

Stranger 721

Chapter 721: Showing Respect to One's Forefather With One's Fists

“Cut the nonsense, or I'll kill you!”

Mo Beiqiu uttered coldly as a terrific aura washed out of her.

“Hehehe... if harsh words are a sign of affection, then a beating is a sign of love. You really do love me to death, don't you?”

Beside himself with joy, Zhang Lingyang moved his face closer to Mo Beiqiu and said, “Hit me then! Hit me hard enough to kill me! I am your man, and you have my word that I am strong enough to take any love you can throw at me!”

Instead of answering, Mo Beiqiu revealed a smooth, fair palm and slapped Zhang Lingyang in the head.

Zhang Lingyang spun twice on his feet before steadying himself. He wasn't harmed in the slightest.

It looked like the duo were flirting with each other, but Yun Qingxiao knew that it was anything but.

Mo Beiqiu's slap looked weak and powerless, but it really contained enough force to shatter a river or snap a mountain in half. She had seriously hit Zhang Lingyang with the intention to smear his body across the earth.

However, Zhang Lingyang was called the Little Heavenly Master for a reason. He had taken the slap head on and transferred every sliver of force to the underground via force manipulation and neutralization. That was why he was perfectly unharmed.

Of course, the surrounding earth was a different story. Yun Qingxiao could tell that the ground beneath their feet had turned into fine powder.

Yun Qingxiao could withstand a full-powered hit from Mo Beiqiu as well, but there was no way he could've neutralized it with the ease Zhang Lingyang had shown. It was no wonder the man was the champion of the Human Champions Ranking.

Mo Beiqiu too knew that there was little chance she would be able to harm Zhang Lingyang unless she was ready to turn this into a full-on brawl. So, after shooting Zhang Lingyang a cold look, she ignored him and walked to one side with her hands clasped behind her back. After she gave Yun Qingxiao a nod—to which he returned cordially—she devoted her full attention to the basin.

After shaking his head twice to clear away the lingering effects of the slap, Zhang Lingyang put a sunny grin on his face and walked next to Mo Beiqiu. “I knew you couldn't bear to kill me, Beiqiu. After all, you won't find another man like me if I die, hehe...”

“Indeed, there is no one under the heavens who has a thicker face than you,” Yun Qingxiao groaned out while palming his forehead again. What was the temple master thinking when he took Zhang Lingyang into the sect? They might never wash away the shame even in a millennium.

Zhang Lingyang and Mo Beiqiu's relationship was no secret in the jianghu.

In fact, it was a cliché “fall in love at first sight” type of relationship.

Of course, it was Zhang Lingyang who fell in love with Mo Beiqiu at first sight. From the start until now, Mo Beiqiu had never shown any interest in the young man.

Some people might be confused how it was possible for the titular disciples of two opposing factions could possibly share such a relationship. It was an understandable confusion. After all, Zhang Lingyang was the Little Heavenly Master of Dragon Tiger Mountain, one of the Three Temples of Dao, whereas Mo Beiqiu was the Saint of the Demonic Mountain, one of the Nine Dark Ways. The orthodoxy and the Dark Ways were directly opposed to one another, and it was commonly believed that good and evil could not coexist with each other, and there was no way these sects would tolerate each other’s existence in any way. From an outsider’s perspective, it looked like betrayal and a grave breach of honor for Zhang Lingyang to fall in love with Mo Beiqiu.

In reality, such beliefs were merely one-sided delusions from the jianghu warriors that neither Dragon Tiger Mountain nor Demonic Mountain actually shared. In fact, most orthodox and unorthodox factions were perfectly okay with co-existing with each other barring those who were truly inhuman and monstrous.

Generally speaking, sects disliked each other only because their principles and martial ways did not align, and if they fought, it was usually over profit, power, and the Dao. That was all. Barring a few exceptions, there was no river of blood that existed between most sects; no immortal debt that could only be resolved via total annihilation of the other sect.

Even for the exceptions, that hatred were usually confined to one or two generations only. After all, it was always difficult for the future generation to empathize with the previous generation’s hatred. At the very least, they wouldn’t fight their supposedly enemy to the death upon meeting.

While Zhang Lingyang’s infatuation with Mo Beiqiu had definitely earned him some criticisms from other orthodox sects and even his own sect, the current Heavenly Master had suppressed it all in one statement, “Whatever controversy might arrive from this pursuit, it is something for the youngsters to worry about, not old, decrepit people with one foot in the grave like you and me. Besides, assuming Lingyang actually succeeded in wooing that girl from Demonic Mountain, then Dragon Tiger Mountain would’ve earned a new genius disciple, and Demonic Mountain would’ve lost theirs. What is there to be unhappy about?”

It was a statement that was very Heavenly Master Mansion and Zhang Lingyang so to speak.

As for the heretics of the Dark Ways, they were perfectly happy to enjoy the show from the sidelines. After all, it was the Little Heavenly Master who was infatuated with their Saint, so it was the Heavenly Master Mansion and the orthodoxy who stood to lose face here, not them. If their Saint managed to persuade the Little Heavenly Master to switch over to the Dark Ways, then even better!

Long story short, one is willing to give a beating, and the other is willing to take a beating[1]. No outsider had the right to stick their nose into the matter or criticize the parties involved.

“Say, Beiqiu totally loves me to death, right Young Yun?” Zhang Lingyang kept flying back and forth between Mo Beiqiu and Yun Qingxiao like a bird; the former

to lavish affection upon his beloved and the latter to boast about his “love”. “I can’t help it that I’m both handsome and talented! Is there any lady who doesn’t love someone like me?”

Yun Qingxiao pretended he didn’t hear Zhang Lingyang and asked Mo Beiqiu, “Miss Mo, you mentioned that the warrior’s body is stronger than yours. Do you know him?”

“No. He isn’t someone on the Human Champions Ranking,” Mo Beiqiu replied indifferently. “But judging from his movement, force, and qi circulation, I believe he’s a practitioner of the ‘Chaos Demon Ape Body Tempering Sutra’ of the Chaos Demon Tempering Sect.”

“The Chaos Demon Tempering Sect of the thirty six unorthodox sects? Is it even possible for that crumb-sized sect to produce such a powerful disciple?” Zhang Lingyang exclaimed in astonishment.

Mo Beiqiu ignored Zhang Lingyang and continued her explanation, “However, there is no way he could reach the level of body he has with the ‘Chaos Demon Ape Body Tempering Sutra’ alone, much less attract a Profound Yellow Mother Qi Tribulation, so there are other factors in play here.”

“In your opinion, what are the chances that this warrior might overcome the Profound Yellow Mother Qi Tribulation?” Yun Qingxiao asked another question.

“Do you even need to ask? Of course he’s probably going to succeed. It might not be a good thing though,” Zhang Lingyang interrupted.

“Correct. He would probably succeed, but whether this would end well for him remains to be seen,” Mo Beiqiu agreed.

“Heh! It looks like our hearts are linked as one, Beiqiu! Even the heavens wish for us to be together!” Zhang Lingyang chuckled.

Mo Beiqiu ignored this, of course. She continued to observe the mysterious warrior with cold, calculative eyes.

In any case, Yun Qingxiao understood their meaning perfectly. There was a high chance the warrior would overcome the Profound Yellow Mother Qi Tribulation, but it remained to be seen whether this would be a good thing. It sounded like the two statements contradicted each other, but it really described the mysterious warrior’s situation perfectly.

After all, just because the Profound Yellow Mother Qi Tribulation was over did not mean that the warrior’s tribulation was actually over.

He still had to overcome the human tribulation after all.

He alone could sense seven or eight people around the area. He was sure there were more people hiding in areas where his perception could not reach. Like vipers, they were all waiting for the opportunity to strike the mysterious warrior down and claim his boon for themselves.

If underestimating a heavenly tribulation was folly, then underestimating the human heart was a death sentence.

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Inside the basin, Ye Qing looked at the Earthly Sovereign created from a wisp of Profound Yellow Mother Qi and froze in his tracks. He performed a salute while floating in the air, saying, "This junior, Ye Qing, greets the Earthly Sovereign."

He was paying his respects both to the world and his forefather.

As if he was actually sentient, the Earthly Sovereign responded with a kind smile and raised his hand slightly. It was a gesture meaning that Ye Qing did not need to be polite around him. Then, he said,

Ye Qing straightened up and clasped his fist, declaring, "Please, teach me your ways."

Once again, the Earthly Sovereign returned the gesture without a word.

It was at this moment Ye Qing pushed off the air and shot toward the Earthly Sovereign with a boom. His fists were already poised to strike.

He would show his respects to his forefather with his fists.

Chapter 722: Grant Me Three Strikes

"You're a sage of the ancients, whereas I'm just a young junior. Shouldn't you grant me three strikes as a welcoming gift?"

Since the Earthly Sovereign could respond to his gestures, it meant that he was sentient to a certain extent despite being a wisp of Profound Yellow Mother Qi. Knowing this, Ye Qing decided to try his luck.

If his ploy worked, then all was well. If not, all it cost him was a bit of saliva. You know what they say: Those who don't take advantage of a bargain are an idiot and a bastard!

When Ye Qing gathered his strength and punched the Earthly Sovereign with all his might, he was pleasantly surprised to find that his opponent just stood there and took the punch.

Hell yeah! Scum tactics for the win!

Ye Qing wasn't the only one who was surprised. The spectators were speechless as well. They had no idea it was possible to bargain with a heavenly tribulation. It was crazy enough that Ye Qing dared to negotiate with a heavenly tribulation, and it was crazier than the heavenly tribulation actually accepted it. It was an eye-opening experience if nothing else.

The Earthly Sovereign did not budge an inch despite taking a full-powered punch from Ye Qing. That said, one layer of dark yellow aura did dissipate from his body.

Ye Qing was caught off guard by the Earth Sovereign's compliance, but it only lasted an instant. He immediately spun on his heel, turned his spine like a dragon, and threw an even greater punch. It was more powerful than the previous punch be it in terms of force, intent, or viciousness.

And what did viciousness mean in this context? It meant that Ye Qing had socked the Earthly Sovereign at the side of his head!

The Earthly Sovereign *did* promise to grant him three strikes, so why the hell would he play coy or pull his punches? Of *course* he was going to strike him in his weakest spot!

BANG!

This time, the Earthly Sovereign was unable to maintain his immovable stance. The punch was such that he wobbled a little on his feet.

Ye Qing was overjoyed, of course. It was rumored that the Earthly Sovereign was an honest, generous, modest, and open-minded man who valued promises more than his own life. Now, it would seem that it was the truth. The Earthly Sovereign could've tried to dodge the attacks even if he did promise to grant Ye Qing three strikes—it wasn't his fault that Ye Qing couldn't land those hits, was he?

However, the Earthly Sovereign actually just stood there and withstood his attacks head on. He really was far too square—ahem, he meant he was too good and respectable for this world.

Having landed the second punch, Ye Qing decided to give his final free shot his one hundred and twenty percent and took two steps away from the Earthly Sovereign. His arm immediately swelled until it was the size of a tree trunk, and his fist was as big as a sandbag. Once his fist intent had climbed to the peak, he struck the Earthly Sovereign in the head again.

If you can't defeat an enemy in one punch, that's because your fist isn't big enough!

However, the second Ye Qing's fist made contact with the Earthly Sovereign's head, the blood abruptly drained away from his face. The next moment, he was propelled toward the ground at the speed of lightning.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMM!!!

The ground within hundreds of meters exploded like it was struck by a meteor, and the dust and soil it threw up was twice as high. It was like they were fighting at the sea, not the land.

“Cough... cough...”

A few breaths later, Ye Qing finally climbed out of the deep pit he made with one arm hanging by his side and elbow bone sticking out of his flesh. He looked as pale as a ghost as his blood dripped on the floor.

Ye Qing just barely managed to contain his curses inside his head as he looked up at the Earthly Sovereign. Motherfucker! Who's the sonuvabitch who said that the Earthly Sovereign is an honest and square man? They must have fed their eyes and brains to the dogs!

To be fair, the Earthly Sovereign had definitely withstood three of his punches without retaliation. He hadn't tried to dodge or block the attacks either. From an outsider's perspective, he was exactly as he legend suggested and a deserving sage of the ancients.

It was a lie though. All a lie! He should've known better to fall prey to his own naivety and foolishness. Yes, the Earthly Sovereign had withstood three of his punches, but the bastard had also

stored all of the fist force and fist intent inside his body. When the third attack finally struck, he returned it all to Ye Qing in one attack!

That was why he had hit the ground like a meteor.

Ye Qing had never felt his own punches until now. He knew it was powerful since most of his enemies were blown away without leaving a speck of flesh behind, but it was only now that he truly understood just how painful it really was. Three of them combined? He almost regretted being as strong as he was. That one attack had broken his right arm, knocked his internal organs out of position, and even reversed the flow of his vigor!

He was lucky he was as tough as he was strong. Another person would most likely be basking under the light of the Buddha already.

Ye Qing coughed again and muttered under his breath, “That’s not very nice of you, senior!”

Ye Qing wiped away the bloodstains on his lips and stretched. His muscles and bones popped back into place, and his physical injuries began healing at a visible rate.

Ye Qing was sincere. How could the Earthly Sovereign trick him like this? It was like a kungfu master tricking a child into believing he had a chance before kicking him in the nuts! What a monster!

The Earthly Sovereign merely smiled as if to say that all was fair in love and war.

Before Ye Qing could react, the Earthly Sovereign descended from the sky and landed on the earth with a deafening noise, causing the ground to deflate and inflate like a balloon. At the same time, the energies Ye Qing was gathering were abruptly cut off from its source.

Having one’s energy cut midway was like not being able to stretch one’s limbs fully, or not being able to take a full breath[1]. It was uncomfortable to say the least.

The next moment, Ye Qing sensed danger and hurriedly crossed his arms before his chest.

Not a moment too soon, the Earthly Sovereign abruptly appeared in front of Ye Qing and landed an elbow strike on his guard.

“Pwack!”

Ye Qing did not give an inch, but his core was doing backflips like it was a washing machine, and his insides hurt like they just burst apart. He wouldn’t be surprised if that was actually the case. Blood jetted between his lips despite his discipline.

What an insidious technique!

Ye Qing thought to himself even as alarm bells began to blare inside his head. The elbow strike hadn’t just hurt his internal organs, it also pinned his arms against his chest and prevented him from using them.

The next moment, the Earthly Sovereign raised his arm with his elbow as the pivot and smacked him at the side of his head. Unable to defend himself, Ye Qing was sent flying like a rag doll. He left behind deep pits and gorges that were several meters deep as he bounced off the ground again and again.

If the elbow strike from before was soft yet insidious, then this melee strike was violent and brutal. Not only was the Earthly Sovereign able to transition from soft to hard, inaction to action smoothly and without pause, it also felt like the most natural action to take.

After rolling and bouncing off the ground for a bit, Ye Qing grabbed the earth with his bare hand and halted his momentum. Then, he launched himself off the ground with both legs and shot faster toward the Earthly Sovereign than when he was sent flying before.

As he soared through the air, his fist intent poured out until he resembled a raging river. He returned to the Earthly Sovereign in just the blink of an eye.

The Earthly Sovereign did not try to dodge out of the way. Right before Ye Qing's fist would strike his chest, he grabbed his fist with his left hand and pushed downward. The raging river was stopped dead in its tracks as if it had broken against a sheer mountain.

Both men wobbled on their feet. Then, the Earthly Sovereign brought his right fist down on Ye Qing's head, while Ye Qing protected his head with his left arm and kneed the Earthly Sovereign in the stomach.

Bang!

The crunch of flesh and bones happened at nearly the same time. The Earthly Sovereign's fist slammed into Ye Qing's left arm, while Ye Qing's knee smashed into the Earthly Sovereign's stomach.

The duo separated.

Ye Qing swayed like a drunkard as he staggered away from the Earthly Sovereign.

The Earthly Sovereign too backed away from Ye Qing, but it was in an arc instead of a straight line. Not only that, every time he took a step backward, he would leave behind a lifelike image of him. Dozens of Earthly Sovereigns sprung into existence and surrounded Ye Qing in an instant.

They definitely weren't illusions. Ye Qing could feel their force surging toward him from every direction.

In response, Ye Qing sucked in a deep breath and struck the ground diagonally like he was cutting off a stream. Fist force and astral qi immediately shot up and protected him from all sides.

“Divide”

The horde of Earthly Sovereigns slowed down dramatically when they were about one meter away from Ye Qing. It was as if they were caught in a quagmire.

From above, it almost looked like Ye Qing was the stamen, and the Earthly Sovereigns the petals of a lotus.

While the stand-off was still ongoing, Ye Qing's fist fell another inch.

It was only natural for a punch that divided a river to kick up a wave, right?

The wall of fist force and astral qi surrounding Ye Qing abruptly shattered and shot out like pieces of glass, destroying all the Earthly Sovereigns surrounding him except one: the real Earthly Sovereign.

As soon as Ye Qing identified the real Earthly Sovereign, both men charged toward each other at the same time. Sorrow and fatalistic determination gathered in Ye Qing's fist as he raced forth to meet his opponent.

“Break Through”

The Earthly Sovereign's fist intent was the complete opposite of Ye Qing's. It was thick, vast, and deep like an endless expanse of mountains and rivers.

There was a deafening explosion, followed by the destruction of all things physical and a chaotic storm. The two men parted about thirty meters from each other while the ground between them churned like boiling water.

Chapter 723: Challenging the Heavens With My Fists

“That was fun! Again!”

Ye Qing declared loudly while wiping away the blood trickling down the corners of his mouth. His whole body was aching, and steam was rising from it.

He felt great though. Fantastic, even. The Earthly Sovereign created from a wisp of Profound Yellow Mother Qi was a pure body-tempering warrior on the same level as him. This was the first time he fought a true equal since he became a Half-Step Grandmaster in terms of body.

A fight between two body-tempering warriors was very different from a normal fight. It might not be as flamboyant or pretty as a fight between two ordinary warriors, but it was far more violent and blood pumping. Each punch pounded the flesh and cracked the bones, and every victory was decided within the inches. It was a million times more deadly than a normal fight, but because of this, it was also the most exciting.

Ye Qing swelled into a massive, three-meter-tall demonic ape after his declaration. Demonic qi filled the air, and the winds bent to his will.

“Chaos Demon Ape Body”

After transforming into the Chaos Demon Ape, Ye Qing let out a mighty roar and plunged his fists into the ground. Then, he flung an entire chunk of earth at the Earthly Sovereign.

The ground undulated, and at least fifty square meters of land was flipped into the air. The way it blotted out the sky was intimidating to say the least.

However, the Earthly Sovereign stepped forward and grew to the same height as Ye Qing. His presence gradually became potential, boundless, dignified and noble as he raised one hand and clenched his fist. As if he was the heavens incarnate, the massive chunk of earth was shattered into smithereens long before it got close to him.

For a moment, everything was covered in dust and soot. Then, a demonic ape burst through the dust clouds and attempted to ram the Earthly Sovereign with his shoulder.

“Demon Ape Rams A Mountain”

In response, the Earthly Sovereign backhanded Ye Qing in the shoulder and caused the attack to miss by inches. He then stepped behind Ye Qing and thrust both of his arms forward, fist force and astral qi shooting out of his fists like twin dragons.

Ye Qing crouched until his body resembled a crescent, and his muscles and bones cracked ominously. Then, he threw his whole back at the Earthly Sovereign.

“Demon Ape Throws Back”

If a fish threw its back, it could create a big wave. If a demon ape threw its back, then a mountain was going to shatter under its weight.

As mundane as the name sounded, “Demon Ape Throws Back” was in fact a finishing move in the “Chaos Demon Ape Fist”.

The Earthly Sovereign’s twin dragons slammed into Ye Qing’s back. Ye Qing did not budge, and the twin dragons shattered into pieces.

Having won the exchange, Ye Qing did not stop and attempted to crush the Earthly Sovereign with his back.

In response, the Earthly Sovereign raised a fist high above his head like he was holding a ruler’s seal. Then, he slowly lowered it.

The world immediately began to quake violently. It was as if an ancient ruler was about to bring its seal down on the earth that was its paper. When the seal landed, the tremors would be quelled, and peace would return to the four directions.

Ye Qing was about halfway to the Earthly Sovereign when he abruptly face-planted on the ground. Not one to let an opportunity slip by, the Earthly Sovereign immediately stepped forward and kicked Ye Qing in the heart.

There was a dull crunch of impact as Ye Qing was sent flying. Not done yet, the Earthly Sovereign kicked off the ground after Ye Qing and attempted to end the battle with a decisive punch.

Images of mountains and rivers took form once more. The mountains joined into mountain ranges, and the rivers boiled like enraged dragons. At that moment, it looked like the world itself had come to life to crush Ye Qing into bits.

In the air, Ye Qing punched toward the ground and used the rebound to push himself further up the sky. Demonic qi burned around him as he proceeded to throw a flurry of wild punches at the incoming attack. His punches were vicious, brutal, and out of control.

You thought the weight of a world is enough to crush me?

Then I shall rip apart the false peace and turn your world upside down!

It worked. His punches quickly shattered the projection into multiple pieces and threw everything into shambles.

The Earthly Sovereign moved onto the next move. He clenched his fist and swung it horizontally like he was wielding a sword.

In ancient times, the Earthly Sovereign had separated the clear and the filthy with his sword and created a world, thus cementing his name in the annals of history for all eternity.

Today, the Earthly Sovereign would suppress Primal Chaos with his fist and subjugate the demon for a better future.

After his immense fist intent forcefully quelled the chaos Ye Qing had inflicted to the ambient energies, he landed a powerful punch on Ye Qing's stomach.

Blood spilled out of Ye Qing's stomach. The wound was perfectly straight and even as if it had been cut by an actual sword, and it was almost deep enough to cut him in half even in his Chaos Demon Ape form.

Whoever said that a fist could not be as sharp as a sword?

Ye Qing wasn't the type of person to take a blow without retaliating though. While the Earthly Sovereign was scoring a hit on him, he too seized the opportunity to flatten half of the ancient sage's body like a pancake.

As a body-tempering warrior, trading wound for wound was practically his bread and butter.

By the time both men landed on the ground, the wound across Ye Qing's stomach had already healed, and the Earthly Sovereign had regrown the crushed half of his body. As soon as they landed on the ground, they charged each other again.

If the Earthly Sovereign's fist art was vast, majestic, and boundless like the world itself, then Ye Qing's fist art sat on the opposite end of the spectrum. It was vicious, brutal, and out of control like a lawless monster of chaos.

One of them wielded righteous fists that suppressed demons, warded off evil, and created a long-lasting peace that lasted over ten thousand millennia.

Another wielded demonic fists that crushed mountains and rivers with no regard for law and order whatsoever. It was a fist that swore to turn the world upside down and return everything to Primal Chaos.

It was no wonder that their clash felt like a war between absolute good and absolute evil.

They said that good would always triumph over evil. But this wasn't really a war between good and evil, and so far, neither combatant had gotten the upper hand. Not even the most insightful expert could tell who was going to win.

Sometimes, the two combatants would trade punches and push each other away, shattering the ground beneath them in the process.

Sometimes, they would shatter wind and clouds and appear in the sky, trading wound for wound.

Sometimes, they would pass by each other and leave behind a rumbling roar that sounded like an avalanche.

And sometimes, they would split into countless afterimages and clashed against each other like two opposing armies, leaving behind thunderclaps with every impact.

Maybe it was because both sides had scored blood against each other, or maybe it was because the battle had reached its climax. In any case, their fighting style grew increasingly vicious and brutal to the point where every move could mean the end of the other person. It was thrilling, dizzying and chilling to look at.

“What a fight! What a fight!”

At the edge of the basin, Zhang Lingyang's eyes were bright with excitement as he rubbed his hands repeatedly in an attempt to take off the edge. "Fights between pure body-tempering warriors always get the blood pumping! I knew I shouldn't have followed the old man up Dragon Tiger Mountain. It would've been so much cooler if I was a pure body-tempering warrior of the jianghu! Dammit!"

Yun Qingxiao had nothing to say about Zhang Lingyang's complaints, but his comments about the passion of a fight between body-tempering warriors? That was something he wholeheartedly agreed to.

It was true that fights between body-tempering warriors weren't as impressive or stylish as theirs, but it was definitely far more exciting. This was doubly true for a fight where both sides were evenly-matched. Again and again, he could not help but be wowed by what he saw from the combatants.

Besides that, he tried putting himself in the challenger's position and wondered if he could have withstood the Earthly Sovereign's fists.

It would be difficult. Most difficult.

He wasn't underestimating himself or being humble. The fact was that he could not imagine himself defeating the Earthly Sovereign even if he fought with everything he had. At best, he could only aim for a stalemate—even if the Earthly Sovereign below was really just a wisp of Profound Yellow Mother Qi.

Therefore, the challenger was strong. Real strong. At the very least, he was stronger than him.

Suddenly, Mo Beiqiu spoke up, "The victor would soon be decided!"

Zhang Lingyang and Yun Qingxiao looked. As she said, the battle between Ye Qing and the Earthly Sovereign had reached the deciding point.

The Earthly Sovereign was raising his left fist from below, and lowering his right fist from above.

Generally speaking, the large majority of punches traveled in a straight line because fist arts were straightforward, brutish, violent martial arts. Besides that, there was no faster and cleaner way to execute a punch than a straight line.

This particular punch from the Earthly Sovereign was clearly different though. For one, his fists were traveling in an arc. Two, his fists were imbued with different fist forces. One fist swam gently across the air like a weak stream, whereas the other fist felt as heavy and vast as a mountain range.

The two fists looked contradictory and illogical, but the fact was that they looked beautiful and in harmony with each other. Black and white, hard and soft, they left behind profound trails of Dao as they swam through the air.

When the two fists finally connected with each other, both heaven and earth trembled at the same time. Action and inaction, hard and soft, yin and yang blended together to form a profound portrait that seemed to imbue the absolute truths of the world.

As black and white swam around in a circle, the furious gale and clouds, the chaotic energies in the air, and the disorderly qi in the earth slowly returned to calm.

Chapter 724: The Great Way Is Like A Millstone

Yin and yang complemented each other. Everything had its natural laws.

Underneath the black-and-white portrait, Ye Qing's bones were popping, his muscles were groaning, and blood was pouring out of his pores. The bleed was so bad that his black hair was dyed red, and his expression grew increasingly contorted.

Right now, Ye Qing felt like wheat caught inside a mill. The millstone was slowly but surely grinding his body into powder.

If the Great Way was similar to a millstone, then time was a merciless killer.

A hundred generations could turn even the thickest blood into water, and all life was naught but a finite journey.

The millstone that was the Great Way and time could grind everything down into nothing, so how could a man possibly be exempt from the rule?

As the black-and-white portrait continued to rotate, Ye Qing's body slowly twisted into an indescribable shape. To give an example, it was like a pair of invisible hands had grabbed his head and his legs before twisting him in opposite directions like a rag. His muscles slowly tore itself apart, his bones began breaking and splintering into itsy bitsy pieces, and his blood spilled out of his flesh like the water of a wet rag. His entire body was dyed in red, and a pool of blood quickly gathered beneath his feet.

Despite this, Ye Qing remained perfectly silent. While holding back the pain, he slowly raised his arms like he was lifting a mountain.

When his hands had risen up to his chest, he clenched his fists and let out a heart-stopping roar. Demonic qi gushing out of his body, his hands abruptly separated like he was ripping something apart.

Maybe it was because he used too much strength, but both of his arms broke and splattered blood everywhere.

However, his action also caused a crisp sound to resound throughout the basin. It wasn't loud, but it did sound profound and mysterious.

At the same time, the black-and-white portrait in the sky split in half from the center.

"Roar!"

As soon as the black-and-white portrait was ripped into pieces, the demonic ape leaped into the air and slammed into the portrait, causing it to scatter into irrecoverable bits. Then, he trapped the Earthly Sovereign with his left arm, grabbed his head with his right hand, and squeezed with everything he got.

The Earthly Sovereign wasn't just going to give up and die, of course. He raised his free right hand and punched the demonic ape at the side of his head. At the same time, he raised his leg and kneed the demonic ape in the stomach.

The demonic ape ignored the counter attack. Although the Earthly Sovereign's punch caved in half of his head, and the knee strike had broken the pocket world inside his body into pieces, he kept squeezing until his opponent's head finally exploded in a shower of blood and gore.

As if his bloodthirst hadn't yet been quenched, the demonic ape proceeded to grab the Earthly Sovereign's shoulders and ripped the man in half.

"ROAR!!!"

After he successfully ripped the Earthly Sovereign in half, the demonic ape let out another heart-stopping roar before soaring into the sky. Then, he landed a solid punch on the dark yellow cauldron.

TWANG...

The dark yellow cauldron shook violently and emitted a long, loud ringing. It sounded like the ringing of a massive bell.

The bell ringing was heavy but not deep, loud but not deafening. When it spread out, it was actually calming and nourishing like the spring wind and fine rain.

**"My fist strikes against a cauldron and create a ringing that lasts for eternity,
My heart rises with the wind and spreads spring unto infinity."**

After the punch, the demonic ape fell from the sky as if it had spent all of his strength. As he fell, Ye Qing transformed back into a human.

Ye Qing hit the ground with a loud thud, his aura weaker than it had ever been.

The next moment, the dark yellow cauldron in the sky scattered and reformed into the Earthly Sovereign.

Earthen yellow descended from the sky and landed beside Ye Qing. Smiling down on him from above, the Earthly Sovereign leaned down and briefly touched the young man's forehead.

When he rose to full height once more, the Earthly Sovereign abruptly grew increasingly transparent until he was completely gone.

At the same time, an indescribably profound and virtuous aura of Dao emanated from Ye Qing.

"A celestial touched my head, so I prepared to receive immortality."

Clearly, the Earthly Sovereign had injected the wisp of Profound Yellow Mother Qi directly into his body.

Realizing what just happened, some of the people lurking in the shadows could not restrain their greed any longer. They immediately pounced toward the unconscious young man.

Although the Earthly Sovereign had injected the wisp of Profound Yellow Mother Qi directly into the young man's body, it would take time for him to refine and incorporate it into his body. All they needed to do was to kill the young man to extract the Profound Yellow Mother Qi and claim it for themselves.

They needed to act quickly though. They could still extract the Profound Yellow Mother Qi even after the young man successfully assimilated into his body, but its effects would be greatly diminished as a matter of course.

On top of that, the Profound Yellow Mother Qi was a natural creation with the power to nurture the body. It sounded simple, but the young man's severe injuries were healing at a visible rate, and his aura was rapidly stabilizing in just a matter of breaths. It probably wouldn't be long before he awakened from his coma and recovered enough to fight once more. If that happened, forget robbing the young man of his fortune while he was unconscious, they might even die for their audacity.

No one was stupid enough to underestimate the young man after his stunning battle against the Earthly Sovereign.

Long story short, there was no better time than now to kill the young man and rob him of his Profound Yellow Mother Qi. If they missed it, they wouldn't get a second chance to try again.

"Sigh. That shall come will come, and will not tarry[1]."

Zhang Lingyang sighed as he observed the hyenas charging the young man from every direction.

"A heavenly tribulation is easy to overcome. The human heart? Not so much."

Yun Qingxiao replied indifferently.

"So? Would you like to give it a go, Young Yun?" Zhang Lingyang teased.

"No. I am not interested," Yun Qingxiao declared decisively. "It is beneath me to take what isn't mine to take—but of course, no one can take what is mine to take either."

"Hehe... how very manly of you," Zhang Lingyang praised his compatriot before glancing at Mo Beiqiu. "What about you, Beiqiu? Do you want it?"

"Will you take it for me if I say yes?" Mo Beiqiu asked.

"If you want it, then of course! You're my woman after all!" Zhang Lingyang declared loudly while slapping his chest.

Suddenly, a giggle came from somewhere. "Hahaha... to think that the righteous Little Heavenly Master of Dragon Tiger Mountain would openly declare their intention to rob another man's fortune like a lowly bandit. Aren't you afraid that the Heavenly Master Mansion's reputation would suffer because of you?"

No one knew when she arrived, but a woman wearing a mask and a green dress had appeared on a nearby tree. She was barefooted and carrying a red umbrella, and she was sitting on a tree branch and shaking her legs a little, the little bells tied to her ankle ringing melodious to every sway.

It was Greenlake Bai.

"Do I look like that type of person to you? I would never kick a man when he's down!"

Zhang Lingyang's eyes lit up like a pair of light bulbs when he saw the pretty woman. He immediately declared in a righteous tone, "What I mean is that I'm going to take the Profound Yellow Mother Qi after the bad guys had taken it! Is it bad to rob a robber? Never! We call that justice and karmic retribution!"

"Plus, I was planning to cover up my face and book it as soon as I got the Profound Yellow Mother Qi. No one will ever guess that it was I who stole the prize!"

Yun Qingxiao facepalmed. I don't know this guy. He's the shame of my sect.

"Hahaha... they all say that the Little Heavenly Master of Dragon Tiger Mountain is a funny, unfettered man of passion. It looks like the rumors are true after all."

Greenlake Bai giggled. "Do inform me when you decide to act. I'll do my best to support you when the time comes."

"Hahaha! I will happily accept your offer, my kindred spirit!"

Zhang Lingyang pulled back his sideburns before asking, "By the way, may I know your name, your hometown, your age, and whether you're single?"

"Ahem!"

Yun Qingxiao coughed. He seriously couldn't stand this any longer.

You couldn't even wait until Mo Beiqiu is gone before you flirt with another woman? No wonder she isn't interested in you!

"What? You got a bug in your throat or something?" Zhang Lingyang shot Yun Qingxiao a frown.

"It's nothing," Yun Qingxiao replied while glancing at Mo Beiqiu meaningfully.

"It is nothing," Zhang Lingyang rolled his eyes. "The sages say that appetite and lust are only natural, and the ancients say that everyone loves beauty. So long as your heart isn't covered in dust, then everything is all as it should be."

"I'm conversing with this lady purely because I admire her appearance like I would admire a fine painting. I do not think of her romantically at all, and I'm sure Beiqiu understands me perfectly. Right, Beiqiu?"

"Get lost," was Mo Beiqiu's response.

"See? I know that Beiqiu still loves me. She's willing to shower me with harsh words after all!" Zhang Lingyang exclaimed with a wide grin.

Yun Qingxiao: "... I really should've ignored him.

Buzz...

Suddenly, the earth shook again. Something unexpected had happened inside the basin.

Chapter 725: One Woman, One Saber

Inside the basin, a surge of killing intent suddenly engulfed a few attackers and ground them into paste before they could react.

“Shit! Retreat!”

A man panicked and tried to back away to safety, but the second he moved, earthly qi combined into an invisible earth dragon and swallowed him whole.

That wasn’t all. The attackers quickly realized that their surroundings were overflowing with yin qi before they knew it. The wind howled like blades, the rain fell like swords, and killing intent was everywhere. It was as if they had suddenly crossed into the underworld, and the living was *not* welcome here. The bloodcurdling screams appearing throughout the area were proof of it.

“Huh? Earth-bound traps? Is a fengshui master helping the challenger?”

Zhang Lingyang exclaimed in surprise but shook his head right after. “It’s too bad the fengshui master’s craft is average at best, and his fengshui array isn’t perfect due to the lack of time. It’s good enough to scare the hyenas a little, but to actually stop them? It’s not enough.”

A warrior who was adept in the art of fengshui was called a fengshui master. An average fengshui master could only observe qi, probe waters, research the earth, and identify fortune or misfortune. However, a powerful fengshui master—generally known as a geomancer—could not only do everything a fengshui master could do, but also shift mountains, change fates, and slaughter their enemies without a trace using earth veins and earthly qi.

If a geomancer had enough time to set up a fengshui array, they could even kill champions who were above their cultivation level. They were the kind of friends you want to have, and enemies you wish to avoid as much as possible.

Unfortunately, the fengshui master who set up the fengshui array was no geomancer. While his fengshui array was good enough to stop or intimidate the average warrior, it was completely useless against a true elite.

As expected, Zhang Lingyang hadn’t even finished speaking when a cold hmph came from the basin, “You think you can stop me with this level of fengshui array?”

The next moment, a fiery saber force accompanied by the crisp cry of a phoenix descended from above. A fiery phoenix extended its wings and engulfed the fengshui array in a blaze of fire.

Of course, the *jianghu* warriors trapped within the fengshui array were killed as well.

After the fengshui array was destroyed, a brawny man carrying a massive red saber on his shoulder stepped out of the sea of flames. He wore a long robe with fiery red patterns, and he had long hair that covered his shoulders. He carried himself in a bold and unrestrained manner.

“Why so angry, Feng San[1]? Why kill innocents when you could pierce the array without?”

An old, blind Taoist chided the brawny man while stepping out of the sea of flames as well. He was supporting himself and extinguishing the flames around himself using a bamboo staff.

“Hah! As if leaving them alive would help their chances of claiming the Profound Yellow Mother Qi! They couldn’t even survive me!”

The brawny man named Feng San scoffed loudly. “Also, you should’ve just died instead of blocking my attack. Now, I’m going to kill you.”

“Tsk tsk... can you believe this guy? If I didn’t know better, I would think that you already have the Profound Yellow Mother Qi in your pockets!”

A ridiculing laugh broke out from another direction, and a middle-aged man with disheveled hair and tattered clothes stepped out into the open as well. He carried a sword, but it wasn’t his weapon. Why? Because he was biting off its blade and chewing the metal vigorously every few steps or so. Looking at his intoxicated expression, you would think that he was eating a sugar cane, not a sword forged from refined steel.

By the time the middle-aged man walked up to the group, everything above the hilt was completely gone. He glanced at Feng San and said, “Have you asked for *our* permission before you made your move? No? How rude of you!”

“Hah! Sure, I’ll ask for permission after I slaughter you all!” Feng San bared his teeth at them. “But before I do that, allow me to take out the skulking rat first!”

Before he even finished speaking, Feng San grabbed his saber with both hands and fired a powerful saber beam at a nearby bush. Pedant Earth had no choice but to jump away from his hiding spot to avoid the attack.

After he was forced to reveal himself, Pedant Earth produced multiple yellow talismans and tried to turn invisible once more. However, the blind Taoist tapped the ground with his bamboo staff and caused a pair of earth serpents to burst out of the ground. They slammed into the yellow talisman and shredded it before it could take effect. Pedant Earth himself staggered backward while his face turned as pale as a ghost.

“Since you’re all attacking, I guess I’ll have to contribute as well,” said the sword-eating man before he opened his mouth and threw up a flood of sword qi.

Pedant Earth looked pale, but there wasn’t a sliver of fear on his face. Right before the flood of sword qi would kill him, a saber beam descended from the sky and cut the sword qi in half.

“The hell are you doing? Do you actually have a death wish?”

Shangguan Hongjin landed in front of Pedant Earth and chided him.

“I trust that you would save me,” Pedant Earth replied with a cheeky grin on his face.

“I see! There’s more than one rat in this place!” Feng San remarked while staring at Shangguan Hongjin.

“You’re the rat! Your whole family are rats!” While carrying a saber with her right hand and keeping her left hand on her second saber, Shangguan Hongjin spat in Feng San’s direction and said, “Oh, excuse me for my mistake. To call you petty lurkers who only know how to take advantage of another’s difficulties rats would

be a disservice to rats. You're at best bed bugs who deserve to be exterminated on sight!"

"Oh my, what a fiery temper. I love it!" The sword-eating man exclaimed while looking Shangguan Hongjin up and down.

"Pooey! Look at yourself in your piss, ugly face! As if a man like you would ever deserve me!" Shangguan Hongjin declared contemptuously.

"Red shirt, red scarf, and a woman of fiery temper. You must be the leader of the Flying Red Scarfs, Shangguan Hongjin, aren't you?" The blind Taoist asked.

"Oh! I guess you aren't blind after all. That's right! I am Shangguan Hongjin!" Shangguan Hongjin admitted without fanfare.

"Why are you stopping us, Miss Shangguan? Are you plotting to claim that man's Profound Yellow Mother Qi for yourself?" The blind Taoist asked.

"Don't you dare mention my name in the same breath as you! I am not here to take that whatchamacallit either. I'm standing here only because I can't tolerate your contemptuous actions!"

Suddenly, Shangguan Hongjin raised her eyebrows and swung her saber at a certain direction. There was a loud clang, and a man and a woman abruptly popped into existence. Their expressions were ugly.

The man was dressed ostentatiously and wearing make-up like a woman. The woman was also dressed just as flamboyantly as the man, though her aura was dark and creepy. Neither looked like a person of virtue.

"You think you can stop us alone, Shangguan Hongjin?"

The seductive woman said with an ugly expression, "Get out of our way if you know what's good for you! Otherwise, we will make you wish you were dead!"

"Guess what? I *do* think I can stop all of you alone!" Shangguan Hongjin tightened her grip over her sabers and let out a bold laugh. "You want the Profound Yellow Mother Qi that badly? Sure! You just have to pass through me first!"

"Why the hell are you wasting your breath on her? Can't you tell she's trying to buy time? Kill her already!"

It was at this moment Feng San roared and swung his saber at Shangguan Hongjin from range. A fiery phoenix screeched, and a sea of flames engulfed the world.

In response, Shangguan Hongjin unsheathed her second saber and swung upward like she was cutting the sky. The sea of flames were instantly split in half.

Not done yet, Shangguan Hongjin chased, no, surpassed her saber beam and appeared in front of Feng San. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. She brought her saber down with the intention of cutting the man in half.

Feng San did not expect Shangguan Hongjin to move this quickly. He just barely managed to cross his saber before his chest before their sabers clashed.

Clang!

There was a metallic clang, and a muffled groan escaped Feng San's lips. Blood poured down his hand as he staggered away from her.

Shangguan Hongjin pressed forward. This time, she turned her saber against the blind Taoist.

The blind Taoist tapped the ground with his bamboo staff and summoned three armored, sword-wielding generals about three meters tall in an attempt to stop her charge. Fearless, Shangguan Hongjin swung nine times in a row, firing three saber forces each at the earthen generals. Thick as a cyclone, the saber forces easily blasted the earthen generals into smithereens.

Right before Shangguan Hongjin's momentum was spent, a bamboo staff suddenly burst through the dust cloud and struck Shangguan Hongjin in the chest. It pierced right through like her flesh was paper.

"Got you, you blind bastard."

Shangguan Hongjin smiled despite receiving a serious wound, however. Not only that, she pressed forward—the bamboo staff sliding even deeper into her chest as a result of this—and swung her saber at the blind Taoist's head.

Chapter 726: The Bright Moon

The blind Taoist felt every hair on his skin stood on end. He tried to pull out his staff and retreat, but it was stuck between Shangguan Hongjin's chest bones. Left with no choice, he had to relinquish his staff and pull away.

The blind Taoist wasn't Shangguan Hongjin's only enemy though. The sword-eating man, the man with hefty make-up, and the seductive woman attacked Shangguan Hongjin at the same time.

Every time the sword-eating man exhaled, his breath would turn into a sword. Dozens of deadly swords arrayed in the air in just the blink of an eye.

The man with hefty make-up swung his sleeve at Shangguan Hongjin's direction. The force he unleashed seemed open and direct, but every wisp of force hid a silver needle that was no larger than an ox's hair. Of course, the needles were all coated in poison.

And finally, the seductive woman manifested a mountain-sized fox with nine tails that were as big as hills. They fell toward Shangguan Hongjin and threatened to flatten her like a pancake.

"I was waiting for you all!"

Shangguan Hongjin grinned and finally unsheathed her second saber. A bright moon rose to the sky and emitted a cool light that resembled a dream.

The moonlight was also her saber force. Wherever the moonlight reached, saber force cascaded like a waterfall.

Shangguan Hongjin wielded two sabers. The first one was called “Evil Slayer”, and it was a murderous weapon that had slain countless evils of all shapes and sizes. It was also best wielded in one-on-one situations.

Her second saber had a much more elegant name called “Bright Moon”. Excellently crafted and named, the saber possessed the power to summon a moon in the sky and unleash saber force through its light.

It was also why she had a technique called, “Of Bright Moon”.

Since Ye Qing began his tribulation, she had been gathering Bright Moon’s strength and condensing its saber intent until it was barely bigger than a small dot. It was so that she could unleash it at the right moment and bleed her enemies dry.

The sword-eating man, the man with hefty make-up, and the seductive woman blanched and tried to retreat. Unfortunately, it was already too late. The moonlight engulfed them all.

For a time, dazzling, crystalline light engulfed everything within a fifty-meter radius. Nothing could be seen except the light.

When the moonlight finally faded away, the ground was stained red with blood and riddled with holes and bodies.

The sword-eating man was covered in horrific wounds and bleeding all over the place. He wasn’t dead yet, but his energies were shriveled like a prune.

The man with hefty make-up and the seductive woman weren’t so lucky. The moonlight had cut them down into pools of fleshy goo.

Five weaker warriors who lurked in the shadows hoping to play the fishermen were also dead because Pedant Earth had blocked their escape paths.

“Hahaha... this can’t be all of you! I thought you wanted to steal the Profound Yellow Mother Qi? All you need to do is to kill me, and it will be yours! Come at me!”

Shangguan Hongjin ripped out the bamboo staff stuck inside her chest and allowed her blood to dye her already red shirt a dark red color. She didn’t flinch even once as she laughed at the face of her enemies.

“Of Bright Moon” wasn’t an easy technique to pull off, and despite her lack of reaction, her chest wound was pretty serious. It looked like she was close to her limits, but neither Feng San, the blind Taoist nor the sword-eating man moved a muscle. In fact, they looked paler than Shangguan Hongjin.

Shangguan Hongjin was a Half-Step Grandmaster. Feng San, the sword-eating man, and the blind Taoist were also Half-Step Grandmasters. The man with hefty make-up and the seductive woman were only late-stage Spirit Masters, but since they were partners, their combined strength was nothing to scoff at either.

However, not only did their combined assault fail to defeat Shangguan Hongjin, she actually slew two of them and heavily injured one. It was unbelievable.

The battle had turned out this way not because they were weaker than Shangguan Hongjin. It was simply a difference in determination. Shangguan Hongjin had stepped into this fight fully anticipating that she would die in defense of Ye Qing, whereas the five attackers were conserving their strength for future battles and on guard against one another. That was why she was able to overwhelm them despite being outnumbered.

The same reason prevented them from immediately jumping back into the battle. There was a chance Shangguan Hongjin might possess some other trump cards, and even if she didn't, the crazy woman was fighting with the determination to take as many of them to the grave with her. There was nothing a person who was ready to sacrifice their life couldn't do.

They were here to enrich themselves, not surrender their lives to Shangguan Hongjin and benefit those who came after them. That was why they were gripped with hesitation right now.

"Tsk tsk tsk... trash, every last one of you. I can't believe you lot ever thought you had a chance of claiming the Profound Yellow Mother Qi when you're such pussies."

Shangguan Hongjin sneered when she saw this. "Who else wants the Profound Yellow Mother Qi? You can show your face now. I'll stop all of you! Or are you just cowards who can't do anything besides scheming and backstabbing?! FACE ME!"

"Hmph."

It was at this moment a cold *hmph* erupted in the air like a thunderclap. A groan escaped Shangguan Hongjin's lips as she swayed on her feet, and blood poured out of her lips.

"You're quite the boastful one for one so young!"

A short, boyish-looking man appeared in the sky next. "So, how are you going to stop me, *little girl*? I'm salivating with anticipation here, so please don't disappoint me."

"Stop scaring the little girl, Six Yins. It's such a bad look."

A red-haired woman wearing a red dress flew over on a blood cloud and landed on the ground. Despite what she said to Six Yins Boy, she beamed at Shangguan Hongjin and asked, "I'm here, little girl. How are you going to stop me?"

"Six Yins Boy? Blood Rakshasa?"

Feng San, the sword-eating man and the blind Taoist all gulped when they saw the duo. This was just the beginning though. Before they could even recollect their thoughts, another man appeared from afar.

He was a middle-aged man with a wooden expression. His head was bowed as if he was absorbed in thought. He slowly but steadily stepped toward Shangguan Hongjin.

The middle-aged man was also accompanied by a young monk.

“That’s the seventh named warrior on the Human Champions Ranking, Defeated... and the sixteenth named warrior, the Holy Son of Maitreya!”

The trio recognized the duo at the same time.

“Hahaha... we are here as well.”

A boisterous laugh cut through the night sky, and another duo emerged from the north. One of them was fat, and the other thin. The plump man was all smiles and wearing luxury clothes. He looked like your stereotypical rich man. On the other hand, the thin man was wearing a sorrowful, bitter expression and dressed in rags.

Strangely, the smiling, wealthy-looking fat man was carrying the sorrowful, poorly-dressed thin man on his back.

The plump man greeted Six Yins Boy, Blood Rakshasa and Defeated briefly before stomping his feet. Then, he yelled with a chuckle, “Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket, why don’t you show yourselves as well. The girl with more bark than bite wants to meet everyone, and I’m pretty sure that the two of you aren’t exempt!”

As soon as the plump man was finished, a man with a monkey’s face and a pair of whisker-like mustaches stepped into the open. He was wearing a Taoist robe despite looking anything but a Taoist. He tunneled out of the ground not far away from Shangguan Hongjin and shot the plump man an unfriendly look. “Annoying bastard. If it wasn’t for you, I would’ve killed that foolish girl already.”

“Apologies, but the girl’s head is mine.”

At the same time, an old woman with white hair and a wrinkly face emerged from the opposite direction. She was carrying an exquisitely-made bamboo basket on one arm. The basket wasn’t big, but it was filled with at least a dozen heads. It was horrifying to say the least.

“Herald of Fortuity, Harbinger of Doom, Mountain Tunneling King, Mrs. Basket...”

Feng San, the sword-eating man and the blind Taoist muttered in shock and disbelief. If they were stunned before, now they were positively quaking in their boots.

Every single one of these people were famous warriors in their own right. Six Yins Boy and Blood Rakshasa needed no introduction. They were both named Grandmasters on the Earth Champions Ranking.

Defeated was seventh on the Human Champions Ranking, and the Holy Son of Maitreya the sixteenth.

The fat man was called the Herald of Fortune, and the thin man the Harbinger of Doom. They were twins who looked anything but alike, and they were both Half-Step Grandmasters. They were experts in teamwork and coordination and could fight any Grandmaster present to a standstill together.

Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket were also Grandmasters. Although they weren’t good enough to enter the Earth Champions Ranking, they were horrific villains whose infamy preceded them.

This group of powerhouses was so powerful that the Holy Son of Maitreya and Defeated were—in terms of cultivation level at least—the weakest out of all of them.

Compared to them, Feng San, the sword-eating man and the blind Taoist were literally small fries.

“We’re all here, little girl. So, how are you going to stop us?”

Chapter 727: Leave The Rest To Me

“What’s wrong? You were talking a good game just now. Cat got your tongue?”
Six Yins Boy sneered.

Shangguan Hongjin instinctively licked her lips, palms completely covered in sweat. Although she entered this knowing full well that she would die, this sheer magnitude of her opposition still surpassed her expectations.

She had anticipated facing a couple of Half-Step Grandmasters and elites on the Human Champions Ranking, but where did these Grandmasters spring from? There were even two Earth Champions Ranking Grandmasters among the group!

She could confidently say that the number of Grandmasters standing here today exceeded the total number of Grandmasters she had ever seen in her life until now. Since when did Grandmasters become as common as cabbages?

It’s just a wisp of Profound Yellow Mother Qi, people. Where’s your dignity?

Despite her complaints, Shangguan Hongjin wasn’t really all that scared. After all, she never planned on walking away from this alive. If even death couldn’t scare her, then how could a bunch of Grandmasters possibly break her resolve?

Not only that, a trickle of excitement was seeping into Shangguan Hongjin’s veins. How many people in this world dared to challenge this many Grandmasters at the same time?

There’s no chance I’ll ever be able to beat these people, but get on their nerves? Hah!

And so Shangguan Hongjin straightened her back and gripped her sabers in a reverse grip, laughing, “Hahaha! You must be joking. Not even death can steal my resolve, and you think I would cower before you lot?”

“You’re just a bunch of shameless, vulgar, and pathetic bunch of *rats* who have to resort to underhanded tactics to continue their martial way. Well, fine, I’ll grant the talentless, useless fucks who have no hope of advancing their cultivation without resorting to shameless methods a pass, but what about the rest of you? You’re either heaven-born geniuses, top ten rankers of the Human Champions Ranking, Grandmasters, and even Grandmasters on the Earth Champions ranking, and yet you’re doing the same scummy shit as those third-rate warriors. You’re such scum you can’t help but abuse your power and numbers to steal something you know deep down in your hearts that you will *never* deserve.”

“If you had any shame at all, you would not have shown your faces today. Better yet, you would’ve crawled into a hole and stayed there like the *rats* you are. Truly, you lot are the shame of all Grandmasters. Pooey!”

Shangguan Hongjin spat in the group's direction before taunting, "What's wrong? Feeling angry and murderous already? Then come at me then! If I so much as furrow my brows, then I am your mother!"

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"Holy mother of heavens! What a woman!"

At the edge of the basin, Zhang Lingyang gasped at the audacity of Shangguan Hongjin. Her strength was one thing, but her mouth was definitely Grandmaster stage. He only needed to look at Six Yins Boy, Blood Rakshasa, Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket's blue faces to know it was the truth.

"Unfortunately, the honor of a Grandmaster must not be sullied. A shame!" Yun Qingxiao lamented. Frankly, he quite disdained the Grandmasters who had chosen to take part in this robbery as well.

No one was surprised when Six Yins Boy abruptly appeared in front of Shangguan Hongjin and launched a palm strike. In response, Shangguan Hongjin brought down her saber in an attempt to cut Six Yins Boy's hand in half or force him to cancel his attack.

Unfortunately, the gap between their strength was just too much. Six Yins Boy easily caught "Evil Slayer", a Soulstealer-class Strange Artifact with his bare hand and snapped it into several pieces. At the same time, his cold, yin-type palm force invaded Shangguan Hongjin's body and sent her flying. In the air, ice was rapidly growing over her hair and eyebrows, and her complexion turned an unhealthy bluish purple.

"Run, Miss Shangguan! I'll hold them back!"

Seeing this, Pedant Earth took one step forward and crossed his fingers together. He drew a profound rune in the air and yelled, "Rise!"

Killing intent burst out of the ground, and the wind howled like an enraged god. Everyone was in range of the attack.

"Foolish cur!"

A cold glint flashed in Mountain Tunneling King's eyes as he waved his hand casually. A thunderclap erupted out of nowhere, and both the killing intent and the wild gale instantly disappeared into nothing. At the same time, Pedant Earth was sent flying by the terrifying blast of force. Blood spilled out of his lips, and his face looked as white as paper.

"I'll be taking their heads, thank you. I was hoping to add some new decorations for my basket."

Mrs. Basket threw her basket into the air, and it fired a pair of bloody beams at Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth.

Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth exchanged glances with each other. They knew that there was no chance they would be able to survive this attack, and they were annoyed that they couldn't buy more time for Ye Qing.

But they never once regretted their decision. Together, they burst out laughing.

“Hahahaha! I may die, but I leave no regrets behind!”

“Hahaha! The afterlife greets me, but I shall enter it with a clear conscience!”

Suddenly, the bloody beams disappeared right before they would destroy Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth. At the same time, the two warriors felt something arresting their momentum, and their pain vanishing rapidly from their body somehow. They were... healing?

“Thank you both.”

A warm voice rang beside their ears.

“Warrior Ye!”

“You’re awake!”

Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth exclaimed in pleasant surprise as they looked behind their backs and met a refreshing smile.

“I’m awake.” Ye Qing smiled and patted their shoulders. A tremendous amount of true qi entered their body and rapidly restored their damaged organs and veins.

“Now, go catch some rest and leave the rest to me!”

“What are you doing, warrior Ye?”

Pedant Earth was surprised by Ye Qing’s declaration to say the least. It didn’t sound like he was planning to make a great escape with them.

“I’m going to take revenge for you and Miss Shangguan, of course!” Ye Qing was smiling, but his eyes were as cold as ice.

“Are you crazy? Now is hardly the best time!” Miss Shangguan said hurriedly. *We just barely managed to keep you from dying, dude! Do you want to die that badly?*

Although Ye Qing was now a Grandmaster, it hadn’t even been a *minute* since the young man fully ascended. Meanwhile, everyone here was at least a veteran Grandmaster with years of experience under their belt, not to mention that they outnumbered him many times to one. While she liked her revenge served hot as well, she wasn’t that impatient that she would risk her life for it!

Sure, she and Pedant Earth were ready to give their life in defense of their honor and belief, but now that life was an actual option, why the hell would they choose to die?

“Relax. You’re the one who said that they’re a shameless, vulgar, and pathetic bunch of rats who have to resort to underhanded tactics to continue their martial way.” Ye Qing shot her a reassuring smile. “Why would I be afraid of such a worthless lot?”

“I...” Shangguan Hongjin couldn’t say anything. *I was just taunting them, dude!*

“Arrogant boy. Die!”

Enraged, dozens of bloody heads flew out of the floating bamboo basket and flew toward Ye Qing. They were all snarling or howling or weeping as if they were alive. As they grew closer to Ye Qing, their voices grew increasingly shrill and disturbing.

“The Life Stealing Heads and Mind Bending Screech...”

The flying heads were called the Life Stealing Heads, and they were Strangers Mrs. Basket had refined using her Bonded Strange Artifact[1], the Head Basket. The Head Basket was a Phenomenon-class Strange Artifact that could fire beams of blood that could shackle a victim's mind, sever their head, and subsume it to the bamboo basket. Hence the name. Once a head had been subsumed into the basket, Mrs. Basket would be able to command them as she pleased.

If the head was refined into a Life Stealing Head, it could produce a sound wave known as the Mind Bending Screech. The coalescence of all of the victim's resentment when they were still alive, the Mind Bending Screech could attack the mind, kill a person, and even steal their soul. It was a most malevolent power.

It was worth noting that the class of a Life Stealing Head was the victim's cultivation level when they were still alive. The Life Stealing Heads currently stored inside the Head Basket were all Spirit Masters Mrs. Basket had killed throughout the years, so every one of them was equal to a Phenomenon-class Stranger.

The Mind Bending Screech produced by dozens of Phenomenon-class Life Stealing Heads were no joke. Most Grandmasters would choose to dodge out of the way against such an attack.

However, Ye Qing simply took one glance at the Life Stealing Heads and threw a punch.

BOOM!

An entire chunk of space caved inward like it was a physical object, and the vortex at the center drew the flying heads in before they could react.

The next moment, every Life Stealing Head exploded into smithereens.

Chapter 728: Demonic Blade of Six Yins

“Urgh!”

Since Mrs. Basket's energies were connected to the Life Stealing Heads, their destruction dizzed her for a brief moment.

When she regained her senses, she abruptly realized that the audacious young man was now standing right in front of her.

How did he...?

Panicked she might be, her response was immediate and decisive. Her clothes abruptly lit up like a mini sun as countless talismans and restrictions formed an impenetrable barrier around her.

It was clear that her clothes were a kind of defensive Strange Artifact. It was pretty high grade too. Too bad for Mrs. Basket, Ye Qing easily cut through the barrier strong enough to block a full-powered attack from a Grandmaster with a casual swing of his hand. Her eyes widened. If she didn't know better, she would have thought that the barrier was made of paper!

The next moment, Ye Qing clenched his fist and punched her in the head. The old woman immediately staggered backward as if she had just been hit by a giant hammer. Stars circled around her head, and her head hurt like a bitch. Whatever true qi she managed to gather earlier had instantly been dispelled by the punch.

Suddenly, Mrs. Basket felt as if she was floating in the air. Scratch that, she *was* floating. A powerful force lifted her into the air before Ye Qing elbowed her in the heart!

Crack!

Mrs. Basket's chest caved in, and her eyes bulged so much that it would not be a surprise if her eyeballs actually fell out of their sockets. Blood poured out of every orifice as she hit the ground hard and kept sliding forward like a plow, leaving a deep gorge behind her.

By the time she finally came to a stop, Mrs. Basket was exhaling more than she was inhaling. It would not be an exaggeration to say that she was dying.

For a time, silence enveloped the entire basin. Everyone was staring at the young man with shock and disbelief.

This was not how they had imagined the fight would turn out. In their imagination, The young man should be the one being punched down by Mrs. Basket, not the other way around. Actually, scratch that, it was worse. The young man had grievously wounded Mrs. Basket, an infamous, veteran Grandmaster in just the blink of an eye.

How was this even possible? Were their eyes playing tricks on them?

Even if Mrs. Basket was among the weakest Grandmasters out there, it should not be possible for someone who just overcame their tribulation *minutes*

ago to defeat her. The guy didn't have the time to stabilize his cultivation yet!

And yet, the impossible had happened. Mrs. Basket didn't just lose, she had lost so quickly and decisively she never even managed to mount a counterattack.

Not even the Grandmasters present thought they could defeat Mrs. Basket that easily and decisively!

Everyone was looking at Ye Qing like he was a monster.

"Are you done admiring my good looks? If you are, then come at me already. The Profound Yellow Mother Qi is still inside my body. If you don't strike me down soon, you won't get another chance."

Ye Qing smirked and added, "Also, I don't mind you coming at me together. Rats can only attack in packs, am I right?"

"The audacity!"

"You are courting death!"

His taunt was a hit with Six Yins Boy and Mountain Tunneling King. They looked like they were going to fly into a rage at any moment.

“Tsk tsk... you think you can fight us all alone, little brother? Really?” Blood Rakshasa smiled like the spring wind. “Your bark is bigger than your stature if nothing else.”

“My bark is loud because my bite is worse.” Ye Qing shot back. “That said, I don’t really need to be strong to kick all of your asses. After all, you’re just a pack of rats, aren’t you?”

“The audacity!”

Finally hitting the limit of his tolerance, Six Yins Boy made a grabbing motion as if he was pulling some sort of invisible curtain. The next moment, this corner of the world turned dark and silent.

The unnatural darkness lowered from the sky before shrinking and stretching into a certain form. It looked as if an invisible man was hammering a small piece of the world into a weapon using their spirit.

A flawless, pitch black saber appeared in the sky. It didn’t have a hilt, and it had a savage, demonic design. Killing intent washed out of it like a flood long before it descended toward Six Yins Boy, and when it did, it changed colors every three meters or so. First it was black, next it was red, then it was green, yellow, blue, and finally pure white.

Every time the demonic saber changed a color, the killing intent and icy chill in the air would deepen a little more. By the time the demonic saber reached its final color, it felt like they were standing in the middle of the coldest winter. Every part of the basin was covered in ice, snow was falling from the sky, and whatever life that remained in this wasteland of a basin was completely wiped out by a choking amount of killing intent.

“The Demonic Blade of Six Yins...”

Feng San, the sword-eating man, and the blind Taoist took one look—just one look—at the demonic saber and felt their Yin Gods ripping themselves into shreds, and their blood freezing in their veins. They all collapsed to the ground with shock and horror on their faces.

Six Yins Boy’s main cultivation art was something called the “Six Yins Demonic Pinnacle Art”. It was an exceptionally yin, frigid, violent and brutal martial art. The Demonic Blade of Six Yins was the strongest technique in the “Six Yins Demonic Pinnacle Art”, and it compressed the six pinnacles of the six yins into a single saber. In the manual, it was described that the Demonic Blade of Six Yins was capable of splitting open the heavens, sundering the earth, annihilating the body and severing the soul.

“Six Yins, six pinnacles, one saber; Cut the sky, split the earth, kill ghosts and gods.” It was a succinct but accurate summary of the technique’s power. Feng San, the sword-eating man, and the blind Taoist had no doubt that they would have already experienced true death if they were the targets of the Demonic Blade of Six Yins.

The actual target of the technique, Ye Qing, didn’t look perturbed in the slightest, however. In fact, he was actually wearing a smile.

Ye Qing bent his knees slightly and jumped up to face the saber. When he was about halfway there, he threw a punch.

One punch rose, and a hundred punches fell. The flurry of punches contained an enormous amount of force and even greater intent. They combined into a patch of dark yellow earth that stood in the demonic saber's way.

Boom!

There was a huge explosion, and the dark yellow earth conjured by the one hundred punches was sliced clean through by the Demonic Blade of Six Yins. However, the saber also turned from white to blue, to yellow, to green, to red, and finally to black.

What this meant was that five of the six pinnacles of the Demonic Blade of Six Yins had been destroyed. It also meant that the technique only possessed a sixth of its former strength.

The black saber struck Ye Qing squarely in the fist, causing a tremor that spread throughout his body. Dark yellow light circulated around his body as he fell toward the ground like a meteor.

Thump!

Ye Qing's feet hit the ground, but it didn't trigger a massive explosion like it normally did. Instead, all he kicked up was a bit of dust and stones like he was striking a drum.

On the surface, it looked like nothing was going on. But under the ground, it was like multiple earth drakes were tossing and turning in their sleep.

Mountain Tunneling King hadn't been idle while Six Yins Boy was attacking Ye Qing. He had found an opportunity to slip underground, and he was poised to strike the young man while he wasn't looking. Then, the earth around him suddenly started crushing him like he was wheat inside a millstone, causing him to ache all over and lose control of his energies. He had no choice but to jump back onto the surface.

However, the second he burst out of the earth, a palm grew bigger and bigger in his vision. It pierced through his astral qi and slapped him in the face before he could do anything.

Mountain Tunneling King's face hurt like hell, but he did not hesitate to summon earthen spikes from the ground and attack Ye Qing from behind.

Ye Qing did not so much as bat an eyelid. He simply grabbed Mountain Tunneling King, turned around, and smashed him into his own spikes instead.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Countless spikes slammed into Mountain Tunneling King's body and exploded into smithereens, but the debris didn't scatter or fall to the ground like they should. Instead, they attached themselves to Mountain Tunneling King's body and formed a set of earthen armor that only grew thick, bigger, and heavier as time passed. Over time, it looked as if Ye Qing was an infant attempting to lift a titan with his puny hands.

Still, Ye Qing was unmoved by this turn of events. With just one hand, he lifted Mountain Tunneling King—at this point, the man was as heavy as a literal mountain—into the air, sucked in a deep breath, and exhaled everything at once. It was so loud that his exhalation sounded like

rumbling thunder, and he threw Mountain Tunneling King straight at the two brothers, Herald of Fortuity and Harbinger of Doom.

After the prowess Ye Qing just displayed, neither Herald of Fortuity nor Harbinger of Doom were stupid enough to treat him like an ordinary, newly-ascended Grandmaster. They went all out.

Herald of Fortuity began laughing. His laughter was joyous and growing increasingly loud with each passing second.

At first, it sounded like he was the only one who was laughing. Later on, it sounded like thousands and thousands of people were laughing at the top of their lungs.

Images of female celestials dancing in the sky or celestials and Buddhas drinking to each other's health suddenly manifested into view. Combined with the laughter, it was as if they had been transported into a divine kingdom of bliss.

Chapter 729: Suppressing Grandmasters

If a divine holds up the sky, one might say that he's holding an entire world in his palm. The Herald of Fortuity practiced a cultivation art known as the "Joy Heaven Sutra". At the adept level, the practitioner could summon the Skyholding Divine and manifest a Blissful Land in their palm. The Skyholding Divine was supernaturally strong—they could supposedly hold up the sky after all—and the Blissful Land could summon Bliss to influence one's spirit and bewitch one's mind.

The Skyholding Divine extended his left hand to catch the Mountain Tunneling King. At the same time, he threw the divine kingdom on his right palm at Ye Qing.

If a Kingdom of God collapses, it would be as if the sky itself had collapsed. The force behind such a fall was mighty indeed. On top of that, the incessant laughter possessed the power to bewitch one's mind, so it was clear that the Herald of Fortuity wasn't holding back.

Ye Qing didn't bat an eyelid. He ran like the wind while overflowing with fist intent.

The moment the Skyholding Divine caught Mountain Tunneling King, the earthen armor Mountain Tunneling King was wearing abruptly exploded into smithereens, dissolving the Skyholding Divine's left arm and threatening their balance. Because of this, their aim was thrown a little off as well.

Not about to let such an excellent opportunity pass by, Ye Qing grew twice as fast and appeared above the Skyholding Divine's head. Then, he punched down at the creature.

Buzz!

There was a dull, buzzing noise, and the Skyholding Divine froze in place. Then, cracks spread out from where Ye Qing had struck until it covered the creature completely. Finally, the Skyholding Divine dissolved soundlessly into nothing.

"Pwack!"

The Skyholding Divine was also the Herald of Fortuity's Yin God[1]. Losing it caused him to throw up a hefty amount of blood.

The Herald of Fortuity was laughing though. It was because his brother, the Harbinger of Doom, was nowhere to be seen.

The Harbinger of Doom hadn't run away, of course. While Ye Qing was destroying the Skyholding Divine, the Harbinger of Doom had appeared behind his back with a long stick in his hands. The long stick looked impossibly frail like it was made of paper, but it was also giving off a dark, evil energy. It was clearly a high-grade Strange Artifact.

As the Harbinger of Doom swung his stick, thirteen stick-wielding silhouettes appeared around the young man as well. At the same time, ghastly wails drowned out all sound in the area.

“Thirteen Sticks of Doom”

Bang bang bang!

The thirteen silhouettes struck Ye Qing at the exact same time, but nothing happened. Somehow, the dark yellow aura surrounding Ye Qing was able to neutralize the forces perfectly.

Astonishment and anger flashed across the Harbinger of Doom's face. He let out a roar, and the stick he was holding abruptly grew as big as a pillar. At the same time, a dharma[2] over ten meters tall appeared in the sky, grabbed the enlarged stick, and swung it at Ye Qing.

Such was the force behind the swing that spatial cracks appeared along its trajectory, the air turned as cold as ice, and ghastly wails that sounded like a million people's screams filled the ears.

“Thirteen Sticks of Doom: Ten Thousand Cry”

The “Thirteen Sticks of Doom” was an offensive-type stick art that specializes in killing, and “Ten Thousand Cry” was its most powerful technique. In the martial arts manual, “Ten Thousand Cry” was described as being strong enough to take ten thousand lives at once.

However, the Harbinger of Doom's eyes widened like saucers the next moment. It was because Ye Qing had caught his signature move with his bare hands.

When “Ten Thousand Cry” descended, all Ye Qing did was cross his arms above his head and waited. Considering how small Ye Qing was compared to the enlarged stick, his guard looked as childish and futile as an ant trying to block a falling tree.

In reality, Ye Qing did not budge even an inch after taking the hit. Invisible ripples appeared beneath his feet like he was standing on a lake, and rumbling thunder broke out from the point of impact, but that was it. No matter how hard he pushed, his “Stick of Ill Omen[3]” refused to move any further.

“The technique is great, but your strength is lacking. Watch this.”

Ye Qing shot the Harbinger of Doom a smile and grabbed the enlarged stick with both hands. Then, he twirled on his feet and swung it straight at the thin man.

Neither the enlarged stick nor the dharma could resist Ye Qing's strength. They could only flail helplessly in the air before slamming into their owner.

The Harbinger of Doom fell from the sky like a meteor and struck the Herald of Fortuity head on.

Rumble!

The ground cracked like an egg, and both brothers exploded in a shower of blood and gore.

Since the Harbinger of Doom was dead, the dharma in the sky gradually disappeared like a bubble, and the Stick of Ill Omen returned to its normal size. After Ye Qing landed back on the ground and gave the stick a tentative swing, he shook his head and crushed it into a million pieces. He clicked his tongue disdainfully as he said, "What did I say? Pack of worthless rats, all of you."

Feng San, the sword-eating man, and the blind Taoist were shitting their pants at this point. Realizing that not even the Grandmasters might be able to defeat Ye Qing, they turned around and tried to escape. However, they had just lifted a foot when Ye Qing stomped the ground and started a mini earthquake. Their energies abruptly dissipated, and they immediately lost their balance.

The next moment, Ye Qing appeared behind the trio and punched the blind Taoist in the back. The poor fuck instantly exploded in a shower of blood and gore.

Next, Ye Qing threw an elbow at Feng San. Scared shitless but not out of his wits, Feng San raised his flaming saber and gathered all of his power to guard. It was the best and only action he could take.

It wasn't enough. Ye Qing wasn't even trying, but the saber containing all of Feng San's power still snapped like an old twig. Then Ye Qing's elbow and the broken blade sank into the man's heart.

By now, the sword-eating man was ten meters away from Ye Qing. He was surrounded in sword qi and running toward the edge of the basin with all he got.

Ye Qing tapped the other half of the broken saber with his finger and sent it flying toward the sword-eating man. In response, the sword-eating man half-turned toward the flying saber and fired a sword beam at it.

The sword beam howled like a cyclone. No matter how you looked at it, it seemed impossible for the broken saber to cut through it.

As soon as the broken saber made contact with the sword beam, it abruptly exploded into a million pieces and scattered fragments anywhere, turning the cyclonic sword beam into a pincushion.

When the sword beam faded, it was revealed that the sword-eating man had been turned into a pincushion as well. Blood sprayed out of countless holes as he slowly collapsed to the ground, lifeless.

After Ye Qing withdrew his stance, he looked at Defeated at the Holy Son of Maitreya and said, "Did I say you can leave?"

The duo was just about to make a retreat until Ye Qing called them out. Despite their apprehension, they thought better and stayed where they were. No one said a thing.

At the edge of the basin, Zhang Lingyang was staring at the battlefield with shocked, disbelieving eyes. "Bei... Beiqiu, can you slap me? I need to know if I'm dreaming."

Slap!

Mo Beiqiu happily obliged him and slapped him as hard as she could. She then shook her hand a little and said, "You're not dreaming. My hand hurts."

For once, Zhang Lingyang did not try to flirt with Mo Beiqiu. He muttered dumbly, “He just overcame his tribulation, and his power hasn’t stabilized yet. And yet, he’s already strong enough to kill not one, but two Grandmasters? Is he even human?”

His confusion was understandable. In less than a minute, the young man had endured a Demonic Blade of Six Yins from Six Yins Boy without a scratch, grievously wounded Mrs. Basket and Mountain Tunneling King, and killed both the Herald of Fortuity and the Harbinger of Doom. No one was expecting this outcome at all.

After all, the guy was fighting Grandmasters, not defenseless piglets!

In his shoes, they were certain that they could defeat one or even two of the Grandmasters present. It wouldn’t even be difficult. But to injure two, kill two, and withstand an ultimate attack from a veteran Grandmaster who was named on the Earth Champions Ranking with the level of ease the young man had displayed so far?

They knew better than to put themselves on the same pedestal as him.

Whoever that guy was, his strength was out of this world to say the least.

“I’m no match for him!”

Yun Qingxiao let out a deep sigh. He was a Dao Child of the San Qing Temple and a godlike genius. Although he was “just” the fifth warrior on the Human Champions Ranking, he was certain he wasn’t inferior to anyone who was higher than him on the list. His power and everything he had achieved until now were the wellspring of his confidence.

But not this time. For the first time in his life, Yun Qingxiao conceded that he had a peer who was well and truly out of his league.

Greenlake Bai did not offer a comment. She was staring at the young man making waves in the basin with a strange face.

Is it him?

But it can’t be. It’s hasn’t even been a year since we parted ways, has it?

“This is just the beginning.”

Mo Beiqiu suddenly spoke up, “Six Yins Boy and Blood Rakshasa would not allow him to walk free.”

Everyone fell silent upon hearing her spoken and unspoken words.

The young man had humiliated them, and no Grandmaster could bear to be dishonored. Naturally, Six Yins Boy and Blood Rakshasa were going to kill him if only to cleanse their name.

That wasn’t the biggest reason they wanted him dead, however. The biggest reason they would do everything in their power to kill the young man... was fear.

It wasn’t the current him that they feared. No, it was who he might become in the future.

The young man had just overcome his tribulation, and the power he displayed was already out of this world. He was guaranteed to make it on the Earth Champions Ranking, and there was a good chance he might become a Sage in the future.

Would the young man allow them, powerful threats who had tried to take his life while he was still weak, to live after he had fully grown into his power? Obviously not.

That was why Six Yins Boy and Blood Rakshasa weren't going to go easy on him. By hook or by crook, they would eliminate the hidden threat with everything they got.

Therefore, Mo Beiqiu was right. Ms. Basket, Mountain Tunneling King and more were just the appetizer. The real battle was just beginning.

Chapter 730: Blood Soul Divine Light

“Hahaha... You're quite bloodthirsty, little brother. Allow me to play with you.”

A charming giggle escaped Blood Rakshasa's lips, and countless blood streams abruptly burst out of Feng San, the blind Taoist, the sword-eating man, the Herald of Fortuity and the Harbinger of Doom's body. They condensed into a blood cloud and wrapped around Ye Qing before he could react, pinning him in place.

Not only that, his vigor was rampaging uncontrollably inside his body. The unnatural stirring made it incredibly difficult for him to gather any strength at all.

“One word of advice, little brother... Shameless boasts that aren't backed by strength cost a price.”

Smiling, Blood Rakshasa slowly walked toward Ye Qing while playing with her hair.

For those who were watching closely, they would notice that countless strands of blood were floating in the air. So thin that they were practically invisible, they were penetrating Ye Qing's skin and invading his body from every direction. It was these threads that caused his vigor to run uncontrollably like a stampede and boil like a pot of oil. The loss of control over his own energies was uncomfortable to say the least.

These blood threads were created from Blood Rakshasa's cultivation art, “Blood Soul Divine Light”. “Blood Soul Divine Light” possessed the power to control blood, and it could be used to wound one's enemies or boost oneself. At the adept level, the practitioner could outright control the blood inside their victim's body and kill them with a single thought[1].

The young man before her was a body-tempering warrior, and body-tempering warriors more than anyone else valued the cultivation of vigor. Their primary goal was to refine a body of steel and a sea of vigor.

Generally speaking, a body-tempering warrior possessed a powerful body, an incredible amount of vigor, and overwhelming strength. Tens or even hundreds of times stronger than the average warrior, a body-tempering warrior was an absolute nightmare to fight against in most cases.

Not Blood Rakshasa. In her case, it was actually the opposite. Body-tempering warriors were naught but helpless lambs she could slaughter as she pleased, and it was all thanks to her “Blood Soul Divine Light”, the bane of all warriors with great vigor. The stronger her target's vigor, the easier it was for her to manipulate it.

Vigor was the root of all strength. If a person's vigor flowed sporadically, then it would be difficult for them to generate strength or qi. It was only a matter of time before a pool of dead water dried, just like a tree without roots would eventually die.

For an ordinary warrior, this generally wasn't too big of a problem. Even if their body was susceptible, they still had their mind. The same could not be said for a body-tempering warrior. If the flow of their vigor was interrupted, then they were like pools of dead water or trees without roots. What was the greatest punch if it had no strength behind it? How could their body endure if they did not have qi? And how could they fight without end if their recovery was missing?

Like an apple that was rotten at the center, or a sky pavilion that was supported by a single base, the slightest pressure was enough to destroy them.

Of course, not all body-tempering warriors were helpless before vigor-manipulating warriors like Blood Rakshasa. Body-tempering warriors excelled at creating wonders from inches of space, and this level of fine control extended to their vigor as well. Given enough time and practice, they could control every drop of vigor like their own limb and greatly diminished the threat of vigor manipulation arts.

Unfortunately for the young man, he had just overcome his tribulation and become a Grandmaster. His vigor was much greater than before, but it also meant that his previous level of control was no longer sufficient. From Blood Rakshasa's point of view, the young man's current vigor control resembled a child trying to wield a greatsword. It looked mighty impressive, but it was full of holes.

Therefore, the young man resembled a circus monkey to her. His tricks were impressive, but he was still a monkey. It took her barely any effort to take control of his vigor.

"The last person to boast to me like that had his teeth shattered, his tongue cut out, and his lips sewn together so he might never speak again. So? How do you want me to punish you?"

"Hello? You were so talkative before, so why are you pretending to be mute now?"

Seeing that Ye Qing refused to respond to her—or maybe he was too busy struggling against her bindings to make a response—pity and scorn flashed across Blood Rakshasa's eyes as she turned toward Six Yins Boy. "Do you have a suggestion, Brother Six Yins?"

"You're asking me? Well, I'm a simple man. I'm just going to extract his soul and light a lamp with it. I will make him wish that he was dead!"

Six Yins Boy let out an ugly laugh before closing in on Ye Qing. Hand combusting into green flames, he grabbed Ye Qing's skull to extract his yin god.

He did not notice Ye Qing's eyes curling a little when his hand closed around his skull. The next moment, Ye Qing struck Six Yins Boy with both hands.

A body-tempering warrior's fists were like a tidal wave or a storm. Once it began, it would not stop until it had expended all of its energy.

In one breath, Ye Qing landed at least dozens of punches on Six Yins Boy's torso. Every punch was as heavy as mountains, and every burst of fist intent was perfectly controlled.

On the surface, the flurry of punches failed to push Six Yins Boy even an inch. In reality, his insides had dissolved into a pot of porridge.

Yes, Six Yins Boy was a Grandmaster, and yes, his physique was greater than most warriors. Compared to a body-tempering warrior though? Getting within melee range of a body-tempering Grandmaster was easily one of the biggest mistakes of his life.

When Ye Qing dished out his final punch, Six Yins Boy's body exploded in a shower of blood and gore. At the same time, Ye Qing grinned at Blood Rakshasa and said, "Thank you so much for your help, big sis. If it wasn't for your help, it would've taken me a lot more effort to kill Six Yins Boy. Seriously, thank you."

"W-What?"

Blood Rakshasa was too stunned for words. She couldn't understand how Ye Qing had suddenly broken free from her "Blood Soul Divine Light" and regained his freedom, nor could she believe that he had annihilated Six Yins Boy's physical body with just a flurry of punches. His latter remark only confused her even more.

A second passed, and realization finally struck Blood Rakshasa like a lightning bolt. Before she could do anything about it though, a demonic, pitch black saber appeared behind her back and swung downward.

Blood Rakshasa was just a beat too slow to dodge out of the way. Her right arm was severed just like that.

Blood Rakshasa let out a bloodcurdling scream and appeared ten meters away from the saber in a flash of blood. Green flames were spreading from her severed stump, and her pain-wracked face looked horrifically pale for someone who thought herself as a master of blood manipulation. More than pain though, it was fear that shone through her expression.

A child-sized, six-headed demon god was floating not far away from her, and each head had a different color: black, red, green, yellow, blue and white. They all wore Six Yins Boy's face.

Right now, all six faces were contorted with anger and hatred. The demonic qi washing out of the yang god alone seemed strong enough to warp the weather itself.

"AAAAAAAAAAHHHH! YOU FUCKING BITCH! HOW DARE YOU STAB ME IN THE BACK! I'LL KILL YOU!"

The Six Yins Demon God roared as his demonic qi merged into a humongous, dark saber. It then fell right on top of Blood Rakshasa.

"Demonic Blade of Six Yins"

"It's a trick, Six Yins! That brat is trying to drive a wedge between us! I swear I wasn't colluding with—"

Blood Rakshasa tried to defend herself. She still didn't know why Ye Qing wasn't affected by her "Blood Soul Divine Light", but she now understood exactly what he was planning.

Ye Qing could've broken out of his restraints at any moment, but he feigned weakness because he wanted to bait Six Yins Boy to get close to him. While the Grandmaster's guard was completely lowered, he abruptly broke free from the "Blood Soul Divine Light" and dealt him a decisive blow.

Naturally, Six Yins Boy was utterly stunned by the counterattack. His suspicion of Blood Rakshasa went from zero to a hundred in an instant, and Ye Qing's inflammatory words only added fuel to fire. He instinctively thought that Blood Rakshasa had purposely released her "Blood Soul Divine Light" at the last moment so that Ye Qing could ambush him. Enraged and humiliated, Six Yins Boy threw all caution to the wind and chased after her with murder on his mind.

If she didn't do something soon, this would surely end with Ye Qing killing them both after they were both injured and fatigued.

Unbeknownst to Blood Rakshasa, she had gotten one minor detail wrong. She was Ye Qing's original target, not Six Yins Boy.