump into the air to avoid the giant sphere of light. Instead, he shifted a few meters to the side to avoid it. At the same time, he neutralized Qiu Honglei's follow-up attacks too.

Liang Ling was stunned. Why had he been stupid enough to jump into the air during his match?

He finally understood the move after thinking about it for a while. It turned out that the fast-moving spheres of light seemed chaotic, but many of them had just been used to cut off his paths of evasion. After a while, the spheres would trick an opponent into thinking there would be more projectiles if they dodged to the side. That was why he had instinctively dodged into the sky when the big sphere of light flew toward him.

It was easy to think through now, but back then, both he and Shi Dingtian had fallen for it. Wu Xiaofan had managed to see through it so quickly... As expected of him.

...

When Qiu Honglei saw that the opponent had seen through her tricks, she stopped attacking for a moment. She looked at the fine weapon in front of Wu Xiaofan and couldn't help but ask with a chuckle, "Why aren't you attacking me with that toothpick?"

Wu Xiaofan said calmly, "In my current state, I might not be able to defeat you through its attacks." Using the weapon with the same sword control skill he had used against Wan Guiyi would seriously injure her but not eliminate her even if it hit. Meanwhile, he would exhaust a ton of ki.

"Since you feel you can't win against me in your current state, why not just admit defeat? That way, you won't ruin your condition further and let that affect your future cultivation," Qiu Honglei said, using her strategy of breaking down her opponent's fighting spirit again.

Wu Xiaofan shook his head and replied, "This humble one might not be able to hurt you, but it can still become big."

As soon as he spoke, the toothpick grew, becoming a shockingly large rod.

## **Chapter 1659: Demonic Blade**

Cries of alarm resounded from Golden Peak. Even though this wasn't the first time, it was still very shocking to see.

Humans had always worshiped large things. That could be traced back to the mural paintings of ancient times.

Only Wan Guiyi had an ugly expression. This was the massive staff that had defeated him. Even though he had been injured at the time, a defeat was a defeat. He was really curious about how Peng Wuyan planned to face Wu Xiaofan's terrifying rod.

Wu Xiaofan quickly made his move and sent the massive staff crashing down. Terrifying ki rippled in all directions. The tip of his weapon even caused the space around it to warp!

Qiu Honglei naturally didn't dare to face the attack head-on. She quickly evaded to one side.

The power of the staff covered the entire stage with cracks.



Watchful Peak's Elder Feng Wuchang wiped away cold sweat. Fortunately, he had asked the sect master to apply a seal on the whole place. Otherwise, the attack would have already crushed the stage to rubble!

When Wu Xiaofan saw Peng Wuyan evade, he swept his staff horizontally. It practically covered the entire stage with its massive figure, leaving the opponent with no room to evade at all.

Many spectators felt nervous. Wouldn't they be turned into a bloody paste if they were struck by that massive staff? Even though this Peng Wuyan wasn't that pretty and she was a bit too fierce, she didn't deserve to die, right?

Suddenly, there were many cries of surprise. It turned out that with a twist of Peng Wuyan's body, she had ended up standing on top of that large rod! She kicked off lightly with her toe tips, rushing viciously at Wu Xiaofan along the staff's body.

"Wonderful!" Wan Guiyi exclaimed, crying out in admiration. As expected of the strong woman he favored! This ability to adapt really was exceptional.

Wu Xiaofan's big stick was quite strong. Being able to change size was a huge strength, but it did have a disadvantage. It was more powerful the farther away it was, but when the enemy was close, it became harder to wield. If Peng Wuyan could get close, the big staff would immediately become half as effective. Quite a few others recognized that fact. It was now Righteous Sun Sect's turn to feel nervous.

Even though Wu Xiaofan looked unfazed, his large staff suddenly shrank, becoming the size of a toothpick again.

Peng Wuyan was left with no footing and almost fell. Her opponent's toothpick quickly transformed into a streak of light and rushed straight at her.

Clang!

She blocked the attack with her two blades. Meanwhile, Wu Xiaofan took the chance to make some distance between them again.

"This Wu Xiaofan indeed has some skills," Heavenly Sorrow Sect's Zhao Xiaodie said with a sigh of amazement. She had been wondering what he was going to do as Peng Wuyan had closed the distance. She hadn't expected him to deal with it in such an effortless manner.

"He is indeed formidable. However, this Peng Wuyan seems to be stronger than I imagined her to be," Zhi Yin said, frowning as he looked at Peng Wuyan. Why were the women of this tournament all so strong? He even wondered who was stronger between himself and this Peng woman.

Wu Xiaofan gave Qiu Honglei a vigilant look. Even though he had averted danger, he was actually quite nervous and didn't dare to attack like that again. Instead, he brought the toothpick close to himself. Then, it changed into its large defensive staff form.

Qiu Honglei was a bit unhappy when she saw how he was acting. She remarked, "What is a grown man like you acting all passive for? Are you making a delicate girl attack first? That's not what a real man should be like at all."

"Delicate girl?"

The crowd immediately hissed in displeasure. Her viciousness had left all of them with a deep impression.

Zu An was a bit absent-minded. This woman really gave him a familiar feeling. That kind of tone was even more familiar.

...

On the stage, Wu Xiaofan remained unshaken, replying, "I am wounded, so I hope junior sister can understand."

Qiu Honglei felt a bit helpless when she saw that he wouldn't yield. Still, she couldn't just waste time like this. With a harrumph, she brandished her twin blades and attacked. Even though she was beautiful, as someone who had grown up in the Devil Sect, her combat style was naturally very fierce and direct.

The blades released a sharp and clear noise when they collided. Her presence immediately became more imposing, and the entire stage was covered by her power. Even the light around her seemed to become a bit distorted.

The various sects' disciples were all shocked. The representative disciples couldn't help but sit at the edge of their seats. This woman seemed to have been holding back earlier!

The sect masters looked at her blades. They had looked completely ordinary at first, but now, they seemed to be a bit different!

Wu Xiaofan's expression changed. He naturally didn't dare to look down on her either. A large staff was difficult to maneuver, so he shrank it down to the size of Sun Wukong's golden staff. Then, he swept it toward the ground, sending a chunk of the floor at his opponent. After that, he charged while swinging his staff, carrying with it a powerful momentum.

Feng Wuchang didn't have time to feel heartbroken over the destruction of the stage. He was more concerned with the results of the battle. After all, Wu Xiaofan was from the Righteous Sun Sect!

"Wu Xiaofan is actually still able to bring forth such vigorous ki despite being seriously injured!" Lou Wucheng exclaimed as his eyes flickered brilliantly. He felt a sense of danger.

Perhaps he had been careless in his fight against Shi Dingtian, but whether it was Peng Wuyan or Wu Xiaofan, he felt he would most likely lose if he had to fight against them.

Qiu Honglei had a grave expression. Her blades intersected, forming a ✕-shaped blade of light that rushed at her opponent.

The floor of the stage had been reinforced by special formations, making it incredibly sturdy; despite that, before the cross-shaped blade of light, it was instantly cut into several pieces like a hot knife through butter. The blades of light didn't stop, and crashed straight into Wu Xiaofan's domineering staff.

A huge explosion resounded, and the entire stage rocked back and forth. The barrier around the stage flickered crazily. Meanwhile, the pieces of the floor that had been cut apart were blasted into dust by the impact's power.

The spectators were all horrified. Was this really the level of power two disciples could produce? If not for the protection of the barriers, just the blast waves alone would have injured a large number of people.

...

Qiu Honglei turned into a streak of light, attacking from all directions as she moved around.

Meanwhile, Wu Xiaofan stood in place. The staff in his hands spun like the wind, always managing to deflect his opponent's attacks.

As he watched them fight, Wan Guiyi was left in complete admiration. He had thought that Wu Xiaofan was only good at shamelessly using that huge staff as an absolute defense method, but now, he learned that Wu Xiaofan's staff technique was actually quite profound.

What was even more surprising was the weight behind each strike of the staff; despite that, Wu Xiaofan was still able to use it so nimbly. Still, that didn't come without a price. He basically didn't move at all. It was clear that he couldn't use both the heavy staff and nimble movements.

Qiu Honglei naturally picked up on that. After another clash, her arms spread out to the sides as she retreated, resembling a 十 character.

Many disciples were confused. She had finally managed to close the distance, so why was she retreating again?

Wu Xiaofan also looked at her with confusion. Qiu Honglei smiled, and at that moment, her two daggers floated in front of her.

Then, two became four, four became eight... Soon after, the sky was covered with copies of the daggers. With a point of Qiu Honglei's finger, those blades roared toward Wu Xiaofan.

"Isn't this just a futile move? With that huge staff to protect him, what use are long-range attacks?" Heavenly Sorrow Sect's ninth disciple Cai Yu couldn't help but mutter.

Zhi Yin harrumphed. "What do you understand? She's just clashing with Wu Xiaofan to exhaust his ki in a war of attrition."

Meanwhile, Wan Guiyi also nodded inwardly. As expected of the woman I favor. She noticed that Wu Xiaofan needs to consume ki to use his staff so quickly. He's still wounded, so he might not be able to maintain it for long.

Sure enough, Wu Xiaofan frowned. However, he didn't have any other choice. He could only enlarge his staff to block all of the flying daggers.

His figure trembled slightly as the ki inside of him stirred. However, he didn't have time to worry about that. He looked toward the sky vigilantly, muttering, "Where did she go?"

A second later, he immediately had a bad feeling. Powerful killing intent surged from behind him.

“So that attack was just a pretense! But when did she get behind me?” Wu Xiaofan muttered, although he didn’t have time to think. He activated all his ki, completely unconcerned with appearances as he frantically dodged to the side.

Even so, although he avoided getting hit in a vital position, the opponent still managed to stab her dagger into his ribs.

“Ahhh!”

The Righteous Sun Sect’s people were all incredibly shocked. Even if one didn’t die, that kind of attack would leave serious injuries, right?

The other disciples had conflicted expressions. They hadn’t expected that the publicly acknowledged number one, Wu Xiaofan, would actually be defeated. Furthermore, he had lost to someone who was completely unknown before all of this.

However, Qiu Honglei didn’t look happy at all. She didn’t feel her blade stabbing into flesh; rather, it was as if it had struck something extremely tough.

Wu Xiaofan shouted, then brandished the large staff in his hands.

Even though Qiu Honglei did her best to evade, the weapon still brushed past her arm and half of her body went numb. She retreated roughly ten meters away and stared at Wu Xiaofan’s chest. As she had pulled out her dagger, his clothes had been ripped apart by the blade’s ki, revealing a yellow-green set of flexible armor.

“The Righteous Sun Sect’s Green Scale Armor!”

The sect masters all looked at Wang Wuxie in shock. They hadn’t expected him to give something so precious to his disciple.

The Green Scale Armor was a heaven-grade defensive artifact that could block the attack of heaven-grade weapons. To a certain degree, it could even reduce an immortal-grade weapon’s attacks. It was rumored to have previously been worn by Wang Wuxie himself!

Wu Xiaofan had been strong to begin with. However, with this set of armor, he was even more invincible. Like hell there was even a point in fighting anymore!

Wang Wuxie could see their dissatisfaction, so he was also a bit embarrassed. He said, “I didn’t give it to him before because I didn’t want him to depend on it. But since his injuries yesterday were a bit too serious and he wasn’t able to make a full recovery in such a short time, I gave it to him for protection.”

That made the others feel a bit more at ease. No wonder Wan Guiyi had been able to wound him yesterday... It seemed this Mister Wang still had some sense of shame.

With such serious injuries, giving Wu Xiaofan such a set of armor was understandable. Although, it was a pity for that Emptiness Isle woman. Her tactics were truly outstanding. Without the set of armor, Wu Xiaofan would already have lost.

They looked at Elder Peng from Emptiness Isle, waiting for her to vent her frustrations at Wang Wuxie. However, she remained completely calm. There was even a sneer on her lips.

Don't tell me she still has more cards to show? they thought, shocked.

Wu Xiaofan said apologetically, "Wearing this set of precious armor has given me an unfair advantage. I hope that junior sister doesn't take offense."

Qiu Honglei sneered and replied, "Who says you've won?"

Wu Xiaofan sighed and said, "Your attacks won't be able to break through my defense." Judging from their earlier exchange, he already had a rough idea of the upper limit of her attacks. With his strength and this armor protecting him, he was already in an invincible position.

Qiu Honglei didn't reply. Her expression was grave. How could she possibly lose in this competition in front of those other women's eyes?

She brought the blades in her hands together. The two daggers seemed to absorb each other, connecting to form an S-shaped curved blade. Then, a terrifying pressure emanated from them. At the same time, an overwhelming killing intent filled the air.

"This is..."

The sect masters' expressions all changed.

Chapter 1660: Interrogation

"It seems a bit like Devil Sect Master Yun Jianyue's Crescent Ring," Guan Chouhai muttered.

"It is a bit similar, especially with all of the killing intent," Wan Tongtian said with a frown. The dense killing intent clearly made them uncomfortable.

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As the others were talking to each other, Wang Wuxie had his own thoughts. He didn't involve himself in the conversation.

Yun Jianyue frowned slightly when she heard them mention her name, but she wasn't too worried. Qiu Honglei had never used these blades before in the world of warriors, so she wasn't scared of them finding out anything.

She suddenly heard Zu An's voice call out, "This is far from Sect Master Yun's Crescent Ring."

Yun Jianyue raised her brows. She looked at him with an ambiguous smile.

"Oh? I've heard that Sir Zu faced Sect Master Yun in the past. You must have a very deep impression," Wang Wuxie said as he looked at Zu An. As the State Teacher, he naturally knew more about court matters than his fellow daoists. Zu An had been famous during the Imperial Palace invasion, and then enjoyed a meteoric rise in the Eastern Palace.

However, when Wang Wuxie had first seen that Zu An didn't have even the slightest bit of ki fluctuations around his body, he assumed that Zu An had lost all of his cultivation in the Fiend races' territory from his serious injuries. How could he have known that this kid was even more formidable than the rumors said?

The other sect masters all looked at Zu An. They hadn't expected him to have already faced Yun Jianyue!

"We indeed had a deep interaction..." Zu An said with a reminiscent smile.

Yun Jianyue's face reddened. What is this damn brat thinking right now?

Yan Xuehen gave him a confused look. Why do those words sound so strange?

"That witch has always been cold-blooded and ruthless. The fact that Sir Zu was able to keep your life after facing her is quite a rare experience," the White Jade Sect's Li Changsheng said, sounding deeply moved.

Yun Jianyue narrowed her eyes. This damn White Jade Sect is always opposing me. I should pay them a visit one day, and let them experience what it really means to be cold-blooded and ruthless.

Wan Tongtian laughed heartily and said, "I was able to see Sir Zu fight. It's not all that surprising for him to be able to escape from that witch's clutches at all." Since Zu An had helped him before, he had quite a good impression of him.

"Witch?" Yun Jianyue muttered with a dangerous expression. Still, seeing as he was praising Zu An, a smirk appeared on her lips. She couldn't bring herself to get angry.

"She's actually not as scary as you're all making her out to be. She looks pretty fierce on the surface, but she's actually quite soft inside," Zu An said, speaking up for her. He just didn't feel all that great listening to others talk badly about her.

Yan Xuehen gave him a look, then shifted her gaze. They had all fought together while risking their lives, so it wasn't that surprising for him to speak in such a way.

However, the others didn't think the same way. Their expressions all changed as they said, "Sir Zu, please speak cautiously. That witch is absolutely heartless, an absolute criminal wanted by the court. Please remember to not make friends with her at all costs."

Wan Tongtian, who carried good intentions for Zu An, emphasized further in a sincere tone, "Indeed, Sir Zu, those witches are best at deceiving people. Do not let yourself be fooled by that side of theirs."

Zu An frowned. In the end, he didn't say anything else. His time in the online forums of his previous world had taught him how difficult it was to convince others. These people's impressions were already set in their ways and they couldn't coexist with the Devil Sect. Anything he said here would be meaningless.

However, Yun Jianyue was completely amused. She thought to herself, This kid is surprisingly loyal. I... My disciple didn't choose the wrong person.

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Meanwhile, there were new developments happening on stage. With the emergence of Qiu Honglei's curved blade, both her weapon and her entire figure began to flicker with overlapping afterimages.

Wu Xiaofan was shocked. What kind of skill was this? Which one was her real self?

Qiu Honglei's blade sliced outward. A line of explosions erupted across the entire stage. Wu Xiaofan didn't dare to take the attack head-on and quickly dodged; a huge groove instantly appeared in the spot he had been standing on. The entire stage was almost sliced in two.

Feng Wuchang was heartbroken over how much money they were going to lose, even as he worried for Wu Xiaofan. The power of his opponent's sword was actually so great! It was clearly a heaven-grade weapon at the very least. Would Xiaofan be able to stop it?

When they saw Wu Xiaofan evade in a panic, the spectators erupted into discussions. Even though he was injured, the Green Scale Armor made up for that. And yet, he was still being pressured right now! Wasn't this Peng Wuyan a bit too strong?

On Zhao Xiaodie's side, she couldn't help but frown. She gave Zhi Yin an inquiring look and said, "Senior brother, master rank cultivators can anticipate attacks beforehand with their souls. Shouldn't all those under the master rank be easily crushed? Why does the current situation almost seem backward?"

Zhi Yin replied with a sneer, "Do you really still believe that Peng Wuyan is only at the mid-stage of the ninth rank?"

Zhao Xiaodie was stunned, saying, "But the test previously said..."

Zhi Yin shook his head and added, "She probably used some kind of skill to hide her cultivation. I believe that was precisely to catch us off guard."

He felt even worse when he thought about how he had been kicked out beforehand. In order to make sure that this pretty junior sister of his didn't look down on him, he added, "Actually, the idea of master rank cultivators overwhelming all those beneath that cultivation stage only applies to ordinary ninth ranks. For representative disciples like us from the great sects, we all have special ways of weakening the soul advantage of master ranks. I believe the others also have that ability."

"Senior brother is incredible!" Zhao Xiaodie exclaimed; she was sincere in her admiration. As someone who was also from the Heavenly Sorrow Sect, she knew just how strong Zhi Yin was. These people were proud of themselves, and had enjoyed countless miraculous encounters ever since they were young. Meanwhile, challenging opponents above their current cultivation rank was something others wouldn't even dream of doing.

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Wu Xiaofan was left with no choice. He could only enlarge his staff. Whenever he swung it, it was as if a mountain crashed down.

He knew that he would only be worn out quickly if he continued like this and could even collapse from his injuries, but he didn't dare to show any hesitation either. He had already mustered all of his fighting spirit. If he didn't face her with his full power, he even suspected that he could be cleaved in two by that blade. Even though he had the Green Scale Armor covering him, he still didn't have much confidence when he sensed the opponent's overwhelming killing intent.

Is this woman really from the righteous faction? Why does she have such a sinister weapon?

As the massive staff came at her, Qiu Honglei didn't dodge this time. Instead, she brought her curved blade straight down. A blade beam, filled with killing intent that almost seemed tangible, emerged. It actually sliced the massive staff image apart!

"What?!" Wan Guiyi exclaimed as he stood up. He had faced Wu Xiaofan before, so he naturally knew that the staff was a projection of ki, but it was so powerful it felt real. Back then, even his own sword ki couldn't slice through that staff, and yet this woman had managed to accomplish it!

As expected of the woman I appreciate! Her entire figure gives off the aesthetic of strength!

Wu Xiaofan was also stunned when he saw his staff projection sliced through. He had no choice but to continuously back up. He retreated all the way to the edge of the stage, where he had nowhere left to run.

"This Wu Xiaofan is no good too. Everyone praises him as if he's some deity, and yet he's been beaten up like this by a woman."

Even though the truly strong understood how powerful the two competitors were, there were far more ordinary disciples. They weren't on the stage, so they couldn't really understand what Wu Xiaofan was going through. They just saw him being forced back again and again. Furthermore, when they remembered all the rumors about how strong he was, they immediately developed feelings of contempt, as if they could do better if they stepped up themselves.

Wu Xiaofan turned a deaf ear to these remarks. His gaze was steady as a burst of violet ki suddenly surged around him.

"Mist of Violet Ki!"

The sect masters on the elevated section looked at Wang Wuxie in shock. They hadn't expected him to have already passed on his ultimate skill to his disciple! Furthermore, because of Wu Xiaofan's exceptional talent, he had actually learned it.

Wang Wuxie continued to observe the situation on the stage without any noticeable changes in emotion.

With the support of the violet ki, even the winds around the massive staff carried hints of violet luster now. One strike after another, it smashed apart Qiu Honglei's sword ki.

"That's more like it! How could Wu Xiaofan possibly have an undeserved reputation?!" many of Wu Xiaofan's supporters immediately cried out in excitement.

Qiu Honglei rubbed the bruise on her arm. It had just been brushed by that staff, and yet it had made half of her body numb. Her expression was cold as she suddenly raised her hand. A layer of dazzling light covered the surface of the curved blade.

"Could it be that she still has some other secret move that she hasn't used yet?" the disciples exclaimed as they all extended their necks.

"Huh? Why did her blade disappear?" Zhao Xiaodie exclaimed. She had also been watching the fight closely. She suddenly cried out in alarm.



Only then did the spectators see that after the light passed, the blade in Peng Wuyan's hands had disappeared.

On the stage, Wu Xiaofan was both nervous and vigilant. Violet ki surged all around him, as if he was guarding against something.

A moment later, a spatial rift suddenly appeared in front of him. Only those who were close to him could see that countless stars appeared within that spatial rift. It was like a portal that led to a galaxy beyond. In an instant, a terrifying blade of light slashed outward from the rift. It almost instantly sliced through all of the violet ki around Wu Xiaofan, then crashed into the Green Scale Armor he wore.

Boom!

A deafening noise resounded. A blast of bloody mist erupted from Wu Xiaofan's body. The famous Green Scale Armor was left with a clear crack, and soon grew dim. Wu Xiaofan himself was knocked off the stage by a tremendous force, and his body fell heavily to the ground. He struggled to raise his head, but he still fainted in the end.

The entire place fell dead silent.

All the spectators looked at the woman on the stage. What kind of monster was this? She had defeated Wu Xiaofan without even any visible injuries on herself, other than being a bit out of breath! Even though Wu Xiaofan was injured, her performance was a bit too absurd, right? Why did such a woman previously not have any reputation among the daoist sects at all?

The Righteous Sun Sect's people hurriedly rushed forward. When they saw that Wu Xiaofan had only fainted from serious injuries and that there was no risk to his life, they all sighed in relief. Wang Wuxie remained on the elevated area and didn't head out, however.

Meanwhile, the spectators all congratulated Yun Jianyue. Now that Emptiness Isle had such a talented disciple, they were destined for a glorious path ahead of them! The pupil could even surpass the master, raising their sect to the point of becoming the leader of the daoist sects!

"Not at all, not at all. We were just lucky, haha~" Yun Jianyue humbly replied, although she was practically unable to suppress her laughter. The feeling of seeing these daoists who normally cursed her to death now congratulating her really wasn't bad at all. She wondered just what kind of amazing reactions they'd have if the truth was revealed one day.

Wang Wuxie suddenly said, "If I recall correctly, that blade is the Moon Demon Blade used by the Devil Sect's Great Demon Ding Tianle a century ago. It is an important treasure of the Devil Sect. Why would it end up in Lady Peng's hands?" He stared at her with his sharp eyes as he spoke.