

Prodigies 271

Chapter 271 Infamous

The atmosphere was buzzing like it had never before. It was a magnificent event.

Lin Xun casually handed over some things to Gu Liang, held up the examination badge and walked ahead alone.

Ahead was the examination zone where cultivators participating in the examination had to wait for the examination to start.

When Lin Xun arrived, many people had already gathered in the examination zone. There were men and women, all of whom were under eighteen years old. From a rough estimate, Lin Xun reckoned there were a few thousand people.

The majority were from wealthy families and only a few were cultivators from poor backgrounds.

The assessment hadn't started and all the youngsters in the examination zone were discussing and chatting among themselves. Their faces filled with anticipation, excitement, nervousness, and various other emotions.

For them, the provincial examination was an opportunity to change their destiny. If they successfully passed, they could leap to the dragon's gate, rise to the sky and surpass the rest of the world!

"I heard that the many influential figures in the southwest province would come to watch the exam. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Even if we fail, we might have a chance to attract the attention of influential figures as long as we perform well!"

"Don't say that. The exam hasn't started yet and you're already talking about failing. Do you have a backbone?"

"This is not about having a backbone or not. It's reality. Do you think that people like us can compete with the true top geniuses? I guarantee that you won't be ranked in the top 100."

"Ugh, yes, I indeed am not hopeful of passing the assessment. I just hope that my strength will be noticed by an influential figure during the exam. I would already be very happy to be scouted by a top sect or clan."

"I agree, I heard that many of the top geniuses are already at the Earth Dipper Stage. Also, Xue Shaolin, Yu Wenjing, Le Zhiyou and Yun Zitong are well-known geniuses of the Heaven Dipper Stage!"

"Heaven Dipper Stage!? Heavens, isn't that terrifying?"

"Hey, what's all the fuss? The rules of the provincial exam state that cultivators have to be under eighteen and have to be at least at the Human Dipper Stage. It doesn't state that those at a stronger cultivation level can't take part."

"Damn it, there's no point comparing. Who would have imagined that there are people younger than eighteen with a cultivation base of the Heaven Dipper Stage? I just hope I won't have to go up against those abnormal people in the exam."

"Haha, those at a higher cultivation level are undoubtedly more powerful but don't forget that there are also some fierce characters in the Human Dipper Stage. Some of them could even compete with people of a higher cultivation level than them!"

"Who?"

"Who else could be? Of course it's Lin Xun!"

"I knew it would be him! He has been acknowledged as the opponent most people don't want to face!"

"Damn it. He is indeed abnormal. I heard that he trained against Heaven Dipper Stage puppets in the Azure Sea Training Hall a few days ago. Isn't he abnormal?"

There were endless discussions in the examination zone. All of them were analyzing the situation in the examination.

When they mentioned the famous top youngsters, Lin Xun's name would always be spoken.

Lin Xun was a little dumbfounded. He had never thought that he would be that famous.

The funniest thing was that no one was able to recognize him even if he was standing in front of them.

Suddenly, a chubby man beside him took him aback. The man's eyes were tightly closed and his hands were folded together as he constantly mumbled something like he was praying.

Lin Xun could vaguely hear the chubby man say, "God, please, please don't let me encounter that abnormal person Lin Xun..."

Lin Xun rolled his eyes. Am I that scary?

The little chubby man opened his eyes and caught a glimpse of the speechless look on Lin Xun's face. He blushed in embarrassment and explained, "Buddy, you might think I'm being ridiculous, but from what I heard, Lin Xun is an evil demon. Whoever provokes him will suffer."

"..."

"I'm not lying to you, I watched the duel between him and Huang Jianchen with my own eyes. You can't even imagine how terrifying he is."

Lin Xun finally couldn't help but say, "Since you watched the duel, can you tell me what Lin Xun looks like?"

The little chubby man said without wavering, "I was too far away so I only know he is nine feet tall with a blue face and fangs. He looked fierce like an evil spirit that escaped from hell."

Lin Xun rolled his eyes again. He forcibly resisted the urge to beat him up, turned around, and walked away. A blue face and fangs? Evil spirit? When did I become a demon?

"Hey, buddy, why are you leaving? I'm not lying!"

How could Lin Xun pay any attention to him? He thought he was already very kind in not beating him up.

Lin Xun finally confirmed that although many of the examination candidates had heard about him, most were exaggerations!

Not long after that, Lin Xun finally saw some familiar figures, such as Wen Mingxiu, Yuan Shu and Qi Yunxiao. They were also candidates in the provincial examination.

At almost the same time, Wen Mingxiu and the others also met Lin Xun's gaze. Their expressions dramatically changed.

Most of them had complicated feelings towards Lin Xun including hatred, jealousy, awe and admiration.

"Junior Sister Mingxiu, what's up with you guys?" A young man in a luxurious robe swept a surprised glance over Wen Mingxiu and the others.

"Senior Brother Xue!"

"Paying our respects to Senior Brother Xue."

Immediately, Wen Mingxiu and the others snapped out from their thoughts and bowed their heads respectfully.

The young man was Xue Shaolin, one of the four geniuses in Haze Academy! At only seventeen years old, he already had the superb cultivation base of the Heaven Dipper Stage!

"Senior Brother Xue, we just ran into an acquaintance just now," Wen Mingxiu explained softly.

"Who? Is it a student of Haze Academy?" Xue Shaolin's interest was piqued.

"No." Wen Mingxiu shook her head and was about to explain when Qi Yunxiao interjected, "Senior Brother Xue, aren't you also curious about who Lin Xun is? Look, he's there." He pointed to the distance.

Lin Xun!

A gleam flashed in Xue Shaolin's eyes, but he only caught a glimpse of Lin Xun's back before he vanished into the crowd.

However, Xue Shaolin was able to remember him from just his rear view. This was because he had often heard about Lin Xun's name and it made him very curious about him since he could defeat Huang Jianchen.

He finally saw him with his own eyes but unfortunately, it was just his back.

"If there is a chance, I would like to have a showdown with him in the provincial exam. It will be very interesting," Xue Shaolin said with a smile.

Wen Mingxiu and the others were stunned for a moment with complicated emotions swirling in their eyes. Even if Xue Shaolin was at the Heaven Dipper Stage and was two cultivation levels higher than Lin Xun, it was still hard to say who would win in a duel between the two.

It wasn't that they had no confidence in Xue Shaolin, but that they knew Lin Xun was an abnormal person who didn't play the usual cards. Anyone who underestimated him was an absolute idiot!

Their reactions surprised Xue Shaolin. He couldn't help scrunching his brows. Could Lin Xun really be so strong that it made Wen Mingxiu and the others silent?

This is getting more and more interesting!

An irrepressible fighting spirit rose in Xue Shaolin's heart. He was determined to have a showdown with Lin Xun.

Xue Shaolin suddenly wondered whether Yu Wenjing, Le Zhiyou and Yun Zitong would feel the same if they learned about Lin Xun's strength.

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Soon, a melodious and resounding bell echoed across the world, silencing the commotion in the examination zone.

All the spectators and examination candidates simultaneously turned to the easternmost part of the venue.

A white jade platform was suspended in mid-air like a castle in the sky. Rune light suffused the platform and made it look extremely mysterious.

There were rows upon rows of seats, which were already filled with people. In the center sat Governor Liu Wujun and beside him was Wei Lingzhen, the principal of Haze Academy, and Du Dongtu, the head of the Violet Plume Army.

They acted as witnesses of the provincial examination and would work with chief examiner Liu Wujun to assess the examination!

Everyone fell silent and the atmosphere had unknowingly become incomparably solemn.

Under everyone's watchful gazes, Wei Lingzhen rose to his feet and announced the rules of the provincial examination. He then highlighted some things to take note of and encouraged the candidates to do well. His voice, clear and sonorous, echoed throughout the stadium.

Finally, he ran his eyes across the audience and commenced the examination!

Meanwhile, in the examination zone, the candidates were drawing lots to divide themselves into different areas.

Lin Xun's slip of paper was written with 'first set, No. 36, opponent Tan Long'. In other words, he would appear in the first set of battles on the no. 36 arena and would go up against an opponent called Tan Long.

According to the rules of the provincial examination, battles would simultaneously take place in one hundred arenas.

The duration was one hour and the winner would progress to the next round and the loser would be eliminated!

If a winner hadn't been decided within one hour, both cultivators would be eliminated.

When the first set of battles was over, another 200 cultivators would make their way onto the platform and compete and so on.

The first round of examination was over when all 5,436 cultivators had fought.

In other words, in the first round, all candidates would battle against their drawn opponent in the arena.

Based on this, at least half of the candidates would be eliminated after the first round.

This was equivalent to 2,718 people. The elimination rate was brutal!

It was the provincial examination! Only the true top cultivators of the younger generation could pass the round after round of cruel assessments and finally stand out from the crowd!

Chapter 272 Enemies are Bound to Meet on a Narrow Road

The list of the names of people participating in the first set of battles was quickly released. A total of two hundred cultivators were to compete in the one hundred arenas.

The examination time was one hour.

As the list circulated throughout the audience, it sparked enthusiastic discussions. The tens of thousands of people in the audience immediately started to analyze the list.

“No way, there doesn’t seem to be many top talents on the list for the first set of battles. What’s there to watch?”

“Open your eyes and look carefully. No. 36 arena, Lin Xun! Isn't he a top genius?”

“It indeed is Lin Xun! That guy is fierce.”

“I didn’t expect to see Lin Xun fight in the first set of matches. I wonder whether he is indeed as powerful as rumored.”

“Hahaha, who is Tan Long anyway? He’s really unfortunate to have to face a fierce character like Lin Xun in the first round.”

Uproar broke out in the audience. After analysis, everyone agreed that the battle soon to take place in the No. 36 arena was the most worth watching.

It couldn’t be helped. There were a total of one hundred battles going to take place at the same time and they couldn't watch them all. They had to choose the most interesting battle to pay attention to.

Evidently, everyone most looked forward to Lin Xun’s appearance.

Almost everyone in the audience knew that Lin Xun had beaten Qi Yunxiao and Yuan Shu and had defeated Huang Jianchen, an aristocratic clan descendant from the Forbidden City.

In their hearts, Lin Xun was a dazzling figure with tyrannical strength. How would they not be excited to watch his performance in the first match?

For a moment, Lin Xun’s name seemed to be echoing throughout the venue.

Gu Liang stood dumbfounded in the audience. He thought back to when Lin Xun was just a nobody in Donglin City. Who would have thought he would become one of the most dazzling figures in Haze City?

On the white jade platform, influential figures such as Liu Wujun, Wei Lingzhen and Du Dongtu couldn't help feeling moved upon hearing the spirited discussions.

It had only been less than a year since Lin Xun appeared in Haze City but he had risen like a star and drew countless people's attention. It was simply a miracle.

As they thought about everything that had happened to Lin Xun, they had to admit that the youth was indeed impressive!

Several major forces suffered serious damage in a bloody massacre on a rainy night but not one of them dared to utter a word. Huang Jianchen lost to Lin Xun in a duel and left in misery.

Now, no one knew for sure what sort of result he would receive in the provincial examination.

However, there was no doubt that he could easily pass the provincial examination given his past performances. Of course, no one could say for certain before the final result was released.

At that moment, even the examination candidates couldn't help but focus their attention on Lin Xun. They had heard too many rumors about him and many had already analyzed Lin Xun's strength in depth.

However, those were just rumors. Now that they could see Lin Xun in battle with their own eyes, they would have a more comprehensive understanding of his strength.

A true cultivator would never underestimate their opponent. Since Lin Xun was recognized as the opponent no one wanted to face, everyone was curious to see whether he would live up to the title in the provincial examination!

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Tan Long felt a little bewildered. Damn it, how unlucky am I to fight in the first match?

How unlucky am I to have to face Lin Xun the evil demon?

There are so many damn cultivators, why do I have to be chosen? God is not fair!

When Tan Long stepped onto the No. 36 arena, he could feel countless eyes fixed on him like knives. It was as though they were waiting for him to embarrass himself.

Tan Long felt extremely uncomfortable. He drew a deep breath and tried to cheer for himself. It doesn't matter. Regardless of how strong Lin Xun is, he is still only at the Human Dipper Stage like me. Why should I be afraid of him?

Suddenly, Tan Long noticed a familiar figure approaching the arena from the other side. Perplexed, he exclaimed, "Buddy, what are you doing? My opponent is Lin Xun, not you."

That figure was precisely Lin Xun. When Lin Xun saw Tan Long, he stared at him blankly for a good moment. Isn't he the little chubby man who said I have a blue face and fangs and is like an evil spirit from hell?

Lin Xun smiled and strolled up the arena. "You're called Tan Long, right?"

Tan Long felt a chill in his heart and a bad feeling flooded him. He swallowed a mouthful of saliva and nodded. "Brother, you...don't tell me..."

Before he finished, Lin Xun nodded. "Correct. I am Lin Xun."

Hssss!

Tan Long gasped, and his heart went cold. He's Lin Xun.

Tan Long felt dizzy at the thought of how he called Lin Xun an evil spirit who escaped from hell the first time they met. Heavens, are you playing a joke on me!?

"Uh, Big Brother Lin Xun, I didn't do it on purpose. I...I only heard it from others. I didn't mean to insult you."

The battle hadn't even started yet, but Tan Long was already panicking.

"I understand, it's okay, I don't blame you. Let's just have a good battle," Lin Xun said with a smile, seeming very generous.

"Can I...can I admit defeat?" Tan Long's face morphed into a bitter smile. His fighting spirit gradually faded in the face of Lin Xun. It wasn't because he was cowardly but because he was aware of the difference in strength between Lin Xun and him. Even if he fought with all his strength, it was no different from hitting a stone with an egg.

Rather than being beaten and humiliated, it was better to admit defeat and save a bit of face.

Lin Xun stared at him blankly. He had never thought the little chubby man would be so cowardly. "Don't you want to give it a try? Maybe a miracle will happen."

Tan Long shook his head repeatedly. "I have never believed in miracles."

Lin Xun was utterly speechless. Then, he said angrily, "Impossible, you have to fight, even if you admit defeat, that's up to me to decide!"

"Uh..." Tan Long felt as if a bolt of lightning had struck him. He wanted to cry but no tears came forth. Lin Xun is too domineering. He won't even let me admit defeat. How could there be a bully like him...

The onlookers were also at a loss for words when they heard the conversation between the two. They couldn't help but look down on Tan Long. I've seen cowards but I've never seen such a coward. It's shameful to admit defeat before the fight has even started!

However, the scene clearly showed how fierce and terrifying Lin Xun was. He had terrified his opponent into voluntarily admitting defeat before the battle had even begun.

Clang—

The bell rang across the world, raising the curtain to the first battle.

On the no. 36 arena.

With a clang, Lin Xun unsheathed a giant, wide blade. It flashed a chilling and fierce glint.

“What kind of blade is that? What an impressive appearance!”

“I don’t know but it should be a newly developed aeth tool, right?”

All eyes were drawn to the giant blade in Lin Xun’s hand. The size of the blade was too astonishing. The blade was four feet long with an entirely jet-black body. It was easy to imagine its terrifying destructive power from its chilling glint.

On the opposite side, Tan Long trembled and wailed inwardly. Damn it, am I going to be beaten by Lin Xun?

However, at that critical moment, he gritted his teeth and summoned a pair of battle axes. He drew a deep breath, gathered all his strength and pinned his eyes on Lin Xun. It was as if he was about to fight to the death.

“Lin Xun, let’s end this quickly. How about we decide the battle with one move?” Tan Long roared.

“All right, as you wish,” Lin Xun readily agreed.

“Die!”

Before his voice faded, Tan Long violently charged forward. Images of his figures appeared as he sped across the air. It turned out that his chubby body was very nimble!

Rumble—

His entire body was enveloped in crimson-red light like a burning volcano and his aura suddenly soared.

The audience was stunned. The little chubby man has such an imposing aura. Why did he look like a coward?

Clearly, he was pretending to be cowardly!

Many people criticized Tan Long for his despicable and cunning behavior. His imposing aura alone was top-class but he looked so miserable like his parents had died. If he was not pretending then what was he doing?

“Ha, the little fatty is interesting.”

On the white jade platform, Wei Lingzhen smiled. The other influential figures also chuckled. Given their experience, how would they not see through Tan Long’s little trick? They knew that Tan Long only acted cowardly to take Lin Xun off guard.

It was impossible for someone who could pass the selection process to participate in the provincial examination to be ordinary.

If Tan Long was a coward, how would he possibly be qualified to take the provincial examination?

Rumble—

Two battle axes swung across the air, like a pair of interweaving dragons. The surrounding air collapsed from the terrifying destructive force.

Tan Long had launched a full-strength attack at Lin Xun!

Everyone's hearts jumped to their chest and their eyes went wide. How would Lin Xun deal with such a violent attack?

Would he be caught off guard because of his carelessness?

Lin Xun stood motionless in the same spot with a smile on his face. It wasn't until Tan Long's mid-air attack was about to strike him that he twisted his wrist and raised his giant wide blade!

It looked like he was lifting a door.

Boom!

With an earthshaking boom, Tan Long was blasted across the air like a fat fly!

Everyone's jaws dropped. That...is too cruel, isn't it?

Chapter 273 Rise to Fame

Bang!

Tan Long uncontrollably blasted across the air and slammed into the ground outside the arena.

His face twisted with horror and disbelief. Did he defeat me with one blade strike? That guy is more abnormal than rumored!

Gasps rang out from the audience. Everyone was in utter shock. They thought that Tan Long was pretending to be cowardly and possessed remarkable strength, so he would be able to fight a fierce battle with Lin Xun.

Who would have thought that Lin Xun sent Tan Long flying with one blade strike? It looked as easy as swatting a fly!

The battle ended too quickly!

Many people were a little dumbfounded, refusing to believe that the duel that they looked forward to the most was over so soon.

On the white jade platform, Wei Lingzhen and Du Dongtu exchanged a glance with each other and couldn't help smiling wryly. Lin Xun is savage!

Governor Liu Wujun narrowed his eyes but he didn't utter a word. The way that Tan Long was defeated was indeed unexpected but it made sense that Lin Xun could defeat him given the strength he had previously shown.

"Damn it, that guy is an evil demon!"

"I know Tan Long. He is considered a genius in the Human Dipper Stage, yet he was defeated in one move. You can imagine how strong Lin Xun is."

The cultivators waiting to appear in the arena for their battles couldn't compose themselves. The battle had ended too quickly. They weren't able to gain an insight into Lin Xun's true power, but from the way he crushed his opponent in one move, logically speaking, no ordinary person would be a match for him!

Perhaps, only top Earth Dipper cultivators could suppress Lin Xun!

The audience fell silent and all gazes were fixed on Lin Xun. Everyone wore strange expressions and their emotions were constantly fluctuating.

No one paid any attention to the battles in the other ninety-nine arenas.

Amidst the silence, Lin Xun suddenly straightened his body. His eyebrows were sharp like blades, his eyes flashed like lightning, and he had a superior air around him.

What is he going to do?

Many people's eyes narrowed.

Lin Xun leisurely raised the wide blade in his hand and placed it at his eye level. Suddenly, the jet-black blade unleashed a long and clear cry.

Lin Xun ran his eyes across the audience, gathered qi to his dantian and said in a deep voice, "Haha, don't laugh at my performance. In truth, I only effortlessly won the battle because of the blade in my hand."

The audience was completely dumbfounded. What is he doing?

"Excuse me, Young Master Lin Xun, where did you buy that blade?" someone asked aloud.

Lin Xun said with a smile, "This battle blade is everlasting and one can be handed down forever. This blade is personally forged by the runemaster of Golden Jade Hall. It can be called a divine weapon of mid-human grade aeth tools. I really like it so I will only buy aeth tools from Golden Jade Hall from now on!"

"Golden Jade Hall?"

"Yes, It's Golden Jade Hall!" Lin Xun repeated.

Uproar broke out from the audience once again. Everyone's expressions were unusually splendid.

"He's promoting Golden Jade Hall!"

"Who the hell is Golden Jade Hall? How can they make Lin Xun advertise them? It's simply...simply...too dope!" someone exclaimed.

"Pah! Shameless! This is the provincial exam, a grand event of the empire. Lin Xun is obsessed with money and promotes irrelevant things on such an occasion. What does he think the provincial examination is? Does he even have the dignity and backbone of a cultivator?" someone berated.

"Why—why did the idol I admire become like this? His mighty image in my heart has collapsed with this, and my heart hurts..." Many young women cried out in disappointment.

Many people also criticized Golden Jade Hall. They felt that the business had insulted such a grand event!

Wen Mingxiu, Qi Yunxiao and other candidates were dumbstruck. Could Lin Xun be so poor that he had to do such a shameful thing?

Isn't it easy to make money given his current reputation and strength?

Some people speculated that Golden Jade Hall had to be closely connected to Lin Xun. Otherwise, Lin Xun wouldn't do such a thing that would tarnish his reputation.

Many people quickly agreed with the speculation. Everything made sense if Lin Xun had an inseparable relationship with the Golden Jade Hall.

On the white jade platform.

Governor Liu Wujun's face was overcast with a frown, and a glint of discontent flashed in his eyes. Lin Xun, this is nonsense!

Suddenly, Wei Lingzhen chuckled. "I'm curious who the boss of Golden Jade Hall is? No ordinary business could make Lin Xun promote them."

A thought struck Liu Wujun's mind, and then he heard Du Dongtu say, "Indeed, Lin Xun has recently become famous in Haze City. He wouldn't possibly do such a shameful thing just for money."

Liu Wujun remembered that Lin Xun was more than just an outstanding cultivator. Behind him stood a colossal force that dozens of major sects and clans feared!

Why would someone like him help promote a business for no reason?

Liu Wujun suddenly remembered that Lin Xun had been specially arranged to sit in the distinguished guest seat at the Stone Cauldron Alms 100th anniversary celebration.

This matter isn't as simple as it seems!

But if I investigate Lin Xun during the provincial exam, it seems...inappropriate.

Liu Wujun frowned, and he finally suppressed his discontent. He decided to wait for the provincial exam to finish to investigate Golden Jade Hall!

At that moment, everyone seemed to have forgotten about the ongoing provincial examination and were all drawn to Lin Xun's unexpected behavior.

As for Lin Xun, he had already stepped down from the arena. He couldn't help chuckling when he heard the mixed responses in the audience. In any case, the name of Golden Jade Hall will likely spread throughout Haze City after this!

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Lin Xun left the examination zone and left Haze Academy.

He had smoothly passed the first round after his battle with Tan Long and he had to wait three days before the second round of examination started.

He left not because he had no interest in the following battles, but because he received endless strange looks and heard various criticisms wherever he went.

He felt extremely uncomfortable and had chosen to leave to avoid being in the limelight.

When he walked out of the gate of Haze Academy, it was still crowded with people.

None of them was allowed to enter the venue, but that didn't mean they couldn't watch the fun. The result of Lin Xun's battle rapidly spread out and caused a great sensation.

"What? Lin Xun is too weird. He even risked damaging his reputation to help promote a business?"

"Heavens, Golden Jade Hall is amazing. It will soar to fame with Lin Xun's!"

"Lin Xun might be strong in battles but there is a problem with his character. I have decided to not see him as my idol from now on!"

"Hmph, look at your ugly face. If I was Lin Xun, I would be very happy that you made such a wise decision."

The matter stirred heated discussions, and news quickly passed from mouth to mouth. The matter that Lin Xun promoted Golden Jade Hall in the exam spread at an incredible speed like wildfire.

Lin Xun was speechless for a while. Fortunately, not many people at the scene recognized him and he was able to safely leave Haze Academy.

However, it made Lin Xun realize that the name of Golden Jade Hall would spread throughout the entire Haze City before dawn.

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Lin Xun didn't return home but headed to Golden Jade Hall to take a look.

Who would have thought that the entrance of Golden Jade Hall was already crowded to the extent that not a drop of water could pass through?

Most of them were cultivators who had just heard the news from the provincial examination. They wanted to see what the deal about Golden Jade Hall was.

However, many people were indignant and had come to berate Golden Jade Hall. They felt that Golden Jade Hall's actions had ruined the reputation of the provincial examination and tarnished Lin Xun's image.

When Lin Xun looked into Golden Jade Hall, he saw that Gu Liang had already returned and was sweating profusely while directing attendants to help maintain order.

Golden Jade Hall is about to soar to fame!

Lin Xun made an intuitive judgment. Regardless of whether Golden Jade Hall was famous for a good or bad reason, at least, its name had spread and it was no longer unknown to the world like before.

As long as it had some fame, they wouldn't need to worry about the flow of customers. If Gu Liang handled the matter well, he could even take the opportunity to expand Golden Jade Hall!

Of course, Lin Xun knew that the sudden rise of Golden Jade Hall would inevitably cause vigilance and oppression from other businesses in the city. However, he felt that he should leave Gu Liang to handle the matter himself.

If Gu Liang couldn't handle it, he might as well close Golden Jade Hall.

After contemplating for a while, Lin Xun turned around and came to the Rune Master Association. He mentioned the matter to Chu Feng and asked him to dispatch people to Golden Jade Hall to help maintain order.

Golden Jade Hall would no doubt be swept into a whirlpool of trouble in the next few days. Given Gu Liang's current power, he couldn't possibly maintain order by himself.

If someone with bad intentions took advantage of the opportunity to create trouble, the consequences would be serious.

Chu Feng had already heard about the incident and so he agreed without hesitation. He swiftly dispatched several guards to Golden Jade Hall.

After settling the matter, Lin Xun didn't stay for too long. But just as he stepped out of the Rune Master Association, a familiar figure appeared in his periphery and took him aback.

Chapter 274 Deliver Charcoal in the Snow

The figure was clad in a black dress and had silky smooth jet-black hair rolled up in a bun, highlighting her beautiful face and soft, translucent skin.

Her figure was graceful and alluring, and she radiated a feminine aura that only mature women had. Even just standing there, she drew the attention of countless passers-by.

Mu Wansu!

Lin Xun recognized her with just one glance.

The Black Rose from Donglin City had become the manager of Stone Cauldron Alms in Haze City. The status and power she wielded were no longer the same as before.

Lin Xun also was no longer the weak youngster as when he first arrived in Feiyun Village.

Almost two years had passed since Lin Xun last saw Mu Wansu, so he couldn't help but reminisce about some past events.

Mu Wansu also noticed Lin Xun walking out of the Rune Master Association. A faint almost imperceptible smile came to her lips and she waved her hand.

Lin Xun stepped forward and said with a smile, "What a coincidence, I didn't expect to run into Big Sister Wansu here."

"It's not a coincidence. I deliberately came to find you."

Mu Wansu's mood changed when she saw the warm and bright smile on Lin Xun's face. If I didn't know this little bastard, I likely would be deceived by his harmless looks.

“You came to find me?” Lin Xun looked perplexed.

Mu Wansu nodded. “How about going on a walk with me?”

Lin Xun thought for a moment and then said playfully, “How would a man refuse the invitation of a beauty like Big Sister Wansu?”

Mu Wansu glared at him. “I haven’t seen you in a while but you’re still a smooth talker.”

She turned around and leisurely strolled along the street. “Why didn’t you attend the Stone Cauldron Alms celebration?”

Lin Xun followed and walked next to her. “I had something urgent to deal with and couldn’t make it.”

Mu Wansu nodded and didn’t question him further.

“What? Big Sister Wansu, did you come to scold me?”

Mu Wansu snorted. “I have no intention of being angry with you. I came to ask you what your relationship is with Golden Jade Hall.”

“Big Sister, you have also heard about Golden Jade Hall?”

Mu Wansu said irritably, “I’ve not only heard about it but also watched your performance in the provincial exam. I just want to know why you would do something that will tarnish your reputation. If you are short of money, you can cooperate with Stone Cauldron Alms. Given your mastery in the art of runes and the financial resources of Stone Cauldron Alms, you can enjoy an inexhaustible amount of wealth and glory.”

Before Lin Xun could respond, Mu Wansu turned around and stared at Lin Xun pensively. “Of course, you didn’t do that for money, am I right?”

Lin Xun looked at her charming and beautiful face and exclaimed, “Big Sister, you have sharp eyes and know everything.”

Mu Wansu snapped, “Stop talking nonsense. I no longer treat you as an outsider because of your relationship with First Young Master Shi Xuan and Third Young Master Shi Yu. But if you fool around anymore, you are being too disrespectful.”

Lin Xun suddenly assumed a serious expression. “I will always remember Big Sister’s teachings.”

He explained, “The boss of Golden Jade Hall has saved my life before. We have become close friends so as a friend I have to help Golden Jade Hall establish a reputation in Haze City.”

Mu Wansu was aware of Golden Jade Hall’s background because the first Golden Jade Hall store that Gu Yanping opened was in Donglin City. This was the reason why she found it strange that Golden Jade Hall could ask Lin Xun for help given that it was much inferior to ordinary forces in Haze City.

Fortunately, Lin Xun’s explanation resolved a lot of her puzzlement.

“I didn’t expect you to be someone who cherishes friendships that much.” Mu Wansu chuckled. She wasn’t mocking him but she was genuinely surprised.

Lin Xun responded with a smile, "When you get to know me more, you will notice a lot of good points in me."

Mu Wansu snorted, "I can't see any good points, but I do notice that you are more shameless than before."

Lin Xun shrugged helplessly.

Mu Wansu tucked her jet-black hair behind her ear and suddenly said, "I originally planned to ask you to join Stone Cauldron Alms and was going to create a new special runemaster position for you, but that seems impossible now."

Only then did Lin Xun realize that was Mu Wansu's real purpose of coming to find him.

He didn't say a word but his silence already showed his response.

"Never mind, let's work together again if there's a chance in the future." Mu Wansu quickly made a decision.

Lin Xun nodded with a smile.

"By the way—" Mu Wansu suddenly said, "Golden Jade Hall doesn't have a deep foundation and now that it's creating a lot of noise in Haze City, you should remind your friend that fame is just fame. Golden Jade Hall needs true strength if it wants to gain a foothold in Haze City. Without a solid foundation, it's impossible to compete with the other well-established businesses in the city."

She talked eloquently, "Business is as fierce as war. No matter how famous Golden Jade Hall is, it will eliminate itself if it has a weak foundation."

"For example, there are hundreds of large and small businesses in the city, and they sell everything. If Golden Jade Hall doesn't have any unique products, what does it have to compete with other businesses? The others will have what you have, and it is likely to be cheaper. How can Golden Jade Hall's shallow foundation be able to compete with those powerful businesses?"

"Ultimately, the Golden Jade Hall should first deal with the problem of fame. Then, its priority should be to release products unique to them to avoid competition with the other business."

Without Mu Wansu realizing it, she had said too much. She spoke calmly and meticulously. She was like a successful and strong woman strategizing.

She suddenly flushed. "Ever since I came to Haze City, I don't have any friends whom I can talk to. I have rambled on without realizing."

Lin Xun smiled. "Everything Big Sister said is very insightful. It was a rare and valuable business experience. I wish I could hear more."

Mu Wansu suddenly felt that Lin Xun's smile seemed less annoying than usual.

.....

It was late at night when Mu Wansu said goodbye to Lin Xun. The provincial exam was still undergoing.

As the examination progressed, news continued to spread out and caused a stir in Haze City. It made the dark night seem particularly lively.

Naturally, the cultivators who won became the focus of attention.

The cultivators who failed in the first round also became targets for various clans and sects to recruit.

Everyone knew their failure was just a failure in the provincial examination, and it didn't negate their cultivation potential.

On the contrary, they were all below eighteen years old, had a Human Dipper cultivation base or above, and had earned the qualification to take the provincial examination. They had already surpassed many of their peers. Such talents of the younger generation would only bring them benefits if they could recruit them.

Lin Xun didn't care for that, or rather, he only cared about whether he could successfully pass the provincial examination.

At that moment, he was sitting in a secret room in Golden Jade Hall. He handed over a stack of paper full of rune patterns to Gu Liang.

Those papers detailed the ideas of seven brand-new aeth tools, including their appearance, shape, materials and runes.

The design of every aeth tool had never been seen on the market!

When Lin Xun forged the Flowing Light Blade, he had already proved that his mastery in the art of runes had reached the point where he could independently design and develop new types of aeth tools.

However, the ideas for the seven brand-new aeth tools weren't his own. Instead, they were found in an animal skin notebook from Mister Lu.

Although the animal skin notebook had long disappeared since the Omega Secret Realm appeared, the notes inside were engraved in Lin Xun's mind.

The ideas for the seven brand-new aeth tools were Mister Lu's creations.

"Take a look, I have listed the methods and steps for making these seven kinds of aeth tools in detail. You only need to find rune masters to make them."

Lin Xun picked up a cup and took a sip, looking leisurely.

With a swoosh, Gu Liang grabbed the thick stack of paper and looked through it carefully.

Before Lin Xun had come to find him, he was very troubled even though Golden Jade Hall had risen to fame and its name had spread throughout Haze City.

This was because Gu Liang was aware of the most tricky problem of Golden Jade Hall—It had no unique signature product.

If that problem wasn't taken care of, Golden Jade Hall would sooner or later be suppressed by other businesses in the city and wouldn't be able to lift its head high again.

Gu Liang was overjoyed when Lin Xun rushed over to talk to him about the matter. Lin Xun had basically delivered him coal in the snow.

When Lin Xun brought out the ideas for seven brand new aeth tools, he was utterly dumbfounded like a pie had dropped onto his lap from the sky.

He knew very well what a brand new aeth tool signified. It was akin to a secret recipe of a restaurant.

If the brand-new aeth tool could meet the demands of the market after testing, it would undoubtedly become the signature product of Golden Jade Hall and bring endless benefits to them.

Moreover, there wasn't only one brand-new aeth tool but seven!

Seven!

Gu Liang trembled with excitement and his heart pounded violently, almost about to jump out of his throat.

An indescribable excitement and joy flooded his entire body like the tide and almost made him go crazy!

Chapter 275 Endless Limelight

After taking several deep breaths, Gu Liang finally suppressed his joy and excitement and said gratefully, "Lin Xun, you have helped me a lot this time. I don't even know how to thank you."

His words were from the bottom of his heart, and even those words couldn't express his true feelings.

Earlier, Lin Xun had not only helped him resolve trouble from Jadelight Pavilion but also left him with a batch of rune materials worth over one hundred thousand gold coins.

That amount could buy out the entire Golden Jade Hall!

And now, Lin Xun helped promote Golden Jade Hall and even drew up the concepts for seven brand new aeth tools. He had done too much for Gu Liang!

Gu Liang was very certain that the seven brand new aeth tools would fetch an unimaginable amount of money if Lin Xun had sold them to other businesses!

However, Lin Xun didn't waver in the slightest when he handed the designs to him. How would Gu Liang not be moved?

Gu Liang wouldn't even frown if Lin Xun wanted his life!

Lin Xun was utterly taken aback by Gu Liang's moved and tearful face. He chuckled, "I also have a share in Golden Jade Hall. I'm not helping you, but doing it for myself. If you want to thank me, then help me improve Golden Jade Hall. Didn't you say you want to expand Golden Jade Hall outside the empire? I believe you can do it!"

Gu Liang clenched his teeth and said fiercely, "One day I will make the entire world know about Golden Jade Hall!"

Lin Xun smiled. "Then I'll wait and see." And then he pointed to the seven new aeth tools ideas in Gu Liang's hand. "Those are like secret recipes. You mustn't leak them no matter what. You should know what the consequences are when other businesses learn about them."

Speaking of business matters, Gu Liang's face glowed with confidence, "Don't worry, my father has a special way to keep things secret. This matter won't be leaked at all."

He suddenly frowned. "What I'm most worried about is whether the seven new types of aeth tools will be easy to imitate."

Lin Xun grinned. "I can tell you that there are many unique markings throughout the creation process of the seven aeth tools. No other runemaster will be able to crack their secrets, unless..."

"Unless what?" asked Gu Liang.

"Unless they come and ask me to tell them the secret," he said casually but his voice was filled with utmost confidence.

Those were brand new aeth tools that Mister Lu had personally designed. How would they be so easy to imitate?

If Lin Xun didn't understand the secrets of the aeth tools, he couldn't possibly successfully make them!

Gu Liang smiled broadly and finally relaxed.

He had decided to invite his father Gu Yanping from Donglin City tomorrow and make preparations together.

If he handled the matter well, the rise of Golden Jade Hall would be unstoppable!

.....

Lin Xun felt much lighter after solving Golden Jade Hall's matter. He had done what he had to do and he could only leave Gu Liang to do the rest.

It was already midnight when he returned home. Xue Jin was snoring in the corner as usual and the courtyard was bathed in starlight. It seemed particularly tranquil.

Lin Xun didn't want to disturb Xue Jin and lightly tiptoed toward his room. But Xue Jin suddenly turned over and opened his eyes. "What you did today doesn't seem like your usual style."

Lin Xun was surprised. "You also heard about it?"

Xue Jin sat up, frowning. "Nonsense, the incident had stirred the entire Haze City. How would I not know about it? I'm just very puzzled why you did it. Are you aware of the possible consequences?"

Before Lin Xun could speak, Xue Jin continued, "Boy, I have to remind you that your reputation has grown tremendously. You are beginning to attract attention and this is a good thing but also a bad thing. At least, your enemies won't let go of any opportunity to attack you. You may be safe in Haze City for now but that doesn't mean your enemies will give up."

“Based on that, your relationship with Golden Jade Hall will only become your weakness. If your enemies want to attack you, they could just take action on Golden Jade Hall!” Xue Jin had assumed a serious expression. “Many similar incidents had happened in the past. Have you thought about the consequences of your actions?”

Lin Xun fell silent and then said after a while, “Nothing in this world has no risk. If we want to expand Golden Jade Hall, competitors will attack us sooner or later. I believe that Gu Liang has already realized this. As to whether or not my presence would have a bad impact on Golden Jade Hall is out of my control.”

Taking a deep breath, Lin Xun continued, “But no matter what, there are some things you have to continue even if you know the risk. Without courage, you will only be worried about the gains and losses every time you do something. If that’s the case, is there any point to doing anything?”

Xue Jin’s expression turned complicated. He realized that he had indeed worried too much and had forgotten that everything in the world was like that. Nothing in the world always went smoothly.

“Moreover, if someone dares to attack Golden Jade Hall to get revenge on me, then they also can’t blame me for retaliating.” Lin Xun’s expression was calm, but his voice was chilling and fierce. “I don’t believe that they don’t have any friends or families!”

In other words, he wouldn’t hesitate to retaliate against whoever dared to attack the Golden Jade Hall to get revenge on him by attacking their family and friends!

Xue Jin felt a chill run down his spine as he saw the calm and indifferent expression on Lin Xun’s face.

He was certain that Lin Xun would do what he said. Moreover, his retaliation would be more terrifying and ruthless than theirs!

“Ai, I’m too old, I can’t compare to you young people. As the saying goes, the older one is in Jianghu, the less brave they become. Maybe you are right.” Xue Jin sighed.

“Old Jin, you are also right, we just have different views.”

Xue Jin waved his hand. “All right, ignore me. I just talk too much. After I leave, you can do whatever you want. You can pierce a hole into the sky if you have the ability.”

Lin Xun fell silent for a moment, smiled, turned around and walked into his room.

As Xue Jin watched Lin Xun disappear, he realized more and more that he couldn’t understand Lin Xun.

How can there be a youngster like him?

.....

Three days flew by.

The first round of the provincial examination ended yesterday and more than half of the 5,436 candidates had been eliminated. Only 2,600 successfully made it to the next round in the end.

Only half of the candidates were supposed to be eliminated after the one-on-one duels, but both sides of some battles were eliminated due to going over the time limit.

The cultivators able to take the provincial examination were the best among the younger generation, yet more than half of them were eliminated in the first round. This clearly showed how brutal and cruel the provincial exam was.

Of course, the winners who successfully entered the second round received more attention compared to the failed candidates.

Among them, the most eye-catching people were naturally the geniuses of the younger generation including Xue Shaolin, Yu Wenjing, Le Zhiyou, and Yun Zitong.

Almost all of them were at the Earth Dipper Stage or Heaven Dipper Stage. They had already displayed their brilliance in the first round and caused sensations.

Lin Xun was also one of the people who gathered the most attention, but he was special because he was only at the Human Dipper Stage. Moreover, he became a laughingstock after he promoted Golden Jade Hall after he won the first match and subsequently tarnished his reputation.

However, regardless, Lin Xun's strength in battle was unquestionable.

Moreover, Lin Xun used a more domineering method to win and won in a much shorter time compared to the other candidates.

He sent his opponent flying with just one blade strike. This fact alone was enough to make many people shudder.

Haze Academy, examination zone.

The second round was about to commence and the two thousand-odd people who passed the first round had already assembled in the examination zone.

Even the seats around the venue were filled with people just like it was three days ago. It seemed even more lively.

The second round of the examination would no doubt be more intense than the first, and naturally, attract more attention.

A commotion broke out in the audience when they saw Lin Xun.

"Look, it's Lin Xun. I wonder if he will promote Golden Jade Hall again in the second round."

"Hahaha, that guy is peculiar. He doesn't need money but he did something that ruined his reputation. I don't know what he's thinking."

"I only know that Golden Jade Hall's fame has exploded. Who in Haze City doesn't know about Golden Jade Hall now? This is all Lin Xun's doing! This is proof of how successful Lin Xun's and Golden Jade Hall's promotion strategy was. You have to be impressed."

A clamor of discussions rang out. Some praised Lin Xun but some criticized him. Regardless, Lin Xun had become the focus of the audience.

Many exam candidates couldn't help showing strange expressions when they saw this. They had to admit that Lin Xun was no doubt the most popular person in the examination!

Of course, not everyone wanted that kind of limelight.

On the white jade platform, Governor Liu Wujun, Wei Lingzhen and Du Dongtu assumed strange expressions. Lin Xun indeed can only be described as...abnormal!

Chapter 276 The Bet of One Move

Lin Xun felt somewhat uncomfortable being the center of attention. He smiled bitterly in his heart. It's troublesome being famous.

Fortunately, a melodious and clear bell soon rang, raising the curtains to the second round of the examination.

A total of 2,600 cultivators took part in the second round of examination and the examination rules were the same as the first round. Candidates drew lots to choose their opponents and fought in the arena.

However, the duration of the exam had been changed from one hour to half an hour!

In other words, both sides would be eliminated if a winner couldn't be decided within half an hour.

Lin Xun's opponent was called Yue Zhongtian, which was an unfamiliar name to him. He was arranged to fight on the no. 49 arena and was scheduled to appear in the fourth set of matches.

In other words, Lin Xun would duel in the arena in the fourth set along with ninety-nine cultivators.

Soon, the first set began and two hundred cultivators began to fight with their chosen opponents in the one hundred arenas.

All sorts of cheers, shouting, and excited roars erupted from the audience, shaking the sky and ground. The atmosphere buzzed like never before.

Lin Xun waited in the examination zone, closely watching the battles. Fierce battles broke out one after another and he found that every cultivator was the best among the best.

However, very few were worth his attention. It wasn't that the cultivators weren't strong, but Lin Xun's strength had long exceeded the normal level. Even cultivators with extraordinary powers didn't interest Lin Xun.

Even so, Lin Xun still watched carefully as different cultivators practiced different cultivation techniques and arts that he could learn from.

Suddenly, a sneer sounded in the distance. "Hmph, I don't need you to remind me. I know Lin Xun is powerful but do you think I, Yue Zhongtian, am weak? You guys might fear Lin Xun, but I don't!"

Lin Xun looked over and saw a slender man look offended by the reminder from a group of people.

The slender man was Yue Zhongtian, Lin Xun's opponent in the second round!

He was slender and tall and dressed in a sapphire blue robe. He had a piercing gaze and exuded a terrifying aura.

He raised his chin slightly, showing arrogance and superiority. He was a prideful young man.

As Yue Zhongtian met Lin Xun's gaze, his lips curled in a cold smile. Then, he stared at Lin Xun provocatively.

The cultivators near Yue Zhongtian looked awkward when they saw that Lin Xun had noticed them. They secretly cursed Yue Zhongtian for his big mouth. They had only reminded him to be careful out of good intentions. He not only ignored them but also deliberately said it out loud for Lin Xun to hear it.

Lin Xun was surprised to see Wen Mingxiu, Qi Yunxiao and Yuan Shu among the cultivators around Yue Zhongtian!

Wen Mingxiu and the others avoided his gaze and drew away from Yue Zhongtian as though they were afraid that Lin Xun would misunderstand.

"It seems that guy is a student of Haze Academy," Lin Xun said thoughtfully as he withdrew his gaze.

Lin Xun ignored Yue Zhongtian's provocative expression. He wouldn't be so petty to be angry because of a glance.

Who would have thought that Lin Xun's reaction was a sign of fear and avoidance in Yue Zhongtian's eyes?

Smiling, he strode towards Lin Xun.

"Lin Xun, many people think it's not good to mess with you but I disagree."

Yue Zhongtian came to a stop three feet away from Lin Xun, narrowed his eyes, and arrogantly sized him up.

It was a blatant provocation!

Yue Zhongtian's comrades turned ashen-faced and inwardly scolded the youth for acting too arrogant and looking for trouble.

However, they all knew that was Yue Zhongtian's personality and no one could do anything about it.

As Lin Xun had speculated, Yue Zhongtian was indeed from Haze Academy and was quite well-known there.

He had just turned sixteen but was already at the Earth Dipper Stage. Although he wasn't as dazzling as Xue Shaolin, Yu Wenjing, Le Zhiyou and Yun Zitong, he was still one of the top figures in Haze Academy.

However, he was obnoxious, arrogant, and had a big mouth. He had caused a lot of trouble in Haze Academy and wasn't very likable. If he wasn't exceptionally talented, he would have been expelled from the school long ago.

The cultivators from there couldn't help shaking their heads and sighing when they saw Yue Zhongtian actively trying to provoke Lin Xun.

Some people watched from afar like it was a show.

However, Lin Xun didn't even glance at Yue Zhongtian and completely disregarded him. It was as though he felt the teen was a weirdo and didn't want to lower himself to engage with him.

However, the more Lin Xun ignored him, the more Yue Zhongtian wanted to push him further. He said aggressively, "Do you want to know what I think of you?"

"No," Lin Xun answered very bluntly.

Yue Zhongtian's face stiffened. Then, he smiled coldly. "You are indeed very arrogant. I admit that you're strong, but it's a shame about your character. To make money, you didn't hesitate to help promote a business during the exam. You have tarnished the name and integrity of cultivators!"

He was not only rude but pointed Lin Xun in the face and berated him.

Many people were dumbfounded. Although they knew that Yue Zhongtian was nuts, they didn't expect him to be that crazy!

Lin Xun was his opponent in the next match. What if Lin Xun defeated him in the arena?

It didn't end there. Yue Zhongtian continued to sneer, sounding arrogant and conceited, "Of course, this is your own clown behavior and it's fine as long as you don't bother other people, but don't forget this is the provincial exam and what you do doesn't just affect you! You..."

Lin Xun finally responded. He glowered at Yue Zhongtian and interrupted him, "What are you trying to say?"

This guy is too noisy. He has rambled endlessly like an annoying fly. Even good-tempered people would lose their patience at this point.

Many nearby cultivators felt a chill as they realized that Yue Zhongtian's endless attacks had finally angered Lin Xun.

"That guy is just asking for death! Just because he is at the Earth Dipper Stage, he is looking down on Lin Xun. He's too naive and immature!" Qi Yunxiao whispered. Even if he hated Lin Xun to the bone, he had to admit that Lin Xun was a monster. Various previous incidents had already proved that whoever underestimated Lin Xun would suffer!

However, Yue Zhongtian recklessly tried to provoke Lin Xun. What a joke!

A lot of people had the same thought as Qi Yunxiao. People like Wen Mingxiu and Yuan Shu had already had a taste of Lin Xun's ability in the past and knew that Yue Zhongtian's action was incredibly stupid.

Yue Zhongtian unexpectedly said, "It's very simple, I want to make a bet with you."

Lin Xun frowned. "Bet what?"

Yue Zhongtian smiled coldly, "Bet that you can't knock me out of the arena like how you defeated Tan Long!"

What bet was that?

Everyone almost couldn't believe what they heard. Yue Zhongtian acted so arrogantly just now, so how could he propose such a bet?

Knock him out of the arena within one move? Is there such a bizarre bet in the world?

If they hadn't witnessed it with their own eyes, they would think that Yue Zhongtian was crazy. They would never agree to such a ridiculous bet let alone Lin Xun.

One move?

Clearly, he wanted to stand in an invincible position. Only an idiot would agree to the bet.

In many people's view, Yue Zhongtian might not be a match for Lin Xun but he could easily block Lin Xun's attack without being defeated!

Based on that, Yue Zhongtian's proposed bet was not only absurd but also completely unreasonable.

Lin Xun was taken aback at first. He thought that Yue Zhongtian had some ability given how arrogant and conceited he acted, but who would have thought that it was all an act to provoke him to accept his ridiculous bet?

"What, are you afraid? Ten moves is fine too. Of course, since it's a bet, there has to be a wager. Let's each bet ten thousand gold coins."

Seeing that Lin Xun didn't say a word, Yue Zhongtian became increasingly smug, and his face was full of disdain.

Just when everyone thought that Lin Xun would refuse, he smirked. "All right, I accept. Ten thousand gold coins, right? Prepare it for me!"

Yue Zhongtian's eyes lit up. He didn't expect Lin Xun to agree!

The others thought that he was extremely arrogant and that he was stupid to provoke Lin Xun repeatedly, but only he knew that he did it for the bet!

Regardless of how crazy Yue Zhongtian was, he wasn't an idiot. Otherwise, he wouldn't have earned the strength and reputation he had today. He knew that his chance of winning was slim against Lin Xun so he thought of a way to minimize the impact of a failure.

The proposed bet may seem shameless and ridiculous but Yue Zhongtian was confident in winning the bet as long as Lin Xun agreed to it. If he won the bet, even if he lost to Lin Xun in the second round, it wouldn't be as humiliating!

This was Yue Zhongtian's thought. His face was alight with excitement and a hint of smugness when he heard Lin Xun agree.

However, Lin Xun's next sentence made his heart tremble.

"You don't need to change the conditions of the bet to ten moves. One move is enough."

Lin Xun turned around to leave the area.

Yue Zhongtian should have been more delighted, but for some reason, as he watched Lin Xun's handsome figure leave, a bad feeling rose in his heart.

Chapter 277 Emergence

Yue Zhongtian stood completely dumbstruck, his expression morphing indefinitely.

The nearby cultivators also vaguely guessed what Yue Zhongtian was thinking and also had strange expressions.

Only then did they realize that Yue Zhongtian's arrogant behavior was an act. His real purpose was to provoke Lin Xun to accept the bet!

However, they had never expected Lin Xun to agree to such an obvious trap.

Could it mean Lin Xun had the confidence to knock Yue Zhongtian out of the arena in one move?

The cultivators who were aware of Yue Zhongtian's strength couldn't help but sigh. Lin Xun might have the utmost confidence in his strength, but he has made a mistake if he thinks Yue Zhongtian is easy to deal with.

The others might not know but they knew very well that Yue Zhongtian had been practicing a unique secret art called the Shifting Cloud Light Art. Once mobilized, his movements would be erratic and swift like flowing clouds or flickering light.

Most importantly, the cultivation art was perfect for evading attacks.

Based on that, it was impossible to knock Yue Zhongtian out of the arena within one move!

Lin Xun was bound to lose in Yue Zhongtian!

Many people shared the same thought!

Some people criticized Yue Zhongtian for being so shameless. It never crossed their minds that such an arrogant and conceited person would be so cunning.

On the other hand, Wen Mingxiu, Qi Yunxiao and Yuan Shu couldn't help but wonder whether Lin Xun could win the bet against Yue Zhongtian who practiced the Shifting Cloud Light Art. His hopes of winning are very slim.

Of course, they felt that Yue Zhongtian was no match for Lin Xun, but, at least, he had a chance of winning the bet.

.....

Time flew by and the battles continued on the examination site. Each one was intense and made the audience tense.

Uproar broke out when the matter of Lin Xun accepting Yue Zhongtian's bet had spread outside the examination zone.

"The bet is Yue Zhongtian's trap, but Lin Xun still agreed! I don't know whether I should call him stupid or brave," someone remarked.

"Defeat Yue Zhongtian in one move? Whom is he kidding? Lin Xun is going to fail!" someone else snorted

“Lin Xun likes to be in the limelight. He has already caused a huge scene with Golden Jade Hall during the first round. Now, he made a bet that he would win in one move! Would he die if he’s not in the limelight?” someone said disdainfully.

In short, almost no one thought that Lin Xun would win the bet.

Even Governor Liu Wujun was speechless. What is Lin Xun thinking?

Wei Lingzhen, Du Dongtu and the other influential figures looked at each other in dismay. It was the first time they heard of such a ridiculous bet, yet Lin Xun had agreed to it.

Meanwhile, Lin Xun appeared very relaxed and continued to leisurely watch the ongoing battles like he was completely unaffected by the matter.

Lin Xun knew that Yue Zhongtian had the confidence to win since he proposed such a ridiculous bet.

However, Lin Xun wasn’t worried. Naturally, he was also confident in himself!

.....

When the third group of cultivators entered the arenas, all eyes shifted to the No. 49 arena!

The people about to duel in the arena were of course Lin Xun and Yue Zhongtian.

Everyone was curious to find out whether Lin Xun could win the bet. After all, the terms were too absurd. No one could understand why Lin Xun would agree to it.

On the arena, Yue Zhongtian’s lips were curled in a smug smile. He was very confident about winning!

What a joke! How would I not be able to block one move from Lin Xun?

Of course, Yue Zhongtian wouldn’t act carelessly. He proposed the bet because he knew that he was no match for Lin Xun and he had to resort to such a move to protect his reputation. *NOVELnext.com*

Since Lin Xun had agreed, he wouldn’t let go of such an opportunity. He was ready to go all out.

“Lin Xun, if you regret it now, it’s still not too late,” Yue Zhongtian said leisurely.

“I should be the one asking you that.” Lin Xun smiled. “Have you not thought about that, if you were defeated in one move, you would not only lose the bet but fail the exam? You also would lose face and reputation. You would become a laughingstock and be unable to lift your head again.”

Yue Zhongtian’s expression altered subtly. It wasn’t that he hadn’t thought about such an outcome but that he didn’t think it would happen.

“Hmph, then show me how you can knock me out of the arena in one move!”

Yue Zhongtian gritted his teeth and a ruthless glint flashed across his eyes.

He drew a deep breath and mobilized all his power. Instantly, he seemed to have become a different person. His body was enveloped in blinding golden light and an invisible force had engulfed the area and made even the air whimper.

Many people's eyes lit up. Perhaps Yue Zhongtian might not be as famous as Lin Xun, but he was still a top figure of the Earth Dipper Stage and one of the geniuses in Haze Academy. If he fought with all his strength, how would he be eliminated in one move regardless of how strong Lin Xun was?

Lin Xun stood unarmed and his face devoid of expression. Only his body was flowing with wisps of mysterious sky-blue aeth dipper qi, which highlighted his imposing aura.

He was like a boulder, still but unfathomable.

Clang!

The bell rang, lifting everyone's spirits. The battle is starting!

Even the influential people on the white jade platform unconsciously turned towards the No. 49 arena. One move would pass in the twinkling of the eye. The bet could be decided in a split second. No one wanted to miss such a wonderful moment.

Shua!

Before the sound of the bell faded, Yue Zhongtian unleashed a deafening roar and soared into the air.

Swoosh—

Instantly, his figure streaked across the air, leaving behind many images. Each one was indistinguishable from his real person.

From afar, it was as though dozens of Yue Zhongtian were acting together. He roamed across and around the arena like misty clouds and flickering light.

What kind of secret art is that?

An uproar broke out from the audience and many people marveled. They never imagined that Yue Zhongtian had mastered such an incredible secret art!

No wonder he dared to propose such a bet. It turns out that he is well prepared. It would be hard for ordinary cultivators to distinguish the real Yue Zhongtian, let alone defeat him in one move.

"As expected of the Shifting Cloud Light Art!"

Those aware of Yue Zhong's ability couldn't help but wonder what Lin Xun would do in the face of such a secret art?

"Hahaha, Lin Xun, come on. Knock me out of the arena, are you beginning to regret it now? Hahahaha," Yue Zhongtian roared with laughter, his mocking voice echoing across the arena.

He wanted to infuriate Lin Xun and make him lose his judgment.

The most bizarre thing was that Yue Zhongtian's eyes were closed, but his figure was floating across the arena like a ghost. He didn't show a hint of a flaw.

Anyone who understood the Shifting Cloud Light Art would know that the main characteristic of the secret art was that the cultivator's spirit sensing power would replace their eyes.

Lin Xun stood motionless in the same spot but his lips were curved in an imperceptible cold smile.

Suddenly, he made a move. He was still standing in the same spot but his hands were raised strangely.

At the same time, the Storm Grinder that had long been activated in his body buzzed. Mighty and vast aeth dipper power surged to his arms and gathered around the palms of his hands.

At that moment, his hands resembled two scorching suns. They illuminated the entire venue and washed away the glamor of the world and made its return to its state of simplicity.

That's—

The audience fell silent. Many people felt their hearts throb and their eyes went wide. What kind of power is that?

Influential figures such as Liu Wujun, Wei Lingzhen and Du Dongtu couldn't stop their eyelids from twitching. They could tell that Lin Xun had performed an incredibly terrifying secret art!

Boom!

Lin Xun balled his hands into fists and slammed them forward like he was crushing a divine mountain. At the same time, he exuded an invincible and superior aura.

The air around the arena was visibly being crushed. It crackled and rumbled, stinging the eardrums.

The power was so terrifying that even the surrounding space seemed to be collapsing.

Yue Zhongtian's triumphant laughter abruptly stopped. He sensed danger. Without any hesitation, he activated the Shifting Cloud Light Art to its fullest.

However, he was horrified to find that every inch of the air around the arena was constantly battering him like waves. He felt like a little boat in a stormy sea, constantly being blasted back. Blood and qi violently tumbled in his body and he almost coughed out blood!

What secret art is that!?

Yue Zhongtian's scalp went numb with both terror and anger. His figure constantly flashed across the arena but he found that Lin Xun had fully enveloped the arena with his terrifying power with just one punch. Regardless of where he went, he was subjected to the same terrifying attack.

Boom!

Yue Zhongtian staggered and was almost blasted out of the arena. The audience sprang to their feet and gasped.

However, Yue Zhongtian managed to steady his figure. He gritted his teeth and roared. He planned to face the oppressive force head-on.

He had realized that evading was futile. He had to face the attack head-on to have any hope of not being defeated!

Chapter 278 Six Person Battle

Some things were easier understood than done. One often realized how terrifying some things were when they faced difficulties.

For example, Yue Zhongtian wanted to rely on his Earth Dipper cultivation to face and withstand Lin Xun's attack head-on.

However, he underestimated the terror of Lin Xun's attack. It was only for a brief moment but Yue Zhongtian felt like a sacred mountain was crushing him. His bones cracked and his face twisted. He felt every inch of his skin was about to explode.

In everyone's eyes, Yue Zhongtian was like a leaf flowing against the current or a mayfly trying to shake a giant tree. He seemed incredibly tiny and would collapse any moment.

Many people were stunned and speechless. They couldn't imagine how terrifying Lin Xun's attack had to be to make a top Earth Dipper Stage cultivator look so distressed!

Boom!

Under countless gazes, Yue Zhongtian vomited a mouthful of blood and was suddenly lifted into the air.

He rotated.

He leapt.

He closed his eyes—

Then, with a thud, he smashed into the ground dozens of feet away from the arena. He twitched and trembled like he had gone crazy and couldn't get back up!

The audience fell silent. All eyes were fixed on Yue Zhongtian, unable to believe what they saw.

In one move, Yue Zhongtian was defeated and sent flying out of the arena!

Who would believe that?

The cultivators in the examination zone couldn't help but gasp. The scene struck a chill into their hearts.

Too fierce!

How did Lin Xun do that?

It doesn't make sense that even the Shifting Cloud Light Art and someone at the Earth Dipper Stage couldn't block his attack!

"That boy must have used a secret ancient art. Otherwise, it wouldn't have such unbelievable power." A cold glint flashed in Liu Wujun's eyes and his voice contained a hint of surprise. He seemed amazed by Lin Xun's performance.

The other influential figures couldn't compose themselves. They had already witnessed the duel between Lin Xun and Huang Jianchen and had already thought that Lin Xun possessed astonishing strength then. Yet, compared to then, Lin Xun's strength was much more terrifying now.

It was a strength unheard of in a Human Dipper Stage teenager!

“Haha, Yue Zhongtian has shot himself in the foot. Not only did he lose the bet, but he was also eliminated from the exam and lost ten thousand gold coins to Lin Xun. He has completely destroyed his reputation.” Du Dongtu chuckled.

“That boy is arrogant and considers everyone beneath him. It’s not a bad thing for him to experience failure. Fortunately, he’s only sixteen years old and he can sign up for the provincial exam next year,” Wei Lingzhen remarked. As the principal of Haze Academy, he knew well what kind of person Yue Zhongtian was.

Soon, an uproar broke the stunned silence.

“Damn it. Lin Xun is too strong. He defeated Tan Long with one blade attack and he blasted Yue Zhongtian across the air with just one punch!”

“Hey, what’s even more abnormal is that Lin Xun is only at the Human Dipper Stage yet he can already defeat opponents at a higher cultivation level than him. Compared to him, the so-called talented geniuses are not worth mentioning.”

“As they say, however strong you are, there is always someone stronger. There’s always a taller mountain. Lin Xun’s performance perfectly shows what a true genius is!”

Amid the discussion, Lin Xun walked down the arena and came to stand next to Yue Zhongtian as he lay on the ground, “See, I already reminded you, but you didn’t listen. Whom can you blame now that you have lost?”

Yue Zhongtian’s face was deathly pale but his eyes were filled with anger and bitterness from the defeat. He trembled with fury at Lin Xun’s mocking remarks. “You...are going too far!”

Lin Xun smiled. “Too far? You’re wrong! I’m just giving you a taste of your own medicine. I didn’t annoy you but you deliberately provoked me. Do you think I’m very broad-minded and wouldn’t mind it?”

Yue Zhongtian’s expression dramatically changed. Only then did he realize that Lin Xun did all that to get revenge.

Isn’t this guy too vengeful and petty?

He has already won and become the center of attention while I have lost face and my reputation. I have already suffered such a tragic outcome yet he still wants to get revenge. He is too vengeful!

“Don’t be so angry. You should be thankful that you are in the provincial exam, otherwise, your outcome would be much worse. Oh, by the way, remember to send me ten thousand gold coins when the exam is over!” Lin Xun patted him on the shoulder with a smile and returned to the examination zone.

As Yue Zhongtian watched Lin Xun leave, his expression changed indefinitely. In the end, he sighed out loud. He knew that he had made a mistake. He should have never schemed against a ruthless and fierce person like Lin Xun.

.....

Lin Xun had ended the duel and the absurd bet with his Mountain Smashing attack.

That was the first time he showed the world the Nine Heavenshaking Destruction Art and caused a huge sensation. All the cultivators couldn't help but marvel at the power of the art.

The audience changed their view of Lin Xun once again. They perhaps looked down on Lin Xun for promoting Golden Jade Hall, but now, even if they did look down on him, they had to keep their opinion to themselves.

This was absolute power!

When a person had proved their strength, it would inadvertently affect many people's views. This was one of the reasons why many cultivators were obsessed and crazy about power.

As Lin Xun returned to the examination zone, many cultivators looked at him with strange gazes. It was as though they were staring at a fierce beast.

That was normal. After defeating Huang Jianchen, Lin Xun had soared to fame in Haze City and became one of the most dazzling youngsters and also the opponent no one wanted to face in the provincial examination.

The first and second rounds of the provincial examination had completely demonstrated the terror of Lin Xun's strength.

Whoever dared to underestimate Lin Xun had something wrong with their head.

Even Xue Shaolin, Yu Wenjing, Le Zhiyou and Yun Zitong, who were top Heaven Dipper cultivators, began to pay attention to Lin Xun.

So what if Lin Xun possessed the strength of the Human Dipper Stage? His performance in the two battles had already demonstrated that he was a demon-like youngster. His strength couldn't be measured by his cultivation level!

.....

Lin Xun stood in the examination zone, ignoring the strange gazes around him and analyzed the battle just now.

If I had used Star-Gather, I also could have defeated my opponent, but I would have exposed my trump card.

The Nine Heavenshaking Destruction Art was different. Lin Xun's grasp of the secret art had only reached the Inkling Realm and he could at most display around one-tenth of its true power.

Therefore, even if he had exposed the fact that he knew such a secret art, cultivators without knowledge of such an art wouldn't be able to determine its true power.

As Lin Xun pondered, he swept his eyes around the arenas.

He didn't leave right away because the third round would begin shortly after the second.

The third round was called the Six-Person Battle. In other words, cultivators would be divided into groups of six and fight in the arena. The last cultivator standing would be able to successfully pass and enter the final round of examination.

There was no time limit in the Six-Person Battle, nor was it against the rules for cultivators to fight in groups.

However, after careful thought, one would realize that the Six-Person battle was brutal. Anything could happen in a melee of six people and candidates had to be on constant guard against cultivators ganging upon them.

Lin Xun had a feeling that the people in his group would no doubt join hands to get rid of him first!

There was nothing he could do about that. His performance in the first two rounds was too striking and he was now regarded as a fierce beast. Of course, he would become everyone's target.

Time flew by and night fell. The second round of examination finally came to an end.

A total of 1,400 people had been eliminated in the second round and only 1,200 people remained!

Those who failed were recruited by the major clans and sects.

Those who passed became even more dazzling and the third round of examination was about to commence.

After the first two rounds, the number of Human Dipper cultivators had sharply dropped but the number of cultivators in the Earth Dipper and Heaven Dipper Stage remained roughly the same.

Of course, if Yue Zhongtian wasn't so unlucky to face Lin Xun in the second round, he would have successfully entered the third round.

The cultivators able to participate in the third round were no doubt the elites among the elites!

Lin Xun found that Qi Yunxiao and Yuan Shu had been eliminated in the second round.

He was most surprised to see that Lian Fei had made it through to the third round! [NOVELnext.com](http://www.NOVELnext.com)

It had been two years since they last saw each other, and Lian Fei had grown much stronger. This was evident by the fact that he was able to make it to the third round of examination.

Most importantly, Lian Fei was also at the Human Dipper Stage!

"It seems that Yao Tuohai had put a lot of effort in training him in the past two years. Only that could explain his achievements," Lin Xun said thoughtfully.

On the first day he came to Haze City, he learned that Lian Fei was the son-in-law of the great cultivator Yao Tuohai and that he had formed a second-grade aeth power reservoir when he broke through to the Human Dipper Stage.

Lian Fei's current strength and achievements had to be closely related to Yao Tuohai.

Thinking of Yao Tuohai sent intense murderous intent surging in Lin Xun's mind. Yao Tuohai had almost killed him and Xia Zhi during the district examination in Donglin City!

Chapter 279 Target of Attacks

The examination zone was much more spacious with only 1,200 candidates remaining. When Lin Xun noticed Lian Fei, the youth had also shifted his gaze to Lin Xun.

It was difficult to describe Lian Fei's expression. It was a mixture of intense hatred, a hint of fear, and an indescribable resentment.

Lin Xun had killed his father but every time he wanted to avenge his father, his operation ended in failure.

Lian Fei didn't need Yao Tuohai's reminder to know that he couldn't deal with Lin Xun alone.

He was most annoyed that his wife Yao Susu and father-in-law Yao Tuohai had forbidden him from taking revenge on Lin Xun.

But would he be willing to do so?

Lian Fei definitely wasn't willing. But after two years of training, he had developed an extremely strong forbearance and wouldn't act rashly as he did in the past.

However, he had vowed to kill Lin Xun with his own hands one day!

Suddenly, Lian Fei's eyes narrowed and his face darkened. Lin Xun was waving to him with a slight smile.

Provocation!

That bastard is provoking me!

Hatred and anger violently bubbled in Lian Fei's heart like lava. He almost lost control of his rage. He's too arrogant! Does he really think that I can't do anything to him?

Just you wait!

Soon I will make you pay with blood and suffer a fate worse than death!

Lian Fei's face was livid. He turned his head and didn't glance at Lin Xun again.

Lin Xun also withdrew his gaze with a smile, but the murderous intent deepened in his heart. He knew that there would be endless troubles if he didn't get rid of Lian Fei!

"Don't let me find an opportunity to get rid of you..." Lin Xun muttered.

.....

It was late at night but the examination venue was still crowded with people. Not a single spectator had left. Everyone was eagerly waiting for the third round of examination to start.

The bright lamplights dotted the site and illuminated the area like fire dragons.

The third round kicked off with the ring of the bell.

The third round was called the Six-Person Battle. After drawing lots, the remaining 1,200 cultivators were divided into two hundred groups. Each group of six people had to battle against each other in the arena. One hundred groups would compete first in the one hundred arenas and then the remaining one hundred groups would battle.

After Lin Xun drew his lot, he smiled bitterly. How am I so unlucky!?

It turned out that four of the five cultivators in the same arena as him were at the Earth Dipper Stage. The other cultivator was at the Heaven Dipper Stage while Lin Xun was the only one at the Human Dipper Stage.

The four Earth Dipper cultivators were Liu Kesheng, Wu Cen, Zhai Xiuyuan, and Chen Cheng. Although their names sounded unfamiliar, they were all top figures from different cities in the southwest province.

Of course, the most notable was the Heaven Dipper cultivator—Le Zhiyou, one of the top students in the prestigious Haze Academy!

He was a fierce character comparable to Xue Shaolin, Yu Wenjing and Yun Zitong. The fact that he had reached the Heaven Dipper Stage before the age of eighteen already proved how outstanding and talented he was.

This is going to be a tricky battle!

Lin Xun frowned. He was already certain that he would suffer the joint attacks of the four Earth Dipper cultivators and one Heaven Dipper cultivator.

This was because he was a huge threat and also because he was only at the Human Dipper Stage. The others would choose to deal with him first compared to Le Zhiyou.

“I’m really unlucky! Never mind, it seems like I have to fight with all my strength...” Lin Xun murmured.

This was the result of the draw and there was nothing he could do.

While Lin Xun was frowning and sighing, bursts of wailing rang out from other areas. It seemed that other cultivators were also upset with the result of the draw.

Of course, some cheered happily, seemingly very satisfied with the result of the draw.

When a crescent moon shone on the world, some families were happy and some were troubled.

.....

The audience broke into an uproar when they saw the figures of Lin Xun, Le Zhiyou, Liu Kesheng, Wu Cen, Zhai Xiuyuan and Chen Cheng appear in the No. 9 arena.

It was understandable. The group of cultivators at the No. 9 arena were too strong. It was impossible to not attract any attention.

“Damn! It’s going to be interesting. Look, Lin Xun’s opponents aren’t just four Earth Dipper cultivators but there’s also Le Zhiyou. This battle will no doubt be spectacular!”

“It doesn’t look good for Lin Xun. Although he’s fierce, he is alone and won’t stand a chance against the joint attacks of the others. If Le Zhiyou also joins forces with the others to deal with him, it would be extremely bad for him.”

"I have a hunch that Lin Xun will no doubt be the target of the others in the No. 9 arena given that he is the only one at the Human Dipper Stage. Once he's eliminated, it will be equivalent to eradicating huge trouble for all four Earth Dipper cultivators and also for Le Zhiyou."

"You are looking down on Lin Xun too much. Le Zhiyou is a Heaven Dipper cultivator. He may also become the target."

"Regardless, Lin Xun will have to defeat the other five people in the arena to pass the third round. This round will no doubt be hard for him!"

The audience buzzed with excitement and the clamor of discussions continued.

Indeed, no one had expected such a result from the draw. Not only a fierce character like Lin Xun was in the arena, but also a top famous figure like Le Zhiyou. The other four were also powerful Earth Dipper cultivators. The group of people was too remarkable!

Of course, the battle didn't look good for Lin Xun.

It couldn't be helped. He had drawn too much attention in the previous two rounds. As a Human Dipper cultivator, he had defeated Earth Dipper cultivators. His opponents would feel uneasy if they didn't get rid of him first!

Many people looked forward to Lin Xun's performance but some sympathized with him. They felt that he would most likely be eliminated in the third round and fail to progress to the final round despite how amazing he was.

If that happened, Lin Xun wouldn't be able to pass the provincial examination!

"That guy's luck is finally over. Hahahaha..."

Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shu and the others couldn't help but gloat. They thought that even the heavens couldn't tolerate Lin Xun's arrogance anymore. Otherwise, why would he draw such a bad result?

"The situation is indeed not good. Both Lin Xun and Le Zhiyou are talented geniuses of the younger generation. It would be a huge loss to eliminate either of them in the provincial examination." Wei Lingzhen, the principal of Haze Academy, frowned. He didn't expect such a fierce battle would happen before the final round.

"This is fate. You have to admit that although talent, power, foundation and background are important to cultivators, luck also plays a huge role on the cultivation path."

Du Dongtu said solemnly, "If you have bad luck, even if you have heaven-defying power, you are destined to encounter many troubles and unimaginable calamities. On the contrary, with luck, sometimes even an idiot can rise to the sky. It's not like something similar hasn't happened before."

"Correct, the six-person battle tests one's adaptability but luck is also a part of it. This is something that can be controlled," Governor Liu Wujun suddenly said aloud. "Besides, even if Lin Xun is eliminated this time, he isn't even fifteen yet so he can take the provincial examination again next year."

Everyone remained silent and shifted their gazes to the battlefield.

.....

"I didn't expect Le Zhiyou to have to face Lin Xun at this time. It's really surprising." Xue Shaolin sighed.

Then, he suddenly smiled and his eyes blazed. "But this way, I can take a look at Lin Xun's true ability. I have a feeling that he hadn't brought out his true killing moves in the first two rounds."

"Even if he has killing moves, he is unlikely to win against the joint attacks of Senior Brother Le Zhiyou and the other four Earth Dipper cultivators," said Yun Zitong indifferently. She was a beautiful maiden with a calm and elegant bearing.

"Yes, I heard that the four Earth Dipper cultivators were discussing joining forces with Le Zhiyou to deal with Lin Xun first!" Yu Wenjing chuckled. She was also a pretty maiden and had the characters gentle and quiet in her name, but she wasn't in the least gentle and quiet. Her sweet smile was full of energy and wildness.

"Then Lin Xun will likely be defeated," Xue Shaolin said with regret. "I wanted to have a proper match with Lin Xun, but unfortunately I won't have the chance to."

Wen Mingxiu was standing beside them. They were scheduled to appear in the second set of matches and so could wait in the examination zone to watch the battles.

However, she disagreed with Xue Shaolin and the others. The melee battle is a common training method in Blood Kill Camp. If you think Lin Xun could be easily taken down in a joint attack then you are wrong.

Of course, Wen Mingxiu wasn't sure whether Lin Xun would win or not, but she was certain that Lin Xun would take someone down with him if he was eliminated.

Amidst endless discussions, Lin Xun was studying Le Zhiyou, Liu Kesheng, Wu Cen, Zhai Xiuyuan and Chen Cheng in the arena.

As he stepped into the arena, he sensed that the five people had firmly locked their gazes on him. They seemed to have made an agreement.

Lin Xun's heart sank. Usually, the six people in the melee would be wary of one another but, judging from their reactions, it was clear that they had agreed to deal with Lin Xun first. Otherwise, their gazes wouldn't all simultaneously pin him!

Chapter 280 Fight Alone

The entire audience wasn't optimistic about Lin Xun's situation!

However, Lin Xun didn't waver in the slightest. He hadn't encountered any real danger since starting the provincial examination.

His battle against Tan Long and Yue Zhongtian both ended in one move. He completely suppressed his opponents and hadn't truly fought.

Now, facing four Earth Dipper cultivators and one Heaven Dipper cultivator, he felt pressure for the first time in the exam.

In fact, Lin Xun wanted to be put into such a situation. Only when he fought against true opponents would he deeply understand himself and realize the gap between him and his enemies!

Lin Xun stood quietly, without uttering a word. But the Storm Grinder was already mobilized in his body and his aeth dipper power was roaring like waves.

His eyebrows were sharp as blades and his black eyes flashed like lightning. He was akin to a volcano on the verge of erupting. A dreamy sky-blue glow had enveloped his body, highlighting his imposing and superior bearing.

Huh?

Many people narrowed their eyes as they sensed a change in Lin Xun's aura. They couldn't help but wonder whether Lin Xun was finally going to mobilize all his strength.

Some people could tell that Lin Xun's change was because he felt pressure and danger!

Le Zhiyou, Liu Kesheng, Wu Cen, Zhai Xiuyuan and Chen Cheng also noticed the change in Lin Xun's aura. A chill came to their hearts. They rapidly accumulated power and were ready to act.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

They drew their weapons without the slightest hesitation. Swords glinted and beams of blade light shot in all directions. Fierce killing intent pervaded the area and instantly turned the atmosphere chilling.

Evidently, they didn't dare to be careless facing Lin Xun despite their advantage in number.

Having witnessed Lin Xun's performances in the first and second rounds of the examination, they knew he was a demon-like fierce character. Even if he was only at the Human Dipper Stage, his true strength was extremely terrifying.

No one would dare to underestimate such a fierce opponent unless they were an idiot.

Even Le Zhiyou, a top figure in the Heaven Dipper Stage, was on full alert and didn't dare to underestimate Lin Xun.

They just found it strange that Lin Xun seemed to have no intention of using a weapon. His hands were bare and no one could understand what he was thinking.

Regardless, they were ready to get rid of Lin Xun in the battle!

.....

Clang!

A clear and melodious bell signaled the start of the third round.

Instantly, Le Zhiyou and the other five acted at the same time, launching an attack right away!

"Earth Destroyer Slash!"

Following a roar, a dazzling beam of black sword light streaked down from above like a ferocious dragon and ripped apart the void.

It was Le Zhiyou. He launched an attack with lightning speed. His black sword tore the air with incredible power.

Gasps rang out in rapid succession. That's the power of the Heaven Dipper Stage. It's indeed tyrannical!

Almost at the same time, Liu Kesheng, Wu Cen, Zhai Xiuyuan and Chen Cheng were charging forward from different directions.

A bronze umbrella sprang open and rapidly rotated like a whirlpool, spewing out a thousand arrows of fiery-red aeth dipper qi. It was dazzling and spectacular like fireworks exploding in the air.

Boom!

On the other side, a large golden ax swung up in a mighty manner like it was about to sever the universe.

A long chain made up of solid bones fluttered into the air like a python shot out from an abyss, creating ripples in the air.

Screeeee!

A pair of brass battle-axes split the air with an ear-piercing whistle and lightning speed.

In the blink of an eye, the bronze umbrella, golden ax, long chain of bones, and brass battle ax soared into the air. Each weapon was beautiful yet chilling.

The weapons came from the hands of Liu Kesheng, Wu Cen, Zhai Xiuyuan and Chen Cheng. They acted at the same time as Le Zhiyou and fully displayed the tremendous power of the Earth Dipper Stage.

That combined attack caused a sensation in the audience. Everyone stared unblinkingly at the arena lest they miss anything.

It was too terrifying. The battle had only just begun but Le Zhiyou and the others had already unleashed their full strength and showed no mercy. It was obvious that they intended to eliminate Lin Xun in the shortest time possible!

Everything happened in a split second. Ordinary cultivators would have been suppressed and eliminated before they could respond to the attacks.

Fortunately, Lin Xun wasn't an ordinary cultivator!

Boom!

Just as Le Zhiyou and others launched an attack, Lin Xun also acted. He swiftly charged forward and aimed the Smashing Mountain attack directly at Le Zhiyou, who was directly opposite him.

He didn't evade or dodge the multiple attacks.

To catch bandits, first catch the ringleader. If he could get rid of Le Zhiyou, he would remove his biggest threat!

Rumble!

A blast of wind crushed the surrounding space and, with a deafening explosion, shattered the beam of black sword light that Le Zhiyou launched out.

That was the power of one punch. It was like a sacred mountain crashing down and destroying everything in the way!

Le Zhiyou snorted coldly. His sword danced in the air and dissolved the attack. However, he tottered and couldn't help but wince. This guy's strength is too abnormal!

Almost at the same time, Lin Xun wrinkled his brows. He had already mobilized all his strength in the attack yet Le Zhiyou managed to block it!

Evidently, Le Zhiyou wasn't easy to deal with.

Lin Xun didn't think much about it. He also didn't have time to think about it. Liu Kesheng and the other Earth Dipper cultivators were charging toward him from all directions!

Lin Xun couldn't evade in time and had to meet the attacks head-on. His figure flashed across the air and his fist slammed out like a dragon. Aeth dipper power spread out from his body like waves and he exuded a superior, invincible and imposing bearing.

Rumble—

Divine light erupted on the arena, mist splattered everywhere, and blazing light engulfed the area. The scene was terrifying and chilling.

For a moment, the audience stood dazzled and stunned at the intense battle, their minds swaying.

They were most astonished that even if Lin Xun was only at the Human Dipper Stage and was unarmed, he managed to withstand the attacks from all four Earth Dipper Stage cultivators and a Heaven Dipper cultivator!

At that moment, Lin Xun was standing alone but his bearing was as fierce and imposing as that of a dragon. Sky-blue mist constantly spiraled around his body. He was like a terrifying volcano on the verge of erupting, and his every movement unleashed a terrifying power.

Not even multiple strong attacks could suppress him for a short moment!

He's too terrifying!

Many people trembled inwardly, finding it hard to believe that Lin Xun was at the Human Dipper Stage.

Unbelievable!

All eyes were fixed unblinkingly on the No 9 arena. Naturally, Lin Xun who was still standing in the face of several attacks received the most attention.

"That guy is too abnormal. He's a freak!"

Xue Shaolin, Yu Wenjing, Yun Zitong and the others were confident that Lin Xun would lose and looked forward to seeing how Lin Xun would lose.

Who would have thought that everything that had happened in the arena destroyed their expectation?

Most terrifyingly, Lin Xun was only at the Human Dipper Stage!

If the matter that a teenager countered the joint attacks of four Earth Dipper Stage cultivators and one Heaven Dipper cultivator spread out, it would no doubt cause a sensation in the empire!

"I knew that he would only use his real power now..."

Wen Mingxiu's expression was complicated. She couldn't compose herself knowing how much stronger Lin Xun had grown since he fought against Huang Jianchen.

I still remember when he first entered Blood Kill Camp more than a year ago, he was only at the fifth layer True Martial Stage!

But now...he has such accomplishments!

If you didn't know about Lin Xun, you would likely find it impossible to believe!

Boom!

The fierce battle continued in the arena. Everywhere was rumbling and quaking.

The grave and solemn expression deepened on the faces of Le Zhiyou and the other four Earth Dipper Stage cultivators.

They had never thought that Lin Xun would be so tenacious. They had all activated their aeth tools and displayed their secret arts without any reservation yet they still couldn't suppress Lin Xun. It was too unbelievable!

Who would believe that a Human Dipper cultivator could achieve that?

Kill!

Kill!

Kill!

They didn't dare to think anymore. They gritted their teeth and operated their secret arts to their fullest. It was as though Lin Xun was their greatest enemy.

It would be very humiliating if they couldn't defeat Lin Xun even if they had joined forces!

They increased their attack power to protect their dignity and their victory. It was as though they were fighting for their lives.

Fortunately for them, Lin Xun's brilliance was gradually being oppressed. He started to show signs of exhaustion and was drawing back

Le Zhiyou and others secretly breathed a sigh of relief, but they didn't lessen their attacks. On the contrary, the power of their attacks intensified.

They knew that they must not allow Lin Xun a chance to breathe. Otherwise unpredictable changes could happen!

At that point in the battle, everyone could tell that Lin Xun's momentum had been suppressed and it wouldn't be long before he would be defeated.

Many people felt relieved. It would be very abnormal if even Le Zhiyou and the others couldn't defeat Lin Xun after joining hands!

However, some people were worried and anxious for Lin Xun. They couldn't bear to see him defeated because they thought he was a remarkable miracle to be able to hold up against Le Zhiyou and the others despite only being at the Human Dipper Stage. They didn't want the miracle to end!

"From the looks of it, Lin Xun is doomed to lose no matter how heaven-defying his strength is. It's unfortunate that he unluckily drew such opponents. Given his strength, he could likely compete with the geniuses of the younger generation in the Forbidden City..." Wei Lingzhen, the Principal of Haze Academy, sighed as if he had foreseen Lin Xun's result.