

## Prodigies 421

### Chapter 421 The Power of Music

The atmosphere palpably altered, and the guests' expressions also changed. Puzzled and ruminative expressions crept into their eyes.

Some of the young descendants of noble clans couldn't help but snicker at the embarrassing gift that Lin Xun presented.

A jade hairpin?

What is he doing?!

Chief Steward Peng didn't add any description when he read out Lin Xun's gift. It had no special name or origin, so it was likely not a rare inherited treasure.

That kind of thing is fine as a gift for a little girl, but it's too shabby as a birthday gift for Her Majesty!

Fortunately, Lin Xun was at the central imperial palace, where many powerful and influential figures had gathered and the empress sat on the high throne, so the youngsters dared not to start trouble.

Otherwise, they likely would have ridiculed and laughed out loud given their personality and temper.

Lin Xun wasn't stupid. He, of course, sensed the change in the atmosphere. But he didn't care.

The jade hairpin indeed doesn't have an impressive history, but it is handmade. Also, it has another use besides being worn as an accessory. I believe the empress won't be disappointed.

After reading out Lin Xun's birthday gift, Chief Steward Peng put away the gift list, and his expression imperceptibly turned strange.

He thought Lin Xun's jade hairpin was nothing but a hairpin.

As someone who had served the imperial family for years, he knew well about Lin Xun's great grandfather Lin Daochen. He couldn't help but sigh to himself. What kind of person was Duke Daochen? His power shook the world. Even if he is gone, he will always be remembered by the empire.

But now, the Lin Family has deteriorated to such an embarrassing state that even their direct descendant can't offer a presentable birthday gift to the empress. This is really pitiful.

He snapped out of his thoughts, and no longer thought about it. The birthday gift list had been read out, and it was time for the birthday banquet to officially start.

However, before he made an announcement, the gentle and calm voice of the empress rang from the mist-shrouded throne.

"Reward him."

Her one remark shook the audience like a clap of thunder.

Reward?

Reward who?

Whose birthday gift pleased Her Majesty so much that she made an exception to bestow a reward upon them at such a time?

Many people couldn't help but speculate who from the list would receive such an honor.

The influential and powerful figures who were confident that their birthday gifts were the best were full of anticipation, expecting the reward to be bestowed upon them.

Even Chief Steward Peng was a little surprised. He had never expected such a situation and so hadn't prepared a reward in advance.

He was about to ask the empress when a cloud of pale blue light hovered out from the throne.

Under watchful gazes, it landed on Lin Xun's table.

How...**ηOvEl**next.com

The audience was utterly dumbfounded. How is that possible?

Among the birthday gifts, Lin Xun's jade hairpin is the most unpresentable. Why would Her Majesty make an exception to reward him?

Everyone's gazes turned complicated.

They had thought that Lin Xun had presented a disgraceful birthday gift to the empress, but all of a sudden, a reward from the empress landed on him. Who would have imagined such a situation to happen?

Could it be that the jade hairpin wasn't as simple as they had thought?

The voice of the empress again rang from the throne. "This jade hairpin is perfect for me. You indeed live up to the name of the rune grandmaster who invoked the cries of the nine dragons. There is a pill in that bottle to express my gratitude."

Hiss!

Many people gasped sharply.

It wasn't just a reward, Her Majesty also praised Lin Xun to show her gratitude. This rarely happens!

Some intelligent people instantly guessed that Lin Xun had made the jade hairpin himself from the fact that the empress had praised him for living up to the title of rune grandmaster.

That also explained why Chief Steward Peng didn't describe the name and origin of the jade hairpin.

Lin Xun made the treasure himself. Since it was a gift for the empress, he wouldn't go overboard and name the treasure!

After realizing that, many people looked at the youth with complicated gazes. They had to admit defeat.

However, they were very curious as to what sort of hairpin could win the favor of the empress.

Could the jade hairpin be more precious than the other remarkable birthday gifts?

Unfortunately for them, neither the empress nor Lin Xun explained the special characteristic of the jade hairpin.

This was because it was very simple. The jade hairpin would produce mysterious effects when used with the Sword of Apocalypse!

Simply speaking, the jade hairpin and the Sword of Apocalypse could coordinate with each other to produce even greater power.

The Sword of Apocalypse was a treasure belonging to the empress, so the jade hairpin from Lin Xun was an unexpected surprise for the empress.

As Lin Xun sensed the change in the gazes around him, he felt very grateful. The empress' praise and reward had helped him retaliate against those who had looked down on him.

"Thank you for the reward!" Lin Xun stood up and bowed with the utmost respect.

"Take a seat."

Lin Xun sat down again, his eyes drawn to the reward glistening on the table. It was a little exquisite-looking jade bottle around the thickness of a thumb. The mouth of the bottle was sealed with a mysterious and peculiar rune pattern.

The aura emanating from the secret rune alone indicated that the pill inside wasn't ordinary!

Not only Lin Xun, but even the other people present also knew that the pill was no ordinary pill.

Many people were very envious of Lin Xun. He is so damn lucky! He exchanged a jade hairpin for an aeth pill from Her Majesty!

Some people eagerly awaited to see the type of aeth pill inside the bottle. But to their disappointment, Lin Xun just put away the bottle.

After the little incident, Chief Steward Peng announced the start of the birthday banquet.

Immediately, a group of brightly-dressed male and female musicians marched into the central imperial palace, carrying various instruments such as the pipa, bamboo flute, chime stones, and zither.

Liu Qingyan led the group of musicians.

She looked different from usual. Her makeup had changed, and she looked very capable and experienced with her long black hair tied up in a bun and dressed in the empire's martial attire.

"I am Liu Qingyan. I and all musicians pay respect to Your Majesty. I am untalented, but I would like to present a song to wish Your Majesty to live as long as heaven and earth!"

Liu Qingyan and the musicians bowed respectfully.

"Rise, I heard that you are the leading figure among all the art cultivators in the empire. I wonder what is the name of the song you will present," the empress asked gently.

"Your Majesty will know when you hear it."

Liu Qingyan smiled.

“Okay, let’s get started.”

Suddenly, an open space appeared in the center of the hall, and Liu Qingyan stood in the center facing the throne at the end of the hall with the group of musicians behind her.

At that moment, her face was very calm. Her delicately beautiful face assumed a solemn expression, and she looked heroic in the neat martial uniform.

Everyone was full of anticipation. Many young masters’ eyes gleamed in admiration. They were very excited that they were fortunate enough to hear Liu Qingyan sing.

It was also Lin Xun’s first time to hear Liu Qingyan sing. There was also a curious glow of excitement on his face.

How did the famous art cultivator, a young maiden admired by countless youngsters, achieve such fame?

It would be clear in a moment!

Clang! Clang! Clang!

A loud and passionate solo pipa melody reverberated throughout the hall like a powerful army. It was filled with a mighty and majestic force like the roaring ocean.

For a moment, everyone fell into a trance. They felt like they were on a battlefield and saw countless men from the empire fighting for their families and land.

Everywhere were battles. Everywhere were clouds of smoke and dust. Everywhere were mountains of corpses and pools of blood.

Immediately, the boom of the zither, bamboo flutes, and drums pulsed in the air and merged with the melody of the song, making the whole piece of music even more complete, exciting and rhythmical.

It was as though an endless stream of heroic men was appearing on the bloody battlefield. They showed not a hint of fear regardless of how vicious and fierce the enemies were.

The music wasn’t sad or tragic, but it set everyone’s blood rushing around their bodies. Their emotions seemed to be constantly fermenting and accumulating like a volcano on the verge of erupting.

The powerful and influential people recalled their glorious years, reminisced their heroic battles on the battlefield, and remembered their comrades.

The young people were all full of pride, wishing they could face the enemies on the battlefield and wishing they could shed blood in combat!

Even Lin Xun felt goosebumps all over his body. The musical composition was too invigorating, too exciting, and too majestic. It was hard to not be emotionally moved.

When the music reached its climax, and everyone’s emotions were almost at their peak, Liu Qingyan slightly opened her mouth and her beautiful voice rang out from the center of the hall.

“The red sun rises, casting its great light to every corner.”

Her voice, clear and bright, possessed a power capable of reaching one’s soul. As her voice reverberated, the music that had reached its climax surged even higher!

She only said a few words, but it gave the music a gush of new power.

Everyone felt their scalps numb. The emotions bubbling in their hearts felt like they had ignited and exploded in their chest, drowning their entire body. They felt immersed and unable to free themselves.

That was the power of music!

Art cultivators cultivated the great Dao of sound, and Liu Qingyan, a top art cultivator, had already reached an extraordinary saint-level in terms of her understanding and control of sound.

The lyrics, the emotions, the singing...were in perfect harmony. It was as though the sound of Dao was echoing throughout the hall and shaking everyone’s minds!

Even those with profound cultivation bases and who had long tempered their minds to a rock-like state couldn’t help but feel emotionally moved. Their eyes were shining with a gleaming radiance.

Chapter 422 The Heaven Pride Song

Everyone present was a cultivator, so their state of mind wouldn’t be easily affected. But the song that Liu Qingyan composed was too special. She had an incredibly skilful mastery of music.

In ancient times, a mighty one had entered the Dao with music and had crushed mountains and shattered stars with a single cry!

This showed that the mystery of the Dao of sound was extraordinary.

Moreover, the musicians performing with Liu Qingyan were all masters who had studied the Dao of sound for years, and they all played unusual instruments.

The musical piece they performed together was so soul-stirring that everyone was fully absorbed in the music and unable to free themselves.

As the song swelled to a point of musical climax, Liu Qingyan’s eyes and cheeks became more animated and then her red lips moved. A uniquely beautiful and majestic voice rang out like the sound of nature.

Streams and rivers emerged from the ground, gushing into the vast sea.

A dormant dragon leapt from the water, its scales and claws glistening in the air.

The tiger cub’s roar echoed through the valley, terrifying all creatures.

The hawk spread its wings, hovering in the wind.

Rare flower species bloomed and flourished beautifully!

His head reached high into the sky, and his feet were planted firmly on the ground.

Time and space stretch endlessly.

The future is limitless and the ocean is boundless.

The lyrics resounded like rumbles of thunder and resonated with the mountains and rivers. Everyone seemed to see thousands of empire soldiers bathed in the glow of the morning sun on the bloody battlefield stepping on enemy corpses and singing triumphantly!

It was as though they saw their splendid empire was full of vitality. It was like a youngster rising from the ashes and striding forward, making all enemies tremble with fear!

The spine-tingling music and the cascade of emotions everyone felt made them excited, stirred up and looked forward to the future.

The music also inspired Lin Xun. For the first time, he was shocked by the power of the Dao of sound. His blood seemed to be bubbling with emotions and resonating with the music.

The rhythm, tone, and arrangement were all majestic.

The lyrics and melody were in perfect harmony!

Suddenly, the music came to a pause. It lingered in the hall before fading to silence. Everyone felt that their emotions had suddenly become suppressed. Their throat tightened and an impulse to explode fermented.

At that moment, Liu Qingyan's eyes were especially bright, and her body was exuding an indescribably imposing aura. She vocalized the last two verses of the song.

Beautiful, my young empire is immortal like heaven!

Magnificent, the empire youngsters are limitless like the empire!

The two verses were like a clap of thunder crashing into the doors of their hearts, unleashing the suppressed emotions in everyone's hearts like an explosion.

Like a river bursting its dam and rushing into the sea!

Like an erupting volcano spilling into the mountains and rivers!

Everyone felt their souls quivering and their hearts swaying. The final two verses were a perfect end as they brought the splendid piece of music to a new height. It was in harmony with heaven and resonated with all beings on earth.

The song came to an end, but it continued to echo around the beams.

Everyone had fallen into a trance, their chest heaving up and down. The younger audience was panting and trembling all over.

That was Liu Qingyan's new song. It was masterfully performed and reverberated throughout the central imperial palace rhythmically.

"This song should only be found in heaven!"

An old man sighed emotionally after a long moment, and many people echoed his words and clapped.

Indeed, the new song was considered sublime and exquisite in rhythm, lyrics, and melody. But sung in Liu Qingyan's heavenly voice, its soul-stirring power was brought to an unprecedented level.

Otherwise, the powerful and influential figures and the talents of the younger generation wouldn't be so stunned.

Everyone's gazes changed when they looked at Liu Qingyan. They gleamed with admiration, awe, and even infatuation.

Who wouldn't admire such a talented and beautiful woman?

Lin Xun's heart was swirling with complex emotions.

"Your technique and skills are perfect, and the lyrics and music are remarkable. It's rare to see such talent. Come, take a seat," the empress exclaimed from the throne.

Once Liu Qingyan was seated, the empress asked, "Does this song have a name?"

Liu Qingyan answered respectfully, "Can I ask your Majesty to name it?"

The empress thought for a moment and said, "Our Ziyao Empire has been standing up to this day, and an unknown number of authority figures have emerged. They have fought for our empire and defended our territory. Their services can't be forgotten."

"Now, during the strong rise of our empire, the youngsters of the empire should all have the heart to serve the country. Only those people can be called the pride of the empire. How about we call the song the Heaven Pride Song?"

Before her voice faded, someone clapped enthusiastically and exclaimed, "Wonderful, the vast empire has countless young talents. Our youthful empire will live forever with heaven and be limitless. The name is very apt."

The other influential figures echoed.

Perhaps, there was a hint of flattery, but Lin Xun also felt the name Heaven Pride matched the song very well.

"Thank you, Your Majesty, for the name."

Liu Qingyan was also very satisfied with the name. She thought it complemented her song and lyrics very well.

"Miss Qingyan, how did you come up with the idea of composing such an emotional and passionate song? Even the lyrics are amazing and grand," someone asked with a smile.

Liu Qingyan said casually, "To be honest, I suddenly had a spark of inspiration and composed the song on the spur of a moment. But the lyrics are the masterpiece of Master Su Sanshi." [ηOvElnext.com](http://www.OverElnext.com)

As Liu Qingyan explained, she seemed to remember something as she smiled lightly. "Speaking of which, Master Su Sanshi was able to smoothly write the lyrics because of Young Master Lin Xun."

Everyone was taken aback. Why does this matter have something to do with Lin Xun?

Lin Xun was also surprised to hear that the writing of the lyrics was related to him. But then he remembered that Liu Qingyan had thanked him before she entered the central imperial palace, though he had no idea how he had helped her.

“How did that happen?” someone asked.

“At the time, I had invited Master Su Sanshi to write the lyrics, but Master Su had no inspiration. Later, when Master Su and I met at the Lingyun House, I suddenly heard rumors about Young Master Lin Xun all over the city. He was praised as a talent blessed by heaven, and his achievements touched Master Su so he came up with the lyrics in one sitting.”

Everyone’s expression turned strange as they listened to Liu Qingyan explain the making of the song.

Isn’t it too coincidental?

However, sometimes such things happened, especially for lyricists and composers. When they had exhausted their inspiration and their minds were blocked, the smallest thing could cause inspiration to flow like a spring.

The song Heaven Pride Song was born under those circumstances.

Although everyone understood that, they still felt complex emotions toward the majestic piece of music inspired by Lin Xun.

It meant that the Heaven Pride Song was specially written for Lin Xun!

Does Lin Xun...deserve such a great honor?

Many descendants of aristocratic families felt uncomfortable.

Lin Xun was at a loss for words. This matter is indeed too coincidental.

Liu Qingyan’s performance ended.

The birthday banquet continued. Many people raised a toast to the empress, and there were special song and dance performances. The atmosphere turned very lively.

Lin Xun, on the other hand, sat alone, sipping the Dragon and Phoenix tea. As the pale, purple tea flowed down his throat, its aroma spread out and it turned into a warm current that poured into his body.

Lin Xun felt his cultivation base, which had stagnated for a period, showing signs of movement.

What amazing tea!

A glimmer of surprise flashed across his eyes. When he joined Qinglu Academy, his cultivation had stagnated at the intermediate Spirit Sea Stage, and he couldn’t make any breakthrough.

He had thought that some intense training or opportunity would shift the cultivation barrier and allow him to make a breakthrough, but who would have thought that a cup of tea would have such a marvelous effect?



Lin Xun couldn't help but glance at the others around him. To his surprise, no one's aura seemed to change when drinking the Dragon and Phoenix Tea.

After a moment of thought, Lin Xun realized that his cultivation had already reached an accumulation limit, and he could break through at any time once he pierced through the layer of window paper.

The tea might be very useful, but it, at best, just provided him with an opportunity to pierce the window paper and breakthrough!

Lin Xun gulped down the cup of tea and began to meditate, ignoring everything happening at the birthday banquet.

He didn't know when he would encounter such an opportunity again.

Not long after that, Chief Steward Peng's voice suddenly sounded in the main hall, "Her Majesty has decided to bring out some rare treasures as rewards to encourage the outstanding talents of the younger generation to devote themselves to cultivation. Her Majesty hopes to cultivate many more talents for the empire."

The atmosphere stilled and the audience fell utterly silent.

Song Yi, Chi Cangfeng, Bai Lingxi, Yun Fushen, and Yuchi Ze, the genius talents of the younger generation, all went wild with excitement.

It's time!

They had been waiting for that moment for a long time!

"However, your skills and abilities will determine your reward."

As Chief Steward Peng was speaking, he stepped forward and ran his eyes across the guests. "Now, if anyone is interested in the reward, they can stand up and challenge the opponent they most want to learn from. The winner will receive a reward!"

Chapter 423 Provocation Continues

News had already spread out before the empress' birthday banquet.

Experts from the Ancient Wasteland Domain were said to attend the banquet, and those whom they took notice of would be brought to the Ancient Wasteland Domain for cultivation!

Ancient Wasteland Domain!

Many cultivators in the world might not have heard of the place.

However, descendants of noble families knew very well that it was a vast world with Daoist traditions and was filled with unimaginable cultivation resources.

If they were able to cultivate there, they could rise to the sky and leap through the dragon gate!

Therefore, many genius talents attended the banquet for the opportunity to enter the Ancient Wasteland Domain, such as the Marquis of Rising Sky, Yuchi Ze, Song Yi, Chi Cangfeng, Bai Lingxi and Yun Fushen...

The empress had already left the throne with the reason that she had to welcome some friends.

Everyone was certain that the guests were experts from the Ancient Wasteland Domain given that the empress had to personally greet them!

Therefore, Chief Steward Peng's announcement that the empress would offer rewards for the geniuses of the younger generation sparked an intense reaction.

The so-called rewards were to motivate all the young talents to perform well in the duels!

As long as they performed good enough, they wouldn't only receive a reward from the empress but also a favor from the experts of the Ancient Wasteland Domain!

That was the most attractive reward.

Many youngsters' eyes suddenly blazed with fighting spirit and eagerness to get into action.

"Everyone must have guessed the significance of the duel, but I still have to remind you all." Chief Steward Peng's deep voice echoed through the hall. "Her Majesty and others will watch over everything." Chief Steward Peng assumed a solemn expression. "This is a rare opportunity. Everyone, come with me!"

He strode out of the central imperial palace.

All the guests in the hall got up and walked out in a line.

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A tremendous martial arts arena had been built on the square outside of the central imperial palace without anyone knowing, and a terrifyingly tremendous rune array had enveloped the area to prevent it from being destroyed.

The arena surprised all the influential and powerful figures. The duels being held at Her Majesty's birthday banquet aren't simple.

Otherwise, why else would a martial arts arena be set up in front of the central imperial palace?

"It seems that the rumors are true. The experts from the Ancient Wasteland Domain must have come to participate in Her Majesty's birthday banquet to select disciples. Anyone whom they take notice of would receive a great opportunity!"

Many people's gazes altered subtly as they guessed something.

They repeatedly reminded their children to seize the great opportunity!

If their children were chosen to cultivate in the Ancient Wasteland Domain, they would bring unimaginable benefits to their families!

They knew well about the background of the Ancient Wasteland Domain and understood that it wasn't just a simple sacred cultivation land.

The terrifying Daoist sects there had a huge influence on the Ziyao Empire!

If the descendants of their clans were able to be selected to cultivate in the Ancient Wasteland Domain, the empire would attach great importance to their clans!

That tempted many people.

The duel had a different significance for the younger and older generation. The younger generation wanted to train in the Ancient Wasteland Domain, but the older generations only cared about the benefits it would bring to their clan if their descendants were chosen.

On the other hand, Lin Xun's thinking was much simpler. He didn't intend to participate as he knew he couldn't leave the empire even if he was selected.

He had to watch over Mind Cleansing Peak, and he had the important responsibility of helping the Lin Clan rise. How could he leave everything behind and train in another world?

However, he did hope to learn some information about the Omega Sword Sect from the experts of the Ancient Wasteland Domain.

Liu Qingyan went over and asked Lin Xun softly, "Will you take part?"

"It depends," Lin Xun said after a thought.

Many geniuses and talents who had made a name for themselves in the empire were present. He wanted to see how strong the so-called heaven prides were before he considered whether to take part in the duels.

"No matter what, I believe that you can seize this opportunity." Liu Qingyan smiled.

Lin Xun blushed at her compliment. It was a delightful feeling to be thought highly of by a beautiful woman

"Lin Xun!"

Suddenly, an arrogant voice rang behind him.

Not far away, Chi Cangfeng swept a cold glance over Lin Xun. His face was fierce and full of malice.

"Get ready, I will kill you first!"

Chi Cangfeng's voice was ice-cold, and he looked ruthless like a sharp sword.

He turned around and walked away.

Lin Xun frowned. I didn't get revenge from him, but he actively came to create trouble again. He's so arrogant.

"Is there animosity between you two?"

Worry clouded Liu Qingyan's clear eyes.

Chi Cangfeng was an abnormal young man who possessed the bloodline of Golden Sea Violet Lotus. His name had already been known throughout the Forbidden City at the age of fourteen. [Novelnext.com](http://Novelnext.com)

The fact that he had achieved second place in the national examination was enough to prove his strength.

"Yes. He tried to kill me when I first arrived at the Forbidden City, but he failed. I never thought he would come to find me again."

Lin Xun explained and then he asked, "Can you kill people in this duel?"

Liu Qingyan was at first taken aback by his question, then she shook her head and said, "Definitely not, this is the birthday banquet of the empress. How can someone die on this special day?"

"So, that kid is just spurring nonsense when he said he will kill me," Lin Xun said with a chuckle.

"Don't worry too much. If he challenges you, he will also be severely wounded."

Lin Xun nodded with a smile.

Liu Qingyan was unaware that Lin Xun was disappointed to learn that he couldn't kill in the duel. If possible, he wouldn't mind killing Chi Cangfeng in the palace!

"Lin Xun."

Suddenly, another voice sounded. It was gentle and very feminine. Who else would it be besides the Marquis of Rising Sky Zhao Jingyin? Dressed in a blood-red robe, he looked bewitchingly pretty!

"Will you dare to have a duel with me later?"

His gaze was aggressive. "If I win, you have to serve me for ten years and give Liu Qingyan to me."

"You..." Liu Qingyan never expected him to use her as a wager. Her pretty face turned cold as ice, but her eyes blazed with anger.

He went too far!

Not only Liu Qingyan, but the other cultivators also gasped out loud. They felt that the Marquis of Rising Sky was too arrogant and daring.

However, anyone who knew about the Marquis of Rising Sky would know that he had a violent and fearless temper. After all, he had been expelled from the Forbidden City because he had slaughtered dozens of cultivators for a woman. How would that not spark an outrage?

"Miss Qingyan, ignore that idiot."

Lin Xun said indifferently, "You want to fight against me? Fine, but we have to change the wager."

The Marquis of Rising Sky wasn't the least bit angry after being called an idiot. Instead, a bewitching and sinister smile spread across his face. "Oh, let's hear it."

"It's very simple. If I win, you have to kneel and apologize to Miss Qingyan and swear to not get revenge forever," Lin Xun said unwaveringly.

Some cultivators' expressions dramatically changed. He not only called the Marquis of Rising Sky an idiot, but he also told him to kneel and apologize if he lost. Lin Xun has guts!

Lin Xun's actions impressed many women nearby. Look, he dared to challenge the Marquis of Rising Sky for Liu Qingyan. He's a real man!

Liu Qingyan was also moved. She stared intently at Lin Xun like it was the first time she had met the handsome young man standing in front of her.

But then, she couldn't help feeling worried. He's so silly. It's not worth confronting someone like the Marquis of Rising Sky just to stand up for me!

"Deal!"

Blood-colored sparks shot out from Marquis of Rising Sky's eyes like lightning as they opened and closed. He accepted the bet without any hesitation like he wasn't the slightest worried that he would lose.

He suddenly asked, "Then, what if you lose?"

"It's also very simple. Don't you want me to serve you for ten years? I will do that if you win!"

Everyone nearby trembled inwardly. The stakes are too huge!

Who in the empire doesn't know that Lin Xun is the young rune grandmaster who invoked the phenomenon cries of the nine dragons? In addition, he also helped the empress repair the Sword of Apocalypse.

His terrifying mastery in the art of runes made many experienced senior rune grandmasters in the Forbidden City look inferior. The bet is such a good deal for the Marquis of Rising Sky!

"Lin Xun..." Liu Qingyan cried out anxiously.

"Trust me, it will be fine."

Lin Xun smiled brightly.

"Haha, good."

The Marquis of Rising Sky laughed, seeming satisfied. "It's a pity that you're not gutsy enough. You could have proposed a more satisfying bet. If I were you, I would wager my life. That would be a real bet!"

"In my opinion, your life is worthless and not worth betting on. The battle between you and I is like a broken earthen pot colliding with fine porcelain."

Lin Xun grinned.

Chapter 424 Insult

Life is worthless!

He compared the Marquis of Rising Sky to a broken pot!

Many people's eyes widened in shocked disbelief upon hearing those words. Lin Xun looks gentle, but he curses so ruthlessly.

The Marquis of Rising Sky is notorious for being violent and domineering in the Forbidden City. He is one of the leading figures of the younger generation, but Lin Xun didn't seem to care and countered back at every chance. He is so brave!

A gleam glowed in many young noble women's eyes. They found Lin Xun's contemptuous attitude toward the Marquis of Rising Sky very interesting and novel. They had never seen a youth brave enough to teach an imperial family descendant a lesson.

"You have a sharp tongue, but it will be very funny when you lose. I can't wait to hear what you will say then."

A chilling smile cracked over the Marquis of Rising Sky's lips. Lin Xun's repeated insults had truly enraged him.

He would have lost his tolerance if he didn't want Lin Xun to serve him.

So, he turned around and left.

Lin Xun smiled and didn't seem to care.

This made Liu Qingyan both worried and emotionally moved. Although she disagreed with Lin Xun's approach, she couldn't say anything because she knew that Lin Xun did so to stand up for her.

"That guy...isn't he afraid of retaliation?" whispered a young woman. Her face flushed, finding the incident too exciting.

"Haha, you seem to not know anything about Lin Xun. Ever since he entered the Forbidden City, how many outrageous things had he done? But isn't he still living well? He even received a reward from the empress. He must have a strong backing to dare to act so arrogantly."

Another young woman clenched her fists. She seemed to know Lin Xun very well.

The news that Chi Cangfeng had challenged Lin Xun and then the Marquis of Rising Sky had made a bet with Lin Xun quickly spread.

"See, that's karma! That guy has been arrogantly bouncing around so much these days. Someone finally can't stand him anymore," someone said gloatingly.

"Indeed, the empress has just rewarded him in the central imperial palace and even Miss Liu Qingyan composed a song inspired by him. Many people must have found him annoying."

Some people sounded jealous and sour.

In that clamorous atmosphere, Lin Xun was just thinking about when Chief Steward Peng would announce the start of the duel.

He peered into the distance and noticed Chief Steward Peng standing still on one side of the martial arts arena like he was waiting for an order.

"Lin Xun!" a voice suddenly rang out.

Song Zhe complacently strutted toward Lin Xun, saying, "Listen, my older cousin Song Yi will have a showdown with you when the duel starts. Don't be a coward then!"

The nearby people broke into an uproar. Even Song Yi disliked Lin Xun.

This is too shocking. First, it was Chi Cangfeng, then it was the Marquis of Rising Sky and now the person ranked first in the national exam, the peerless genius of the aristocratic Song Clan also wants to have a duel with Lin Xun. Lin Xun has provoked too many clans!

That guy is so unlucky. It's going to be hard for him to not lose and embarrass himself.

Many people snickered in their hearts and couldn't wait for the duel to start.

"Don't look at me like that. You make it seem like I've done something really bad."

Lin Xun ignored Song Zhe and looked at Liu Qingyan with a wry smile. She was staring at him with a worried and concerned look.

"You—do you not know how to restrain yourself?" Liu Qingyan sighed.

"It's out of my control," Lin Xun said indifferently.

Those ordinary and indifferent words made Liu Qingyan's heart ache.

Anyone aware of Lin Xun's situation when he first came to the Forbidden City and the dangers he had to face would know how difficult it had been for him.

Outsiders only saw how he stirred up a storm from time to time, only saw him rise to fame, and only saw him constantly in the limelight. They didn't know about the kind of danger and hardship he had experienced.

"Lin Xun, you are going too far. I am talking to you but you ignored me! What do you mean by that?" Song Zhe fumed.

Lin Xun swept a glance over him and said with a smile, "I wondered who it was. It turns out to be the cuckold young master. I don't dare to talk to you. What if someone misunderstands that I'm cuckolding you?"  
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Everyone's expression turned strange. Lin Xun's words were hurtful.

"You—"

"You what? Song Yi wants to fight against me and not you. Why are you so anxious?" Lin Xun rolled his eyes.

Everyone nearby glanced at each other. Although they already knew that Lin Xun was crazy, they didn't think he was crazy to that extent.

Song Zhe's face was livid. "Just you wait," he hissed through gritted teeth before he swung his sleeve and stormed away.

"You don't even dare to challenge me. You are going to be cuckolded all your life," Lin Xun remarked indifferently.

Song Che trembled with rage and almost went berserk. That guy must be killed!

Liu Qingyan couldn't help but said aloud, "Lin Xun..."

Lin Xun suddenly changed the topic and said with a smile, "Miss Qingyan, if you're worried about me so much, those young masters will get jealous and jump out and challenge me again."

Liu Qingyan pursed her lips and said angrily, "Are you not worried about yourself at all?"

She was indeed very worried about him because she knew how awful the morals of some young masters were.

"It's no use worrying." Lin Xun shrugged his shoulders with a smile.

Chief Steward Peng suddenly said aloud, "Everyone, the duel will officially start now. Stand forward if you want to compete for the reward from Her Majesty."

His voice reverberated throughout the area, ceasing all discussions and conversations.

"Lin Xun, come out!"

"Lin Xun, come and take the challenge!"

"Lin Xun, do you dare to fight against me?"

Different voices rang out as soon as Chief Steward's voice faded. They all wanted to fight against Lin Xun!

It was Chi Cangfeng, the Marquis of Rising Sky and Song Yi.

The audience broke into an uproar. They already knew that Lin Xun was unlucky, but they didn't expect to see such an explosive scene.

Chi Cangfeng, Marquis of Rising Sky and Song Yi were all unparalleled figures in the Forbidden City.

However, they all demanded to duel against Lin Xun!

"Hahaha, that kid is hated by everyone! Everyone wants to give him a beating! This is so satisfying to watch!"

"It's understandable. Ever since he arrived at the Forbidden City he has offended many clans and showed no restraint. He deserves to be targeted."

"I have a hunch that Lin Xun will be utterly defeated in the duel and become a laughingstock."

"Hey, I admire Lin Xun a little. He's such a troublemaker. I have never seen a person as reckless and bold as him. I'm surprised he is still alive."

Everyone broke into an uproar. Most of them gloated at Lin Xun's misfortune and couldn't wait to see how the youth would respond.

Even the powerful and influential figures couldn't help but chuckle. Lin Xun isn't very popular.



The unexpected situation surprised even Chief Steward Peng. Three genius talents had stood up right away to challenge Lin Xun.

After a long moment, he asked Lin Xun, "Whose challenge will you accept? Or, do you reject them all?"

Shua!

All gazes gathered on Lin Xun.

Some people couldn't help but sneer, "Lin Xun, weren't you very arrogant? This is a rare opportunity to show off."

"I don't think he dares to accept the challenges."

"You can't say that. Lin Xun's rune skills are amazing."

"Hahaha."

The noble descendants such as Hua Wuyou, Hua Wuhen, Song Zhe and Song Chonghe, who had feuded with Lin Xun, all laughed out loud.

Seeing that, Liu Qingyan couldn't help feeling angry. Those aristocratic descendants act elegant and polite, but they turn out to be so unkind.

She was about to persuade Lin Xun to not take offense when he darted forward and landed in the center of the martial arts arena.

The entire audience fell silent. To their astonishment, Lin Xun entered the martial arts arena first without any hesitation!

"Before the duel starts, I have something to say," Under watchful eyes, Lin Xun spoke indifferently. He stood straight and tall like a spear, and his jet-black eyes were deep and calm.

Everyone kept quiet, curious about what he was going to say.

However, he ran his eyes across the audience and soon fixed his gaze on some acquaintances. He smiled slightly. "Today, many people are waiting to see me make a fool of myself. They are either losers previously defeated by me, scumbags jealous of me, or enemies who feuded with me. But in my eyes, they are the same. They are all—"

"—Trash!"

Many people's expressions changed, skewed with anger and panic.

That kid is too arrogant. He is so fearless and arrogant in the central imperial palace and in front of so many authority figures of the empire. He deserves to be killed!

"Trash will always be trash. You don't even dare to challenge me and can only rely on others to fight against me to restore some of your self-esteem. If you're not trash, then what are you?"

Lin Xun's words became more and more impolite. Many powerful and influential figures' faces became overcast with a frown. We're at the forbidden palace! How can he say such rude words?

“Lin Xun, please watch what you say,” reminded Chief Steward Peng.

Lin Xun smiled apologetically and then said, “There is one last sentence I want to say. I will fight after I finish.”

Everyone fell speechless. What kind of person is he!? He doesn’t know what’s good for him.

Lin Xun drew a deep breath and glanced around, a smile spreading across his handsome face. His eyes were resolute as he said in a loud and clear voice, “Trash, please rest assured that I won’t disappoint you!”

Chapter 425 What Does it Mean to be Strong?

All the aristocratic clan descendants such as Hua Wuyou and Hua Wuhen became livid when they heard Lin Xun call them trash.

That boy...deserves to be killed!

However, some admired the youth’s courage. For example, a young girl unfamiliar with the world found Lin Xun’s contempt towards the aristocrats incredibly refreshing.

Only Liu Qingyan was smiling bitterly. Lin Xun has completely infuriated and offended those people.

“Lin Xun, please make a decision!” Chief Steward Peng said in a tone that allowed no dillydallying. The duel was being watched by the empress and experts from the Ancient Wasteland Domain. Moreover, it was being held in front of the central imperial palace. It was of utmost importance.

“Chi Cangfeng, didn’t you say that you want me dead? Come on, let’s see if you have the ability to achieve that today,” Lin Xun chuckled as he locked his jet-black eyes on Chi Cangfeng. Then, his aura changed abruptly, growing stronger and stronger.

“Hmph!”

Chi Cangfeng’s face darkened and his figure darted onto the martial arena with a swoosh.

“Lin Xun, have you forgotten your bet with me!?” the Marquis of Rising Sky roared.

He thought that Lin Xun was afraid of him, so he chose Chi Cangfeng as his opponent instead.

“Don’t worry. I will deal with you after I take care of Chi Cangfeng.”

Pale azure light enveloped the entirety of Lin Xun’s body. His long, dark hair beat against the air as his aura grew stronger and stronger. Faintly, he oozed superiority and contempt.

Uproar broke out from the audience.

Lin Xun has a death wish. He dares to go up against the Marquis of Rising Sky. He is implying that Chi Cangfeng is no match for him!

“That guy is making a lot of noise today. Could he be trying to attract the attention of the experts from the mysterious domain?” Bai Lingxi furrowed her eyebrows in deep thought.

“He...”

Liu Qingyan's irises glowed a brilliant color. It was her first time seeing such a domineering and strong side of Lin Xun. He looked arrogant and powerful and seemed to look down on everyone in the world, which was completely different from usual.

"Hmph! Then I'll wait. Remember, even if you lose, the bet remains. Don't try to get out of it!" The Marquis of Rising Sky smiled coldly.

Lin Xun ignored him and faced Chi Cangfeng who was standing opposite him.

The eyes of the youth with the bloodline Golden Sea Violet Lotus were filled with murderous rage, and his face was ice-cold.

He was provoked by Lin Xun's words. Does he plan to fight against the Marquis of Rising Sky after our battle? He clearly attaches no importance to me!

"Lin Xun, I won't show any mercy." Chi Cangfeng's voice contained chilling fierceness.

"Oh, if you can't do it, it will be embarrassing!" Lin Xun smiled.

"Die!"

With a boom, a cloud of dazzling light bloomed from Chi Cangfeng. A sword slashed through the air toward Lin Xun.

The imposing manner was so intense that even the rune arrays around the arena swayed.

Terrified, many people trembled inwardly and felt a chill run down their spine.

"Aeth treasure?" Lin Xun narrowed his eyes.

The sword was an aeth treasure. It was as bright as the sun and moon and released an oppressive aura.

Shua!

The sword moved at lightning speed, but Lin Xun was still faster. With a flash, a Hornless Ice Dragon emerged behind him before he vanished from the spot.

Hornless Ice Dragon Step!

A beam of sword light blasted into Lin Xun's original spot. If he was a fraction of a second slower, he would have been killed on the spot.

"Azure Sun Sword!"

Mutters of exclamations and astonishment rippled throughout the audience. They finally saw Chu Cangfeng's weapon.

The sword was entirely bright azure and covered with all sorts of complicated runes. The light beams it shot out were as strong and blinding as the sun's rays. [Novelnext.com](http://Novelnext.com)

The sword was called Azure Sun and was an aeth treasure passed down the Chi Family. It had slaughtered many cultivators, and its power was superior to heaven-grade aeth tools!

Boom!

Chi Cangfeng's figure flickered as he manipulated the sword. He launched another strike. Divine violet light roared around his body like he was a young sword god.

Swoosh!

Lin Xun's figure darted back and forth in the arena, forming Hornless Ice Dragon shadows and leaving images behind him.

His speed was incredible!

His unpredictable footwork and movement seemed to be full of mystery and surprise. He effortlessly evaded Chi Cangfeng's sword slashes again and again.

"What kind of technique is that?"

Many people were stunned. From afar, Lin Xun didn't resemble a human, but a Hornless Ice Dragon flickering in and out of the clouds and maneuvering through the mist. Sometimes he was as illusory as smoke, and sometimes he was as quick as lightning.

Chi Cangfeng's sword qi was incredibly fierce and strong, but Lin Xun still effortlessly evaded it. It was too unbelievable.

Even Hua Wuyou, who had previously faced off against Lin Xun, was dumbstruck. She clearly remembered that Lin Xun had never performed such a mysterious series of steps in their battle.

"Let's see how long you can hide!"

Suddenly, Chi Cangfeng let out a long howl. His Azure Sun Sword transformed into millions of sword shadows and swept over the sky like waves.

Everyone could tell that there was nowhere for Lin Xun to hide anymore!

The sword is too terrifying. It has enveloped all areas, locked on all eight poles, and covered the sky and earth. Lin Xun has to face it head-on unless he chooses to withdraw from the arena!

Bang!

However, Lin Xun stepped forward in the air and a Hornless Ice Dragon shadow rushed out from him. It threw its head back and unleashed a deafening roar.

The sword shadows that shrouded the entire sky crumbled. Lin Xun took the opportunity to safely get out of the predicament.

Many people repeatedly rubbed their eyes, finding it hard to believe what they saw. It never crossed their minds that the youth's unpredictable series of steps had the potential to attack.

That was the power of the Hornless Ice Dragon Step!

When cultivated to the perfect realm, a cultivator could soar to the sky, dive into the earth, and roam the world as if a Hornless Ice Dragon was clearing the way.

"You can only dodge. What a coward!" Chu Cangfeng roared.

Chi Cangfeng's face grew more and more chilling, irritated that he still hadn't killed Lin Xun. His imposing bearing soared once again like an invincible sword.

Sword qi intertwined across the arena, producing dazzling pillars of azure light.

Lin Xun darted between the intertwining sword qi. His movements were indescribably light, smooth, and graceful. He was as dazzling as a rainbow, swift as a bolt of lightning and as ethereal as the mist.

The battle was very strange. From the beginning till now, Lin Xun hadn't fought back once and only repeatedly dodged the attacks.

"Lin Xun is despicable. He doesn't dare to face his opponent head-on."

Many youngsters looked at Lin Xun with discontent expressions. They thought Lin Xun was a coward.

"Those series of steps are very mysterious. Why have I never heard of it before?"

The more experienced cultivators noticed something odd and realized the power of the Hornless Ice Dragon Steps.

"Lin Xun might be arrogant, but he has some skills. Unfortunately, his fighting style is too reserved and not worth the attention."

"Could he be waiting for an opportunity to counterattack?"

"Counterattack? It will be difficult. Chi Cangfeng still hasn't brought out his trump card yet. Lin Xun is doomed if he plays his card right."

Many people speculated.

Everyone was closely watching the battle.

"Hmph!"

Suddenly, a fiendish qi spread out from Chi Cangfeng's body, and the violet qi around him glowed a dazzling golden hue.

His imposing bearing soared to a new terrifying height.

"Lin Xun, let's see how you are going to dodge this!"

Amid a deafening roar, the Azure Sun Sword slashed out, illuminating the world like a giant azure sun and crushing the void!

Its power was so terrifying that the audience cried out in shock.

Vast Sky Sword Art!

One of the Chi Family's secret arts!

Almost at the same time, Lin Xun's figure paused in the air and his dark eyes glinted coldly. That's your true power?

Boom!

Lin Xun didn't try to dodge anymore. He balled his hands into fists, and his aura intensified. He walked across the air in large strides, meeting the attack head-on.

He threw his fist forward. The wind boomed and roared. It was as though he was about to split the sea and crush a sacred mountain.

"He is meeting the attack head-on?! With bare hands?"

Shock erupted from the audience. They couldn't believe what they saw. They all felt that Lin Xun was seeking death.

The collision sent a shudder through the universe. The beam of sword light flickered endlessly and formed all sorts of runes.

On the other hand, Lin Xun violently shook. The brilliance around his body faded as he blasted into the ground.

The ground quaked violently.

To everyone's surprise, Lin Xun wasn't dead or seriously wounded. A trickle of blood flowed down his lips, and he looked a little discomposed.

Everyone gasped. That guy is so fierce. He blocked the Chi Family's secret art, the Vast Sky Sword Art with just his body!

Many people were dumbfounded.

"It's powerful, but it's not enough to kill me."

Lin Xun took a deep breath. Following a flash of divine light around his body, he rapidly recovered to his previous state.

The outcome of the collision astonished many people. They could tell that Lin Xun had the upper hand.

Lin Xun seemed to be suppressed and looked discomposed, but he hadn't mobilized any weapon or treasure nor was he severely wounded!

On the contrary, Chi Cangfeng wielded the Azure Sun Sword, an aeth treasure, and had performed the Vast Sky Sword Art, yet he still failed to kill Lin Xun. The difference in strength between them was obvious.

"That kid is so strong!"

"I underestimated him"

"He's stronger than he was when he faced Hua Wuyou!"

Lin Xun's performance surprised many people.

Especially the geniuses of the younger generation who previously looked down on Lin Xun. They realized Lin Xun's extraordinary ability.

“Chi Cangfeng, if you have other trump cards, you better bring them out now. Otherwise, when I counterattack, you won’t have a chance to use them.”

Lin Xun spoke indifferently, but his words were intimidating.

After some observations and tests, Lin Xun was certain that Chi Cangfeng was no match for him unless he had some heaven-defying abilities up his sleeve.

“Hmph!”

Although Chi Cangfeng’s aura was still as fierce and imposing, he was a little caught off guard by Lin Xun’s unexpected changes.

Chapter 426 What is Superiority?

Before Lin Xun came to the Forbidden City, he was only at the Heaven Dipper Stage and was unable to maneuver in the sky. He was like an ant—easily trampled and killed.

Chi Cangfeng indeed thought so, and he also attempted to crush the youth. Unfortunately, someone had interfered and rescued Lin Xun. In the end, he had failed to achieve what he wanted.

However, in less than one year after that, Lin Xun, whom Chi Cangfeng had regarded as an insignificant ant, possessed the strength to fight against him. How would Chi Cangfeng not be shocked?

In less than one year!

Who would have thought that Lin Xun would become so strong?

Chi Cangfeng had always regarded himself as a peerless genius and arrogantly looked down on the heroes across the world. He believed that he could defeat the so-called geniuses blessed by the heavens in his generation and that they were his stepping stones to rise.

However, when compared to Lin Xun, he realized that his talent, aptitude, and strength were much inferior!

This was a huge blow that he couldn’t accept.

He was the most dazzling person of the Chi Family. Despite being only fourteen years old, he was firmly believed to set foot into the Heaven Ascension Stage within three years!

However, Lin Xun, whose background, status, and talent were inferior to his, had caught up to him. Chi Cangfeng couldn’t believe it.

“Die!”

As he roared, he frantically activated the Vast Sky Sword Art, the secret art of the Chi Family. Purple-gold qi flames rose from his body, and the Azure Sun Sword devoured them. The ancestral Vast Sky Sword Art was displayed in full majesty.

Beams of sword light shot out one after another like giant suns. Each one was frighteningly powerful as they shot across the nine heavens and ten lands.

Rumble—

The arena shook as though thunder had crashed down; the clouds undulated wildly and the surrounding space was torn. The arena would have been destroyed if not for the protection of the mysterious rune arrays.

Chi Cangfeng and Lin Xun repeatedly clashed amid the chaos. Sometimes they soared into the ninth heaven, and sometimes they darted across the ground. The sword qi was glorious, and the blasts of wind generated from the fists were chilling. The world paled, and all sorts of terrifying visions were formed from the impact.

The scenes were too much for the eyes to take in.

Chi Cangfeng's performance demonstrated that he deserved second place in the national examination. Unquestionably, he would become a famous figure in the future for his deep mastery of swordsmanship.

It was understandable that he was powerful. He possessed the bloodline Golden Sea Violet Lotus and extraordinary talent. Moreover, the Chi Clan, one of the top clans of the empire, had carefully cultivated him. It would be more difficult for him to not be outstanding.

Lin Xun's performance surprised the audience more!

At the beginning of the battle, Lin Xun only dodged and evaded the attacks, so many people thought that he was afraid to face Chi Cangfeng head-on.

They realized that Lin Xun was only testing Chi Cangfeng's trump cards!

Lin Xun was evenly matched with Chi Cangfeng despite only using his bare hands. How would the audience not be shocked?

The recent rumors in the Forbidden City that Lin Xun was an outstanding rune grandmaster had made many people forget that he was also a martial arts genius.

He had proved this when he defeated Hua Wuyou despite only being at the initial Spirit Sea Stage.

The thrilling duel between him and Chi Cangfeng further demonstrated his terrifying foundation in martial arts.

"That guy is so abnormal!"

Many influential figures were astonished as they couldn't imagine how a young rune grandmaster who was able to invoke the phenomenon cries of the nine dragons would also possess such transcendental martial arts talent. It was too unbelievable.

"Strange, didn't you want to kill me? Why don't you do it?"

Lin Xun chuckled in the arena. The blasts of wind generated from his fist shook the eight wastelands like a mighty dragon as he displayed the Nine Heavenshaking Destructions Art in its full majesty.

He was oozing superiority as he combined the terrifying killing move with the Hornless Ice Dragon Step.

"Don't look so smug! If someone didn't save you back then, would you still be alive?" Chi Cangfeng said through gritted teeth, enraged by Lin Xun's mocking remark.



Boom!

Suddenly, his sword qi was crushed, and the Azure Sun Sword whimpered and almost escaped his control.

Chi Cangfeng's expression changed once again. Lin Xun has become stronger again. Don't tell me that he was previously holding back his strength.

"You still have the guts to mention this? Haha, then I might as well tell you now that you wouldn't be alive now if the elder hadn't intervened!"

Lin Xun's power grew increasingly terrifying as he strode toward Chi Cangfeng like a Hornless Ice Dragon.

Lin Xun simmered with anger at the mention of the incident. He had almost lost his life when Chi Cangfeng suddenly attacked him.

"Ridiculous! You were just an ant at the Heaven Dipper Stage, so how could you kill me then?!" Chi Cangfeng fumed. *noVelnext.com*

However, regardless of what cultivation art he resorted to, he couldn't stop Lin Xun from approaching. Instead, he was forced to draw back.

Lin Xun had launched a suppression operation and was no longer holding back. Chi Cangfeng had already exhausted his strength and was no longer a threat to him.

Boom!

Waves of pale azure light surged around his body, making him appear like a mobile abyss. He constantly charged forward with the power that could devour the world.

Mountain Smashing-Sea Splitting Destruction!

Soul Shattering Destruction!

The Great Dragon and Phoenix Destruction!

.....

The combination of the Nine Heavenshaking Destructions Art and the Hornless Ice Dragon steps allowed Lin Xun to fully display his power. He was unstoppable and seemed able to push through mountains and valleys.

Suddenly, Chi Cangfeng was on the verge of defeat. His face was deathly pale, and he was gasping for breath. He was still livid and unable to believe it.

The audience broke into an uproar. This is unbelievable! Lin Xun has suppressed Chi Cangfeng with tremendous power!

He is only at the intermediate Spirit Sea Stage, so how can he be so strong without even using a weapon?

"I thought that guy had recently been focusing on the art of runes, but it turns out that he hadn't neglected his martial arts!"

Bai Lingxi's clear eyes flashed with shock. Chi Cangfeng is very terrifying. The fact that he was ranked second in the national examination at the age of fourteen showed how strong he is. But he is still inferior to Lin Xun!

"How does he train?" Many people were filled with disbelief. They all remembered that Lin Xun was nowhere near as strong as he was now compared to when he had defeated Hua Wuyou!

"His body arts, fist technique, cultivation base, fighting skills and means...are all top class. That kid is extraordinary!"

Some figures of the older generation assumed a complicated expression as they inferred something from Lin Xun's strength.

Who would have thought that such an amazing talent would emerge from the deteriorated Lin Clan?

"Vast Sky Slash!"

Suddenly, Chi Cangfeng let out a furious roar in the arena. His sword erupted in a blaze of light and a beam of sword light slashed down with incredible speed.

Lin Xun's eyes glinted. At the same time, he drew a deep breath, and rays of azure light flowed around his hand and fingers. Then, he thrust it forward.

Prison Suppressing-Sky Devouring Destruction!

Rumble—

An earth-shattering boom drowned out all noises, and divine brilliance flowed everywhere.

The Azure Sun Sword whimpered as it blasted across the air. At the same time, Chi Cangfeng slammed to the ground, violently coughing up blood.

Lin Xun landed on the ground and stepped on Chi Cangfeng.

Kacha!

The crushing and cracking of bones rang in the air. The audience felt throbbing pain when they heard it. It was unimaginable how Chi Cangfeng felt.

"You want to die!" Chi Cangfeng roared, struggling to get up.

He felt deep shame. He was about to go berserk with anger. A descendant of the high and mighty Chi Clan, a young genius of the Forbidden City, was being trampled on under watchful eyes. How would he have the face to lift his head up in the future?

"Didn't you say you wanted to kill me? Why can't you stand a single blow? Young man, it's very embarrassing to not be able to keep to your words."

A murderous glint flashed in Lin Xun's black eyes as he raised his hand to end Chi Cangfeng's life.

It was then that an invisible force pushed Lin Xun dozens of feet into the distance.

Chief Steward Peng took Chi Cangfeng away from the arena with a gentle wave of his hand.

“Today is Her Majesty’s birthday and no life should be taken today,” Chief Steward Peng reminded Lin Xun.

Although Lin Xun was reluctant to stop, he thought for a moment and said with a smile, “Thank you for reminding me.”

The first match came to an end.

Chi Cangfeng had been severely injured and left in embarrassment. The Chi Family’s people hurriedly took him away.

The outcome astonished everyone. Their gazes changed as they looked at Lin Xun. They had never thought that Chi Cangfeng would lose the duel.

They also had never thought that Lin Xun would be so abnormally strong. He was able to defeat Chi Cangfeng without using any treasure or weapon.

Did Lin Xun not have any treasured weapons?

Impossible!

He was a rune grandmaster, and he had helped the empress repair the Sword of Apocalypse! How would he not have a single treasure in his possession?

Then why did he not use any?

The answer was very simple—He didn’t think Chi Cangfeng was worthy of him bringing out any treasure!

Chi Cangfeng’s defeat undoubtedly proved this!

“That guy is so strong! By the way, is he married?”

“Give up. You have no hope with a person like him.”

“I pity Chi Cangfeng. He achieved second place in the national examination, but Lin Xun defeated him in such a way. His reputation has no doubt been destroyed.”

“Lin Xun is arrogant, but he has true skills and strength.”

Many people spiritedly discussed the duel. Their tone and words showed that their attitude towards Lin Xun had drastically changed.

Hua Wuyou, Hua Wuhen and Song Che stared at Lin Xun with overcast expressions, gritting their teeth with hatred. Even Chi Cangfeng failed to suppress Lin Xun.

“The kid’s performance in the duel will no doubt be watched by the empress and the experts from the Ancient Wasteland Domain...”

Complex emotions swirled in many people’s hearts.

Unexpectedly, Lin Xun didn't leave the martial arts arena, but shifted his gaze to the Marquis of Rising Sky.

"It's your turn now." His indifferent words were like a clap of thunder.

Silence fell over the audience and everyone froze.

What did that guy say? Did I hear it right?! Does he want to fight against the Marquis of Rising Sky after defeating Chi Cangfeng?

What was superiority?

This was!

He was crazy, but he kept his promises. His courage alone made many people feel inferior.

### **Chapter 427 The Power of the Marquis of Rising Sky**

The Marquis of Rising Sky was different from Chi Cangfeng in that he had made a name for himself much earlier than the latter. In addition, he also had a more frightening background.

A few years ago, he was already a dazzling genius talent when he had been expelled from the Forbidden City on the emperor's order.

He was sent to the frontier because his perverse behavior and domineering attitude had sparked a lot of outrage.

Even if he hadn't returned to the Forbidden City in the past five years, his name and news still occasionally rang out in the Forbidden City.

Rumors said that he had slaughtered countless enemies on the battlefield, and that his name was known even within the Darkness Race.

His return to the Forbidden City was a sensational event. Many people speculated on the terrifying level his strength had probably reached after five years of training on the battlefield.

How would the audience not be surprised to hear that Lin Xun dared to challenge the Marquis of Rising Sky?

"Before the birthday banquet began, Lin Xun had already clashed with the Marquis of Rising Sky on the white jade path. Moreover, to prove who was more daring, Lin Xun slaughtered three ink-dragon beasts on the spot! I didn't expect Lin Xun to be so provocative," someone murmured.

"Does he think that the Marquis of Rising Sky is easy to bully? Or is he really that fearless or arrogant?"

"I heard that he made a bet with the Marquis of Rising Sky. He demanded that the Marquis of Rising Sky kneel and apologize to Miss Liu Qingyan if he loses. He is so fierce!"

"Fierce? He's asking for death! Who doesn't know that the Marquis of Rising Sky has a bad temper? Lin Xun is just seeking death."

Everyone thought that Lin Xun was too arrogant and ignorant to not retreat after he defeated Chi Cangfeng.

“You don’t know how tall the sky is!”

A roar erupted from above the arena like a wave of ice.

In a flash, the Marquis of Rising Sky was standing tall in the center of the arena. Clad in a blood-red robe and standing tall and straight, he resembled a godly being. His bewitchingly pretty face was filled with detached indifference, and lightning flashed in his blood-red eyes.

“Remember what you said. If you go back on your words, no one in this world can save you!”

The Marquis of Rising Sky’s feminine voice sent a chill down everyone’s spine like an ice-cold wave.

As a descendant of the imperial family, he had always acted unscrupulously and perversely. He didn’t care about anything and that was undoubtedly the most terrifying aspect of him.

Lin Xun said seriously, “I just hope you won’t forget to kneel and apologize to Miss Qingyan when you lose.”

Everyone’s eyes widened with shocked disbelief. Even some of the influential figures hiding in the dark assumed strange gazes. The bet is true.

It’s just a duel but the two had made such a bet!

The loser will have to pay a heavy price.

Comparatively speaking, Chi Cangfeng was a lot more fortunate in his defeat against Lin Xun.

“Haha, you are becoming more and more courageous. But I like it. If I fight, I should fight someone like you. It’s much more satisfying!”

As the Marquis of Rising Sky laughed, he turned his hand over and a sparkling golden halberd appeared in his grip. He simply thrust it forward.

It was very simple and direct. He seemed to treat Lin Xun like a chicken being slaughtered.

He displayed the most overbearing arrogance and unparalleled conceit. His blood-red eyes glinted coldly, and his blood-red robe billowed around him, glowing a terrifying blood-red hue.

Vaguely, everyone seemed to see a mountain of corpses and a sea of blood emerging behind him.

Boom! *noVelNext.coM*

The golden halberd slashed through the air, producing booming noises as it crushed the air. It aimed straight towards Lin Xun while terrifying killing intent drowned out the youth.

The terrifying pressure stifled many people, and their faces contorted with shock. They hadn’t seen the Marquis of Rising Sky for five years, but he had become so strong.

He looked like a killing god emerging from a sea of blood!

Clang!

Lin Xun slammed his fist into the giant golden halberd, and an indescribable shock wave swept out like two mountains were colliding.

The wind raged, rocks whirled into the air, and the clouds roiled.

Lin Xun was blasted back, staggering side to side. On the other hand, the Marquis of Rising Sky's power was as strong as the sun!

Everyone watched the battle with bated breaths. From that blow, it seemed like Lin Xun wouldn't last much longer if he didn't bring out a treasured weapon.

"Bring out your weapon! Otherwise, I will slaughter you like a chicken!"

The Marquis of Rising Sky swung his golden halberd with monstrous arrogance and superiority.

In battle, he seemed to have become another person. His fierceness made many young women's eyes lit up with delight and their hearts stirred.

"You're not strong enough to make me bring out any treasure or weapon."

Lin Xun was unscathed from the attack. He leapt into the air, the pale azure glow around him intensifying. It was as though he had transformed into a hurricane. He activated the Nine Heavenshaking Destructions to counter the attacks.

It was a duel between two top young geniuses. They both mobilized their top secret arts and activated their true killing moves. It was like a battle of life and death.

Some influential figures of the older generations felt their minds shaking. They had never possessed such earth-shaking might and power when they were young.

Boom!

Lin Xun's fist shattered the surrounding air and slammed into the great halberd. Then, he swung his other fist, aiming for the Marquis of Rising Sky's face. However, his opponent effortlessly thrust out his palm and dissolved the incoming attack.

The impact shot splendid rays of light into the sky, dazzling the eyes and stirring the soul.

Although Lin Xun was repeatedly blasted backwards, he grew increasingly stronger. No one could imagine what kind of terrifying power was stored in his thin body.

The Marquis of Rising Sky was even more remarkable. His murderous spirit swept the arena like a tidal wave, and his great halberd seemed tyrannical and unparalleled as it danced in the air.

"So strong!" everyone marveled.

Some of the geniuses of the younger generation such as Bai Lingxi, Song Yi, Yun Fushen, and Yuchi Ze assumed solemn expressions. Lin Xun had repeatedly surprised them with his performance.

However, the Marquis of Rising Sky's terrifying strength frightened them even more!

In truth, anyone could tell that the duel was a top battle of the Spirit Sea Stage.

Lin Xun and the Marquis of Rising Sky could be regarded as two of the best among the young geniuses of the empire!

Boom!

From afar, divine azure light was surging around Lin Xun, and blood-red murderous intent was raging around the Marquis of Rising Sky. The two were locked in a fierce battle like godly beings competing.

Bang! Bang Bang!

The collisions were as loud as a clap of thunder from the ninth heaven. Lin Xun repeatedly drew back, and his clothes were stained with blood.

The Marquis of Rising Sky's strength was no doubt frightening. His golden halberd was like a divine weapon as it wiped out everything in its way.

Without a weapon, Lin Xun had indeed suffered a lot.

Even so, the Marquis of Rising Sky failed to suppress Lin Xun. Lin Xun's tenacity was undoubtedly terrifying.

Everyone realized that, regardless of what the outcome of the duel was, Lin Xun had successfully risen to become one of the geniuses of the Forbidden City. He not only defeated Chi Cangfeng, but was able to also hold his ground against the Marquis of Rising Sky.

"Lin Xun, I have only used seventy percent of my strength but you almost can't stand it anymore. I'm very disappointed!" the Marquis of Rising Sky roared, his long hair dancing in the air, his blood-red eyes shooting out lightning, and his body raging with monstrous murderous intent.

As he strode across the sky, the golden halberd in his grip was as bright as the sun and the moon. He ruthlessly lunged it toward Lin Xun's chest fiercely.

A sharp and clear clang rang in everyone's ear.

Bang!

It was another earth-shaking collision. The golden halberd rebounded as Lin Xun blocked the strike.

The Marquis of Rising Sky gave a sinister smile and just as he was about to swing his halberd again, he felt the halberd sink as if a tide-like force was rushing towards him. Following a boom, his hand went numb, his blood and qi tumbled within his body, and he almost lost control of the golden halberd.

"Huh?"

His pupils shrank as he sensed Lin Xun's strength rapidly soaring!

This guy's power is getting stronger!

Could he have been holding back his strength?

"Die!"

Unhesitatingly, the Marquis of Rising Sky swung his halberd across the air and charged forward.

Rumble—

The golden halberd erupted in a blaze of light. Endless golden waves drowned the void. Everyone's jaw dropped. They recognized that it was another terrifying secret art.

Golden Wave Vortex Halberd!

An unfathomable inherited art of the imperial family.

However, to everyone's surprise, although the Marquis of Rising Sky's power had soared once again, Lin Xun still wasn't suppressed.

Lin Xun and the Marquis of Rising Sky fiercely clashed in the arena. Their clothes were dripping with blood, and they were both constantly blasted back. But they were both growing stronger and stronger like a volcano accumulating magma!

Everyone was dumbfounded. Isn't Lin Xun too abnormal?

Even the Marquis of Rising Sky furrowed his brow.

He is only at the intermediate Spirit Sea Stage, an entire cultivation level lower than me, but his power is soaring under my constant suppression!

How is that possible?

Bewilderment mixed with anger flashed in his eyes. He decided to unleash everything he had learned to completely suppress Lin Xun.

Boom!

Under the Marquis of Rising Sky's series of furious attacks, a clean cut split Lin Xun's chest and blood poured out.

Many people exclaimed in shock. The Marquis of Rising Sky is truly enraged and wants to quickly get rid of Lin Xun!

Hua Wuyou, Hua Wuhen, Song Zhe and Song Chonghe cheered excitedly. They were hoping to see such a scene.

Liu Qingyan was secretly anxious. That guy is so stupid. Why is he not using any treasure? Don't tell me a high and mighty rune grandmaster doesn't even have a weapon.

Is the outcome of the duel about to be decided?

The other influential figures' attention was fixed on the battle. In truth, they were already very surprised that Lin Xun could survive this long by just using his bare hands.

They breathed a sigh of relief when they saw that he had finally been injured. It would be too shocking if the Marquis of Rising Sky couldn't do anything to Lin Xun.

Chapter 428 Terrifying strike

Rumble!



The Marquis of Rising Sky took the opportunity to attack Lin Xun while he was wounded. With a wide sweep of his great halberd, a wave of golden light rolled across the area and blanketed the sky. The murderous intent was palpable.

Lin Xun dodged and didn't attempt to face it directly.

The Marquis of Rising Sky saw it as a sign that Lin Xun was on the verge of defeat so his attacks turned more violent.

Endless golden rays and mysterious runes erupted from the golden halberd like a holy blade and left the audience in awe.

So strong!

The power that the Marquis of Rising Sky had showed put many cultivators of the same cultivation level to shame!

Lin Xun indeed couldn't withstand much longer. He constantly dodged and evaded the onslaught.

He even took advantage of a chance to hide and gulp down the nine dragon ancient brew! *NovelNext.com*

Many people couldn't help but gasp out loud. Lin Xun wasn't pretending to be heroic. Instead, he had exhausted his physical strength and had to replenish it.

"The kid has fought Chi Cangfeng, and now he is fighting against Marquis of Rising Sky. He must have exhausted his strength. Otherwise, he wouldn't look so distressed."

"Haha, he actually used the nine dragon ancient brew to restore his physical strength. Its medicinal power is tremendous. Is he not afraid of being stuffed to death?!"

"He's playing with fire. If he can't refine its power, he will be possessed by demons. Why did he take such a risk in a battle?"

Everyone frowned with pity. They saw his injury and the fact that he had to restore his strength as a sign he was on the verge of collapse.

"Hahaha, Lin Xun, if you kneel and admit defeat now, I will stop embarrassing you. What do you say?" The Marquis of Rising Sky howled with laughter, looking at Lin Xun contemptuously.

He swung his halberd and charged forward, blocking the youth's escape route.

Bang!

Almost at the same time, Lin Xun tossed the jar of medicinal wine away and charged forward!

He was still weaponless and still dripping with blood.

He looked like he was about to fight to the death. He suddenly stretched out his hand and grabbed the halberd sweeping across!

"What is he doing?"

Many people gasped.

Rumble—

A terrifying power burst forth from the great halberd like a river flooding its banks.

The Marquis of Rising Sky's lips curled upwards in a chilling smile. He had instilled all his strength into that attack. Lin Xun would no doubt be severely wounded if he dared to grab it with his bare hands!

Everyone could tell that the attack was too strong to block with bare hands. Lin Xun was asking for death!

Liu Qingyan's heart suddenly jumped to her throat. She was so anxious that she couldn't watch anymore.

Unexpectedly, Lin Xun clutched onto the terrifying golden halberd and seemed completely unaffected.

Huh?

The audience was bewildered. What is going on?

The cold smile froze on the Marquis of Rising Sky's lips. That—

Boom!

Lin Xun seemed to have been reborn from the ashes. An unprecedented terrifying power erupted from him, and his imposing aura had become twice as strong.

Not good!

The Marquis of Rising Sky suddenly felt an incomparably strong feeling of danger envelop him. He subconsciously soared up and lifted his right leg, bringing it down at Lin Xun's head like a golden stone pillar. The power it contained could smash the universe.

Lin Xun's head would no doubt be crushed if struck. He would become a headless corpse!

However, while Lin Xun gripped the halberd in his right hand, he balled his left hand into a fist and threw it towards the Marquis of Rising Sky's leg like a hammer.

Bang!

The collision reverberated as divine light suffused the area. The Marquis of Rising Sky howled in pain, and his bones crackled.

The audience couldn't believe what they were seeing!

Lin Xun was on the verge of collapsing, but who would have thought that he would be able to grab the Marquis of Rising Sky's halberd and break his leg in the blink of an eye?

How is that possible?

The Marquis of Rising Sky frantically retreated in response to the unexpected change. Then, he gathered all his strength into his hands and attempted to retrieve the halberd.

Who would have thought that Lin Xun would suddenly exert a force on the halberd, bringing the Marquis of Rising Sky up into the air before slamming it against the ground?

Caught off guard, the Marquis of Rising Sky smashed to the ground, whipping up a cloud of dust.

He coughed up a mouthful of blood, his bewitchingly pretty face ashen.

Hiss—

The audience inhaled sharply. That's too cruel.

"Is this all you have?" Lin Xun asked indifferently as he dove down with the golden halberd in his hand.

"He broke through! He has broken through to the advanced Spirit Sea Stage!"

An influential figure turned ashen-faced and lost his composure.

It wasn't uncommon for a cultivator to break through during battle, but it was extremely dangerous. The slightest carelessness could lead to death.

However, Lin Xun had succeeded!

"No wonder his strength soared all of a sudden...it turns out that he has made another breakthrough in cultivation!"

"Monster! That kid is simply abnormal!"

"I understand now! He didn't drink the nine dragons' ancient brew to replenish his strength but to break through!"

Uproar broke out.

No one could have imagined that Lin Xun had been thinking of seeking an opportunity to break through during the duel with Marquis of Rising Sky!

He appeared to be suppressed in the battle, but he had unleashed his potential, smashed the cultivation barrier, and broke through in a critical juncture of life and death!

"It turns out that he didn't need to use any treasure to temper his cultivation and make a breakthrough..."

Liu Qingyan was stunned. She couldn't imagine that Lin Xun would be so brave. Is he not worried about losing his life if something went wrong?

"Get lost!"

On the ground, the Marquis of Rising Sky's long hair flew back in rage. Before Lin Xun could launch an attack, he leapt up and spewed out a shaft of terrifying blood-colored light from his mouth.

The blood-colored light was covered with secret runes and reeked of blood. It dyed even the air red!

Lin Xun raised his eyebrows and made a large sweeping motion with the halberd.

Following a crashing noise, Lin Xun's right arm throbbed with unbearable pain and the golden halberd escaped from his grip.

Only then did Lin Xun see that the terrifying blood-colored light was a talisman. Similar to his Sky Suppressing Bead, it was a type of killing weapon.

Fortunately, it could only be used once.

Boom!

The Marquis of Rising Sky regained control of his halberd, and its body was again enveloped in a golden aura.

"You made me waste a blood spirit talisman. Kid, you can die without regret now!"

His expression was chilling and vicious as he launched a storm-like attack.

Unquestionably, the Marquis of Rising Sky's strength was terrifying. He hadn't fallen even after Lin Xun had wounded him off guard.

Die!

Lin Xun also unleashed all his power. The Hornless Ice Dragon emerged behind him. Its divine powers seemed capable of crushing the earth and controlling the mountains and rivers.

The two were locked in a fierce battle again. Everyone held their breaths while their faces were contorted with shocked disbelief.

So strong!

In the battle, Lin Xun and the Marquis of Rising Sky were like two proud suns competing. The power they had demonstrated had to be described as earth-shaking.

"So what if you made a breakthrough? You're still not qualified to compete with me!" the Marquis of Rising Sky roared, his eyes ice-cold and threatening like blood-colored lightning.

He grew increasingly strong.

However, Lin Xun couldn't be underestimated either. He had undergone a complete transformation after breaking through to the advanced Spirit Sea Stage, and his strength was completely different from before.

He was adapting to his new power and using the Marquis of Rising Sky as a testing stone!

Several moments later.

Boom!

The halberd slashed through the air.

"Die!" the Marquis of Rising Sky roared, and the halberd produced a sonorous noise as though it understood him. It aimed toward Lin Xun with all its strength as though attempting to pierce through him.

The surrounding space shook and many strange visions appeared.

The halberd was so amazing that it made the world lose its splendor!

Many people couldn't sit still and blanched with shock. The Marquis of Rising Sky's power had greatly exceeded their expectations.

Lin Xun also turned ashen-faced. He also never thought that the Marquis of Rising Sky would possess such a terrifying foundation. He clearly didn't use all his strength when they had previously fought.

His attack combined the power of heaven and earth, the strength of the universe, and faintly there seemed to be a wisp of imagery power!

It was the integration of heaven and man.

Otherwise, it couldn't possibly be so powerful.

Lin Xun counterattacked, but his strike was crushed within seconds and the golden halberd continued to thrust toward him.

"What else do you have to compete with me?" the Marquis of Rising Sky roared.

He had long reached the perfect realm of the Spirit Sea Stage, the pinnacle of that cultivation level. After five years of fighting on the battlefield, he believed that he was invincible against people of the same cultivation level.

Clang!

It was then that Lin Xun summoned an earth-grade aeth treasure that he had created himself—The Violet Soul Blade!

Many people exclaimed, "That guy finally brought out a treasure!"

Lin Xun had used nothing but bare hands throughout his battle against Chi Cangfeng, and it made people suspect that he hadn't prepared a weapon for battle.

Now, everyone realized that Lin Xun had a treasure but he just didn't bring it out!

"You're only bringing it out now? It's too late! Kneel!" The Marquis of Rising Sky's voice was ice-cold.

His imposing bearing grew stronger, and the blood-colored glow around his body intensified. He resembled the God of Death.

He was truly terrifying. His body of qi locked on Lin Xun, trying to suppress him.

However, almost at the same time, a blade glinted and countless stars descended. It was as though the world had been plunged into night.

The world and everything in the world seemed to have collapsed!

Star-Gather!

Lin Xun had finally resorted to his killing move.

The audience fell utterly silent and their eyes widened in shock. What kind of blade is that? What frightening power!

Boom!

Another earth shaking collision rang out in the void, quaking the martial arts arena. The rune arrays frantically circulated, trying to dissolve the terrifying impact.

Amid the cloud of smoke and dust, the Marquis of Rising Sky screamed and blasted across the air, vomiting blood.

At the same time, Lin Xun's indifferent and calm voice sounded, "Let's see who will kneel first!"

#### Chapter 429 Fearless

Lin Xun's figure peaked out through the clouds of dust and smoke.

His figure was graceful and ethereal with a pale azure glow bathing his body. In his hand, the Violet Soul Blade produced a brilliance unique to an aeth treasure and accentuated his extraordinariness.

Inexplicably, many people trembled inwardly. Their scalps felt numb, and their souls shook. The blow was too terrifying.

They couldn't imagine what kind of blade could produce such earth-shaking, apocalypse-like visions.

The influential figures of the older generation were also emotionally moved.

Imagery Power!

They had seen the power unique to the Heaven Ascension Stage from a teenager at the Spirit Sea Stage!

Unbelievable!

Previously, the Marquis of Rising Sky's magnificent strike combined the power of heaven and man, encompassed the force of heaven and earth, and contained a wisp of imagery power.

But it wasn't true imagery power!

That was obvious when compared to Lin Xun's blade art.

"I didn't expect your strength to have reached such a level, but do you think you can defeat me?"

The Marquis of Rising Sky rose to his feet, his face ashen. He had already sustained heavy injury and coughed up blood.

However, those injuries were nothing when compared to the anger and rage in his heart.

Lin Xun had repeatedly refused to bring out a weapon, but once he did, the blade art he performed turned out to be so tyrannical!

"Die!"

The Marquis of Rising Sky launched another attack, refusing to let Lin Xun suppress him. In other words, he didn't believe that Lin Xun could compete with him!

He would never tolerate losing even if it wasn't for the bet.

Rumble—

The golden halberd swept through the air, and waves of golden light raged across the area.

However, Lin Xun's blade instantly crushed them all.

"Do you think I'll give you another chance?"

As Lin Xun uttered indifferently, he performed the Hornless Ice Dragon Step. His imposing bearing soared and the Violet Soul Blade produced a cheering cry in his hand before it shot out.

Boom!

A crack suddenly split the void open, and the Marquis of Rising Sky's figure blasted across the air, dripping with blood.

The power of the sharp blade ripped apart his skin.

The audience inhaled sharply. Lin Xun resembled a sword immortal. An attack without any showy movements had such tremendous earthshaking power.

It could both defend and attack!

That was true marvellousness of imagery power. Even the tiniest wisp contained terrifying power.

It was as though a Spirit Sea cultivator had suddenly mastered the skills of a Heaven Ascension cultivator.

"Argh!"

Marquis of Rising Sky seemed to be going berserk. He couldn't accept the blow. Despite his severe injury, he rose to his feet and continued to fight with all his strength.

However, regardless of how he counterattacked, Lin Xun easily dissolved his attacks. His injuries worsened, and his entire body was dripping with blood.

The scene shook many people. The Marquis of Rising Sky was always tyrannical and domineering, and he was seen as invincible against cultivators of the same realm.

However, Lin Xun had completely suppressed him. Many people couldn't help but pity him.

Rumble—

In the end, just as Marquis of Rising Sky collapsed to the ground, Lin Xun thrust his blade into his throat. The murderous intent spewing out from the tip of the blade snapped him awake from his murderous rage, and he didn't dare to struggle again.

His face turned deathly pale and was contorted with unwillingness and bewilderment. He couldn't believe that a rune grandmaster would defeat him!

Five years!

He had fought on the battlefield for five years. He had thought he could regain his prestige and receive recognition from the Ancient Wasteland Domain when he returned to the Forbidden City, but...

He had been defeated!

Utterly defeated!

The audience was shocked into silence. Everyone stared wide-eyed at the martial arts arena, where Lin Xun was standing like a sword immortal. Emotions roiled uncontrollably in their hearts and wouldn't calm down.

Lin Xun had already stunned the audience when he defeated Chi Cangfeng.

Now, he made another strong counterattack. He had unbelievably suppressed the mighty Marquis of Rising Sky.

After all, who would imagine that a teenager at the initial Spirit Sea Stage would become so strong in half a year?

The Marquis of Rising Sky was a genius who had long made a name for himself. The guests who had attended the empress' birthday banquet were all top figures, but only a few could compare to him.

Lin Xun had defeated such a powerful person!

Who wouldn't be shocked?

Who would have imagined it?

"Kneel and apologize to Miss Qingyan!"

Lin Xun said calmly in the arena, his voice filled with unquestionable authority.

Even though everyone had heard about the wager, they were still shocked to hear Lin Xun demand that the Marquis of Rising Sky needed to keep the terms of the bet.

That kid is...so fierce!

The Marquis of Rising Sky was a member of the imperial family. It would be incredibly humiliating for him to kneel and apologize at the birthday banquet of the empress.

As expected, the Marquis of Rising Sky turned ashen-faced. How could he accept such a shameful humiliation?

It was worse than death!

"Lin Xun, you have already won. It's good to have mercy. Why go so far?" an influential figure advised Lin Xun in a deep voice as he couldn't stand his arrogance.

"Who are you?" Lin Xun frowned.

"I am Zuo Tianshuo," stated the man, his voice filled with majesty.

There was no doubt that he was a member of the Zuo Clan, one of the high clans.



Most importantly, Lin Xun suddenly thought of the bloody tragedy on Mind Cleansing Peak more than ten years ago. The Zuo Clan was one of the forces that had taken the wealth and properties of the Lin Family back then!

“Have you not heard?” Lin Xun said rudely, “This is a bet between the Marquis of Rising Sky and me. Outsiders shouldn’t interfere!”

“Little junior, you’re so arrogant!” Zuo Tianshuo’s face darkened.

“Lin Xun, don’t act rashly. It won’t be good for you.”

The corners of Lin Xun’s lips quirked in a light smile. “I won, but you guys are trying to persuade me to let it go. If I had lost, which one of you would stand up for me?”

The audience looked at each other dumbly.

Indeed, Lin Xun’s status was too low. He might be a young rune grandmaster and the master of Mind Cleansing Peak and an instructor at Qinglu Academy, but he was considered a nobody compared to the influential figures present.

Undoubtedly, they would be happy to see Lin Xun keep his promise and fulfill the bet if he had lost the duel. They wouldn’t have spoken up for him.

That kind of double standard was commonly accepted but Lin Xun refused it openly.

Many people were speechless. This kid is such a troublemaker. He doesn’t know what the rules are at all!

“Are you going to kneel down or not?” Lin Xun shifted his gaze to the Marquis of Rising Sky, his eyes flashing with a murderous glint.

“You...” The Marquis of Rising Sky’s face was livid. He was so furious that he almost crushed his teeth.

Many youngsters’ expressions dramatically changed. Lin Xun is so fierce. Is he not afraid of angering people?

Suddenly, a prince of the imperial family said threateningly, “Young man, sometimes it is a blessing to suffer a loss. I advise you to stop in time and not make a mistake!”

The imperial family would lose face if the Marquis of Rising Sky was forced to kneel.

“Is it a blessing to suffer a loss?”

Lin Xun snorted, “Then may you be as blessed as the East Sea!”

His remark was full of thorns.

That prince quivered with anger. When had he ever been provoked by a junior?

The descendants of the younger generation couldn’t help but gasp. They could tell that Lin Xun was ready to risk everything. He is so crazy that he attaches no importance to the influential figures of the imperial family!

“Elder Sister Qingyan, please persuade Lin Xun to stop. Otherwise, he will offend many powerful people. If that happens, how can he establish himself in the Forbidden City in the future?”

A maiden of a noble family couldn't help but anxiously ask Liu Qingyan, “Lin Xun has stood up for you, do you want to watch him jump into the fire pit?”

“It's no use.” *noVelnex.com*

However, Liu Qingyan took a deep breath and stared at Lin Xun. “Wouldn't it be more embarrassing for him for me to tell him to leave the matter at that? Since he has made a decision, I fully support him. Even if he displeases everyone, I will bear the responsibility with him.”

Her voice was calm, but there was unwavering determination.

Liu Qingyan was an extremely intelligent woman, but also a woman with emotions. It would be a lie to say that the youth's action hadn't touched her.

However, she was different from other women. She knew what to do and what choice to make to help Lin Xun protect his dignity.

Even if the path ahead was pitch-black, she would still walk side by side with Lin Xun!

That was Liu Qingyan's decision.

“You guys...are crazy!”

The maiden stomped her feet in anger.

The atmosphere turned tense. Lin Xun's reckless attitude surprised and puzzled everyone.

No one thought that Lin Xun would not consider the situation as a whole, but they couldn't say that he was wrong.

After all, the Marquis of Rising Sky had lost!

Lin Xun had done nothing wrong to follow up on the bet!

Although Lin Xun might offend many people, he didn't seem to care.

The Marquis of Rising Sky's face dimmed. He knew that, from Lin Xun's attitude, he either had to die or had to kneel and apologize!

Amidst dead silence, a gentle and calm voice suddenly sounded, “If you lose, you have to fulfill your promise. How can a man of my imperial family give up on their reputation to protect their face? How would the world view our imperial family if this matter spreads out?”

The empress had voiced her opinion!

Everyone in the audience inhaled sharply. They didn't expect Lin Xun's decision would make the empress speak out in person!

To their surprise, the empress didn't reprimand Lin Xun for his disrespect and for crossing the line. Instead, she believed that the Marquis of Rising Sky should keep his promise.

However, the empress had no other choice but to do so, and it was the most correct decision given the circumstances.

Everyone's gazes changed when they looked at Lin Xun.

#### Chapter 430 Anyone But Him

Some people were shocked that the empress had to speak out and felt that Lin Xun was too daring!

Some people gloated on Lin Xun's misfortune. He had not only angered the imperial family but also the Empress.

After all, Lin Xun had acted so arrogantly on the empress' 300th birthday and refused to stop. It was as though he intentionally came to ruin the banquet!

Although no one uttered a word, Lin Xun knew everyone had the same thought.

But he didn't care.

He had achieved what he wished for. And that was enough.

At that moment, the Marquis of Rising Sky was the most livid he had ever been. He silently got up and then knelt facing Liu Qingyan. He finally bowed his head.

Hiss—

Gasps rang out in rapid succession from the audience.

He knelt down!

The young domineering marquis with a notorious reputation in the Forbidden City not only lost to Lin Xun but was also forced to kneel and apologize in public.

"I, Zhao Jingyin, apologize sincerely for offending Miss Liu Qingyan. I will never be disrespectful to Miss Liu Qingyan again in the future!"

His voice was detached, indifferent, empty, and emotionless as it echoed throughout the arena.

Many people felt chilled to the bone. Lin Xun has completely infuriated the Marquis of Rising Sky.

After saying that, he got up and glowered at Lin Xun with his blood-red eyes. After a long while, he turned around and left the arena without a single word.

Everyone knew that the Marquis of Rising Sky hated Lin Xun to the core. He would no doubt retaliate to wipe away the humiliation he had suffered.

The duel had come to an end, but its impact would not be silent.

Lin Xun's strength and fearlessness had left a deep impression on everyone and made many people fearful of him.

People who never give up unless they achieved their goals like Lin Xun were the most terrifying!

The most terrifying thing about the youth was that he already possessed astonishing power and talent despite his young age. How terrifying would he be once he grew up!?

However, not everyone was worried about that. After all, Lin Xun had previously displeased many clans and forces and now he had angered the Marquis of Rising Sky and the imperial family at the birthday banquet of the empress. It would be impossible for him to live peacefully in the future.

"He has gotten himself into serious trouble," muttered the maiden of a noble family.

"That's a true man."

Liu Qingyan just stared intently at the young man in the arena with glistening eyes, and an indescribable pride surged in her heart.

To everyone's surprise, Lin Xun showed no intention of leaving the arena after the duel!

"It's your turn."

His eyes coldly swept over Song Yi like lightning.

The audience erupted in an uproar as though a thunderstorm had descended. Does that guy still want to fight?

He's too crazy!

"Does he want to offend everyone here?"

"Haven't you heard? Song Yi wanted to stand up for Song Zhe and Song Chonghe and issued a challenge to Lin Xun. Lin Xun is just fighting back."

"He's so courageous! The Empress has already come forward, but Lin Xun still won't restrain himself. Is he not afraid of death?"

Some people couldn't understand the youth's way of thinking.

A torrential uproar broke out. Even the powerful and influential figures were speechless. It was the first time they had seen such a strong and fearless young man like Lin Xun.

Song Yi's face also grew overcast.

Ranked first in this year's national examination, Song Yi was a rare genius. He was remarkable in terms of background, foundation, and talent.

However, after witnessing the duel between Lin Xun and Chi Cangfeng and the Marquis of Rising Sky, he was only fifty percent confident that he could defeat Lin Xun in the arena.

He thought that Lin Xun wouldn't mention his challenge and secretly decided to deal with Lin Xun in the future when he had a chance. It never occurred to him that the youth would call out his name!

Many people's expressions turned strange. In truth, given the circumstances, they weren't optimistic for Song Yi.

Lin Xun had defeated even the Marquis of Rising Sky. How would Song Yi have any hope of winning?

Many people felt that, among the geniuses present, no one would be able to win against Lin Xun, let alone Song Yi!

That was power.

Many people had realized Lin Xun's strength after he defeated Chi Cangfeng.

Many people had learned that Lin Xun was terrifying after he defeated the Marquis of Rising Sky.

Anyone smart wouldn't willingly choose to go up against Lin Xun.

Unfortunately for Song Yi, he had already issued a challenge to Lin Xun. If he didn't come forward to fight after the youth called out his name, it would be the greatest humiliation.

Therefore, everyone's expression turned strange.

"Hurry up. Maybe other people will also want to learn from me after I defeat you. I can't disappoint everyone."

Lin Xun urged indifferently but his words were full of arrogance. Song Yi's expression changed again, and his heart blazed with anger.

Does that guy believe I don't have the guts to fight against him?

However, before he agreed, Chief Steward Peng suddenly said aloud, "Lin Xun, Her Majesty has summoned you."

One sentence made the audience fall utterly silent.

Her Majesty has summoned Lin Xun?

Could it be because she couldn't stand Lin Xun's arrogance anymore?

"Now?" Even Lin Xun was slightly startled.

Chief Steward Peng nodded.

A palace maid suddenly appeared beside Chief Steward Peng and said softly, "Please come with me."

Lin Xun thought for a moment, then followed the palace maid and left the arena.

Once they left, a storm of exclamation erupted from the audience. Everyone started to speculate about the empress's reasoning in summoning Lin Xun at such a time.

Some people believed that the empress didn't want to see Lin Xun continue to stir up trouble. After all, the purpose of the duel was to allow the geniuses of the empire to show off their abilities to appeal for an opportunity to enter the Ancient Wasteland Domain.

If Lin Xun continued to create a scene, it would no doubt ruin the whole point.

Some people believed that Lin Xun had caught the attention of an expert from the Ancient Wasteland Domain which was why he had been summoned.

There was all sorts of speculation.

“Everyone, the duel continues. Who else would like to come into the martial arts arena to show their abilities?” Chief Steward Peng said aloud, halting the heated discussions.

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Meanwhile, under the guidance of a palace maid, Lin Xun navigated through the ancient imperial palace. After several twists and turns, he came to a palace hall.

The palace was unnamed and looked extremely old with dated and unadorned furnishings, but somehow it was grand and majestic.

No one was inside, but the maid invited Lin Xun to take a seat and prepared him a cup of tea. “Please wait a moment, Her Majesty will be with you soon.”

Lin Xun nodded. He didn’t know the purpose of the summons, but he thought it was useless to think about it. He quickly decided to focus on his own cultivation.

In the battle just now, he had taken advantage of the situation to break through to the advanced Spirit Sea Stage, and his power had undergone a complete transformation.

He finally had the time to feel and observe the specific changes within his body.

First, his aeth power in his sea of qi had doubled and become as turbulent as a boundless ocean.

The sun and moon reflected one another above the spirit sea, the stars shone brightly, and a storm was raging between the sea and sky.

His spirit sea seemed to have gained an indescribable life force as it had become very energetic compared to before!

From what Lin Xun knew, the Door of Mystery would appear in the spirit sea once he ascended to the advanced Spirit Sea Stage.

The Door of Mystery was the acupoint of the foundation of the sea of qi. It was also known as the acupoint of the sea of qi. Once opened up, he could transform into a true Heaven Ascension cultivator.

However, Lin Xun still had a long distance to travel before reaching the Heaven Ascension Stage.

In addition to the transformation to his cultivation base, the changes to his spirit power were even more astonishing. A total of 3,600 spirit stars had been illuminated in his mind-sea. They emitted pure, dazzling light that bathed his spirit and lit up the mind sea!

Compared to the past, the number of spirit stars had more than doubled!

Spirit stars were an indication of the cultivation level of his spirit, and it was related to the power of Star-Gather, one of the three great realms of the Little Divine Meditation Art.

Based on my progress, when I reach the Heaven Ascension Stage, I might be able to refine Star-Gather to the perfect realm!

The benefits of a strong spirit were obvious. It had immeasurable benefits when comprehending cultivation arts, inscribing runes, and exploring the mysteries of heaven and earth.

In terms of spirit power, no one in the same cultivation level as Lin Xun could compete with him in the entire empire!

That was the power of the Little Divine Meditation Art.

The secret art that he had inherited from the Omega Secret Realm had been silently supplementing his cultivation path.

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While Lin Xun was understanding the changes in his strength, the empress was in discussions with three great cultivators from the Ancient Wasteland Domain in another magnificent hall.

“Lin Xun is very good. He can be regarded as a rare talent even in the Ancient Wasteland Domain, but his personality is somewhat flawed. He is too reckless and arrogant. If he doesn’t change, he could get himself into serious trouble,” remarked an old man in a black Daoist robe as he twiddled with his snow-white beard.

His name was Hua Xingzi, and he was from the Jade Yuan Sect in the Ancient Wasteland Domain.

“A genius always presents himself as a fool. Although the boy is pretty good, he could bring a lot of trouble. We must curb his arrogance before we bring him back to the sect for training.”

On the other side, a purple-robed middle-aged man with a dark complexion said indifferently. His name was Lu Zhenyang, and he came from the Cloud Cliff Sect in the Ancient Wasteland Domain.

“You two, I think the boy’s personality is very suitable for my Mystery Yin Sword Sect. He is full of vigor and does not fear anything. If he focuses on his swordsmanship, his future is limitless!” a white-robed man exclaimed in admiration.

He was Sun Jianhong from the Mystery Yin Sword Sect.

Seeing the three show an interest in Lin Xun, the empress shook her head and said gently, “Sorry to disappoint you all. You can take anyone but him.”

What?

Hua Xingzi, Lu Zhenyang, and Sun Jianhong were all taken aback.