

The Gods 1561

Chapter 1561 - The Four Great Divine Sovereigns

Nanhuang Chanyi's words caused a stir in Yun Che's heart. He asked, "You've never seen my strength before. Why do you think that my strength is lacking?"

Nanhuang Chanyi's profound aura marked her as a middle stage Divine Spirit profound practitioner, and Yun Che thought that her darkness energy felt almost familiar. Her cultivation level was impressive for her age, but it was still impossible for her to see through his aura.

Nanhuang Chanyi replied, "You wouldn't be bullied by the East Ruins Crown Prince if you were strong, would you?"

Her answer was perfectly reasonable, but the sudden strange feeling didn't leave Yun Che.

"Is that so?" Yun Che said. Instead of unleashing his profound energy and proving his power, he said indifferently, "It's never a bad thing to have to have extra reinforcement, don't you agree?"

"Historically speaking, the Southern Phoenix Divine Country has always been weak. You were always stomped at the Central Ruins Battle, and you've never won more than a tenth of the huge land that is the Central Ruins Realm."

Nanhuang Chanyi, "..."

"Dong Xueci's earlier words were painful to hear, sure," Yun Che said with a half-smile, "but he's right. The Southern Phoenix Divine Country's fate is going to repeat itself during this Central Ruins Battle. There is no way you can overturn your fate since your foundation and the amount of resources you have collected are the weakest of all four sects."

"So what?" Nanhuang Chanyi's reaction was minimal.

Yun Che said, "If you're going to end up in the worst case scenario one way or another, why not take a gamble and see if a miracle will happen?"

The eyes behind the jeweled tassels stared straight at Yun Che's. A moment of silence later, Nanhuang Chanyi nodded and replied, "Alright."

Yun Che narrowed his eyes slightly. "That's a surprisingly quick reply."

Nanhuang Chanyi said, "A person who would dare ridicule the East Ruins Crown Prince without a thought or get within three feet of me is either completely ignorant, or confident in his own safety. Your eyes are telling me that you are the latter."

Yun Che, "..."

"But before that, please tell me your name and origin." She continued to stare at Yun Che while she was speaking.

Right now, Yun Che was surrounded by a strange air that drew in a woman's curiosity like bees to honey. Nanhuang Chanyi was aware of this sudden attraction, but she continued to stare at him as if the act would help her see through him entirely.

“My name is Yun Che. As for my origin... no comment.”

“You gave me only half of the basic information I ask of you, and it doesn’t look like you’re going to show me your power and prove your worth, but you want me to hire you as a foreign representative of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country? Don’t you find this ridiculous?” Nanhuang Chanyi asked. Her voice was like a gentle breeze, and no emotion could be detected from it.

“It’s up to you whether you want to take this gamble despite everything,” Yun Che replied.

“...” There was a short pause before a small smile appeared on Nanhuang Chanyi’s face for an instant. No one saw it because it was completely concealed by the jeweled tassels of her headdress. “You are very right about one thing. If it’s already the worst case scenario, then what wouldn’t I gamble?”

She extended a hand that was paler than even jade itself and created a dark gold color profound jade right in front of Yun Che. The latter grabbed it and gave it a look. His name was engraved on it.

“This is your temporary Southern Phoenix Token. You’ll be able to enter our battle formation with this. I... look forward to the pleasant surprise you’ll bring to this Central Ruins Battle.”

Yun Che flipped his palm around and put away the Southern Phoenix Token. He asked, “Aren’t you going to ask about my goals and my desired reward?”

“You’ll tell me your goals after the Central Ruins Battle is over,” Nanhuang Chanyi said. “As for your reward, that depends entirely on your performance.”

After that, Nanhuang Chanyi turned around and left.

The four realm king sects always sought out outsiders to bolster their forces during the Central Ruins Battle, but these people normally had to be strong, capable of passing through a series of stringent trials, and completely transparent in terms of origin. After all, the Central Ruins Battle was related to one’s fame and the next fifty years of resources!

From the start to the end, Yun Che’s recruitment had been so easy and simple that it was almost unbelievable.

Nanhuang Chanyi knew nothing about Yun Che except his name. However, she still recruited him and gave him his Southern Phoenix Token personally.

Was she really just taking a gamble because things couldn’t possibly get any worse?

“This woman is a little unusual,” said Qianye Ying’er in a low tone after staring in the direction Nanhuang Chanyi had left for a while. The comment sounded casual and indifferent, but the number of times she had actually praised someone could be counted on one hand.

“She’s definitely interesting.” Yun Che’s eyes flashed a little. “I hope she’ll pleasantly surprise me.”

He already noticed that she was unusual from the moment they met. However, he still couldn’t say what it was exactly.

“There’s no changing the fact that this newly crowned princess is about to become that Beihan Chu’s lap girl though. Even a princess must submit to such a fate when she’s a weakling. How ironic,” Qianye

Ying'er said with a mocking smile on her face... It was impossible to tell if she was mocking Nanhuan Chanyi or herself.

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More and more profound practitioners poured into the Central Ruins Northern Area as time passed. Divine Sovereigns seldom fought each other in the norm, so the semi-centennial Central Ruins Battle was the biggest profound gathering in the entire Five Nether Ruins. Those who pursued the Divine King Realm especially wouldn't want to miss even a single term—this was a true battle between peak Divine Kings, and even the tiniest hint could prove to be infinitely useful.

The sky above the Central Ruins Battlefield was calm, and there were no storms in sight in any direction. However, the ground was completely packed with people. Tens of millions of profound practitioners were spread out across the battlefield in a spiral pattern, but everyone's eyes were centered on the middle of the Central Ruins Battlefield.

One of the reasons the Central Ruins Realm was opened to all profound practitioners was to create a grandiose moment like this.

Moreover, this year's Central Ruins Battle was slightly different from the previous. It was rumored that Venerable Hidden Sword of the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace would be the supervisor this time.

Nine Lights Heavenly Palace was the sect of an upper star realm. Although it was no realm king sect, it enjoyed outstanding fame.

The Northern Divine Region's laws of survival were cruel, so there existed a lot tributary relationships. Nine Lights Heavenly Palace was the higher force all four realms paid tribute to for protection. Every time the Central Ruins Battle happened, a Venerable One from the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace would also be invited as the supervisor and witness.

Once in a while, some geniuses would be brought back to the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace and nurtured. Beihan Chu was one of them. But unlike the previous geniuses, he was taken in as a direct disciple by one of the palace masters of Nine Lights Heavenly Palace, Venerable Hidden Sword himself. There were even rumors that Beihan Chu had become his chief disciple.

This was definitely unprecedented across the four realms.

Venerable Hidden Sword had even made one such declaration, "Beihan Chu is talented beyond measure, and he'll definitely succeed me in the future."

The praise naturally caused huge stirs and elevated Beihan Chu's status to miraculous and legendary levels. Northern Chill City was already the strongest realm king sect to begin with, but Beihan Chu's success boosted them even higher and made them look like the sun of the Five Nether Ruins.

The supervisor and the witness of the Central Ruins Battle this time was Venerable Hidden Sword instead of the usual Venerable Hidden Mirror. The rumor that Beihan Chu was planning to propose to Nanhuan Chanyi again had also spread like wild fire, especially considering that the Southern Phoenix Divine Country had replaced their Crown Prince with a new Crown Princess. Everyone could predict what was going to happen in today's Central Ruins Battle.

The only thing they weren't sure about was when the proposal would happen; before or after the battle.

The promised time grew closer and closer, and the crowd wasn't left hanging for too long. Four invisible but irresistible forces suddenly parted the crowd, and an oppressive silence immediately replaced the clamor.

The pressures that dropped from the sky without warning were those of Divine Sovereigns! They were so terrifying that many people felt like dropping to their knees. At the same time, the four realm king sects—Northern Chill City, East Ruins Sect, West Ruins Sect, and Southern Phoenix Divine Country—appeared and moved to the north, east, west, and south corners of the battlefield respectively.

Four barriers of differing colors also spread out and enveloped an area each at the same time.

Four figures dropped down from the sky when the barriers were formed. They embraced the reverent, zealous, and admiring looks the crowd showered them with like gods.

“Welcome, sect master!”

“Welcome, my king!”

“Welcome, monarch!”

“Welcome, sect master!”

All four people carried themselves with an air and pressure that imposed on both heaven and earth, and there was no one in the Five Nether Ruins who was ignorant of their fame. It was because they were the strongest profound practitioners of the four realms and the unparalleled great realm kings of the Nether Ruins!

From Northern Chill City, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign!

From the East Ruins Sect, the East Ruins Divine Sovereign!

From the West Ruins Sect, the West Ruins Divine Sovereign!

And lastly, from the Southern Phoenix Divine Country, the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign!

The four Divine Sovereigns slowly took their seats at the center of their respective domains. They were used to this level of attention and spectacle since a long time ago.

Silence reigned over the Central Ruins Battlefield once more after the four realm kings had taken their seats. The four Divine Sovereigns met each other's eyes briefly before checking out their opponents' battle formations.

Every realm was required to send ten participants in the Central Ruins Battle, and they all must be Divine Kings below three thousand years old.

The number of Divine Sovereigns in any middle star realm could be counted on two hands, and level ten Divine Kings were practically the king of all beings if the Divine Sovereigns were excluded from the equation. What this meant was that there weren't many level ten Divine Kings, and the number went down even further with the age restriction.

Thanks to the incredibly resource rich Central Ruins Realm, the four realms of the Nether Ruins were much stronger than the average Northern Divine Region middle star realm. Not only could Northern Chill City, East Ruins Sect, and West Ruins Sect gather ten Divine Kings for the Central Ruins Battle, they even had substitutes that could be used to tweak their battle formation if they so wished.

Northern Chill City especially had over ten substitutes at the ready during each battle.

The Southern Phoenix Divine Country was the only exception, however. Even with the addition of external reinforcements, they weren't able to gather ten level ten Divine Kings like all other realms...

It was the same this time.

At Northern Chill City's corner, twenty proud-looking profound practitioners stood behind the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign. Only champions were allowed to represent the Northern Chill City, so their quality need not be mentioned. As for quantity, twenty level ten Divine Kings was more than enough to beat every other realm before the battle had even begun.

To them, the point of the Central Ruins Battle was to show off their might, not compete for resources. There would always be four zones of the Central Ruins Realm allocated to them and them alone.

The East Ruins Sect and the West Ruins Sect had thirteen level ten Divine Kings each. As for the Southern Phoenix Divine Country... there were twelve participants this time, but only four of them were level ten Divine Kings. The rest were all level nine Divine Kings.

Although the previous battle's joke of two level eight Divine Kings hadn't repeated itself, it still didn't look like the Southern Phoenix Divine Country was going to escape their fate any time soon.

This time though, the result of the battle probably didn't matter to the Southern Phoenix Divine Country.

Outside the Central Ruins Battlefield, Yun Che and Qianye Ying'er had just arrived.

"The Central Ruins Battle is structured around the simplest 'King of the Hill' format," Qianye Ying'er said. "The champion of the previous battle, Northern Chill City will appear on the battlefield first. They will be challenged by the other three realms one by one until they are defeated!"

"The loser will leave the stage, and the winner will replace him and defend themselves against other challengers. Every realm can send at most ten challengers to the battlefield, and the order of the ranking is decided by whoever loses all their representatives first."

After that, she added, "The Southern Phoenix Divine Country you're representing has always scored last in the Central Ruins Battle!"

"This format is acceptable if only two sides are involved, but four? It doesn't sound fair at all. It's ridiculously easy for multiple sides to gang up on one side," Yun Che said in a low tone.

"Hmph. This is a battlefield. There's no such thing as fairness on a battlefield." Qianye Ying'er let out a cold hmph. "Northern Chill City is always the starter, and they were always ganged up on by the other three realms. However, no one has ever managed to shake them off their throne."

"There are no unfair rules that can't be beaten with absolute power!"

“We’re here.” Yun Che led Qianye Ying’er to the barrier of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country. Then, he took out the Southern Phoenix Token Nanhuang Chanyi gave him and extended it toward the barrier. The barrier parted after a soft buzz, and the duo walked in under a shower of astonished and confused gazes.

“Who are you!” A shout cut through the air, followed by a heavy pressure on Yun Che and Qianye Ying’er. “Why do you have the Southern Phoenix Token?”

The speaker was an old man with white hair. His cry caused every Southern Phoenix denizen to hold their breath in shock... It was because this man was the only other Divine Sovereign in the Southern Phoenix Divine Country besides the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign himself. He was the “Guardian Elder” and the only other transcendent existence in the country, Nanhuang Mofeng.

Only the Southern Phoenix Royal Family and their representatives were allowed to enter the barrier with the Southern Phoenix Token. Yun Che and Qianye Ying’er were clearly neither.

“Uncle Feng.” A gentle voice spoke up right after Nanhuang Chanyi. “They are the recruits I invited to aid in the Central Ruins Battle. I am the one who granted them their Southern Phoenix Token.”

The gentle voice chased away the fear incited by the Divine Sovereign’s pressure like magic. The speaker was none other than Nanhuang Chanyi. But not only did she fail to console Nanhuang Mofeng, the old man frowned deeply and said, “Ridiculous! They are just level five Divine Kings! They’re not qualified to participate in the Central Ruins Battle at all! Absolutely ridiculous!”

Last time, they had no choice but to bring two level eight Divine Kings to the battlefield. As a result, they became the biggest joke of the Central Ruins Battle. To avoid the same humiliation from repeating itself, they’d gouged themselves and hired a bunch of powerful reinforcements. Even the weakest among them was at least a level nine Divine King.

Normally, Yun Che and Qianye Ying’er would be a sight for sore eyes in any realm, but the Central Ruins Battle?

The Southern Phoenix Divine Country might come in last place in every Central Ruins Battle, but not even they could suffer this level of humiliation!

“You’re wrong,” Yun Che said in an indifferent tone, “I’m the only one who’ll be participating.”

Chapter 1562 - Beihan Chu

Nanhuang Chanyi’s words had surprised the crowd, but only a little. However, when Nanhuang Mofeng said “level five Divine Kings”, their surprise instantly ballooned into shock and astonishment.

Level five Divine Kings... in the Central Ruins Battle?

What kind of a joke was this!?

Even better, Nanhuang Chanyi was the one who invited them over personally!?

“It’s you two?” The former Southern Phoenix Crown Prince, Nanhuang Jiang, recognized Yun Che and Qianye Ying’er immediately. He frowned and said, “Chanyi, you shouldn’t joke during the Central Ruins Battle.”

“I’m not joking.”

Yun Che had never told Nanhuang Chanyi his profound level, and it was impossible for her to measure his strength accurately due to her cultivation level. However, she looked unusually calm when Nanhuang Mofeng said the words “level five Divine Kings”. “His name is Yun Che. I ran into him by accident on my way here, so I invited him to participate in the Central Ruins Battle.”

“Accident?” Nanhuang Mofeng’s eyebrows sank even deeper. “The Central Ruins Battle is not a game, and no reinforcements should be hired without careful deliberation! How can you do things so carelessly?”

“We can accommodate him if he’s strong enough, but he’s only a level five Divine King! He simply isn’t qualified to join the Central Ruins Battle!”

Nanhuang Mofeng had seniority over Nanhuang Chanyi, and his strength, status, and prestige were second only to the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign. Considering how ridiculous the circumstances around Yun Che’s recruitment was, it was his right to reprimand Nanhuang Chanyi a little.

“Uncle Feng,” Nanhuang Jian said, “I’ve met them before myself. Dong Xueci had threatened them, and Chanyi saved them from their predicament. That was the first time we met each other. However, I’m not sure why Chanyi would make this decision out of nowhere. Maybe...”

Nanhuang Mofeng’s eyes suddenly turned cold. “Did you two lie to her about your cultivation level!?”

The Southern Phoenix Divine Country only had four level ten Divine Kings, and they looked very bad compared to the other three realms. If Yun Che had lied to Nanhuang Chanyi and told her that he was a level ten Divine King, there was a high chance the latter would choose to recruit him.

This seemed like the only acceptable explanation.

“...” Yun Che didn’t react to his question at all, and Nanhuang Chanyi didn’t attempt to provide an explanation either. She shot Yun Che an indifferent glance from behind the jeweled tassels before turning to face the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign, asking, “Royal father, what are your thoughts?”

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign stared at Yun Che for a bit before asking, “How much do you know about him?”

“Nothing at all,” was Nanhuang Chanyi’s reply.

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign frowned a little, but his tone was gentle. He said, “In that case, I’d like to hear your reason.”

“There is no reason, royal father,” Nanhuang Chanyi said softly. “I invited him purely because I thought that there’s something extraordinary about him.”

“That’s all?” The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign looked surprised by her answer.

“That’s all,” Nanhuang Chanyi nodded. “Only ten people are allowed to fight in the Central Ruins Battle. There’s no harm in having an extra substitute to consider.”

“It’s not as simple as that!” Nanhuang Mofeng said in a low tone, “The battle formation we send to participate in the Central Ruins Battle is the face of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country! We’ve always been the weaker participant, and our battle formation has always been denounced. Do you know how badly we were ridiculed when we had two level eight Divine Kings in our battle formation last time!?”

“In order to avoid the same humiliation from happening, we paid a huge price just to gather four level ten Divine Kings and eight level nine Divine Kings. But if we allowed a level five Divine King to enter our battle formation...”

“It won’t be long before everyone hears that even a level five Divine King can enter the Southern Phoenix Divine Country’s battle formation! We’ll become a complete laughing stock!”

“We absolutely cannot allow that to happen!!”

Nanhuang Mofeng’s words were laced with weight. Everything he said was entirely reasonable and supported by everyone.

“We were close to the Central Ruins Battle, and Chanyi only made this careless decision because she was overly concerned our well-being. She shouldn’t be blamed for this.” Nanhuang Jian hurriedly defended Nanhuang Chanyi before turning to look at Yun Che, saying, “You two, please put down the Southern Phoenix Token and leave. I don’t know how you influenced Chanyi into making such a mistake, but the Southern Phoenix Divine Country won’t hold you to blame at such an important occasion. Also, you are welcome to visit the South Ruins Realm anytime you like after the Central Ruins Battle is over.”

It was never a bad thing to be able to recruit two level five Divine Kings into one’s fold.

But Nanhuang Chanyi ignored Nanhuang Jian’s words and waved at the duo, saying, “Please take your seats, you two.”

She was actually motioning them to sit beside her!

“I...” Nanhuang Jian stared at her in disbelief and puzzlement.

“Very well,” Yun Che replied with a nod before he and Qianye Ying’er sat right next to Nanhuang Chanyi. They completely ignored the strange looks everyone was showering them with from every direction.

Nanhuang Mofeng’s eyebrows abruptly sank as his features scrunched into a look of anger. “Chanyi, you—”

“Uncle Feng,” her words were soft, but it contained an invisible chill and pressure that cut off Nanhuang Mofeng’s words completely, “Did you forget that I am the Crown Princess right now? If you’re that concerned about the royal family’s face, shouldn’t you address me as Your Highness instead? So why are you addressing me by my name repeatedly?”

“...” Nanhuang Mofeng’s expression froze abruptly.

“Royal father has given me full power to direct how we’ll go about this Central Ruins Battle! My decision is the final decision, and no one is allowed to question it!”

“I’ve decided that Yun Che will be added to the Southern Phoenix battle formation. This matter is settled, and I’ll not tolerate anymore objections!”

The Southern Phoenix battle formation was silent for a moment. Everyone was exchanging glances with each other.

Nanhuang Chanyi wasn't just gentle, it was almost as if she was born with little emotion. Although her beauty was well known, she very rarely made a public appearance. In fact, this was the first time she participated in the Central Ruins Battle, and for a reason that was public knowledge no less.

Her tone was imposing and unquestionable. Forget the others, this was the first time Nanhuang Jian and Nanhuang Mofeng saw her like this.

"Settle down." The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign spoke up while everyone was still dumbfounded. His tone was even and devoid of emotion. "Chanyi is correct. I have given her the authority to command this battle formation, so she has the right to decide everything that goes today. However, don't forget that you'll bear all the responsibility that will happen as a result of today, Chanyi."

"Chanyi understands," said Nanhuang Chanyi before bowing her head slightly.

"But..." Nanhuang Jian wanted to say something more, but he caught the look in Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign's eyes and forced himself to swallow whatever he was going to say. The only resistance he could muster at this point was a fierce glare at Yun Che.

Nanhuang Jian was the strongest expert of their battle formation, and even the weakest among them was at least a level nine Divine King. But now, a level five Divine King had suddenly joined their group... Forget Nanhuang Jian, even the other twelve participants were glaring at Yun Che with unkind looks on their faces.

The overall quality of their group just jumped off the cliff because of Yun Che! It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that their last shreds of dignity were stripped right off their faces!

They just couldn't understand what Nanhuang Chanyi was thinking! They could accept her recruiting Yun Che because he had lied about his cultivation level, but why did she stay on this foolish course even after Nanhuang Mofeng revealed that Yun Che was just a level five Divine King?

Worse, the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign actually chose to let her do as she wished!

Nanhuang Mofeng let out a heavy hmph and stopped talking. However, his expression was very ugly.

Uncaring of the looks everyone was giving her, Nanhuang Chanyi leisurely returned to her seat before sending Yun Che a sound transmission. "Don't disappoint me too much."

"You won't regret this," Yun Che said, "however... I'm curious. As they say, I'm only a level five Divine King. Where is your confidence in me coming from?"

Nanhuang Chanyi shot him a sideways glance before replying, "Confidence in you? Whatever do you mean? I'm just defending my dignity as the Crown Princess. This is the first big thing I'm in charge of since I became the Crown Princess. What dignity would I have if anyone could change my decision as they pleased?"

"Also, I suppose you can see this as me being selfish and abusing my power."

Yun Che, "..."

Meanwhile, the gazes on the other side of the Central Ruins Battlefield turned contemplative.

“Big brother, that’s Yun Che!” Dong Xuekui said, “He’s joining the Southern Phoenix Divine Country?”

“Hehe.” Dong Xueci chuckled and said, “Interesting, interesting. He must’ve sought out the Southern Phoenix Divine Country for protection after learning what it means to offend me. A level five Divine King is a precious power to the Southern Phoenix Divine Country after all.”

Every word he said was infused with disdain.

“His seat... he can’t have joined the Southern Phoenix battle formation, can he?” Dong Xuekui asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Impossible,” Dong Xueci said uncaringly. “A level five Divine King fighting in the Central Ruins Battle? The Southern Phoenix Divine Country may have no face to speak of, but they aren’t shameless enough to throw away their last shred of dignity.”

Dong Jiukui had already entered at the East Ruins Sect’s battle formation, but he didn’t notice Yun Che was with the Southern Phoenix Divine Country. It was because he and the East Ruins Divine Sovereign were staring at Northern Chill City.

Today’s events might very well change the future and status of the East Ruins Sect.

The four great Divine Sovereigns kept looking to the west as the start of the Central Ruins Battle grew closer and closer. Finally, an aura appeared on the horizon, followed by a candid voice that entered everyone’s ears:

“Beihan Chu, Hidden Sword Palace disciple of the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace has come to attend the Central Ruins Battle.”

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign immediately got up to his feet with a smile. The three realm kings and the profound practitioners of every sect got to their feet as well. The spectators were holding their breath, raising their heads and staring at the sky with looks of excitement and reverence on their faces.

It was understandable. Who hadn’t heard of Beihan Chu and the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace in the Five Nether Ruins?

Very soon, a small-sized profound ark with two people standing on it entered everyone’s vision. One of them was dressed in black clothes. He had well defined eyebrows, sharp eyes and an extraordinary aura. It was the former Northern Chill Crown Prince and the Hidden Sword Palace chief disciple of the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace, Beihan Chu!

The person next to him was a serious-looking middle-aged man. However, he wasn’t Venerable Hidden Sword. His status was clearly inferior to Beihan Chu’s.

Behind the duo was a square-shaped barrier about as tall as a person. It seemed to be sealing something, but it was impossible to see or sense what was behind the swirling mist of darkness.

Countless people were staring as the profound ark stopped right above of the Central Ruins Battlefield. Beihan Chu jumped down from above, followed by the middle-aged man who kept behind Beihan Chu.

The profound ark didn't move away, however. It continued to float in the sky while carrying that black barrier.

"You're here, Chu'er." Northern Chill Divine Sovereign walked up to meet his son with a smile. His regal pressure was nowhere to be seen.

"Royal father!" Beihan Chu bowed deeply to the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign before doing the same toward all directions. He said, "This one was delayed due to certain businesses. Please forgive me."

When his gaze reached the Southern Phoenix Divine Country, he clearly stopped to look at Nanhuang Chanyi for a bit. A smile flashed across his face as well.

"Hahahaha." The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign laughed loudly. "That's too much, dear nephew. The fact that you're here adds light to the Central Ruins Battle already. Jian'er, Beihan Chu isn't even half your age, and the height of his talents need not be mentioned. However, he's still humble and polite despite his status in the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace. You should learn from him."

"Yes, father," Nanhuang Jian replied respectfully, "This child obeys your teachings."

The fact that the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign was the first one to praise Beihan Chu immediately threw some shade into the atmosphere. That rumor that had spread like wildfire came closer to becoming the truth.

"Chu'er, where is your master? Will he be showing at a later time?" The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign asked with a smile while holding Beihan Chu's hands.

"No, royal father. Master was supposed to accompany me, but something happened in the middle of our trip, and he had to go away to deal with something. He told me to replace him as the supervisor of today's Central Ruins Battle," Beihan Chu answered.

Beihan Chu's reply surprised everyone a little. Venerable Hidden Sword wouldn't be showing today? What on earth happened while they were on the way here?

Of course, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign wasn't going to prod while they were in public. He nodded slowly and said, "I see. It's a terrible shame, but something that concerns even the Venerable Hidden Sword must be very important. Naturally, that must take priority over this battle. Oh right, who is the person behind you?"

He looked at the middle-aged man standing behind Beihan Chu and raised his eyebrows suddenly. The man lacked glamor, and he looked like a subordinate of Beihan Chu. However, was really as strong as himself, if not stronger!

And he, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign was the strongest profound practitioner in the Five Nether Ruins.

"Oh!" Beihan Chu hurriedly introduced the middle-aged man. "Royal father, this senior is Superior Unwhite, Lu Bubai. He's the third palace master of the Hidden Sword Palace."

"Wh..." Beihan Chu's declaration caused everyone's heart including the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign to skip a bit.

The third palace master of the Hidden Sword Palace was a transcendent existence!

Since he was standing behind Beihan Chu, no one realized who he really was until just now.

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign quickly lowered his upper body as he started in a voice that was tinged with anxiety, "Greetings, Superior Unwhite. This little king is named Beihan Shuo. Please forgive me for my impoliteness earlier..."

"Your words are unnecessary!" Superior Unwhite cut him off indifferently before the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign could finish his sentence. He said, "I'm only here to protect the young palace master. None of this has anything to do with me. You may pretend like I don't exist."

Superior Unwhite's words caused Beihan Shuo to look up abruptly, "Young... palace master?"

That wasn't the only thing that caught his attention. It made no sense that the third palace master of the Hidden Sword Palace was acting as a bodyguard for Beihan Chu and standing behind him.

"Hmm?" Superior Unwhite shot him a sideways glance. "Haven't you heard yet? Young palace master has entered the 'Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking'."

BOOM———

The five words erupted in everyone's eyes like a thunderstorm.

The mind of the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign, the number one profound practitioner of the Five Nether Ruins turned completely blank. He felt as if every drop of blood in his body was flowing into his head. His face was fully red, and he could barely speak through his excitement, "W-what... did you... say..."

Chapter 1563 - Troubles Before the Battle

There was a moment of dead silence before cries of shock broke out in the Central Ruins Battlefield. The sky itself was shaking from the commotion.

The East Ruins Divine Sovereign, West Ruins Divine Sovereign, and Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign were all wearing shocked expressions on their faces. In fact, their reactions were even more exaggerated than the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign's, and everyone else's even more so.

Shock, excitement, disbelief... The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign turned his head with difficulty amidst the uncontrollable uproar and focused his spirit perception on his son like his life depended on it. He said, "Chu'er, you... you..."

"Royal father," Beihan Chu said with a smile, "this child has fortunately achieved a breakthrough and become a Divine Sovereign thanks to my master and seniors."

Beihan Chu's voice wasn't loud, but it penetrated the uproar like a hot knife through butter and entered everyone's ears, striking thunder in everyone's heads again.

"..." The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign's lips started trembling first. Soon, it spread to his entire body. "Good... good... good... haha... hahaha... hahahahaha..."

He laughed loudly like he had gone mad, "With a son like this, this father no longer has any regrets in this life! Hahahaha! Hahahahaha!"

It was the happiest and most satisfying laugh the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign had ever had in his life! It was also the first time he truly understood what the idiom "to die without regrets" meant.

The other three realm kings stared blankly at the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign for a very long time before hiding their sighs at the same time. They understood that it was a true miracle that they might never be able to replicate, and it was pointless to feel envy toward it.

"The Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking is the most popular and sublime profound ranking in the entire Northern Divine Region," Qianye Ying'er sent a sound transmission to Yun Che.

Although most information within the Northern Divine Region was inaccessible to the other three divine regions and vice versa, the king realms weren't completely clueless. Qianye Ying'er had heard of the Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking a long time ago.

"This ranking records everyone who became a Divine Sovereign before six hundred years old in the Northern Divine Region... Of course, this ranking doesn't include those from king realms," Qianye Ying'er explained uncaringly. "If I remember correctly, there were hundreds who were entered into this ranking every era."

"I see," Yun Che finally understood why everyone was reacting the way they did.

Qianye Ying'er and him were the most indifferent of everyone present.

In a sense, the Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking was the most famous and exemplary meritorious ranking of them all. Not including the king realms of the Northern Divine Region, it recorded the names of all Divine Sovereigns below six hundred years old!

Anyone who became a Divine Sovereign before they were six hundred years old was without a doubt a true genius! The "Heavenly Sovereign" in the ranking's name was meant to imply that these Divine Sovereigns were blessed by the heavens themselves!

A profound practitioner who became a Divine Sovereign in six hundred years was very newsworthy. They were considered children of miracle even in the upper star realms! There were thousands of star realms and innumerable experts in the Northern Divine Region, but only hundreds were able to enter the Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking!

Of course, the ranking wasn't just for recording the names of the youngest Divine Sovereigns in the Northern Divine Region. It implied that these people had the best chance to become Divine Masters and stand at the top of the Northern Divine Region.

They were miracles that even upper star realms would be hard pressed to produce, but Beihan Chu, a denizen of a middle star realm, had entered the ranking!

It was unprecedented in the Five Nether Ruins... No, it was something they dared not even dream of.

"You should be proud," Superior Unwhite said to the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign. "Chu'er is also the first person in the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace to enter the Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign

Ranking. Everyone before him was at least a thousand years old before they became a Divine Sovereign. The chief palace master is so pleased that he treats him like his own son.”

Beihan Chu smiled and said, “Everything this disciple has today is thanks to the sect. It is my fortune to be able to join the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace.”

“Mm.” Superior Unwhite nodded in agreement.

Even now, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign still couldn’t calm himself. He finally understood why Beihan Chu had suddenly become a young palace master, why he was protected by the third palace master of the Hidden Sword Palace, and why Superior Unwhite was willing to act as Beihan Chu’s subordinate.

No one doubted the future of those who entered the Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking. It was unprecedented even within a sect like the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace. Although Beihan Chu’s seniority was very low, his achievement deserved the highest care, protection and status the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace could afford.

Cries, gossip, cheers... the miracle and glory didn’t just belong to Northern Chill City, but also the Five Nether Ruins. The number of middle star realm Divine Sovereigns who entered the Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking in the history of the Northern Divine Region could be counted on two hands, so it made sense that everyone was basking in the afterglow.

On the Southern Phoenix Divine Country’s side, there were people screaming uncontrollably or gaping in disbelief. Even the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign himself was frozen and lost in thought... everyone, except one person. Yun Che noticed that the news barely fazed Nanhuang Chanyi, the woman looking as calm as still water.

His gaze moved toward the small profound ark in the sky. Although he didn’t try to penetrate the barrier with his spiritual perception by force, he noticed the presence of a person.

Is someone trapped inside that barrier?

Yun Che only glanced at the barrier briefly, however. His attention quickly shifted elsewhere.

“Royal father, this child is here on his master’s behalf to witness the Central Ruins Battle. He shouldn’t distract everyone from the main show any longer,” Beihan Chu said while bowing.

“Haha, alright.” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign literally couldn’t feel any better than he was feeling right now, so he waved a hand and spoke in a voice louder than even the crazy uproar that was engulfing the entire Central Ruins Battlefield, “Everyone, the Central Ruins Battle is a grand event that is held in the Five Nether Ruins every fifty years. It is the battle of Divine Kings, the profound way, and glory.”

“Originally, Venerable Hidden Sword of the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace was supposed to supervise this battle. Unfortunately, Venerable Hidden Sword is away for business, so the young palace master of Hidden Sword Palace, Beihan Chu will be replacing him.”

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign had addressed Beihan Chu as the “young palace master of Hidden Sword Palace” instead of his own son.

“Now, please take your seats, young palace master, Superior Unwhite.”

“I can’t,” Beihan Chu waved his hands urgently, “this child may be the disciple of the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace when away, but he’s only the son of Beihan at home. He cannot sit above his royal father.”

“Hehe, I appreciate the thought,” the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign said with a smile. “However, don’t forget that you’re representing your master today. The Central Ruins Battle is the battle between our four realms, and it’d look unfair if you were to supervise it as the son of Beihan.”

“...Alright, this child will obey his father’s will.” Only then did Beihan Chu take his seat, a seat that was above even the four realm kings!

The Central Ruins Battlefield finally fell silent, but almost no one was paying attention to the Central Ruins Battle. The Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking was such a stunning title that even now they felt like they were dreaming.

Also, who wouldn’t admire a person who remained pure and humble despite his achievements?

“Everyone,” the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign declared after the Central Ruins Battlefield was silent once more, “the rules of this Central Ruins Battle are the same as the previous. Ten participants from each side will be participating in the battle, and they need to be a Divine King and below three thousand years old.”

Any Divine King below three thousand years old was considered the highest being in a middle star realm. They were looked up to by all middle star realm profound practitioners.

But after Beihan Chu showed up... the gap between a Divine King below three thousand years old and a Divine Sovereign below six hundred years old was so big it wasn’t even funny.

Northern Chill City had always been the organizer of the Central Ruins Battle. This time, even the supervisor himself was the former Northern Chill Crown Prince. From this day onward, this champion of the Five Nether Ruins was going to climb even higher up the totem pole, and no force would be able to stop them anymore.

“The rules of battle haven’t changed either. The format is still King of the Hill, and the fight will continue until only one side remains standing on the battlefield. The order of the ranking is decided by whoever loses all their representatives first, and the ranking decides how the Central Ruins Realm will be divided among the realm king sects for the next fifty years to come!”

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign looked prouder than he ever was as he recited the rules. Then, he looked at Beihan Chu and said, “Young palace master, you’re the supervisor and witness of this Central Ruins Battle. You should be the one to kick off this battle.”

Beihan Chu stood up and bowed with a cultured smile on his face. However, instead of kicking off of the Central Ruins Battle, he said slowly, “To be honest, I have my own reason for attending this Central Ruins Battle besides obeying my master’s order.”

The entire place suddenly shut up and became as quiet as the grave. Everyone started looking toward the Southern Phoenix Divine Country consciously.

As if to emphasize something, Beihan Chu was facing the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's side directly.

"Senior Nanhuang," Beihan Chu bowed deeply toward the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign, "This junior fell in love with Princess Chanyi when he first met her at the Southern Phoenix Divine Country. However, this junior was young and lacking in every area except his passion at the time, so it was perfectly understandable that Princess Chanyi would turn down his confession."

"During my time as a disciple of the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace, there was nothing in the world that could distract me from cultivation except my love for Princess Chanyi. Perhaps the reason this junior has been able to come this far is because of the hope to become a worthy partner for Princess Chanyi one day."

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign got up to his feet with a smile. The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign was also smiling and nodding. However, everyone of the West Ruins Sect and the East Ruins Sect were either acting gloomy or gritting their teeth.

The rumors were true after all. Beihan Chu had attended the Central Ruins Battle for Nanhuang Chanyi!

Moreover, the situation was far worse than they initially thought! After all, it wasn't Beihan Chu the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace disciple who was proposing to Nanhuang Chanyi, but Beihan Chu, the Divine Sovereign of the "Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking"!

Moreover, Beihan Chu's attitude toward the Southern Phoenix Divine Country was unbelievably humble and polite. He could've held a grudge against Nanhuang Chanyi for rejecting his confession, but he didn't. He could've borne down on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country like heaven itself, but he didn't. There was only deep sincerity and yearning in his voice as he proposed from a most humble position.

Right now, Beihan Chu had to be famous throughout the upper star realms, and he was without a doubt the most well regarded disciple in the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace. The fact that he still wanted Nanhuang Chanyi could only be described as a favor from heaven!

Moreover, he hadn't needed to show up personally at all. All he needed to do was send down the order, and the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign would deliver Nanhuang Chanyi right to the doorsteps of the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace himself, and take pride in the fact afterward!

"Heh... that Nanhuang is one lucky bastard!" the East Ruins Divine Sovereign said with a hmp. There was no hiding the jealousy in his eyes.

"This Beihan Chu is truly pathetic," Dong Xueci also said hatefully. However, he started sweating buckets when he recalled his ridicule of Nanhuang Chanyi.

Beihan Chu continued to speak, "This junior finally achieved something after years of cultivation, and he believes that he's now barely worthy of Princess Chanyi's attention. That is why he dares to request the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign betroth Princess Chanyi to this junior today. This junior will treat Princess Chanyi's life like his own if you are agreeable to this... please fulfill my wish, senior."

Every word he said was sincere and heartfelt. The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign smiled and looked at the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign, asking, "What do you think, Nanhuang?"

Everyone knew he was wasting his breath. There was no way in hell the Southern Phoenix Divine Country would reject this proposal! The possibility never existed in the first place!

From the moment Beihan Chu entered the Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking, it was possible that he might become a Divine Master one day. If Nanhuang Chanyi was willing to marry Beihan Chu, then the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign's status would never be the same again... No one had any doubt that a heavenly fortune had landed right in the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's lap!

Finally, the timing of Beihan Chu's proposal was a little suspect... It had happened right before the Central Ruins Battle.

It was almost as if he was warning the East Ruins Sect and West Ruins Sect.

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign was beaming, and everyone in the royal family was overwhelmed by excitement and happiness. The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign said, "My girl is most fortunate to win your admiration, dear nephew. However, we should still consult my daughter's opinion first."

"Chanyi, is there anything you'd like to say?" the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign asked. "If you're too embarrassed to speak, I can accept this proposal on your behalf."

The center of everyone's attention, Nanhuang Chanyi, slowly got up to her feet. Her beauty still tickled the heart even though her face was covered up, and it was dawning on everyone why Beihan Chu was unable to forget her despite everything he had achieved... Everyone thought they knew what she was going to say. There simply didn't exist another possibility.

Nanhuang Chanyi's soft voice rang throughout the Central Ruins Battlefield, "There is no greater fortune for a woman than being reciprocated by the one she loves. Unfortunately, Young Master Beihan is not the one I love."

Her voice was a gentle wind in the air, but all it did was silence everyone's voice and freeze their expression.

Chapter 1564 - Prelude to Battle

Silence, terrible silence. Beihan Chu's smile froze on his face, and everyone including the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign, the East Ruins Divine Sovereign, and so on... thought that their ears were playing tricks on them.

Did Nanhuang Chanyi just... reject Beihan Chu's proposal?

Did she!?

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign was frozen on the spot too. Nanhuang Jian's mouth fell open before he turned around to glare at his sibling, "Chanyi, what... what nonsense are you spouting!"

Nanhuang Mofeng rose to his feet and forced a smile on his face. Loudly, he declared, "Northern Chill Divine Sovereign, young palace master, Chanyi has always been a mild-tempered person. She only said what she said earlier because she's naturally reserved. She absolutely didn't mean to turn you down."

“Chanyi.” His smile continued to hang unnaturally on his face, but his eyes were clearly narrowed into warning. “You seemed very happy when you heard that the young palace master was coming for you, weren’t you? There’s nothing to be embarrassed about in this. Just tell the young palace master what you really think, hahahaha.”

Nanhuang Mofeng’s laugh quickly softened the atmosphere, and the people of Southern Phoenix Divine Country started laughing as well. Nanhuang Jian hurriedly agreed, “That’s right! Chanyi has never been to the Central Ruins Realm. The only reason she came today is to meet the young palace master.”

“...” The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign didn’t say anything. There was a strange look in his solemn eyes that no one could discern or understand as he stared at Nanhuang Chanyi.

“Young Master Beihan,” Nanhuang Chanyi continued again, “Chanyi is very grateful for your feelings. However, my feelings don’t lie with you. The reason I came today is to tell you personally to cease this once and for all. I’m sure that your cultivation will improve once this is completely behind you.”

.....

The atmosphere immediately became stiffer and colder than it ever was.

If what she said earlier could be still be amended and saved, then this statement was impossible to rescue!

Nanhuang Chanyi had rejected Beihan Chu!

She had done it right in front of millions of Five Nether Ruins profound practitioners, and her chosen words were about as blunt as it could get!

The one illogical choice that couldn’t happen no matter what had just happened right in front of them.

Beihan Chu’s expression changed... Although he was doing his best to keep a cool and relaxed smile, it was obvious that his facial muscles were twitching.

Beihan Chu had come as the young palace master of Nine Lights Heavenly Palace and a Divine Sovereign of the Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking. He was certain that Nanhuang Chanyi had no reason to turn him down this time.

But she did... and she did it right in front of everyone.

The reason he chose to propose to Nanhuang Chanyi in a public setting instead of a private one was because the possibility that she might reject him never crossed his mind, not even once.

“Hmph. To think that a mere middle realm woman would... what unbelievable foolishness.” Superior Unwhite let out a cold hmph as fury burned inside him.

Not only was Nanhuang Chanyi stupid beyond comprehension, she had hurt Beihan Chu’s face deeply. How could he not be angered by this?

“Chanyi, you... you...” Nanhuang Mofeng’s face spasmed unnaturally as his fury rose to hair raising levels. “Did a devil possess your mind!?”

“Uncle Feng,” Nanhuang Chanyi said indifferently, “please watch yourself.”

“...” Nanhuang Mofeng’s face became distorted.

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign let out a heavy sigh before cupping his hands together and facing toward the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign. “Brother Beihan, my daughter has always been a cold person. She’s not trying to displease your son on purpose, she just isn’t interested in relationships, that’s all. Nanhuang is sad that things turned out this way, but the love of youngsters has never been easy to force. Let us leave this at that, shall we?”

“...You are most right, Nanhuang.” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign nodded with a smile. Not one trace of anger could be spotted on his face.

However, even a retard could tell that the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign was burning up on the inside.

It wasn’t exactly incomprehensible why Nanhuang Chanyi had rejected Beihan Chu the first time. He was just the Northern Chill Crown Prince at the time, and their statuses were almost even. But now Beihan Chu’s status was much higher than Chanyi’s, but she still turned him down in the end...

Anyone would’ve felt the same in his place.

“What’s going on?” The East Ruins Divine Sovereign frowned deeply in puzzlement.

Dong Xueci was speechless for a long time. Then, he clapped his hands and laughed loudly, “Interesting, how interesting! I wasn’t expecting such an interesting show today!”

“Hmph, number one beauty of the Nether Ruins? Did all her growth go to her body and not her brain?” Dong Xuekui sneered, “She turned a gift from heaven into a complete disaster! She’s the shame of all woman of the Nether Ruins!”

All Nanhuang Chanyi needed to do was nod, and Northern Chill City and Southern Phoenix Divine Country would be tied by marriage. After that, Nanhuang Chanyi and the Southern Phoenix Divine Country would be elevated to heights beyond imagination.

Of course, rejecting the proposal would anger Beihan Chu and Northern Chill City.

One choice led to heaven, and the other to hell.

It was such a simple choice, but Nanhuang Chanyi chose to enter hell of her own accord. Why!?

“The Central Ruins Battle is what’s important today. Chu’er...” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign turned to look at his son and said, “There’s no need to force something that isn’t meant to be. You’re a proud child of heaven who entered the Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking, so you should elevate the quality of your judgment and desire appropriately! When one day the world is truly yours to look down upon, you’ll only be grateful for the decision made today.”

It sounded like the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign was consoling his son in a tactful manner, but the veiled insult in his words was impossible to ignore. The already ugly looks of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country’s crowd turned even uglier, but no one could mount a retort.

They knew full well that Northern Chill City would’ve turned against them if this had taken place anywhere else.

When the waves of shock and puzzlement had passed, the look in the onlooker's eyes turned to pity. The East Ruins Realm and the West Ruins Realm especially were taking joy in their misfortune.

"Royal father's lesson is correct. This child won't forget what happened today," Beihan Chu said with his eyes closed. When he opened them again, he declared loudly with a changed expression, "I, Beihan Chu will be supervising the Central Ruins Battle on behalf of my master. No participant is allowed to break the battle rules, and no onlookers are allowed to interfere with the battle without good reason... all disobedience will be punished without question."

It sounded like Beihan Chu was trying to wipe out everything that had happened by forcing everyone's attention onto the Central Ruins Battle. "Nine Lights Heavenly Palace Beihan Chu, young palace master of the Hidden Sword Palace, hereby announces the start of the Central Ruins Battle!"

His aura abruptly burst into existence, sweeping everyone's heart and soul with the might of a Divine Sovereign.

The ranking of the Central Ruins Battle was determined by whoever lost all their participants first, so the first person to stand on the battlefield was without a doubt at a disadvantage. It was determined that the champion of the previous Central Ruins Battle would take the lead, and this year was no exception.

The only advantage of leading the Central Ruins Battle was the ability to challenge any side by force when no one was willing to step up.

There was a clank of metal, and a brawny figure leaped up from the north and landed at the center of the battlefield. Raising his arm and causing a pitch black hurricane to surge around him, the man declared in a voice that reached every corner of the Central Ruins Battlefield, "This one is Beihan Mingzhi of Northern Chill City. Is there anyone who'd like to meet me in battle?"

His roar was met by complete silence. No one from the other three realms had answered his call.

Not all level ten Divine Kings shared the same amount of profound energy. In fact, the gulf between a beginner level ten Divine King and a peak level ten Divine King could almost be seen as two separate realms.

Even if two people shared the exact same profound strength and mastery, the strength of one's profound arts could still easily decide victory or defeat.

Unfortunately for the others, Northern Chill City was the king in both cases!

That was why no sects were willing to take the first fight, especially not against Northern Chill City!

Time passed in silence, and ten breaths quickly passed everyone by. When no one had stepped up to answer Beihan Mingzhi's challenge, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign stood up and declared, "Ten breaths had passed. Mingzhi, you're now allowed to choose your opponent! If the opponent refuses to accept, Northern Chill City will take the win automatically."

Beihan Mingzhi smiled and suddenly turned toward the south side. His smile turned meaningful, and his voice quickly became uncaring and distracted, "I choose the Southern Phoenix Divine Country. Pleased to meet you in battle."

While he was speaking, Beihan Mingzhi extended his palm and wiggled his fingers a bit... It was undoubtedly a gesture meant to taunt, or even humiliate the Southern Phoenix Divine Country.

Everyone on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's side turned pale, and the crowd broke into small murmurs. The first fight of the Central Ruins Battle often went like this, but Northern Chill City had never chosen the Southern Phoenix Divine Country.

It was because the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's battle formation was too weak. It was simply beneath the ruler of the Nether Ruins to challenge the weakest realm of them all!

But things were different now!

No one really felt surprised by Northern Chill City's decision. It was completely the Southern Phoenix Divine Country, or more accurately Nanhuang Chanyi's, fault!

If she had accepted Beihan Chu's proposal, forget Northern Chill City, even the East Ruins Sect and the West Ruins Sect had to take care not to humiliate the Southern Phoenix Divine Country. It was precisely why Beihan Chu had chosen to announce his proposal right before the battle began.

But the outcome of that proposal had surprised everyone, and it didn't take a genius to figure out what was going to befall the Southern Phoenix Divine Country... Northern Chill City was bound to terrorize the Southern Phoenix Divine Country until the end, and the East Ruins Sect and the West Ruins Sect would support them wholeheartedly to get into the good graces of Beihan Chu.

Meanwhile, everyone on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's side was wearing very ugly looks on their faces. Clenching his fists and gritting his teeth, Nanhuang Mofeng said suddenly, "Chanyi... this is all your fault!!"

The outburst was minor and controlled only because they were in public. He would've exploded already if they were in a private setting!

Nanhuang Chanyi didn't say anything.

"I'll go!" Nanhuang Jian stepped forward. They couldn't afford to lose this fight after such a taunt. Even if they did, he had to at least make sure that the Southern Phoenix Divine Country didn't lose without dignity.

Nanhuang Mofeng raised an arm and stopped him. "Jian'er, you're needed for the important matches. Canglang, you go!"

"Yes!"

A man in blue clothes leaped into the battlefield and faced Beihan Mingzhi directly, "I am Wei Canglang of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country. Pleased to meet you in battle."

Wei Canglang was one of the reinforcements the Southern Phoenix Divine Country had recruited for the Central Ruins Battle. In fact, he was the strongest of all the reinforcements they had hired. He was one of the only four level ten Divine Kings in the Southern Phoenix battle formation, and they had no choice but to send him out because of Beihan Mingzhi's brazen taunt.

There was one problem with this decision though. Nanhuang Chanyi was supposed to lead this battle!

But no one had asked for her opinion at all.

The level of treatment she received before and after her rejection was like heaven and earth.

Crown Princess? Everyone knew that the only reason the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign had crowned her as the Crown Princess was because he thought that they and Northern Chill City were going to be tied by marriage. After that fiasco just now, it would be a miracle if the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign's guts weren't green with regret.

There was no way Nanhuang Chanyi would remain the Crown Princess after the Central Ruins Battle was over. Her status would be withdrawn even faster than Nanhuang Jian, and she would be punished severely for her terrible judgment today. She might not even remain a princess after this.

Chapter 1565 - The Miserable Southern Phoenix

"Hmph." Beihan Mingzhi showed Wei Canglang none of the appropriate respect he should receive as an opponent. He even narrowed his eyes and let out a snort... Since he wasn't trying to hide it, it was clear for everyone to hear.

Wei Canglang frowned deeply, but he didn't say anything. He let loose his profound energy and transformed the surrounding darkness into thousands of black blades.

Everyone who participated in the Central Ruins Battle was famous, and Wei Canglang was no exception. The Devil Blade Art he cultivated was extremely brutal in the sense that an inch-long blade could turn an entire mountain into black dust.

Beihan Mingzhi didn't move a muscle, however. He hadn't even assumed a battle stance yet. The only thing moving around his body was a spinning cyclone of darkness.

Staring at Wei Canglang through narrowed eyes, the man suddenly sneered and spoke softly so that only his opponent could hear him, "Weren't you watching earlier, Wei Canglang? The Southern Phoenix Royal Family is foolishly walking to their own deaths, and the day my crown prince rises is the day the Southern Phoenix dies. You are a reputable warrior, so why did you choose to serve a bunch of idiots as a dog? Are all Southern Phoenix Divine Kings stupid dogs?"

"You!" Wei Canglang grew angry. Level ten Divine Kings were extremely revered beings in the middle star realm, and Wei Canglang had never been on the receiving end of such humiliation before today.

He also knew why his opponent was acting the way he did. As his anger and his frustration grew, he said, "You are courting death!!"

"You think you can say that to me?" Beihan Mingzhi grinned. "Alright, come on then. Show me how much salt you're worth."

He folded his arms before his chest slowly and said even more hurtful words to Wei Canglang, "We share the same level, but you are just the stupid dog of the Southern Phoenix. I would be putting dirt on my own face if I attacked first."

"Crack!" Wei Canglang nearly crushed his own teeth. Furious, he let out a growl and adjusted his expression and posture. The pitch black blade he had just created froze for an instant before an unusual aura flowed out of it.

“Ultimate Devil Sword!?” Shocked cries came from every direction. The expressions of those in the Southern Phoenix battle formation changed as well.

The Ultimate Devil Sword was the strongest devil blade Wei Canglang possessed! Since Beihan Mingzhi had kept his volume to a minimum, no one was able to pick up what they were saying. No one understood why Wei Canglang had suddenly erupted in anger and used his trump card so quickly.

In that moment, the calm, composed Beihan Mingzhi who just said he would be putting dirt on his own face if he attacked first suddenly dashed toward Wei Canglang like a phantom and sent the wave of darkness around him toward his opponent. The Ultimate Devil Sword took several breaths to create, and Wei Canglang didn't think that Beihan Mingzhi would actually seize the initiative after that taunt. Provoked into a violent rage, Wei Canglang hadn't set up any defenses to protect himself, so the black cyclone was able to strike him perfectly in the chest.

“You...” Wei Canglang's eyes widened as Beihan Mingzhi's scornful eyes passed through his vision. In the next instant, he was sent flying straight backwards.

Normally, it took a while for two level ten Divine Kings to decide the victor between them no matter the gap. But Wei Canglang was at his most defenseless while he was enraged and creating the Ultimate Devil Sword, so he wasn't able to halt his own momentum even after he recalled his profound energy. The man flew straight out of bounds before crashing heavily to the ground.

Anyone who fainted, surrendered, or was knocked out of bounds was considered to have lost the battle!

“Wei Canglang is out of bounds. Beihan Mingzhi wins!”

The declaration resounded throughout the battlefield. Everyone was dumbstruck for a moment, and most people didn't even realize what had happened until after the fact.

Lose? Did Wei Canglang lose just like that!?

“This is...” Everyone on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's side grew wide-eyed with fear. Nanhuang Mofeng looked like he had just swallowed a piece of shit raw.

The reason he sent Wei Canglang, one of the four strongest profound practitioners of the Southern Phoenix battle formation was to protect their honor! Even if Wei Canglang turned out to be no match for Beihan Mingzhi, at the worst, it should be a sound defeat.

But one hit... it took only one hit from Beihan Mingzhi to send Wei Canglang flying out of bounds.

It was the easiest, ugliest, and most shameful defeat one could suffer.

“Hahaha, hahahahaha!” The people of the East Ruins Sect and the West Ruins Sect broke the short silence and laughed loudly without restraint. The laughter instantly pierced the Southern Phoenix people's souls like sharp spikes.

Even the Southern Phoenix profound practitioners who came to watch the battle felt embarrassed on their behalf.

Boom!

There was an explosion as Wei Canglang leaped back to his feet. It was clear from the small trace of blood trickling down the corner of his lips that he hadn't suffered too much damage, but the shame and anger he was feeling were so terrible that they distorted his whole expression. "Beihan Mingzhi, you..."

"Enough!" The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign interrupted suddenly. No one could accept a loss like this, but a loss was a loss, and acting like a sore loser would only increase one's humiliation and the disdain of others even further. "Your opponent didn't break any battle rules at all. If you cannot accept this result, think on exactly how you lost this fight."

"..." Wei Canglang gritted his teeth and glared at Beihan Mingzhi. The only thing he got in return was a scornful gaze. It was as if his opponent was saying through his eyes, "You really are a stupid dog."

It took nearly all the willpower he ever had in his life, but he managed to restrain himself from fighting Beihan Mingzhi to the bitter end regardless of the cost. Hunching his back and bowing his head, he returned to the Southern Phoenix battle formation and took his seat.

Northern Chill City was the unshakeable ruler of the Central Ruins Battle, and they were normally too proud to use such petty methods. Today's situation was clearly different, however... not only did Northern Chill City want the Southern Phoenix Divine Country to lose, they wanted them to lose in the most miserable and ugly fashion possible!

"It's not your fault," Nanhuang Mofeng said as he shot Nanhuang Chanyi a cold look. He had power, status, and seniority over Nanhuang Chanyi, but he normally restrained himself from excessive behavior because the latter was now the Crown Princess. Right now though, not a shred of respect could be seen in his eyes or heard from his voice. All he had left for her was icy pressure. "Chanyi, the punishment dealt to a sinner of the Southern Phoenix... you had best be prepared."

Nanhuang Chanyi continued to stay silent.

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign shot Nanhuang Mofeng a look, but didn't say anything. It seemed like he was agreeing with the old man.

"Heh, are all Southern Phoenix's peak Divine Kings this fragile?" Beihan Mingzhi shook his wrist a bit while sneering disdainfully, "How disappointing."

Not only did he humiliate the Southern Phoenix in the worst way possible, he ridiculed them openly right after the fact. Everyone on the Southern Phoenix's side was grinding their teeth in anger, but they weren't in a position to vent out loud. Instead, they consciously turned toward the silent Nanhuang Chanyi and glared at her... Whatever respect and admiration they felt for her earlier had all turned into blame and anger.

"Who's next!?"

A participant from the West Ruins Sect leaped into the air and landed on the battlefield right after Beihan Mingzhi was done speaking, "Han Shao of the West Ruins Realm is pleased to meet you in battle!"

His entrance nailed down the order of this year's Central Ruins Battle.

“This one knows that he’s no match for Brother Mingzhi, but he’s certain he won’t be taken out in one hit at least.” Han Shao delivered a proverbial slap right across the Southern Phoenix Divine Country’s face while chuckling.

“Superfluous words are unnecessary on the battlefield,” said the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign, but he was almost smiling, and there was a look of concealed praise behind his expression.

“Haha, please!” Beihan Mingzhi said with a laugh.

After that, Beihan Mingzhi and Han Shao fought, the power of the great Divine Kings clashing mightily against one another. It was as if the Central Ruins Battle truly started with this fight, not the joke that was the previous one.

A long fight later, Beihan Mingzhi won to no one’s surprise.

The East Ruins Realm was the next side to send a participant. Their choice was Zhong Yanfeng, an outsider the East Ruins Realm had hired and a level ten Divine King who dominated the western realms.

Beihan Mingzhi had exhausted quite a bit of power fighting Han Shao earlier, but Beihan Mingzhi still had some slight advantage. Still, it wouldn’t be an easy win, and he would be almost completely spent after this.

After the East Ruins Realm was the Southern Phoenix Divine Country.

If the Southern Phoenix Divine Country sent in another level ten Divine King, victory was all but certain. They would be able to save some face like this.

However, Zhong Yanfeng didn’t attack Beihan Mingzhi. Instead, he shot Northern Chill City a look before smiling, “This one seldom left the East Ruins Realm, but he has heard of Brother Mingzhi’s prowess. There is no way this one will be able to beat you, so I surrender.”

Waa

The current winner of the Central Ruins Battle must accept the challenge of others. Even if the challenger lost, they would still be able to deplete the winner’s profound energy. That was why almost no one had surrendered during the Central Ruins Battle.

The surrender of Zhong Yanfeng caused an uproar, but the spectators quickly realized what was going on and turned to shoot the Southern Phoenix Divine Country pitying looks instead.

“Hahaha.” Beihan Mingzhi laughed loudly. “Brother Zhong’s broadmindedness is truly admirable. Beihan shall accept this favor.”

“Zhong Yanfeng surrenders. Beihan Mingzhi wins!”

As it turned out, Northern Chill City wasn’t their only tormentor. The West Ruins Realm and the East Ruins Realm were taking turns stepping on their face in public as well... With just a few words, Nanhuang Chanyi had managed to drop the Southern Phoenix Divine Country from heaven to hell.

Everyone from the royal family to the spectators of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country was ashen-faced and furious. But... what could they do to change this?

The Southern Phoenix Divine Country sent in their second profound practitioner. It was yet another level ten Divine King.

Unfortunately, Zhong Yanfeng's surrender meant that Beihan Mingzhi had a lot of energy left. Not only did he defeat the level ten Divine King, he even left them with serious injuries.

Four sides were competing in the Central Ruins Battle, so the side that could only enter the battlefield again after the next three matches were over. This continued until all sides except one had lost all ten participants.

This was a battle between peak Divine Kings, and it was about as epic and exciting as it was expected to be. Every Divine King got to show off their skills, and the spectators were boiling with excitement and wonder.

However... everyone noticed that something was off.

Northern Chill City's overall strength remained the best of all realms. Their profound practitioners lingered on the battlefield for the greatest amount of time, and they lost the fewest matches. The East Ruins Realm and the West Ruins Realm's shared a similar number of victories and losses.

But the Southern Phoenix Divine Country...

Every time it was the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's turn, Northern Chill, West Ruins, and East Ruins found ways to make it so that the victor had more than enough strength left to torment their challenger.

The first fight... the second fight... the third fight... the seventh fight... the eighth fight...

Every single fight was a loss to the Southern Phoenix Divine Country!

Historically, the Southern Phoenix Divine Country was the weakest side in the Central Ruins Battle, but there were some fights that they won. This time was completely different. Not only did they lose every single fight, the losses were either incredibly ugly or miserable.

Northern Chill City, East Ruins Sect, West Ruins Sect, and Nine Lights Heavenly Palace... any one of these sects had more than enough power to overcome the Southern Phoenix Divine Country. Just because Nanhuang Chanyi decided to turn down Beihan Chu's marriage proposal, they had worked together to trample the Southern Phoenix Divine Country completely...

Even though there was no prior agreement, it was obvious that the three sides were working together to make the Southern Phoenix Divine Country lose every fight in this Central Ruins Battle!

They wanted the Southern Phoenix Divine Country to leave an unprecedented mark of shame in the history of the Central Ruins Battle, and the Five Nether Ruins itself!

No one was surprised that Northern Chill City would react this way, but did the Southern Phoenix Divine Country owe a blood debt to the East Ruins Sect and the West Ruins Sect as well?

No, of course not.

In a world where strength was king, and power decides everything, who wouldn't want to trample over a weakling who was destined for ruin and curry favor with an expert that will soar to the nine heavens?

Northern Chill City had always been the strongest realm, but they obviously weren't worth this much respect... until Beihan Chu entered the "Northern Region Heavenly Sovereign Ranking" that was. If they could get close to him and win his goodwill, then no amount of shamelessness was too much.

The Central Ruins Battle was still ongoing, but everyone on the Southern Phoenix's side had lost all interest in the proceedings happening before them. In fact, not a peep had come out of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's barrier since a long time ago.

Even the last couple combatants on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's side had lost all will to fight... If there was a choice to escape this battle, they would've done so already.

"Hmph, how terribly boring," Qianye Ying'er muttered to herself with her eyes closed... It was a bit unfair to her put her through this, seeing that she was a former peak Divine Master, and this was a cheap show put together by a bunch of lowly Divine Kings.

Yun Che still hadn't said a word. In fact, most of his attention was on Nanhuang Chanyi all this time.

It was because the culprit behind the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's "downfall" was acting far too calm.

"Seen enough yet?" Nanhuang Chanyi said suddenly before turning to face him.

This was the first time she said something after the Central Ruins Battle officially began.

"..." The corner of Yun Che's lips curled slightly before he answered, "Next time, get naked before you ask me that question!"

Chapter 1566 - Yun Che Enters The Battle

"..." Nanhuang Chanyi was clearly surprised by his words. Her voice turned a bit cooler after hearing his reply. "Lecher."

Yun Che stopped examining Nanhuang Chanyi through his spiritual perception. Instead, he openly stared at her before saying, "I don't sense any panic, shock, anger, or even killing intent from you. You don't care about what's going on at all... You are capable of feeling emotions, aren't you?"

"Another person who said the same thing might've died for their transgression already," said Nanhuang Chanyi. Her voice was still as soft as smoke and devoid of emotion.

"..." Yun Che frowned slightly before asking, "I must admit that my curiosity is growing. Why have you chosen me?"

"No, it is the other way around," she replied, "why have you chosen me?"

"Instinct."

His reply seemed to draw a smile on her face, "How can a man's instinct compare to that of a woman's?"

Yun Che looked away and stopped asking questions.

Boom!

There was a loud impact and a cry of pain, and the ninth participant of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country was defeated in five moves. No one was surprised by this result in the slightest... A level nine Divine King was nothing more but a weakling and a filler. The enemy sects didn't even need to set them up to beat them.

The Southern Phoenix profound practitioner hit the ground hard, unconscious. A pool of blood spread swiftly beneath their body. It was clear that they had suffered a most insidious blow.

If this was in the past, the Southern Phoenix Divine Country would've erupted in anger and denounced their opponent for the malicious attack. This time though, all they could do was grit their teeth, swallow the blood that threatened to pour out of their throats, and carry the participant away for treatment.

All they asked now was for the Central Ruins Battle to end as quickly as possible and perform reparations as best they could later... They absolutely, absolutely couldn't afford to offend Beihan Chu.

After all, considering Beihan Chu's current status, offending him was the same as offending the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace!

Northern Chill City might be strong, but they didn't have enough power to sign their death sentence. However, the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace could!

The fight was still ongoing, and the noises and cheers hadn't stopped even once throughout the Central Ruins Battle. The Southern Phoenix Divine Country was the only one that looked as silent as the dead.

Northern Chill City still had six remaining participants, while the East Ruins Sect and the West Ruins Sect had four... whereas the Southern Phoenix Divine Country was down to their last participant already.

"Jiang'er," Nanhuang Mofeng said solemnly, "we've lost nine battles, and we only have one participant left... do you understand what this means?"

"I understand!" Nanhuang Jian nodded back with equal solemnity. "I will win this last battle no matter the cost. As a prince of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country, I will not allow our sect to leave a winless record in the Central Ruins Battle even if I have to stake my life for it!"

The Central Ruins Battle was still ongoing.

The East Ruins Sect lost against Northern Chill City, and Northern Chill City lost against the West Ruins Sect.

It was the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's turn to enter the battlefield again... their last chance to redeem themselves.

All eyes were trained on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country immediately, the identity of their last combatant was all but certain. It could only be the former Southern Phoenix Crown Prince and the strongest expert of their battle formation, Nanhuang Jian.

The reason the Southern Phoenix Divine Country hadn't sent in Nanhuang Jian all this time was for this final battle of honor.

They wouldn't allow the eternal shame that was a winless streak to happen no matter what!

Meanwhile, Northern Chill City, East Ruins Sect, and West Ruins Sect were all watching the Southern Phoenix Divine Country with varying levels of scorn. Beihan Chu hadn't said a word since the start of the battle just how an impartial supervisor and witness should act, but everyone knew that he was the driving force behind the three realm king sects' unusual behavior.

Right now, the man standing on the battlefield was the new sect master of the King Prayer Sect, Qi Hanshan. In the West Ruins Realm, his sect was second only to the West Ruins Sect. Qi Hanshan was almost three thousand years old, and he had been a level ten Divine King for five hundred years. Naturally, his profound strength and experience as a peak Divine King didn't leave much room for wishful thinking.

The Northern Chill profound practitioner who fought Qi Hanshan earlier had "lost" the battle in just a couple of exchanges, so the latter was practically at full strength. Everyone knew that the realm kings sects were conspiring to eliminate the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's last hope and pride, to force them into leaving a mark of eternal shame in the Central Ruins Realm.

Qi Hanshan stared at Nanhuang Jian with a smile of ridicule and provocation.

"Jian'er," Nanhuang Mofeng said in a low tone, "This isn't about our result in this Central Ruins Battle. This is about defending the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's final pride. Now go and show your strength to the world!"

"Yes!" Nanhuang Jian replied simply before clenching his fists until the joints popped. His muscles bulged bigger and bigger, and his aggression was in full display even though he wasn't on the battlefield yet.

"Wait!"

A calm voice suddenly interrupted Nanhuang Jian right before he was about to leap onto the stage.

Nanhuang Chanyi stood up and said slowly, "Yun Che, you'll enter the battlefield as the Southern Phoenix battle formation's last representative!"

Her words stunned everyone present. Nanhuang Mofeng turned around and exclaimed in shock, "What did you say!?"

Nanhuang Chanyi had kept her silence since the start of the Central Ruins Battle, and everyone thought it was because she was both aware and ashamed of the terrible mistake she had committed earlier.

No one had expected her to stand up at the last moment and spout such... ridiculous words.

"Chanyi... enough!" Nanhuang Mofeng said with an ugly expression.

"Big brother, please return to your seat," Nanhuang Chanyi said. "Enter the battlefield, Yun Che!"

Yun Che rose to his feet.

"Absolutely disgraceful!" Nanhuang Mofeng shouted at Nanhuang Chanyi. His hair was standing, and his eyes were round with anger. The anger he had been bottling up until now erupted completely. "Haven't you caused enough trouble already! It's already a disgrace to bring a level five Divine King into our battle formation, and now you're going to make him fight in our last match of this Central Ruins Battle!?"

While pointing a finger at Yun Che, Nanhuang Mofeng growled, "Are you trying to turn us into a laughingstock for the entire world and strip us of our last dignity!?"

"I know what I'm doing," Nanhuang Chanyi replied.

Nanhuang Mofeng turned his back toward her furiously and ordered Nanhuang Jian, "Ignore her! Jian'er, enter the battlefield!"

"Uncle Feng, I am the highest decision maker at this Central Ruins Battle," said Nanhuang Chanyi with a tinge of icy pressure. "My word is law on this battlefield! Not even father may interfere with my decision, much less you!"

Nanhuang Mofeng shot her a sideways glance before replying in a heavy tone, "You are the decision maker of nothing from the moment you drove the Southern Phoenix Divine Country to a dead end for your own selfish wishes!"

"Maybe there's hope yet for you if you go to Beihan Chu and beg him for his mercy later, but right now you're nothing more than a sinner!"

Inside the barrier, no one dared to say a word.

The onlookers noticed what was going on inside the barrier and laughed even harder at them... They were already on their last legs, and they chose this moment to argue with each other?

"I'm still the one royal father chose to lead this battle even if I'm a sinner," said Nanhuang Chanyi. "Yun Che must be the one to enter this fight!"

Nanhuang Mofeng didn't relent in the slightest, "Do you seriously think that anyone will listen to you after everything you've pulled!?"

"Chanyi." the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign spoke up suddenly. "Are you sure you want to do this?"

"Yes," Nanhuang Chanyi replied softly. No one could see through the jeweled tassels and figure out what kind of eyes and expression she was making.

"Mm," the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign nodded in acknowledgement, "Jian'er, return to your seat. Yun Che, you will fight on behalf of the Southern Phoenix."

"Royal father?" Nanhuang Jian froze. He couldn't believe his own ears.

"Your Majesty, you..." Nanhuang Mofeng said urgently, "Are you just going to watch us become a laughingstock for the entire world!"

"I said that I'd let Chanyi decide everything. I'll not go back on my own words," the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign replied.

"Which is more important, a royal decree or the pride of our country!?" Nanhuang Mofeng was shaking with anger. "She's the reason we fell into this state in the first place! She's bringing nothing but shame to herself by sending Yun Che into battle... why are you still allowing her to continue on this fool's path?"

“Bringing shame to myself?” Nanhuang Chanyi interrupted, “How do you know Yun Che can’t win?”

“You think he can... win?” Nanhuang Mofeng would be laughing if he wasn’t so angry, “Were you possessed by a devil or something??”

“Uncle Feng, let’s make a bet, shall we?” Nanhuang Chanyi said, “What will you do if Yun Che wins this battle?”

“Heh!” A level five Divine King of unknown origin beating the famous peak Divine King Qi Hanshan? Nanhuang Mofeng felt like she was mocking his intelligence and experience, “I’ll forfeit my life if he wins!”

“That is too much,” Nanhuang Chanyi said. “Uncle Feng is perfectly loyal to the Southern Phoenix, so that’s an unacceptable outcome no matter the severity of your mistake. If Yun Che wins, I want you to kowtow to me three times as punishment for your crime of disobedience and disrespect.”

“If Yun Che loses,” Nanhuang Chanyi continued before Nanhuang Mofeng could reply, “I will personally head to Nine Lights Heavenly Palace and save the Southern Phoenix Divine Country from danger myself.”

“Will you take this bet?”

“Hmph, where is she getting that confidence from?” Qianye Ying’er said with a hmph.

“That is a good question,” Yun Che replied indifferently.

“...” Qianye Ying’er narrowed her eyes while staring at Nanhuang Chanyi... A certain possibility had entered her mind.

She just hadn’t expected it to show up in a middle star realm.

“Alright, you better not forget about this!” There was no way Nanhuang Mofeng was going to turn down a bet like this. “I’ll follow your bet! If this boy loses, you’ll head to Nine Lights Heavenly Palace and atone for today’s sin!”

“Yun Che, go,” Nanhuang Chanyi finally said to Yun Che.

“What will happen to me if I lose?” Yun Che asked curiously.

“You won’t die,” Nanhuang Chanyi replied.

“Interesting,” Yun Che said with a fleeting smile. He suddenly felt a bit of curiosity toward Nanhuang Chanyi. He suddenly felt like knowing the face behind the jeweled tassels.

“Chanyi, you...”

Nanhuang Jian still wanted to say something, but Yun Che had already leaped onto the battlefield before he could say anything. He stared Qi Hanshan of the Western Ruins Realm directly in the eye.

The barrier impeded sound, not vision, so no one knew what the people of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country were actually arguing about. Everyone was stunned when they noticed that their last

representative wasn't Nanhuang Jian, and eyeballs clattered to the ground when they sensed Yun Che's aura. Some even spat out a mouthful of saliva in disbelief.

Even Beihan Chu, the supervisor and witness who hadn't moved from his seat or shown much expression since the start of the battle was leaning forward. He looked as if he couldn't believe his own senses.

"Yun Che." Yun Che reported his name indifferently.

"..." Qi Hanshan was absolutely speechless for a couple of breaths. Then, a tremor spread from his lips to his entire face.

A very, very long silence later, an uproar broke out across the entire Central Ruins Battlefield. The phrase "level five Divine King" only made the uproar louder.

Almost everyone on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's side were bowing their heads deeply. They didn't even need to listen to know what kind of noise was tearing the Central Ruins Battlefield apart.

The crowd must think that the Southern Phoenix Divine Country had gone insane... Even they thought that the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign and Nanhuang Chanyi had gone insane.

Chapter 1567 - Sent Flying in One Kick

"Level five Divine King? What kind of a joke is this?"

"Did someone pour shit into the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's brain!"

"What's going on? Didn't they still have Nanhuang Jian?"

"Are they just doing whatever they want because it's already over? No... are they purposely tossing their face on the ground for the enemy to step on?"

"It's not like Nanhuang Jian absolutely can't beat Qi Hanshan. I understand they're giving up, but isn't this a little bit excessive?"

.....

Astonishment, puzzlement, guffaw, and ridicule... Almost no one on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's dared to look up and face the torrent of gazes and noise gushing their way. They had never felt so humiliated their whole life.

"Heh, it looks like the Southern Phoenix Divine Country is doing this on purpose to sicken us." The East Ruins Divine Sovereign stared at the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign from the corner of his eyes before a scornful smile entered his features. "Who knew that a blessing from heaven would turn out this ugly when spurned? Tsk tsk."

Before today, the weakest Divine King to ever enter the Central Ruins Battle was a level eight Divine King. At the time, their presence had already triggered a long period of ridicule during and after the battle.

But now, the Southern Phoenix Divine Country was sending a level five Divine King as their last representative! They chose to do this even though Nanhuang Jian was warming the bench all this time!

How else should they interpret this besides humiliating oneself to sicken others and the Central Ruins Battle?

“Hmm?” The East Ruins Divine Sovereign suddenly raised an eyebrow in surprise. “Is that Yun Che?”

“It’s him! How can this be?” Dong Jiukui exclaimed in surprise at the same time.

“He’s that Yun Che who dominated the eastern region in a day!” Dong Jiukui said, “There cannot be any mistake. But why is he on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country’s side?”

“It’s bad enough he ran to the Southern Phoenix Divine Country, but now he’s even thrown to the frontlines like a dog!” Dong Xueci laughed loudly. “Interesting! How very interesting! I suppose this clown will soon be known throughout the East Ruins, hahahaha!”

“Hmph! I suppose he’s the perfect choice if you need a clown to shame yourself,” Dong Xueyan also commented in disgust.

“What’s going on?” Their conversation caused the East Ruins Divine Sovereign and Dong Jiukui to turn their heads at the same time. “Didn’t you say he didn’t show up?”

“That is correct. He hadn’t shown up at our sect because he chose to come directly to the Central Ruins Realm instead. I ran into him on my way here, and not only did he fail to show remorse or apologize to me for his disobedience, he had spoken very rudely to me. It was clear that he didn’t care about the East Ruins Sect at all.”

All of Dong Xueci’s previous displeasure was replaced by deep satisfaction as he recounted his tale. “So when he came to join the East Ruins Sect, I told Xuekui to withdraw his East Ruins Token and kick him out of our sect. Hmph, if we were anywhere but the Central Ruins Realm right now, I would’ve broken all his limbs already.”

“Yun Che must know that he cannot stay in the East Ruins Realm after he was exiled by big brother and I, so like the shameless bastard he is he joined the Southern Phoenix Divine Country instead. I bet he didn’t think he would be pushed onto the battlefield like a clown, heh.” Dong Xueyan chuckled once before recalling the day she went to the eastern realms to recruit Yun Che a month ago. It was a rather shameful moment.

Dong Jiukui frowned deeply when he heard this, but the East Ruins Divine Sovereign seemed unperturbed. He asked, “Is that true? Jiukui, didn’t you say he’s only a level one Divine King?”

“That is what I saw back then,” Dong Jiukui said, “However, it’s clear now that he’s holding a profound artifact that can disguise his cultivation level. After all, there’s no way he can progress four levels in just a month. Now that I think about it, he may still be disguising his cultivation level... After all, it is a fact that he had defeated the Sun Death Sword Master and Forefather Ming Peng.”

“Have you witnessed that with your own eyes, Elder Jiu?”

Dong Jiukui shook his head and said, “No. But my experience is telling me that he is special in some ways.”

“This means your assessment of him is really just a guess,” Dong Xueci said slowly, “If you were wrong, doesn’t that mean that we, the East Ruins Sect was played like a fiddle like him?”

“It no longer matters. Let’s just pretend that this person never existed in the East Ruins Realm,” the East Ruins Divine Sovereign said. Even if Yun Che did disguise his cultivation level using a profound artifact, he was at best a level ten Divine King. Their battle formation had no lack of level Divine Kings, so losing him was of no consequences.

The reason he sought out large numbers of powerful reinforcements in the first place was because he was worried that the Southern Phoenix Divine Country would rise to power.

But that obviously wasn’t necessary now.

“Southern Phoenix!” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign rose to his feet and said coldly, “Are you sure you want to send this person to battle?”

“Of course.” The one who replied to him was Nanhuang Chanyi.

Some of them were suspecting that this so-called Yun Che had acted on its own and forced his way onto the battlefield, but there was no hesitation in Nanhuang Chanyi’s reply.

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign frowned and said, “This is the Central Ruins Battle, not a comedy show!”

The harsh rebuke caused everyone on the Southern Phoenix Divine Country’s side to turn red.

It wasn’t an unreasonable comment. They still had Nanhuang Jian, but they sent a level five Divine King into the battlefield instead... if this wasn’t a joke, that what was?

“A comedy show?” Nanhuang Chanyi said indifferently, “Excuse me for not understanding your concern, Northern Chill Divine Sovereign. Is his presence in the Central Ruins Battle against the rules in any way?”

“Heh,” the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign chuckled, “Who knew that the Southern Phoenix Divine Country is capable of such ugliness? This king is deeply ashamed that his sect shares the same border as you. Very well, show me what your ‘trump card’ is capable of!”

He then waved his hand and declared, “West Ruins Qi Hanshan fights Southern Phoenix Yun Che. Begin!”

“Qi Hanshan, finish this quickly. The Central Ruins Battlefield is no place for trash!” the West Ruins Divine Sovereign said aloud instead of sending a sound transmission.

Qi Hanshan’s face was still twitching. He never expected to run into a level five Divine King in the Central Ruins Battle, a battlefield that supposedly belong to peak Divine Kings only. Unless he planned to devalue himself, he could never speak to anyone about this fight.

Qi Hanshan didn’t move or circulate his aura when the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign announced the start of the battle. Attack first? He could never embarrass himself like this.

He only raised his palm and tugged at the corner of his lips after the West Ruins Divine Sovereign ordered him to finish this quickly. He said to Yun Che, “You heard that? This is no place for trash like you... now leave!”

He dashed toward Yun Che in a burst of air and curled his fingers like a claw, aiming straight for the latter's head. It was clear that he was planning to throw Yun Che out of the battlefield in the most shameful posture possible.

Yun Che didn't move a muscle. It almost looked like he didn't plan to resist at all. A half realm gap couldn't be covered or resisted by any means. If he allowed his opponent to take him out immediately, he could lessen the amount of scorn and stares he received at least.

Everyone was sure that Yun Che would be swept out of the battlefield in the next instant, that the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's humiliating run in this Central Ruins Battle would end in shame.

If Nanhuang Jian had fought instead of Yun Che, the Southern Phoenix Divine Country had at least a chance to regain their honor. Even if he lost, he could at least show to the world the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's final glory. But no, they sent a level five Divine King to fight their last battle... Maybe it really was their plan to sicken the whole Central Ruins Battle after receiving all that shame and anger.

Qianye Yling'er was the only one who was sitting quietly at her seat with her eyes closed and her head bowed slightly. Not once did she look at the battlefield.

It was because it was completely unnecessary.

The Profound God Convention at the Eastern Divine Region surfaced from her memories. How many people did Yun Che shock to the core when he participated in the Conferred God Battle as a Divine Tribulation Realm profound practitioner back then, before and after?

It was as if he was born to defy every common sense in the world!

Qi Hanshan had closed the distance between Yun Che and himself in an instant, his black, power-infused palm almost two feet away from his target's head. It was at this moment Yun Che kicked out and struck Qi Hanshan right in the stomach.

Bang—

There was a terrible boom they seemed to come in everyone's innards, and the profound energy surrounding Qi Hanshan instantly dispersed like the wind. His body bent at a ridiculous angle, he was launched across the battlefield toward the West Ruins Sect's area like a spear.

Boom boom boom—

Qi Hanshan hit the ground, but he didn't stop until his body dug a ditch several kilometers long across the ground.

Silence instantly oppressed the entire Central Ruins Battle. Everyone was wide-eyed and gaping like they were suddenly in a choke hold. For a long time, they weren't able to say anything at all.

Yun Che was supposed to be injured heavily and tossed straight out of the battlefield, but he was still standing exactly where he was before, and there wasn't even a speck of dust to be seen on his person.

"..." Behind the jeweled tassels, a beautiful glint entered Nanhuang Chanyi's eyes all of a sudden.

Yun Che didn't react at all to the terrified gazes that was shone at his direction. He looked as impassive as a person who casually swatted a mosquito to death.

On the southern side of the battlefield, Nanhuang Chanyi said softly, "The West Ruins Realm King is correct. Trash has no right to remain on this battlefield."

"..." The frozen West Ruins Divine Sovereign didn't react to her remark at all.

"This... this is..." Nanhuang Mofeng, Nanhuang Jian, and everyone else on the Southern Phoenix battle formation was completely stunned. They felt like they were in a dream.

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign had gotten up to his feet subconsciously to stare at Yun Che like his life depended on it... Even he did not dare believe what he was seeing at all.

The dead silence continued to linger above everyone's heads. There had never been such a long period of silence in the entire history of the Central Ruins Battle. After all, nothing quite so ridiculous had ever happened before, until now.

"Wh... wh... what's going on?" Dong Xueci was looking forward to watching Yun Che's downfall, but this was like a hit to the back of the head. Stupefied and speechless, it wasn't until a long time before he recovered himself.

"Ugh... aaah!"

A painful, hoarse scream finally broke the oppressive silence. Qi Hanshan abruptly got up to his feet and glared at Yun Che, but before he could get a word out a jet of blood burst right out of his mouth. The blood quickly turned into a stream, and it weren't just pouring out of his mouth, but all seven orifices on his face. After that, he collapsed on his back and never got back up again.

"Sect... Sect Master Qi?"

A disciple of the King Prayer Sect asked in a shaky voice. The West Ruins Divine Sovereign landed right next to Qi Hanshan, and when he scanned the fallen man with his profound energy an expression of shock quickly overwhelmed his face. He turned to stare at Yun Che with one third fury and two thirds disbelief before saying, "You..."

Qi Hanshan's organs were broken, and nearly half his nerves were completely damaged! If he was given medical treatment, he might still be at risk of dying!

He knew better than anyone what Qi Hanshan's cultivation level was. How, just how... did he suffer so much damage in just a hit!?

Yun Che ignored the West Ruins Divine Sovereign's furious glare completely.

"Is there anything you want to say, West Ruins Realm King?" Nanhuang Chanyi said again, "If you knew he was trash, why did you send him up the battlefield? Are you trying to tell the world that all the West Ruins Realm has left is trash?"

Her voice was soft and gentle, but the scorn in her words were piercing to say the least.

In just a couple of words, Nanhuang Chanyi had tossed the West Ruins Divine Sovereign's insult right back in his face.

The West Ruins Divine Sovereign's eyes turned cold in an instant. He was the realm king of the West Ruins Sect, and no one dared to insult him the way Nanhuang Chanyi did normally... He might endure it if the provoker was the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign, but Nanhuang Chanyi was just a junior and a woman!

Nanhuang Chanyi looked away from the West Ruins Divine Sovereign and to the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign. She said, "So, Northern Chill Realm King, what do you think of this 'comedy' of the Southern Phoenix? If it's up to your satisfaction, then you should declare the winner already, don't you think?"

All eyes were still on Yun Che, but the emotion behind them was completely different from before. It was a fact that this level five Divine King every thought was a joke had taken out Qi Hanshan in one hit... Maybe Qi Hanshan had underestimated his enemy, but it didn't change the fact that he was grievously injured and knocked into a coma by Yun Che.

Besides that, Nanhuang Chanyi... was said to be a gentle and mild-tempered woman. She was the Crown Princess whose beauty outstripped her profound talent by miles. But not only had she defied all expectations by denying Beihan Chu his marriage proposal, she even attacked the West Ruins Divine Sovereign and the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign with words they didn't believe she had in her!

The outsiders weren't the only ones who were surprised. Everyone from the Southern Phoenix Divine Country was surprised as well. They felt like they had been living an illusion as they stared at Nanhuang Chanyi.

Chapter 1568 - Instantly Destroyed

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign was so surprised he forgot to declare the winner of the battle. It was only after Nanhuang Chanyi had taunted him that he regained himself with an ugly look on his face.

"Oh?" Beihan Chu turned to stare at Nanhuang Chanyi with renewed curiosity. He never knew she had such a side to her until now.

In his mind, Nanhuang Chanyi was as cool as water and as gentle as the wind. Sometimes, she didn't show herself for several years at a time.

Behind him, Superior Unwhite was staring at Yun Che like his life depended on it.

It was because his attack was clearly that of a level five Divine King!

Concealing or suppressing one's profound energy with a profound artifact was possible, but the properties of the profound energy itself were impossible to fake.

So the profound energy Yun Che unleashed was undoubtedly that of a level five Divine King, proving that he wasn't concealing his cultivation... However, it was also far, far stronger than the profound energy of a normal level five Divine King! At the very least, it was nothing like they, Divine Sovereigns had ever seen in their lives!

"West Ruins Qi Hanshan loses... Southern Phoenix Yun Che wins."

The declaration finally came, but the tone he used was clearly different from before.

“What... what happened?”

“How... how did Sect Master Qi lose? Isn't that Yun boy just a level five Divine King?”

“This can't be real... Did Sect Master Qi underestimate his enemy? But even if he did, he still shouldn't have...”

.....

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign's declaration finally broke the silence, inciting a noisy murmur among the crowd. The noise eventually escalated into an uncontrollable clamor.

Amidst the noise, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign stared coldly at Nanhuang Chanyi before saying, “Does this win negate the fact that the Southern Phoenix lost nine battles in a row? You were gifted a win only because Qin Hanshan underestimated his enemy. It is unsightly to grow complacent just because of one win, don't you agree?”

Northern Chill City still had five representatives, and the West Ruins Sect and the East Ruins Sect three each... Yun Che was still the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's only representative.

Although a bizarre variable had entered the battlefield, the gap was still impossible to close. The Southern Phoenix Divine Country was destined to sit in last place, and nothing in the world could change that fact... They had simply regained a bit of face, nothing more.

Nanhuang Chanyi didn't say anything.

“East Ruins, please send in your challenger!”

The East Ruins Divine Sovereign looked to the side and said, “Xueci, you go.”

His father's request caught him by surprise, but he quickly knitted his eyebrows and replied, “Got it! I was itching to teach him a lesson anyway.”

“Don't underestimate him,” Dong Jiukui said in a serious tone.

“Don't worry, I'm not an idiot like Qi Hanshan,” Dong Xueci tossed down the remark before jumping onto the battlefield.

When Yun Che and Qi Hanshan's battle first started, everyone had thought of it as nothing more than a passing joke. As a result, no one saw how Qi Hanshan was defeated until it was all over. This time, the spectators made sure to open their eyes wide so they wouldn't miss even a single detail.

They wanted to confirm that everything that happened wasn't just a passing illusion.

Dong Xueci stared at Yun Che and shook his wrist leisurely, “We meet again, Yun Che. How does it feel to be the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's dog? Well, it does seem like you have a bit of skill, so it's no wonder that they had recruited you so hastily. Unfortunately, you're still just a pawn who's beneath the East Ruins Sect's attention.”

Yun Che didn't react to his provocation at all.

“Come. Show me all the tricks you used to take Qi Hanshan by surprise just now, the might of a level five Divine King!” Dong Xueci said with a smile.

His words and expression were full of disdain. He gave off the impression that he was facing a mere ant. But in reality, he wasn’t feeling nearly as relaxed as he pretended to be. He wasn’t blind, he wasn’t ignorant to the fact that Yun Che had grievously wounded Qi Hanshan in one hit. It was a scene that was as impactful psychologically as it was physically.

But of course, the thought that he might lose to Yun Che never passed through his mind... no matter how powerful his opponent was, he was still just a level five Divine King!

A ridiculous outcome like that could only happen once. There was no way he would lose if treated this fight seriously!

He was hoping to provoke Yun Che into rashness, but the latter was unresponsive and as still as a stone sculpture. In fact, his dark pupils were creating a sense of fear he shouldn’t feel in his heart.

At the Southern Phoenix’s battle formation, Qianye Ying’er was still resting with her eyes closed. She hadn’t looked at the battlefield even once up to this point. Nanhuang Chanyi shot her a glance before asking suddenly, “You don’t seem worried about your young master’s wellbeing.”

“...” Qianye Ying’er didn’t say anything. Nanhuang Chanyi wasn’t worthy of her attention.

She might allow Yun Che to do her as he pleased, but that was only because he was worth the price. There were only a handful of people she was willing to look directly in the eye.

Shing!

The battlefield resounded with the sound of something being unsheathed, and a pitch black blade appeared out of nowhere in Dong Xueci’s hand. A forest of black blades then appeared around the young man, cutting black ripples into space itself.

“Hmm? The Ghost Ruin Blade already? Is big brother planning to kill Yun Che in one hit?” Dong Xueyan commented with a look of puzzlement. The Ghost Ruin Blade was a devil blade and one of the sect’s greatest artifacts, and using it was incredibly draining even for someone as strong as Dong Xueci.

“Hmph! Do you seriously still think that Yun Che is just a normal level five Divine King!?” said the East Ruins Divine Sovereign in a low voice.

Dong Xueyan was surprised, but she retorted immediately, “Do you think that big brother will lose to him?”

“He better not!” The East Ruins Divine Sovereign’s voice grew even darker. “Or else...”

Rrrumbb!

Dong Xueci swung the devil blade once and summoned an astonishing wave of darkness. Light itself dimmed as a terrible, demonic storm capable of consuming flesh and bones surged straight toward Yun Che.

“Two laws!”

Cries of surprise rang from all around the battlefield.

Dong Xueci was unleashing both the power of darkness and wind at once. The combination of both elements was perfect, and his control was almost flawless. It was good enough to draw even the Divine Sovereigns' attention.

"No wonder the East Ruins Divine Sovereign chose him to become the young master. His talents are truly astounding."

"There's a bit of Divine Sovereign in his power!" Superior Unwhite said suddenly and shot Dong Xueci a glance. There was a flash of rare praise behind his dull eyes. "There's a chance he might become a Divine Sovereign in a thousand years."

"The East Ruins Realm is full of outstanding talents this generation," Beihan Chu said with a smile. "That being said, this Yun Che guy is more interesting than him."

Each step Dong Xueci took was heavier than the last, and his power of darkness and storm sealed off any space Yun Che might've escaped to. Yun Che himself was completely immobile as if there was nothing he could do nothing against Dong Xueci's power.

The amount of power Dong Xueci was displaying was pretty shocking, but his opponent was just a level five Divine King. The spectators couldn't help but feel that he was overdoing it.

Dong Xueci fell silent and stopped in his tracks. Darkness and storm erupting at once, he leaped into the air and swung the devil blade straight at Yun Che, causing a terrible tear of darkness.

It was clear that he was aiming to kill Yun Che!

The darkness, the storm, the devil blade... Any one of these powers would've been plenty terrifying to face alone, much less all three at once.

Attempting to murder an opponent during the Central Ruins Battle might result in punishment, but it was a price Dong Xueci could accept if he could kill Yun Che himself, the most annoying person he had ever met in his life!

Boom!

His full-powered attack hit the seemingly immobile Yun Che, but instead of the feeling of impact and the splatter of gore he was expecting, the blade passed harmlessly through Yun Che and hit the ground instead.

"Wha..." The attack carried Dong Xueci's maximum power behind it, so the lack of contact and his momentum caused him to stumble forward.

The explosion of darkness and wind had created a terrific domain of destruction. No one could see what was going on behind the curtain of elements.

Dong Xueci crashed onto the ground unceremoniously after his attack missed. A figure then appeared next to him and plucked his devil blade right out of his hand.

At first, the devil blade let out a shrill cry and attempted to struggle, but a flash of darkness quickly turned it into a quivering, submissive mess... At the same time, Dong Xueci's soul connection to the devil blade was completely severed.

Dong Xueci was so frightened that his soul almost flew out of his body. He turned around to stare at Yun Che, and he was shocked to discover that the rampaging storm and darkness had failed to leave any injury onto his opponent at all. In fact, Yun Che's clothes seemed completely untouched by the elements around him. It was almost as if his powers were nothing more than a useless illusion.

"Fool," Yun Che said in a low tone before punching the stupefied Dong Xueci right in the chest.

The sound of his chest bones breaking apart was so loud it was deafening, and his internal organs were destroyed in an instant. A terrible wave of power passed right through Dong Xueci's back... He could feel his body being penetrated like it was nothing, but how... how did a level five Divine King punch through him so easily!?

Dong Xueci's feet were firmly planted on the ground, however. He wasn't sent flying until Yun Che backhanded his face with the devil blade.

Slap!!

The blade smashed ruthlessly into Dong Xueci's face and caused a shower of flesh and blood. Dong Xueci let out a bloodcurdling scream as he crashed toward the East Ruins battle formation.

No one saw what happened because of the shroud of darkness. Yun Che had seemed completely powerless when Dong Xueci summoned two different powers, restricted him with his laws and got close, but the person who was sent flying out of the black light, spewing blood and screaming was none other than Dong Xueci himself!

The devil blade containing his full power was thrown out as well!

"Xueci!"

"Young master!!"

Shocked, everyone in the East Ruins battle formation pounced toward Dong Xueci. The East Ruins Divine Sovereign even teleported right next to him and caught him in midair. His expression immediately soured when he noticed the extent of his son's injuries.

"Royal... father..."

Dong Xueci was barely conscious, but his half-opened eyes looked incredibly empty... It was just a punch... the punch of a level five Divine King no less...

This was a nightmare... This had to be a nightmare!

"Shut up!" The East Ruins Divine Sovereign growled before pouring his powers into his son's chest to suppress his injuries. His entire body was shaking with fury and killing intent. He looked like he was on the verge of losing control completely

Dong Xueci's injury wouldn't kill him.

But it had definitely crippled him!!

Even if the East Ruins Divine Sovereign spent the best resources the sect and the East Ruins Realm could afford on Dong Xueci, his son would never be able to enter the divine way again.

A profound practitioner who couldn't cultivate beyond the divine way was no different from an actual cripple be it in a middle star realm or the whole Northern Divine Region.

Dong Jiukui was the second person to reach Dong Xueci, and he quickly noticed the East Ruins Divine Sovereign's unusual reaction. His expression changed drastically when he scanned Dong Xueci with his spiritual perception.

"How... how is big brother?" Dong Xueyan asked anxiously after rushing over at her top speed.

Dong Jiukui was silent for a long time. Finally, he said powerlessly, "He's... crippled..."

Boom—

The reveal was like a bolt of thunder striking them right in their head. On the ground, Dong Xueci's eyes was so red it looked like they could explode at any moment.

Crippled...

It wasn't an outsider who made the comment, but Dong Jiukui himself! This meant that he was well and truly crippled beyond rescue!

A cripple couldn't become the East Ruins Crown Prince. He would hit rock bottom in terms of status and power. No one would look up to him, envy him or fear him anymore. He would become trash that even the lowliest, pettiest profound practitioner had the right to ridicule, scorn and pity!

"Ah..." Dong Xueyan turned deathly pale as she murmured in a daze, "Im... impossible... this cannot be real..."

Suddenly, her eyes became focused as she let out a tearful cry, "Yun Che... It's all because of Yun Che! How dare he... father, you need to kill him! You must kill him!"

Slap!!

The East Ruins Divine Sovereign abruptly turned around and slapped her right across the face. The young woman was sent flying through the air, and the slap was almost loud enough to be heard throughout the battlefield.

Ashen-faced and breathing heavily, the East Ruins Divine Sovereign uttered, "If you arrogant, ignorant brats hadn't foolishly chased him away, this man would've been one of ours! He would never have gone to the Southern Phoenix!"

"We... we got what we deserve!!"

"Ugh... ah... ah..." Dong Xueci moaned inhumanly again and again as he trembled like a dying larva.

Dong Xueyan herself was clutching the blood drenched side of her face and lying motionless on the ground... At this point, it was far too late for any regrets.

Chapter 1569 - Pretenses Dropped

“Cri... crippled!?”

Many shocked cries came from the East Ruins battle formation.

In the Central Ruins Battle, participants were forbidden from attacking each other over the degree of injury that was inflicted to their representatives, unless the intentions behind the attack were impure.

But Dong Xueci was no normal East Ruins profound practitioner. He was the East Ruins Crown Prince and East Ruins Divine Sovereign's most cherished son!

The East Ruins Divine Sovereign was clearly doing his best to suppress his anger. Obviously, he didn't want to lose his son and his pride as a realm king on the same day.

But Yun Che had undoubtedly made an eternal enemy out of the East Ruins Sect today. Even if now wasn't the time to take revenge, the East Ruins Sect was sure to chase him to the end of the world once the Central Ruins Battle was over!

That still wasn't the most shocking thing of this battle. however. It was Yun Che's ability to take out Dong Xueci in an instant... No one saw how he did it due to the darkness, but barely a couple of breaths had passed between the duo clashing and Dong Xueci being crippled!

Maybe the previous battle could be explained as Qi Hanshan being too careless and giving Yun Che the opportunity to hit him directly in his weak point, but in this battle Dong Xueci was clearly going all out, unleashing two laws and a devil blade all at once. He was certainly strong enough to take down most level ten Divine Kings, and yet his conclusion was even worse than Qi Hanshan's.

How could a level five Divine King be this powerful!?

“He... How is he...” Nanhuang Jian murmured while staring. When he was replaced by Yun Che at the beginning, he felt so frustrated and angry that he wanted the latter to be humiliated even though they were all on the same side.

But now, dumbfounded was the only way to describe his feelings.

As for Nanhuang Mofeng, he couldn't even find a word to say.

Yun Che was an unfamiliar face and an unfamiliar name. No one knew where he came from.

However, he had severely injured a level ten Divine King and crippled the other as a lowly level five Divine King. Even better, both battles had ended in just an instant.

Not even the top geniuses of the upper star realms and the king realms should possess such power, right!?

On the honored guest seats, Beihan Chu and Superior Unwhite's expressions had also changed completely.

“Half-step Divine Sovereign!?” Superior Unwhite exclaimed in a low tone. While it was true that the power that crippled Dong Xueci amidst the darkness definitely belonged to that of a level five Divine King, its intensity was comparable to that of a Half-step Divine Sovereign!

Half-step Divine Sovereigns were stronger than peak Divine Kings because they were one foot away from becoming true Divine Sovereigns! They might not be true Divine Sovereigns yet, but they were practically invincible against anyone who was below Divine Sovereign Realm.

It was possible for a peak Divine King with fragile defenses to crumble if the full power of a half-step Divine Sovereign were to strike them at their weak point.

“He unleashed the power of a half-step Divine Sovereign at level five Divine King Realm?” Beihan Chu muttered to himself, “Junior Master, this disciple is still inexperienced. Is it really possible to amplify one’s power to such an extent?”

Superior Unwhite thought to himself for a moment before answering, “There are some special devil arts that can amplify one’s profound energy by force for a short amount of time. Our sect keeps some of them in storage. However, your master has no plans to teach you such arts because they normally come with great costs such as the loss of one’s lifespan or talent.”

“So, you’re saying that this Yun Che is using a devil art like that to obtain victory for the Southern Phoenix, Junior Master?”

“...That’s the only plausible explanation,” Superior Unwhite answered, but truth be told he had never heard of a devil art that could amplify one’s power this much. Moreover, berserk type devil arts like these were normally chaotic because the profound practitioner was unable to endure the extreme amount of profound energy circulating in their body, but Yun Che’s aura was as calm as a pool of dead water.

Still, it was the only answer he could think of. If he hadn’t witnessed this with his own eyes, if someone told him that a level five Divine King had unleashed the power of a half-step Divine Sovereign, he would’ve disregarded their words as complete nonsense.

“If that’s true, then it’s no wonder he only attacks when there’s an opening, and with enough strength to end things in one hit,” Beihan Chu said as if he understood everything.

“Have you forgotten something again, Northern Chill Realm King?” Nanhuang Chanyi reminded the Northern Divine Sovereign “kindly”.

In the past, the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign was the one who had all the say in the Central Ruins Battle, but not today. Not only was the “great offender” Nanhuang Chanyi in complete control, she was attacking the realm kings openly and without a shred of respect.

Moreover, the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign let her do what she wanted.

Yun Che had crippled the East Ruins Crown Prince, and the East Ruins Sect was in complete chaos. Even the people at the furthest corner of the battlefield could sense the barely suppressed killing intent coming from them. However, not only did the Southern Phoenix not apologize for the transgression, they didn’t even try to express their condolences.

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign breathed deeply as he stared long and hard at Yun Che. Finally, he said, “East Ruins Dong Xueci loses, Yun Che wins.”

“The next fight...” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign’s eyes became focused. The West Ruins’ representative was wounded, and the East Ruins’ crippled. It was now Northern Chill City’s turn to send in a challenger.

Dead silence filled the Northern Chill battle formation. They had fifteen representatives left, and five ultimate experts among them. Everyone of them was a level ten Divine King.

Earlier, these level ten Divine Kings were the ones who laughed at Yun Che the hardest. They had showered him with gazes full of pity, scorn, and superiority because they were sure that he was a clown of the Southern Phoenix. They all believed that fighting him would only bring shame to themselves.

But now, every single one of these Divine Kings were bowing their heads deeply. No one dared to look the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign in the eye.

This was the first time in the history of the Central Ruins Battle something like this had happened to Northern Chill City’s battle formation.

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign’s expression darkened as the blood in his body rose to his head. He was about to unleash his fury at them when Nanhuang Chanyi’s voice suddenly entered his ears, “It’s fine. There’s no point continuing this year’s Central Ruins Battle anyway.”

Her words shocked everyone present. Everyone in the Southern Phoenix battle formation turned to look at her in confusion.

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign turned toward her and asked, “Does that mean you’re going to forfeit this battle?”

The people suddenly realized something after they had gotten over their shock.

Everyone thought that this Central Ruins Battle was going to end with the Southern Phoenix Divine Country being humiliated with a historical ten-loss streak, but then Yun Che came out of nowhere and defeated two level ten Divine kings in a row. One of them was even the East Ruins Crown Prince himself. Grievously injuring an opponent and crippling the other, Yun Che’s achievement was stunning—no, terrifying to all who witnessed it.

But no matter how amazing Yun Che was, the three realm king sects still had many reserves to draw from, and he was the only representative the Southern Phoenix had. They were destined to take last place no matter what.

Moreover, Yun Che had most likely used up his “trump card” after defeating two opponents in a row.

If they forfeited the match now, they would avoid suffering the humiliation of a ten-loss losing streak, defend their honor to the highest possible degree, and leave a lasting mark in everyone’s heart.

But Nanhuang Chanyi retorted coldly, “Forfeit? You’re wrong, Northern Chill Realm King. It is simply because this Central Ruins Battle isn’t worth the Southern Phoenix’s time anymore!”

Surprised, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign let out a sneer and asked, “Worth? What exactly do you mean?”

“Do you really not know?”

Nanhuang Chanyi slowly walked forward, and all eyes were pulled toward her figure as if some invisible force was guiding their gazes. When she spoke, there was something cold and imposing lurking beneath her gentle voice, "The Central Ruins Battle was created to decide the resource rights of the Central Ruins Realm. Besides that, it's also a battle of honor and strength between the four Nether Ruins realms, and an opportunity for Divine Kings to achieve enlightenment!"

"The Southern Phoenix is historically the weaker force, and we've always placed last in the Central Ruins Battle. However, we have never forfeited a match or missed the Central Ruins Battle because it was worth everything we had, even if our efforts always came up short."

"But today's battle..." Nanhuang Chanyi's voice suddenly turned colder and mightier. "The three of you repeatedly surrendered, fixed matches, and communicated orders so that the Southern Phoenix would lose all ten fights. You even hurt our profound practitioners as much as you could every fight!"

"Do you still remember that this is the Central Ruins Battle!? Do you seriously believe that today's farce is worthy of being called the Central Ruins Battle? To curry favor with the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace and humiliate the Southern Phoenix, the three of you even set aside your pride and honor as realm king sects and put on some of the most shameful acts the Southern Phoenix has never seen. So know that the Southern Phoenix will not lower themselves to fight against the likes of you anymore!"

The Central Ruins Battlefield suddenly became so quiet one could hear a pin drop.

Everyone could see that Northern Chill City, East Ruins Sect, and West Ruins Sect were working together to humiliate the Southern Phoenix Divine Country, but no one dared to expose the fact because Beihan Chu and the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace were the ones behind the shaming.

Even if the Southern Phoenix Divine Country did lose all ten battles and leave a permanent mark of shame in the history of the Central Ruins Battle, there was nothing they could do except swallow and accept it. Not even the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign could do anything else because their sect simply didn't have the power to drop all pretenses and tear into the other three sects, much less anger the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace further.

However, Nanhuang Chanyi had done the unthinkable again!

Not only was she criticizing the three realm king sects, she was even tearing into the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace. When she said the words "curry favor with the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace", Nanhuang Jian nearly dropped to his knees in shock behind her.

"Chanyi, what nonsense are you spouting!" Nanhuang Mofeng growled in a lowered voice.

Everyone was stunned by her bold action, and Beihan Chu narrowed his eyes briefly before relaxing into a curious smile. He suddenly felt like he didn't understand Nanhuang Chanyi at all... not realizing that everyone in the Southern Phoenix Royal Family was also staring at her stupidly like today was the first day they had met her.

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign scrunched his eyebrows together and rose to his feet... but in the end, he said nothing at all. A short time later, he slowly dropped back down into his seat.

“Heh.” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign chuckled and said, “Do you know what you’re saying, Southern Phoenix Crown Princess? Nanhuang, I see that you’re staying silent about this. Don’t tell me you agree with her? Or maybe... you’re the one who told her to do this?”

The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign replied, “Chanyi is the person I chose to lead the Southern Phoenix battle formation, so her actions and decisions represent the will of the Southern Phoenix. I don’t mind you viewing her actions as an extension as my will.”

“My lord, you...” Nanhuang Mofeng abruptly turned around and stared at the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign in disbelief.

When Nanhuang Chanyi had turned down Beihan Chu’s marriage proposal, she had offended both Beihan Chu and Northern Chill City at the same time. It was why they were being targeted by the three realm king sects in the first place. Although Yun Che’s unbelievable performance had won them back some face, it wasn’t enough to save them from their current predicament.

If what Nanhuang Chanyi did earlier was the same as digging them a grave, then what she was doing now was pushing them into the hole. But not only did the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign not try to stop her, he was actually supporting her!

Had a devil possess both father and daughter!?

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign nodded slowly and said, “Good, very good.”

“Heh, what a joke,” the West Ruins Divine Sovereign said with a sneer. “The Southern Phoenix isn’t even worth our attention, much less all three realm king sects together.”

The East Ruins Divine Sovereign dropped the unconscious Dong Xueci on the floor and said darkly, “It’s obvious she’s just trying to forfeit because she knows the Southern Phoenix is going to place last anyway. Who knows, maybe something ugly about this Yun Che will be revealed if the battle is prolonged.”

“That’s why she assumed the moral high ground and threw dirt at us and the Central Ruins Battle. I wonder who’s the real shameless one here!”

“You claim I’m forfeiting because I know we’re going to place last?” Nanhuang Chanyi let out a cold hmph. “What a joke.”

“A joke?” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign let out a low chuckle. “I’m sure everyone knows who the real joke here is. Do you think that everyone here is stupid?”

He was just about to criticize the Southern Phoenix for offending the Nine Lights Heavenly Palace when Nanhuang Chanyi interrupted him, “In that case, why don’t we make a bet, Northern Chill City, East Ruins Sect, West Ruins Sect?”

A bet?

Nanhuang Chanyi continued before the three Divine Sovereigns could say anything, “Northern Chill City still has five representatives, East Ruins Sect two, and West Ruins Sect three in this joke of a battle.”

“You will send them all to fight against our Yun Che!”

The sharp glint piercing through the jeweled tassels and the bold words stunned everyone to silence. She said, "Do you dare take this bet!?"

Chapter 1570 - One Versus Ten

Wa—

The Central Ruins Battlefield instantly became noisy. It was because Nanhuang Chanyi had just uttered the most ridiculous statement ever in the history of the Central Ruins Battle.

She wants to put the last profound practitioners of Northern Chill City, East Ruins Realm, and West Ruins Realm against her own!?

Yun Che might've put on an astounding performance just now, but the three sects together still had ten profound practitioners in total! Also, all of them were all peak Divine Kings!

Even if Yun Che won the previous two fights in domineering fashion, even if they assumed that he had plenty of strength left... it was still utterly stupid to make him fight ten people alone!

Either Nanhuang Chanyi had gone insane, or... she was simply putting up a front.

"Chanyi, what in the world is wrong with you today!?" Nanhuang Mofeng shouted. If he held in his anger any longer, his lungs might just give up on him.

"Mofeng," the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign said softly, "Keep your opinions to yourself and watch."

"..." Nanhuang Mofeng's gaze swam irregularly between the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign and Nanhuang Chanyi. He might've shut up as his lord had commanded, but there was no way he could calm down in this situation.

"Hahahaha!" The West Ruins Divine Sovereign laughed loudly. "Nanhuang, has insanity possessed your daughter?"

It wasn't completely a sarcastic remark... So far, everything Nanhuang Chanyi had done today was extremely unusual. The way she behaved was completely different from the rumors, and her actions also didn't match her identity or standing at all. In fact, the moment she rejected Beihan Chu's marriage proposal, a lot of people had arrived at the same suspicion.

"Is that cowardice I sense?" Nanhuang Chanyi whispered softly.

"Of course not. It's because the Southern Phoenix doesn't deserve such attention," the East Ruins Divine Sovereign said. "Our profound practitioners are noble beyond measure. Forget ten, even—"

"Ah!" The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign suddenly raised a hand and cut off whatever the East Ruins Divine Sovereign was going to say. Then, he said, "You want the three of us to send all our profound practitioners against your one representative? I can't believe you would say something so ridiculous. If this king were to agree to this, it'd bring shame to our profound practitioners no matter the result."

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign was correct. Ten on one? How incredibly shameful! It was doubtful that the ten Divine Kings would agree to this fight even if they chose to accept the bet on their behalf.

“Southern Phoenix Crown Princess, you must think that this king will reject your offer, am I right?” Suddenly, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign smiled dangerously and tauntingly at her. “On the contrary, this king is very, very interested in taking this bet! Oh yes, we simply must accept it!”

The East Ruins Divine Sovereign and West Ruins Divine Sovereign frowned deeply at the same time, but they simply stared at their peer and said nothing. They knew that the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign must be plotting something.

“...” Nanhuang Chanyi suddenly fell silent. She didn’t respond to the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign’s reply at all.

“You said ‘bet’ earlier, didn’t you, Southern Phoenix Crown Princess? If I may ask, what are the stakes involved here?” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign said with a smile.

The East Ruins Divine Sovereign and the West Ruins Divine Sovereign’s eyes lit up at the same time.

“...It looks like the Northern Chill Realm King has figured out his demand already. You may as well say it now,” Nanhuang Chanyi said in the exact same tone as before. However, the crowd could sense that her pressure was less than before, and she hesitated briefly right before she made her reply.

“It’s very simple. If the Southern Phoenix somehow wins this battle...” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign’s smile grew wider as he spoke. “You’ll become the champion of the Central Ruins Battle. Besides the four zones you’ll get as the champion, Northern Chill City will also surrender the four... excuse me, the three zones they get as the runner-up to you as well.”

Pfft...

God knows how many people had burst out in laughter before the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign could finish his sentence.

Even the West Ruins Divine Sovereign and the East Ruins Divine Sovereign had to control themselves.

One versus ten... ten peak Divine Kings. They wouldn’t mind eating shit if Yun Che could win this!

“But if the Southern Phoenix loses,” said the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign as he narrowed his eyes slightly and a half-smile passed over his lips, “we won’t stoop so low as to ask you to surrender that tiny bit of control you have over the Central Ruins Realm, but... you’ll have to return to Nine Lights Heavenly Palace with my son!”

“You won’t be his wife or his concubine. You’ll serve him as his servant for a hundred years!”

Wa—

A clamor had broken out yet again.

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign wouldn’t have gone so far if Nanhuang Chanyi hadn’t dropped all pretenses earlier, but she did, and there was no way he was going to go soft on her after that.

Nanhuang Chanyi had rejected Beihan Chu’s marriage proposal in public and humiliated Beihan Chu deeply. Thus, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign used the opportunity Nanhuang Chanyi had delivered into his hands herself and humiliated her right back, demanding she be Beihan Chu’s servant if she loses.

His words were also a declaration of anger to the Southern Phoenix Divine Country! For their crime of offending the Northern Chill City again after foolishly throwing away the olive branch they had extended, he would make Nanhuang Chanyi serve his son as a servant! It was all she was worth after all the offenses she had committed!

He turned to look at Nanhuang Chanyi. He had accepted the impossible bet... and used the opening to state his own terms!

Everyone's attention was set on Nanhuang Chanyi once more. The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign's counter attack was an insidious one. If Nanhuang Chanyi accepted the bet, she would become Beihan Chu's servant after Yun Che's defeat. But if she refused to accept it, it was the equivalent of slapping herself and throwing the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's face in the mud.

Nanhuang Chanyi said, "Northern Chill Realm King, don't you think the stakes you suggested are absolutely ridiculous!?"

It was a reply the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign absolutely saw coming. He looked upward and laughed, "Hahahaha! What's wrong? Having second thoughts? You're the one who asked for this bet, so where's your courage now? Is this the so-called pride and shame of the Southern Phoenix Divine Country?"

"Northern Chill Realm King, you seem to be mistaken about something," Nanhuang Chanyi said indifferently. "Since when did I say I'm having second thoughts?"

"This is a bet, so you have the right to demand what you want if you win. But what right do you have to determine what I want if I win?"

"Oh, really?" The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign said with a smile. "That's a good point. In that case, please tell me what a hundred years of servitude is worth to you, Nanhuang Chanyi."

"You wouldn't be able to afford it even if you surrendered the entire North Ruins Realm," Nanhuang Chanyi said, "but this is a bet, and there must be a stake. The stake must also be something that the likes of you can afford. This is troubling, but I suppose..."

"If we win, the Southern Phoenix Divine Country will lay claim to the entire Central Ruins Realm! That includes the East Ruins Sect and the West Ruins Sect's portion!"

"Moreover, the Central Ruins Realm will be ours for five hundred years, not fifty!"

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign's eyebrows scrunched together for an instant, but quickly relaxed. The moment he heard the first half of Nanhuang Chanyi's reply, he knew that she was going to demand something huge and impossible to accept such as "kill yourself on the spot", or "enter the Southern Phoenix Divine Country as a slave".

Surrendering the entire Central Ruins Realm to the Southern Phoenix Divine Country for five hundred years was definitely no joke. If it came true, the huge boost in resources meant that the Southern Phoenix Divine Country would rise quickly to power, while the rest of them declined.

However, her demand wasn't even enough to terrify him into hesitation, much less drive him into complete rejection.

In the end, Nanhuang Chanyi proved herself to be a junior with less than three hundred years of experience, one with a screw loose in her head no less.

“No problem! That’s no problem at all!” the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign voiced his agreement so quickly that Nanhuang Chanyi’s voice hadn’t even subsided yet. He then glanced to his left and right at the East Ruins Divine Sovereign and the West Ruins Divine Sovereign and asked, “Brothers of the East and West Ruins, what do you guys think?”

“Well, our profound practitioners will be involved in this bet, so it makes sense for us to have a stake in this, hehe,” the West Ruins Divine Sovereign said smilingly.

“I have no objection!” The East Ruins Divine Sovereign also replied without hesitation.

It might look like they weren’t getting anything out of this bet, but it was an opportunity to make Northern Chill City, and more importantly Beihan Chu owe them a big favor! There was no way they were going to turn this down.

“Alright!” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign nodded. “Is there anything else you wish to add, Southern Phoenix?”

It was a perfect example of the saying “can’t get off a tiger”. Nanhuang Chanyi was the one who proposed the one versus ten bet in the first place, and the stake she demanded was fully accepted by the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign. This meant that her retreat was completely cut off, not that it was possible in the first place, judging from the eager expressions on the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign, East Ruins Divine Sovereign, and West Ruins Divine Sovereign’s faces... She could toss the Southern Phoenix Divine Sect’s face in the mud, and she would still have to go through the whole bet one way or another.

“Alright!” Nanhuang Chanyi nodded. “The Southern Phoenix doesn’t wish to waste anymore time on this joke of a battle anyway. Realm Kings, you may choose your representatives now.”

The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign smiled and turned around to face his people. His aura landed on five profound practitioners, and he said, “You five will learn from the Southern Phoenix Divine Country.”

“Yes!” All five peak Divine Kings replied in unison.

If this was just any other battle, their pride would’ve prevented them from participating in an unfair fight like this. But the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign had twisted this fight into a joke with his words, and once this Southern Phoenix profound practitioner was dead, they’d get to enjoy the sight of Nanhuang Chanyi becoming Beihan Chu’s servant for one hundred years. Naturally, any reluctance they might’ve felt earlier was completely gone.

But there was one person—a very important person—in this bet whose opinion no one had bothered to consult.

Yun Che slowly turned around to stare at Nanhuang Chanyi before sending her a sound transmission, “Did you just use me as your tool!?”

His voice was stiff, cold, and full of warning.

"I admit that it's a spur-of-the-moment decision, and I know it's unfair to not consult you on this before proposing the bet. However... you participated in this Central Ruins Battle and chose me as your patron because you need something from me, am I right? You're a capable man, so why not put that ability of yours to good use and benefit yourself even more?"

"What happens if we find out later that my price is beyond your ability to pay?"

"That is impossible!"

"..." By the time Yun Che turned back toward the front, ten powerful auras were standing in front of him already.

All ten auras marked them as peak Divine Kings! There were five from the North Ruins Realm, three from the West Ruins Realm, and two from the East Ruins Realm.

These people were either indispensable to a realm king sect, or the absolute ruler of a realm. Everyone of them was famous across the Five Nether Ruins.

Normally, only peak Divine Kings fought in the Central Ruins Battle, and most of the battles were incredibly intense. Putting aside the Divine Sovereigns, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that this was the highest level of combat of the Five Nether Ruins that took place in the Central Ruins Battle.

Therefore, a battle where ten peak Divine Kings were up against a single opponent five levels behind them was...

Forget the Central Ruins Battle, no one had ever seen anything like this in their whole lives.

The way the Southern Phoenix Divine Country had put themselves in this situation was almost praiseworthy.

"Chanyi..." In the end, the Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign couldn't stop himself from walking up to Nanhuang Chanyi and calling out her name softly.

"Don't worry, royal father," Nanhuang Chanyi replied in a voice that only he could hear, "I know this sounds unbelievable, but ten Divine Kings are nothing but a pack of dogs to this man."

"..." The Southern Phoenix Divine Sovereign's eyebrows lifted, and his lips kept moving like there were a million things he wanted to ask. In the end though, he managed to maintain his silence.

For a moment, the hilarious scene that was ten peak Divine Kings versus a level five Divine King was frozen on the Central Ruins Battlefield. Then, the Northern Chill Divine Sovereign took a couple of steps forward and declared, "The Southern Phoenix must be pretty confident to dare to propose such a bet. I'm sure that a legendary battle unlike any other will be taking place in no time."

His sarcastic remark caused countless people to laugh out loud.

"Moreover, this is a battle with stakes in it. If Northern Chill City, East Ruins Sect, and West Ruins Sect lose, then the Central Ruins Realm will fall under the Southern Phoenix Divine Country's control for five hundred years. No one from the North Ruins Realm, East Ruins Realm, or West Ruins Realm will be allowed to take a single step into that place."

“However, if we somehow win this battle, then the Southern Phoenix Crown Princess will return to Nine Lights Heavenly Palace and serve the Hidden Sword Palace Young Master Beihan Chu as a servant for a hundred years. She’s not allowed to leave until a hundred years is up. This bet is witnessed by everyone that is present!”

He then turned around and bowed toward Beihan Chu and Superior Unwhite. He said, “Young Palace Master, the stakes of this battle involve the Central Ruins Realm, so I believe it can be considered as part of the Central Ruins Battle. Therefore, we request that you be a witness this battle.”

“Alright,” Beihan Chu said with a nod, “I, Beihan Chu, agree to witness this battle on behalf of Nine Lights Heavenly Palace! Anyone who disobeys the rules or the content of the bet will be punished by Nine Lights Heavenly Palace.”

Beihan Chu had barely spoken a word since the start of the Central Ruins Battle, much less provided any biased suggestions or opinions. He had played his role as a witness perfectly up to this point.

His blessing was the final nail in the coffin. There was no longer any way for the Southern Phoenix Divine Country to back out of this bet.

“Thank you, Young Palace Master.” The Northern Chill Divine Sovereign bowed with a smile before facing toward the Central Ruins Battlefield again. Then, he turned serious and waved his hand, declaring, “Begin!”