

The Heavens 871

Chapter 871: Invincible Power!

The arena matches continued as the top 32 continued to fight. The dangers of the outside world had now become a sort of a tempering and assessment of their own.

Because the young woman from the Five Colors Sect conceded, Meng Hao was the first to complete this round, and he sat there cross-legged in the arena, looking at the half-headed man outside. The man looked back at him.

Although there was a vast gap of empty space between them, as they looked at each other, Meng Hao could sense the feeling of a summons rising up within him.

“If I get the chance, I WILL take back that sword!” Meng Hao’s eyes flickered. Although the sword might not seem special to anyone else, to Meng Hao, it had the Sixth Demon Sealing Hex!

Each of the eight Demon Sealing Hexes were strange and mysterious. Both the Body Hexing and Karmic Hexing gave him superiority in flexibility when it came to fighting, and basically prevented anyone from guarding against his attacks.

After four hours passed, the various arena matches wound to a conclusion. The top 16 were now set. From over a thousand cultivators, successive victories had led these people into the top 16. Each and every one could be considered a peak expert of the Spirit Realm.

Experts like this could crush false Immortals, and could even compare to some extent to true Immortals. In fact, most of them would assuredly employ an Immortality Illumination Vine in the near future, after which it wouldn’t be long before they became true Immortals.

Their path to Immortality would be a smooth one, and given their accumulated resources, it would only be a few short years before they were at the peak of the Immortal Realm.

This sequence of events happened once every ten thousand years; since every true Immortal could cultivate at a speed that far exceeded a false Immortal, true Immortals always rose to prominence and became famous in all the Mountains and Seas.

Were it not for the incredible prizes being offered up during the arena matches, the various sects would not have sent their Chosen here, but would have kept them in secluded meditation to prepare for true Immortality.

Actually, one of the reasons even more Chosen hadn't joined the arena matches was that most of them were still in secluded meditation. Once they emerged, as long as they didn't fail in the process, they would be true Immortals.

Meng Hao took a deep breath, rose to his feet and looked around at the top 16 competitors in the arena matches.

Zhao Yifan was among them, as was Fan Dong'er. Sun Hai, surprisingly, was there too, as well as some of the other Chosen who Meng Hao had previously taken note of. As far as competitors from the trial by fire, Li Yan had been defeated, as had the young man with the mosquitoes and Junior Blood Immortal. Other than Meng Hao, the only remaining competitor from the trial by fire was the garrulous old man.

Top 16!

“Rest and recuperate for one day, and then the battle for the top 8 will begin!”

The next day, the battle for the top 8 began!

On the main trunk of the Dao Tree, at the very top, there was a single golden leaf. Beneath that were two silver leaves, further down were four bronze leaves, and beneath that were eight light green leaves.

The battles for the top 8 would be fought on those eight light green leaves!

Eight battles, fought simultaneously. All of the crowds in the Ninth Mountain and Sea were paying rapt attention.

“The top 8 will be selected from these sixteen people! Each one is a top expert of the Dao Seeking stage. This round is definitely going to be spectacular!”

“I wonder who exactly is going to win! Who’s going to be eliminated!?! Even the top 16 experts have no way of knowing!”

“The thing I’m most curious about is whether that Fang Mu will be able to enter the top 8!”

In the starry sky palace, the Patriarchs were also paying close attention.

By this point, many people had already forgotten about the main reason why the arena matches of the trial by fire were being held to begin with. Whoever took first place would have a chance to be taken in by the Three Great Daoist Sects as a disciple. The three Patriarchs from the Three Great Daoist Societies did nothing to remind anyone of this.

It was almost as if the taking of disciples wasn’t very important at all.

Light glittered in front of Meng Hao and next, he was standing on a light green leaf. In front of him, a thin, emaciated figure appeared.

Although he was skinny, amorphous flames spread out around him as he walked forward. They were invisible, but Meng Hao could feel them, as if what was walking toward him was not a cultivator, but a flame Devil!

Within his eyes, flames could be seen flickering. He wore a long black robe, and his hair floated around him. He stood there, his energy surging, growing more and more powerful. In the blink of an eye, the air around him began to ripple and distort.

This was the Chosen from the Bones of the Flamedevil, one of the Five Holy Lands... Chen Hao!

Back in the ten stages of the trial by fire, the masked Li Yan had repeatedly performed just behind Meng Hao. He had been defeated by Chen Hao, although he had ended up seriously wounding Chen Hao in the process.

Meng Hao looked at him calmly, and Chen Hao looked back at him.

Neither of them spoke. The flames in Chen Hao’s eyes burned bright, and the air around him distorted as the invisible flames burned. The flames seemed capable of scorching anything and everything as they shot toward Meng Hao.

No observer could see the fire, but by using divine sense, Meng Hao was able to sense them clearly. What he saw was an illusory body of flames rushing toward him.

“This is not the fire of the five elements!” Meng Hao thought, his eyes glittering. The fire of the five elements was a natural law of Heaven and Earth. In fact, the fire wielded by the young woman from the Five Colors Sect had contained that natural law. However, the flames unleashed by Chen Hao from the Bones of the Flamedevil had no natural law, but instead, a strange will!

After examining it closely for a moment, he realized that it seemed to be bound by some sort of summoning contract, as if... some all-powerful being had bestowed the power of the flames. It was as if this flame was actually a type of life force flame.

Meng Hao’s expression was normal as he clenched his right hand into a fist. As soon as he punched out, a vortex appeared, which sent ripples spreading out. Explosive rumbling could be heard as it slammed into the flames, and was then completely submerged by them.

“Eee?” said Meng Hao, falling back for the first time. Chen Hao’s eyes overflowed with the desire to fight, and as Meng Hao retreated, he advanced, performing an incantation gesture that caused more roaring flames to appear around him. Shockingly, they transformed into the shape of an enormous mouth that bit toward Meng Hao.

The sight of Meng Hao retreating caused quite a stir in the outside world. This was the first time they had ever seen him back up in a fight.

However, as the flame mouth closed in on him, Meng Hao stopped in place and set his jaw. A look of anticipation gleamed in his eyes as he performed an incantation gesture. Then, he punched out repeatedly, using the Nine Heavens Destruction once again.

Booms rattled out in all directions as Meng Hao then transformed into a vulture that shot toward Chen Hao like black lightning. Chen Hao’s face fell, and he performed an incantation gesture. Immediately, a set of flaming armor appeared around him. He reached out with his right hand in a grasping motion, causing an enormous flame spear to materialize. His hands closed around it, and he stabbed it toward the incoming Meng Hao.

The scream of the spear was ear-splitting, and countless erupting volcanos appeared around it as it shot toward Meng Hao in shocking fashion.

Meng Hao snorted coldly as mountains of his own appeared and linked together into an equally shocking mountain range, although it appeared as a huge river to onlookers. It slammed into the volcanoes, causing a huge boom to rise into the air. It was at this point that Meng Hao's shocking Dharma Idol appeared behind him.

In that instant, Chen Hao tilted his back and roared. His own incredible Dharma Idol appeared, a corpse which was covered in scales and emanated black flames. It immediately began to contend with Meng Hao's Dharma Idol.

When the Dharma Idols collided, Meng Hao employed the Star Plucking Magic. An incredible force that Chen Hao could not resist suddenly grabbed him, causing a sense of crisis to well up inside of him. Letting out a bellow of rage, Chen Hao caused his suit of flame armor to detonate, using the force of the mighty explosion to fight against Meng Hao's Star Plucking Magic.

Chen Hao's face was ashen, and blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth. As of this point, he knew that he wasn't a match for Meng Hao, and yet he chose to continue fighting anyway.

However, in the instant that his flame armor exploded, Meng Hao's eyes began to shine with an intense desire to do battle. He strode forward; even the roaring flames could do nothing to prevent his charge. As he passed through the sea of flames, he let out a huge roar.

The roar caused the entire leaf to tremble, and even passed outside of the Dao Tree itself. At the same time, his roar caused an enormous wind to spring up, slashing into the sea of flames and cutting a path through them directly to Chen Hao.

Chen Hao's face fell as he realized how powerful this Fang Mu was. It was only at this decisive moment of the battle that he realized that his opponent was completely terrifying. Magical techniques and divine abilities were secondary; the critical factor was his incredible energy.

"He has an aura of invincibility about him!" thought Chen Hao, madness glowing in his eyes. He bit his tongue and spit out some blood, which then transformed into lava, and then exploded into meteors that streaked through the air toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao snorted coldly, then pointed out with his right finger as he unleashed the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex onto the sea of flames and the shooting stars. No outsider would be able to tell what was happening, but Chen Hao's face instantly fell as his cultivation base lurched to a standstill.

The cost of that standstill was...

Meng Hao closed in, causing all of the shooting stars and the entire sea of flames to be sent spinning away. As Meng Hao bore down on Chen Hao, he punched out. A boom rang out as blood sprayed from Chen Hao's mouth. It only took a moment for him to recover, after which a fierce flame appeared in his eyes. Taking advantage of his backward motion, he spun his right leg around rapidly toward Meng Hao's head.

At the same time, a look of determination appeared in his eyes.

“Flamedevil Transformation!” he cried out

This battle was the complete focus of all eyes out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea. As of now, they were beginning to see how invincible Meng Hao's power was. As for Chen Hao, he also possessed similar power. As they battled, neither of them spent any time on defense, but instead, consistently attacked!

Meng Hao did nothing to evade Chen Hao's spinning back kick. He lifted his left hand and grabbed down hard onto Chen Hao's leg, sending a massive power of vibration into it. Rumbling could be heard, and Chen Hao coughed up some blood. However, by this time his entire body was turning red!

This red was not the red of blood, but rather, the red of flames!

It was as if all the blood in his body had turned into lava. Flames burst out all around him, engulfing him entirely. His skin didn't seem capable of bearing the flames, and began to split apart all over. Soon, the rips and tears covered him completely.

However, his energy exploded up, and despite the fact that Meng Hao was holding onto his leg tightly, he let out a bellow and caused flames to surge toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's expression was calm as he released his hand, then kicked out viciously with his foot. A boom could be heard as Chen Hao was sent flying several dozen meters back.

“Body transformation magic, huh?” said Meng Hao coolly. “Well, I'll just have to beat you back into your original state.” He suddenly transformed into the vulture, which shot forward at incredible speed. In the blink of an eye, it appeared in front of Chen Hao and slashed at him with its claws. Then Meng Hao returned to human form and punched out with a fist.

BOOOOMMMM! After changing forms, Chen Hao thought that he would be even more powerful, capable of fighting Meng Hao. However, he never imagined that a few punches from Meng Hao would slam into him like wild tempests. The speed and power were incredible, and he was incapable of standing up to it. Just when he was about to try to resist, Meng Hao's divine sense transformed into an incredible crushing power that slammed down onto him.

Chapter 872: She Appears!

Meng Hao advanced as if he were crushing rotten twigs. Chen Hao fell back continuously. In the blink of an eye, dozens of lightning-like exchanges occurred between the two of them. Chen Hao constantly coughed up blood, and his energy was rapidly depleting. In the end, he slammed down onto the surface of the arena. The flames covering his body were extinguished, and blood spurted out all over. After struggling to his feet, he found a long spear leveled against his throat.

It was none other than the spear Meng Hao had acquired in the Warrior Pavilion, with the shaft made from part of the World Tree, and a sharp bone spearhead. Thanks to the power of the black feather, however, it looked completely different, and was something no one would ever recognize.

Chen Hao shivered as he sensed the murderous aura coming from the spearhead, which left his entire body feeling ice cold. Then there was Meng Hao, whose eyes had remained intensely cold from the beginning of their battle until this moment. He seemed to be waiting for Chen Hao to say something, and if Chen Hao didn't say it... then the spear would immediately stab completely through his throat.

Meng Hao didn't say anything. He just looked calmly at Chen Hao.

Out in the world of the Ninth Mountain and Sea, cultivators watched the match with thumping hearts. They had never heard of Fang Mu before, but now, he astonished them in battle after battle, proving that he was more powerful than any opponent could imagine!!

“He can definitely take first place!!”

“Heavens, he took first place in the trial by fire already. If he also takes first place in the arena matches, then he... he....”

“This is matchlessly breathtaking! Throughout all the years, there has never been another person like this!”

“Just who is he? There’s no way a person like him could be an obscure nobody!”

While the audiences were in an uproar, the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch floated in the starry sky. His eyes glittered brightly, and Immortal qi swirled around him for a long moment before he retracted it. The desire to fight burned strongly in his eyes.

“Meng Hao....”

Near Planet East Victory, Patriarch Reliance switched back and forth between smiling broadly and gnashing his teeth. He definitely had very complex feelings regarding Meng Hao.

Everyone was watching as Chen Hao lay silently in the arena. He took a deep, painful breath and looked up at Meng Hao.

“How much of your cultivation base did you use?” he asked suddenly.

“Is that really important?” Meng Hao replied coolly.

“It is to me!” said Chen Hao firmly.

“Well, not to me.” Meng Hao shook his head, staring at Chen Hao coldly and with a bit of impatience.

Chen Hao’s trembling heart filled with coldness. Then he suddenly recalled standing in the outside world, watching some of Fang Mu’s bizarre actions. Immediately, he pulled a bag of holding out from within his robe.

“There are over 3,000,000 spirit stones here. I didn’t bring many with me today, but you can have them if you just answer my question.”

Moments before, Meng Hao’s expression had been ice cold, as emotionless as a cold-blooded killer. Now, however, his eyes narrowed, and a slight smile could be seen on his face. It happened so quickly that Chen Hao stared in shock.

Meng Hao quickly grabbed the bag of holding and scanned it with his spiritual sense. Finally, his face beamed with joy.

“Elder Brother Chen, there’s really no need for this,” he said, licking his lips. “It’s just a question, right? What’s the point in pulling out so many spirit stones? Alright, alright. If I refused them, that would be an insult to you. In that case, I guess I’ll just have to suck it up and take them.” His current expression was indeed vastly different than what it had been before. Chen Hao stared in disbelief at how different Meng Hao was now, and how quickly he had changed. It seemed unbelievable how completely natural the change had come to him.

“Taking money to resolve others’ issues... Elder Brother Chen... just now I was using...

“Seventy percent full power!” These last four words were transmitted directly into Chen Hao’s mind. Of course, as to how much he actually used, naturally, that was something he would never reveal.

Chen Hao rose to his feet, taciturn. He didn’t want to believe Meng Hao, but the answer mostly lined up with his own judgement and perception. Giving Meng Hao a long, penetrating look, he finally uttered the words ‘I concede.’

Immediately, he faded away and reappeared on the first level of leaves.

Meng Hao was feeling very pleased. He had never imagined that he would be able to earn some spirit stones in the middle of fighting. Suddenly, he looked up in thought, and then an annoyed expression appeared on his face.

“How could I have forgotten about making money? If I’d thought of doing this earlier, I probably could have made a small fortune in the past few matches.”

As the battles to decide the top 8 continued, Meng Hao sat down cross-legged. After glancing around at the other battles going on around him, he looked down toward the Nascent Soul arena matches, and Chen Fan.

The Nascent Soul arena matches were also in the middle of determining their top 8. Chen Fan was soaked in blood as he fought a young woman. A look of annoyance could be seen on her face as they fought back and forth. Up to this point in the battle, the gloomy will cast out by Chen Fan’s attacks had kept the woman feeling quite suppressed.

However, this young woman was not one of the trial by fire competitors. She was a Nascent Soul Chosen from the Solitary Sword Pavilion, and was definitely powerful enough to make it into the top 4. She and Chen Fan were currently fighting back and forth.

Meng Hao watched the battle silently. Based on the level of his cultivation base, he was able to tell that Chen Fan had reached the end of the line in this battle.

Moments later, Chen Fan lost, and was unable to enter the top 8. He clasped hands silently to the young woman as his body faded away, and he reappeared down below.

Meng Hao sighed. He had sensed the deep bitterness within Chen Fan on previous occasions, but it wasn't until Xu Qing finally departed that he came to understand why Chen Fan had fallen so low.

Time passed, and rumbling booms echoed out. Gradually, victory and defeat were determined in multiple arenas. However, it was at this time that, all of a sudden, numerous figures began to appear outside of the Dao Tree. They hovered there, faces blank as they stared at the arena matches on the Dao Tree.

Each and every one of these figures emanated auras that would cause anyone to tremble. Ling Yunzi and the other two old men immediately started to get nervous.

By the time the battles to select the top 8 had concluded, there were numerous terrifying figures outside of the Dao Tree. One of them had the upper body of a cultivator and the tail of a snake. The creature materialized in midair, then looked coldly over at the Dao Tree, her eyes flickering with a bloodthirsty gleam.

There was another shocking thing that attracted all eyes. It was not a living creature, but rather, an enormous battle-ax. The head of the ax was carved with mountains and rivers, and appeared to be flecked with rust. The battle-ax made no sound as it materialized, but after it appeared, most of the other entities near it immediately moved away.

This battle-ax sent the crowds out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea into an uproar. However, there were actually few people who knew what the battle-ax represented, other than... the Patriarchs in the starry sky palace.

The three Patriarchs from the Three Great Daoist Societies all rose to their feet. Their expressions were deeply solemn, and within their eyes could be seen gleams of hope and excitement.

The Patriarchs from the other clans also had serious expressions as they stood up. One of the main reasons they had agreed to hold the arena matches in the Ruins of Immortality was because of the plan that had been laid out before them earlier by the Three Great Daoist Societies.

If that plan succeeded, then all of the sects would benefit.

“So... will SHE appear...?” asked the old man from the Kunlun Society. When he spoke the word ‘she,’ his voice quavered a bit.

“Perhaps, perhaps not,” said the Patriarch from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto. “Either way, we have a chance.”

Back in the location of the Dao Seeking arena matches, the top 8 had been selected. They stood on their eight respective green leaves, the center of all attention.

Those eight cultivators included Meng Hao, the garrulous old man, Zhao Yifan, Fan Dong’er, and Li Ling’er. In addition to those five, there was the young man from the Paleo-Immortal Mausoleum, who fought using corpses and coffins.

The seventh person was the tall, muscular man from the Kunlun Society who attacked with descending mountains. He was the one who had defeated Sun Hai.

The last person was the youth from the Burning Incense Stick Society. He had a third eye on his forehead, and throughout all the matches, had only ever attacked anyone once. All the other times, he merely transmitted some words, whereupon his opponents would prostrate themselves on the ground and look at him with fanatical piety.

Of these eight people, six were Chosen, and two were competitors from the trial by fire. They were now the focus of all attention from the outside world.

Countless eyes looked on with anticipation, waiting to find out which of the eight would make it into the semifinals, and after that, the final battle!

“The semifinal qualification matches will be different than the previous matches,” said Ling Yunzi, his voice echoing out in all directions.

“Victory will no longer be determined by a single battle. Each and every one of you must fight at least four battles!

“First, we will determine who are the top 4 and the bottom 4. The winners of the first fight will become the top 4, the losers will be the bottom 4.

“Then, each of the top 4 will fight the remaining three competitors who they did not fight previously. In the end, the four people who end up with the most victories will become the final 4!

“The outcome of any tie will be determined by a tie-breaking match.

“You will have three days to rest and recuperate. After that, the semifinal qualification matches will begin!” This method of determining the final 4 would prevent anyone from winning out through sheer luck. Furthermore, the final 4 would well and truly deserve to be called the most powerful!

The Three Great Daoist Societies had decided on this method, and none of the other sects had disagreed.

Time passed. Meng Hao sat there cross-legged, feeling quite confident. However, the other seven people in the competition were all powerful experts, especially Zhao Yifan and the others. Meng Hao had already tangled with them on Planet South Heaven, and was very curious as to how the coming matches would turn out.

Even more curious were the audiences out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea. Many bets had already been placed on the final outcomes.

“Zhao Yifan will definitely make it to the semifinals!”

“Fan Dong’er will most likely make it as well!”

“I wonder if Fang Mu will be able to continue his legendary run!”

Three days later, just when Ling Yunzi's echoing voice was announcing the beginning of the semifinals qualification matches, and all eyes in the Ninth Mountain and Sea were focused on the vortex screens in anticipation....

Suddenly, music could be heard drifting toward the Dao Tree from off in the distance. The music drifted slowly about, echoing in the ears, penetrating the mind. Everyone who heard it suddenly felt sorrow in their hearts, which immediately influenced their emotions.

It was a sad song, filled with longing, as if it were recalling the past, and an old friend.

As the music echoed about, a woman approached from off in the distance. She wore a snow-white gown, and was stunningly beautiful. She approached slowly and came to a stop above the Dao Tree. Her face was ice cold, seemingly devoid of any emotion whatsoever.

Her sudden appearance on the scene caused everyone to stare in shock. She was as different from the other beings in the Ruins of Immortality as black is from white. Immediately, the black wind shuddered, and the huge roc let out a miserable shriek; they both fled in terror at top speed.

Apparently, that roc had been killed by the woman in the past!

As for the blood-colored eye, it shrank back, trembling, and then fled. The other almighty figures all dropped to their knees and then... kowtowed to the woman!

As for the naga cultivator, she let out a shriek of astonishment and then fled, terrified.

Chapter 873: She's a Paragon!

The battle-ax emitted a droning sound as it approached the white-robed woman, and began to circulate around her. She looked at it, and slowly, an expression of reminiscence and sorrow appeared on her face.

Everyone on the ancient Dao Tree felt their hearts thumping as they stared blankly at the woman.

Ling Yunzi and the other two old men were also trembling, and their faces were pale white. They said absolutely nothing.

Meng Hao's eyes widened as well. However, what was most concerning to him was not the woman and her appearance on the scene, but the fact that the half-headed man who had been following him, and was now hovering near the arenas, did not flee or bow like the other beings. He quivered a bit, but by force of will remained hovering there just as before.

When Meng Hao saw this, his heart began to pound.

It was at this point that the Patriarchs from the Three Great Daoist Societies urgently stepped forward toward the vortex. Their expressions were that of shock, and they seemed to be thinking a variety of thoughts. Moments later, though, they began to tremble with wild joy.

All of the other Patriarchs were staring at the woman, dumbstruck.

“It's actually... HER!!”

“She looks exactly like the image recorded in the sect's records!”

“When the Three Great Daoist Societies told us about their plan, I thought it was crazy.... That woman... how could she be alive after all this time!?!?”

The Patriarchs from all the sects were now on their feet, staring at the white-robed woman in the vortex screen in disbelief.

“She's the Paragon from the legends....” murmured the old man from the Kunlun Society.

Similar words echoed about in the minds of all of the other Patriarchs in the starry sky palace, and waves of audible gasps arose from the crowd there.

Meanwhile, at the very peak of the Ninth Mountain, was a statue of a cross-legged man, sitting atop a boulder. The statue seemed devoid of any life force whatsoever, and yet, in this instant, cracks spread out across the surface of the statue. At the same time, the stars in the sky above the Ninth Mountain went dim, with the exception of one, which shone brilliantly, almost as if it were a solitary eye.

It seemed expressionless and ancient, as if it could lord it over all the entire starry sky and everything in it. It looked at the nearby vortex screen and saw the woman floating there, and the eye... trembled.

“Paragon....” murmured an ancient voice.

Back by the arenas, the white-robed woman hovered there in midair, looking at the Dao Tree. All of the cultivators on the tree got the feeling that she was examining them personally.

Ling Yunzi was panting, as were the two old men next to him. After a long moment passed, he clenched his teeth violently and then, face ashen, said, “Cultivators of the Nascent Soul, Spirit Severing, and Dao Seeking stages in the arena matches, let the qualifying round for the semifinals begin!

“Unleash your most powerful divine abilities. Let loose your most powerful Daos. All of you... are fighting in arena matches. However, this is also... a chance for perhaps the greatest good fortune of your entire lives!

“Whether or not you can seize this opportunity is up to your own destiny!” Ling Yunzi wasn’t able to reveal any further information. What he had already said pushed the limits of the boundaries.

His words caused the hearts of all the cultivators in the arenas to tremble. Meng Hao was especially interested in the white-robed woman.

He got a very strange sensation when he looked at her. He could see her with his physical eyes, but when he tried to look at her with divine sense, it was as if she wasn’t even there.

It was at this point that glittering light surrounded all of the cultivators, and they appeared on the green layer of leaves. In the blink of an eye, everyone was facing an opponent.

Meng Hao’s opponent was none other than... Li Ling’er!

Zhao Yifan was facing the hulking man from the Kunlun Society. As for the other matches, the garrulous old man was up against the smiling youth from the Burning Incense Stick Society.

The last match was between Fan Dong’er and the young man from the Paleo-Immortal Mausoleum.

The match to decide the top 4 and the bottom 4 was now beginning!

As Li Ling'er and Meng Hao faced off against each other, the willow leaf mark on Li Ling'er's forehead suddenly began to shine brightly, and an incredible aura exploded out from her.

A strange expression could be seen on Meng Hao's face, and he cleared his throat. Without even thinking about it, he glanced toward her rear end.

"How shameless!" she said with a cold frown. She raised her right hand, instantly causing an ancient, archaic tree to appear behind her. Shockingly, as soon as it materialized, it seemed to form a resonance with the ancient Dao Tree, and brilliant light rose up to surround Li Ling'er, causing her energy to surge.

She waved her hand, causing the ancient tree's branches to whip through the air, weaving together almost like vines as they snaked toward Meng Hao at incredible speed.

This was not the first time Meng Hao had gone up against Li Ling'er. Back in the Southern Domain, he had defeated her and taken her captive. However, his victory had come as the result of a bit of trickery; he had used the teleportation power of the Lightning Cauldron to quickly defeat her.

It was not possible to use the Lightning Cauldron in the arena matches, lest he reveal his identity.

However, Meng Hao was also different than he had been during their initial encounter. Now he had an Immortal meridian that was eighty percent solidified, and his true Immortal powers made him vastly, vastly more powerful than before.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he observed the incoming vines. Then, he kicked out, his energy surging with the power of true Immortality. Behind him, his Dharma Idol appeared, disguised with the transformative powers of the black feather. The gigantic Dharma Idol brandished its fists and then punched out, causing boundless light to appear that transformed into a Dharma Sea, which then shot toward the incoming vines.

A huge boom could be heard, and massive ripples spread out. Meng Hao didn't back up even an inch, but instead headed directly toward Li Ling'er. Last time, he had relied on his aura of invincibility to capture her. Now, his true fighting style could be unleashed. As he closed in, he transformed into a vulture, which slashed its claws toward Li Ling'er with lightning speed.

Li Ling'er's face flickered, and she performed a double-handed incantation gesture. A magical bottle appeared, which she then tossed out ahead of her.

"Shatter!" said Meng Hao. His vulture-form slashed viciously at the bottle, and at the same time, he secretly unleashed the claw magic that he had learned from the wall of the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple.

A boom rang out as the bottle exploded. In their last encounter, Meng Hao had been forced to use the Blood Demon Grand Magic to deal with the magical bottle, but this time, all it took was a single strike on his part.

It was just a simple magical technique, but Meng Hao could clearly sense how much more powerful it was now.

Li Ling'er's face fell, and she began to pant. She anxiously fell into retreat, and yet, no matter how fast she moved, Meng Hao always kept up, bearing down on her as the vicious vulture. He slashed at her again, causing the air to vibrate, as a will of invincibility exploded out.

BOOOOMMM!

Li Ling'er was defeated in exchange after exchange. No matter how she attacked, no matter what divine abilities or magical techniques she employed, regardless of the various magical items she used, they were all useless. Meng Hao bashed her over and over again like a buffeting windstorm, as easily as he would step on a dried weed.

After only the space of a few breaths, the two had exchanged dozens of blows. Blood sprayed from Li Ling'er's mouth, and a look of shock could be seen on her face. This match immediately caused her to recall Meng Hao from Planet South Heaven. He was equally swift and fierce, equally invincible, equally impossible to rattle.

Were it not for the fact that she got the feeling that this Fang Mu far exceeded Meng Hao, she would definitely have assumed that they were one and the same person!

"They can't be the same," she thought. "Meng Hao might have possessed a will of invincibility, but his energy was not incredible like this. Fang Mu... has intense energy, far more than that damned

Meng Hao!” She fell back again, gritted her teeth, and performed another incantation gesture, causing her enormous tree to suddenly begin to vibrate.

“World Tree, detonate. Rebuke the Heavens with your spirit. Transform for me! Stifle all the earth!”

Li Ling’er’s voice echoed with an ancient cadence, and immediately caused the air between her and Meng Hao to echo with deep rumbling.

Thump!!

The sound caused everything to shake. The surface of the arena trembled, and Meng Hao’s face flickered. Li Ling’er had used this exact same divine ability the last time they had fought, and it was as astonishing as it had been before; the pressure exerted by the image of the World Tree was intense.

Last time, if he hadn’t possessed the sunstone, he would never have been able to win the battle. After all, Li Ling’er possessed fifty percent of the might of a true Immortal.

Thump!

Thump!!

THUMP!!!

The successive rumbling sounds seemed to strike at Meng Hao’s heart. The air around him distorted, and wild colors flashed. Everything was shaking as the tree behind Li Ling’er suddenly collapsed. Its leaves fell, and its branches withered until all that was left of the tree was a single log!

It was... the World Tree!

As it fell towards the ground, it emitted a droning sound and passed through Li Ling’er to shoot toward Meng Hao. She performed a double handed incantation, causing her hair to whip around her head, and more power to pour into the attack.

At the same time, a pearl appeared above her head. It began to rotate rapidly, which would apparently sustain her cultivation base, preventing it from being drained by the tree.

“That’s nothing but an illusory World Tree!” said Meng Hao, his eyes glittering. His cultivation base far exceeded its previous level. He extended his right hand, and the World Tree spear appeared with its bone spearhead. Meng Hao hefted it and then flung it toward the incoming illusory World Tree.

From the perspective of the spectators in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, a green sun suddenly appeared between Meng Hao and Li Ling’er as the World Tree and the long spear slammed into each other.

In the blink of an eye, a monstrous roaring sound filled the air as the illusory World Tree trembled and, incapable of standing up to the long spear, collapsed into pieces and then violently exploded.

The spear sliced through the illusory tree like a sharp knife through a piece of bamboo, emerging from the shattered remnants to bear down on Li Ling’er with incredible speed.

In that critical moment, the pearl floating above Li Ling’er’s head shattered, causing a gentle force to flow out and then shove her off to the side. The long spear whistled through the air, kicking up a powerful wind that instantly sent Li Ling’er’s hair into complete and utter disarray. Meng Hao appeared off to Li Ling’er’s side, grasping the long spear and glancing down at her curvaceous rear end.

At the same time, Li Ling’er, who had just avoided the attack, looked over with eyes that flickered with killing intent. In the same moment that she passed Meng Hao, she raised her right hand, gathered the power of the exploded pearl treasure, and then stabbed her two fingers toward Meng Hao’s eyes.

In that instant, Meng Hao let out a cold snort and extended his left hand to violently spank Li Ling’er’s buttocks!

It was a cruel strike, similar to the strike which had landed on her not too long ago....

The slapping sound was accompanied by a miserable shriek from Li Ling’er. Once again, her rear end was now uneven, she even felt her pelvis creaking. She immediately staggered backward in retreat, her face pale and devoid of any blood.

Chapter 874: Semifinals!

“I’m gonna kill you!” raged Li Ling’er. Subconsciously, she had already superimposed Meng Hao’s image over Fang Mu. She didn’t realize that this had happened, as the sudden intense pain in that specific region left her with no time for deep consideration.

Just when she had been about to attack, agonizing pain sent her staggering backward. At the same time, the long spear whistled through the air and came to a stop right in front of her forehead.

Meng Hao looked down at her coldly. After the previous incident, his mother had told him that Li Ling’er was the same Princess Ling’er whose hair he had lit on fire as a child. He also knew that his Grandpa Fang had arranged for the two of them to be married.

However, Meng Hao did not approve of such an agreement. He only had one wife, and that was Xu Qing.

Li Ling’er trembled as she felt the coldness radiating off of the spear that was pointed at her forehead. A sensation of imminent death washed over her, and she knew that if she didn’t say the two words that Meng Hao was expecting to hear, the spearhead would unhesitatingly stab directly into her forehead.

“I don’t want to kill you,” Meng Hao said coolly. Actually, there was something else that he wanted to say.... He still had Li Ling’er’s promissory note in his bag of holding, so until he got his spirit stones, he needed her alive.

If she died, who would repay the spirit stones...?

Li Ling’er glared at Meng Hao, her ample chest rising and falling as she breathed heavily. Finally, she gritted her teeth and slowly said the two words.

“I concede.” Immediately, she vanished, then reappeared on the next layer of leaves. She had not lost her chance to get into the semifinals. If she won out in the following three matches, she would still have that opportunity.

After all, this first round was only to determine who was in the top 4 and the bottom 4.

Immediately, the crowds in the Ninth Mountain and Sea began to comment.

“Fang Mu beat Li Ling’er!”

“He’ll definitely be in the top 4! Li Ling’er is a Chosen of the Li Clan, and will without doubt become a true Immortal in the future. I even heard that she’s never been beaten before, and that a fight between her and Fan Dong’er once ended in a draw!”

“This Fang Mu is invincible!”

Meng Hao was actually not the first person to secure a win. Shockingly, the first battle to end was the one between Zhao Yifan and the hulking man from the Kunlun Society.

That battle had been just as astonishing as Meng Hao’s fight just now, and had drawn quite a bit of attention. When the man from the Kunlun Society attacked, he used an enormous chain of mountains. Even he himself seemed like a mountain, completely impervious to all attacks.

However, Zhao Yifan was also a terrifying figure, which became clearly apparent in their battle. He only used six Earth-shattering sword moves in the fight. Each sword attack was more shocking than the one before it, and they slashed down onto the mountains, severely injuring the big man from the Kunlun Society.

The final sword blow was so powerful that the man from the Kunlun Society was powerless to resist it. His mountains exploded, and were it not for the fact that Zhao Yifan was holding back his killing intent, the man would definitely have been slain.

The battle’s result caused quite a commotion in the outside world. Unfortunately, the Patriarchs in the starry sky palace were not watching the arena matches, but instead were focused on the white-robed woman. Their expressions were a mix of reverence and other complex emotions.

Booming sounds continued to rattle out as the garrulous old man, one of the trial by fire competitors, fought against the young man from the Burning Incense Stick Society. Although their ages were different, both of them gave off the feeling that they were hustlers of some kind.

One of them didn’t attack, but rather, constantly mumbled and chattered madly at his opponents, frothing at the mouth. The other smiled and transmitted words into his opponent’s minds, causing

them to fall down and worship him. In fact, even after those battles ended, the opponents would continue to look piously at the young man from down below on the lowest layer of leaves.

When they fought, they didn't engage in close quarter fighting. Instead, they sat down cross-legged and looked at each other. Although nothing usual seemed to be going on, those who were in the know understood that they were currently in an extremely ruthless showdown.

“A battle of divine will!”

“The Burning Incense Stick Society excels in the use of divine will. They coalesce the will of many living things to become their Dao of burning incense. Xie Yixian is a Chosen of the Burning Incense Stick Society, and supposedly, he's in the running to become Dao Child! His strength in divine will is spectacular!”

“If I remember correctly, the old man's name is Qian Duoduo. He... is actually going to participate in a divine will contest with Xie Yixian from the Burning Incense Stick Society!”

On the other battleground, Fan Dong'er was facing the young man from the Paleo-Immortal Mausoleum. Fierce fighting raged between the two of them, and the face of the young man from the Paleo-Immortal Mausoleum twisted with passion. His eyes seemed capable of melting any coldness, but what had driven him mad was not Fan Dong'er. Rather, part of the mist behind Fan Dong'er had been scattered during the course of the fighting to reveal the female corpse behind her.

“That is... the most beautiful corpse I have seen in my entire life!” murmured the young man. Seven coffins were arrayed in front of him, all of them opened to reveal seven corpses, which he was using to fight Fan Dong'er.

Fan Dong'er was on the verge of going mad. Right now, there was nothing she hated more in the world than corpses, and the look in her opponent's eyes filled her with revulsion.

Booms rang out, and time slipped by. The white-robed woman continued to float above the Dao Tree, coldly watching the cultivators in the arena matches. It was impossible to tell what she might be thinking.

After a long moment passed, a boom rattled out next to Fan Dong'er, and the young man coughed up a mouthful of blood. He fell back, and as he did, a black hair suddenly appeared in his hand. It did not belong to Fan Dong'er, but rather, the female corpse.

Fan Dong'er's face twisted into a unsightly expression as the mist behind her vanished. The white-robed corpse was now clearly visible to everyone who was watching in the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

"I concede!" cried the young man from the Paleo-Immortal Mausoleum. He coughed up some more blood, but his face was plastered with a look of enchantment. He held the hair up to his nose and inhaled deeply, then carefully put the hair away. Eyes burning, he looked over at the female corpse behind Fan Dong'er.

"She is my true love. Fan Dong'er, you better take good care of her." With that, the young man vanished to appear on the set of leaves for the bottom contenders among the top 8. However, he continued to look down at the corpse, intoxicated.

Discussions immediately rose up among the audiences in the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

"That guy Xiao Luo from the Paleo-Immortal Museum is such a pervert! He's a Chosen, but it turns out he's actually a necrophiliac!"

"I can't believe what everyone has been saying is true! There's a female corpse floating behind Fan Dong'er!"

"From what I heard, the corpse got attached to her when she ran into some fellow named Meng Hao on Planet South Heaven!"

As the crowds buzzed about the matter, the match between the garrulous Qian Duoduo and Xie Yixian from the Burning Incense Stick Society had come to an end. Xie Yixian's face was flushed, and blood gushed out of his mouth. After wiping it off, he sighed lightly, rose to his feet, and bowed to the old man.

"I have been thoroughly convinced that your divine will magic is an amazing inheritance, Fellow Daoist," he said. "I, Xie, concede."

Qian Duoduo's face was also a bit pale. His eyes snapped open and he rose to his feet, then solemnly clasped hands toward Xie Yixian.

Conversations immediately broke out.

“So, Qian Duoduo actually won!!”

“He defeated Xie Yixian from the Burning Incense Stick Society. Just how strong is his divine will? He’s really a dark horse in this competition. Earlier I had assumed he wouldn’t make it past the top 16. I never imagined he would pull off a win like this and make it into the top 4!”

Regardless of the analyses of the outside crowds, the top 4 had been decided: Meng Hao, Zhao Yifan, Qian Duoduo, and Fan Dong’er!

The bottom four consisted of Li Ling’er, Xie Yixian, Xiao Luo and the hulking man from the Kunlun Society. What would happen next would be the final three battles of the round!

Now everyone from the top four would have to fight against the rest of the bottom four. After all of the battles were completed, the four people with the most wins would become the semifinalists!

After six hours of rest, when everyone was back at their peak readiness, the second fight in the struggle to qualify for the semifinals began! Meng Hao stood motionless on the bronze leaf as light glittered in front of him to reveal the hulking man from the Kunlun Society.

The man stepped forward, and it was like the descent of numerous mountains, although Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever. Regarding the various sects of the Ninth Mountain and Sea, he was already familiar with the Demon Immortal Sect, because of Zhixiang. Also, he knew of... the Kunlun Society.

His master Pill Demon had joined the Kunlun Society, and because of that, Meng Hao smiled amiably at the hulking man.

The big man stared in shock, then nodded at Meng Hao and clasped hands.

“I am Yang Yi from the Kunlun Society,” he said. “Fellow Daoist Fang, please give me some fighting tips!”

“Of course!” replied Meng Hao, clasping hands back at the man.

Introductions having been made, Yang Yi's eyes began to glow brightly, and a massive aura exploded out as he charged toward Meng Hao. As he neared, shockingly, numerous mountains materialized around him.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever, but his pupils constricted. He had noticed before that this hulking man was actually wielding... the Mountain Consuming Incantation!!

The Mountain Consuming Incantation was a Daoist magic from the ancient Demon Immortal Sect, and previously, Meng Hao had assumed it was something only he could wield. Having seen the hulking Yang Yi in action, though, he was now much more interested in the Kunlun Society.

"So, the Mountain Consuming Incantation...?" thought Meng Hao. Laughing inwardly, he also stepped forward, causing numerous mountains to materialize around him. Of course, with the help of the black feather, he made them look like streams of water.

In the blink of an eye, the two began to fight back and forth. They did not use a variety of techniques, but rather, focused on the Mountain Consuming Incantation, and their incredibly powerful fleshly bodies.

RUMMMBLE!

Dozens of exchanges occurred, after which Yang Yi fell back, body trembling, but eyes overflowing with the desire to fight.

"Wonderful! This match is far more enjoyable than the fight with Zhao Yifan!" Yang Yi laughed heartily, then clenched his fists, causing the mountains around him to link up into a mountain range. He himself seemed to change into an enormous mountain.

Meng Hao was laughing as loudly as Yang Yi. He attacked, causing the streams to unite into a mighty river that rumbled through the air. They fought back and forth again, holding nothing back. Booms echoed out, attracting quite a bit of attention from the shocked audience.

They didn't fight for very long, only enough time for an incense stick to burn. Finally, Yang Yi was sent staggering backward seven or eight paces. Panting, he flicked his sleeve, causing the mountains to vanish. Then he stood there and gazed deeply at Meng Hao. Finally, he shook his head and laughed.

“I’m not a match for you. I have to concede! However, I do have to say that this was the most fun I’ve had in all of the arena matches!

“Yang Yi won’t be entering the semifinals. However, if you have time, Elder Brother Fang, please come to the Kunlun Society so that we can drink together!”

Meng Hao laughed. He could sense that Yang Yi was an outspoken and straightforward person. After all of Meng Hao’s years spent in the world of cultivation, he could tell that the man was no hypocrite or faker. Meng Hao nodded and smiled.

“I will definitely be going to the Kunlun Society!” he said.

Yang Yi laughed as he faded away to reappear on another leaf for his third battle.

Meng Hao took a deep breath and then sat down cross-legged. After an hour passed, light suddenly glittered as the third battle began. However, no opponent appeared. Instead, rumbling could be heard as nine coffins materialized, smashing down from up above.

“The female corpse behind Fan Dong’er is my true love, so I can’t harm her. The rest of you, however, are completely different!” The voice which spoke was soft and feminine, but the figure who walked out of the light was a man.

This was none other than Xiao Luo from the Paleo-Immortal Mausoleum, one of the Five Great Holy Lands!

Chapter 875: Domineering!

When Xiao Luo made his appearance, a cold wind sprang up, causing his hair and robes to flutter. He was clearly male, but there was also something overtly feminine about him. This was especially true when it came to his cheerless eyes, which caused his handsome features to be strangely twisted.

Xiao Luo stood there in the middle of the arena, looking at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever as he stood there looking past the nine upright coffins at Xiao Luo.

“Nine Heavens Asura Squad!” cried Xiao Luo, his eyes flickering with killing intent. He waved his hand, causing rumbling sounds to emanate out of the nine coffins, which then simultaneously opened, causing a thick aura of death to spill out.

The air twisted, and strange colors danced. Nine tall figures appeared within the coffins, nine corpses who abounded with auras of death. Their bodies were not decomposing, but rather, mummified. They wore tattered clothing and had vicious expressions, and it was just possible to tell that seven were men and two were women.

“Kill him!” said Xiao Luo with a vicious chuckle. A ruthless gleam could be seen in his eyes as the nine corpses charged toward Meng Hao, kicking up a foul wind.

They closed in on Meng Hao in the blink of an eye. However, Meng Hao’s expression didn’t change in the slightest. He extended his right hand, within which materialized the World Tree spear with the bone spearhead. Then, he dashed forward like the wind, the spearhead leading the way.

A bang could be heard, along with an ear-piercing rumble as a huge vortex appeared, spreading out in all directions and instantly interfering with the nine corpses’ movement.

Meng Hao moved rapidly, bypassing the corpses and heading directly toward Xiao Luo. In the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint, Xiao Luo performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and pointed toward the surface of the arena. Immediately, Yin-type qi surged up, transforming into a blast that shot toward Meng Hao like a huge wall.

A boom could be heard as Meng Hao’s spear pierced the Yin qi wall. The wall shuddered and then collapsed, after which Xiao Luo waved his hand, causing nine black magical needles to appear. They immediately shot toward Meng Hao like nine black vipers.

At the same time, the nine corpses that were now behind Meng Hao turned, becoming black beams of light that immediately began to surround Meng Hao.

Xiao Luo laughed coldly. He had unleashed his most powerful magic in an attempt to catch his opponent off-guard.

“DIE!”

In this moment of deadly crisis, Meng Hao simply snorted. He stabbed his spear into the surface of the leaf, causing a boom to echo out. Cracks spread out across the surface of the arena as a shocking energy suddenly exploded. It transformed into a storm-like vortex that spread out in all directions, slamming into the corpses. The corpses fell back, trembling, and as for the nine needles, cracking sounds could be heard as they simply fell to pieces mid-flight.

Within the screaming vortex, Meng Hao released his grip on the spear, then transformed into the vulture. There was a flash, and then he appeared directly in front of Xiao Luo and slashed at him viciously.

Boom!

Xiao Luo's face fell, and he quickly performed an incantation gesture, causing the Yin qi to surge, transforming into another wall to block against the vulture's slash. A huge boom could be heard as that wall collapsed, too. Before Xiao Luo could even fall back in retreat, the vulture vanished and Meng Hao reappeared, his leg flashing around in a spinning kick.

A bang could be heard as the kick, seemingly powerful enough to smash mountains, formed a semicircle and slammed directly into Xiao Luo. In that critical moment, Xiao Luo's eyes went wide, and he spit a pearl out of his mouth. The pearl emanated a powerful glow that attempted to block the kick, and yet instantly shattered, completely incapable of standing up to the attack. However, it did manage to give Xiao Luo a moment of breathing room. Coughing up blood, he rapidly fell backward in retreat.

At the same time, Meng Hao increased his speed and levied another attack. Currently, he paid no heed to defending, but rather, attacked like lightning, like a windstorm that could crush anything in its path.

He bore down on Xiao Luo like a tempest, performing an incantation with his right hand and then stabbing his finger out ahead of him. The shocking finger attack caused the air to vibrate, and Xiao Luo's face to fall. This magical battle was unfolding so quickly that Xiao Luo had no time to even breathe. He had to exercise complete and utter attention; the slightest misstep would leave him dead.

Xiao Luo performed an incantation gesture as fast as possible, causing the Yin qi to form into numerous pearls.

"Burst! Burst! BURST!" roared Xiao Luo. Booms rang out as the pearls flew toward Meng Hao and then exploded, transforming into a powerful shockwave that swept out in all directions. A vicious

smile appeared on Xiao Luo's face. The Yin qi pearls seemed ordinary, but in fact, they were a secret magic from the Paleo-Immortal Mausoleum. Any one of those explosions was powerful enough to slay a peak Dao seeking expert.

Xiao Luo knew his opponent was powerful, but even a Stone Golem would at least be injured by their detonation.

"I just need to put a bit of distance between us," Xiao Luo thought with a cold laugh. "Then I can send the nine corpses to slaughter him!" Just as Xiao Luo was about to continue to fall back, the air twisted as Meng Hao actually stepped into the explosions. To him, these detonating pearls could do nothing more than inflict flesh wounds. His right hand clenched into a fist and he sent out a punch.

BOOM!

Xiao Luo let out a miserable shriek. Blood sprayed from his mouth as he tumbled backward. In the blink of an eye, Meng Hao was on him again, slamming out with an attack that could shatter rock. Xiao Luo once again fell back, blood pouring from his mouth.

In the blink of an eye, ten more exchanges were made. Meng Hao's shocking energy and will of invincibility made it so that all Xiao Luo could do was fall back and focus all of his energy on defending himself. He wasn't the slightest bit capable of attacking.

Meng Hao's moves were just too swift and too vicious. Booms echoed out in the short span of a few breaths that to Xiao Luo, seemed like a very, very long time. Then, a cracking sound rang out as his leg was broken by Meng Hao.

Intense pain caused his face to go pale. A look of complete astonishment could be seen on his face.

"Dammit," he thought, "I can't let him build up any more energy. Otherwise, I'm going to be defeated for sure!"

The crowds outside watched the semifinal qualification rounds with intense concentration. Many were focusing on Meng Hao, and were completely astonished by what they saw.

"If I were in Xiao Luo's place, I would be just as powerless!"

“This Fang Mu is completely domineering! His attacks are swift and fierce; he’s totally incomparable!!”

“You definitely can’t let yourself be put on the defensive when facing Fang Mu. Doing that... is just giving him a chance to explode with ferocity and turn the battle into a catastrophe!”

Xiao Luo gritted his teeth, and a look of madness appeared on his face. Roaring, he caused bursts of Yin qi to explode out, which formed into numerous ghostly figures. Just as he was going to attempt to make a counterattack, Meng Hao’s fist landed again. All of Xiao Luo’s qi collapsed, and he was sent flying backward like a kite with its string cut, blood spurting from his mouth.

Then, with indescribable speed, Meng Hao shot toward Xiao Luo and extended his finger toward his forehead, killing intent roiling.

Xiao Luo’s eyes went wide, and his heart was trembling. In this moment of deadly crisis, he bit the tip of his tongue, burning some of his Essence Blood and longevity to unleash a forbidden magic.

“Time to risk it all,” he cried. “YIN MOON SEVERING!”

A crescent moon appeared on his forehead, which rapidly transformed into a black-colored moon that shot toward Meng Hao in a slashing motion.

Meng Hao’s eyes widened as the moon closed in on him. Suddenly, his Dharma Idol appeared behind him, and its fist shot out to meet the incoming Yin Moon.

A huge boom could be heard, and a tremor ran through Meng Hao as the Yin Moon exploded. Blood oozed out of Xiao Luo’s mouth, but he used the short moment of freedom to shoot backward. Face twisted with unprecedented bitterness, he let out a shout.

“Nine Corpses Demon Transformation!” he cried. Immediately, the nine corpses that had continuously been behind Meng Hao and unable to even touch him, began to tremble violently. In the blink of an eye, long black fur began to grow out of their bodies, and their appearance became even more ferocious than before. Furthermore, Demonic qi began to surge within them, although that was something nobody would be able to detect.

As the Demonic qi surged, the nine corpses’ cultivation bases began to rise dramatically. In the blink of an eye, they were comparable to false Immortals!!

Nine false Immortals!!

This was Xiao Luo's trump card that he had originally hoped to use to secure first place. It was not something he would casually unleash, but he had been forced into a corner, and therefore, in the frenzy of this fight, he didn't hesitate at all.

"DIE!" he roared as the nine false Immortal corpses bore down on Meng Hao. One by one, they began to lash out with astonishing attacks that caused the crowds out in the Ninth Mountain to reel in shock.

"Heavens! That's false Immortal energy!!"

"What magical technique is that!? He actually gave those nine corpses the powers of false Immortality!!"

"Xiao Luo didn't even use that divine ability in his fight with Fan Dong'er!"

As the outside crowds were in a commotion, the nine corpses closed in on Meng Hao, bursting with explosive energy. As for Meng Hao, an odd expression could be seen on his face.

"Demons...." he thought, his facial expression quickly returning to normal. His right hand suddenly rose into the air, and he performed an incantation gesture. The art of Righteous Bestowal was unleashed. This art was different than the Eighth Hex, and was designed specifically for subduing Demons!

No one got any special feeling when Meng Hao unleashed the art. However, as soon as his hand lowered, the nine corpses suddenly stopped in place and began to tremble. Their previously blank eyes then began to glow with bright light.

Xiao Luo's face fell completely, and he retreated in astonishment, frantically performing incantation gestures in an attempt to regain control of the nine corpses.

However, it was at this point that Meng Hao extended his right hand. A strange light could be seen in his eyes as, under the cover of the transformative powers of the black feather, he unleashed the Seventh Demon Sealing Hex, Karmic Hexing!

Rumbling filled the air as the Karma threads connecting the nine corpses to Xiao Luo began to separate. As that happened, the corpses trembled even more violently, and explosive death auras radiated out of them. Then they toppled over onto their faces.

Xiao Luo was trembling, and he coughed up nine successive mouthfuls of blood. From the look on his face, he was completely gobsmacked. He stared at Meng Hao for a moment, shaking violently.

“I concede!” he yelled, fearful of losing his life in this place.

As soon as the words left his mouth, he was surrounded by flickering lights, and then vanished.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever as he picked up his spear and walked off to the side.

He stood there, his energy surging, the focus of attention of all eyes in the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

“Three fights, three wins!!”

“There’s one more fight, but Fang Mu is definitely in the semifinals!”

“Not even Xiao Luo was a match for him. From the look of things, Fang Mu hasn’t even used all of his power yet. Just... how strong is he?!?!”

Chapter 876: Four Battles, Four Victories!

[/expand]

When Meng Hao attacked, the white-robed woman floating in midair outside of the Dao Tree looked at him calmly for a moment, although no onlooker would notice that fact, not even Meng Hao.

Xiao Luo reappeared on another leaf, his entire body shaking as he looked back at Meng Hao with terror and astonishment. Before their battle, he had been aware that Meng Hao was powerful, but he had never imagined that he would only be able to defend and would be completely incapable of fighting back against him.

He had even burned some of his longevity and used his Nine Corpses Demon Transformation, explosively increasing their cultivation bases to be similar to false Immortals. And yet, his opponent had then unleashed some unknown divine ability... to cause his nine corpses to stop in mid-flight, and even sever their connection to him.

As he thought about it, Xiao Luo took a deep breath. This was the first time he had ever truly been afraid of another person.

“He’s somebody I can’t ever provoke! If I ever meet him again, I’ll simply flee! His magical technique... can inhibit my Dao!” Xiao Luo took another deep breath as he looked at Meng Hao. Intense terror filled his heart, and he rejoiced at his decision to concede when he did. If he hadn’t, he himself might be a corpse now.

Almost in the same moment that Meng Hao finished his match, Zhao Yifan also secured another victory. After that... the fourth battle began.

Meng Hao stood as usual on his leaf. From the very beginning to now, he had not moved to the losers bracket. There was only one other among the top 4 who had done the same, and that was Zhao Yifan!

Even Fan Dong’er had been defeated, by none other than Xie Yixian from the Burning Incense Stick Society.

That match garnered quite a bit of attention, and caused Xie Yixian to suddenly rise up abruptly in the eyes of the onlookers.

The bizarre Qian Duoduo ended up being defeated by Li Ling’er, whose magical techniques were somewhat effective at counteracting the old man. However, in the very end, it was actually difficult to say who won and who lost. Li Ling’er earned her victory mostly due to luck.

As of this moment, Meng Hao and Zhao Yifan were certain to enter the semifinals, but as for everyone else, it was hard to say.

Meng Hao’s opponent in the fourth battle was the Chosen who had beaten Fan Dong’er, Xie Yixian from the Burning Incense Stick Society. As soon as he emerged from the glittering light to stand in front of Meng Hao, his eyes gleamed seriously.

Of all the people who made it to the top 8, he truly feared three of them. One was the spectacular Zhao Yifan, the other was the talkative Qian Duoduo, and the last... was none other than this Fang Mu.

“I am Xie Yixian from the Burning Incense Stick Society. Fellow Daoist Fang, please give me some fighting tips!”

Having said this, Xie Yixian suddenly sat down cross-legged and performed an incantation gesture with his right hand. Immediately, a copper furnace appeared in front of him.

Stuck into the very top of the copper furnace was an incense stick.

As the incense stick burned, streams of smoke curled up into the air to surround Xie Yixian, obscuring him slightly.

“Fellow Daoist Fang, my magical technique is different from the kind you’ve seen before. If you can stand up to it for the amount of time it takes this incense stick to burn, then I will concede.”

Meng Hao stood in place, his expression the same as ever. He had been paying close attention to how Xie Yixian fought. Right now, Meng Hao didn’t even speak. He took a step forward, and then suddenly, everything around him distorted, and in the blink of an eye, the arena was gone. In its place, a boundless land stretched in front of Meng Hao.

Countless cities could be seen dotting the land, and within each one was an enormous statue. If you looked closely, you would see that the statues depicted none other than Xie Yixian.

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered.

At this point, a majestic voice rang out throughout the world.

“The Heavens are grand, the Earth majestic!” As soon as the voice echoed out, the statues of Xie Yixian trembled and opened their eyes, almost as if they were coming to life. They flew up into the air, a total of 9,000 of them, which then began to circulate around Meng Hao and emanate radiant light. In a short moment, the statues merged together into one.

They became... a lifelike Xie Yixian.

He hovered there in midair, smiling slightly at Meng Hao.

“The Heavens are grand, and the Earth is majestic, but the greatest of all is the host of all living things!

“Living things possess desire. Desire becomes thought. Thought becomes burning incense. Worship the gods, pray for their blessing. Through the cultivation of this burning incense, if they worship me, then I am a god! If they pray to me, I am a god!

“This place is my Burning Incense World. Here... I am a god, and in this place, I cannot be defeated!

“If I say that a single breath will last for ten thousand years, then ten thousand years that breath shall last!

“Fellow Daoist Fang, you have a monstrous cultivation base, and shocking divine sense. Willpower and determination like yours is something I rarely see. Why not become my follower here? Become part of my Burning Incense Flock. Cultivate the Dao of burning incense. Then one day, you too can be a god.” Xie Yixian’s words were spoken indifferently, but seemed to contain a bizarre power. As they echoed out into Meng Hao’s ears, he felt his mind trembling, as if there was something within the words that made them impossible to resist, and that was forcing him to comply.

“If I become part of your Burning Incense Flock, how many spirit stones will you pay me per month?” asked Meng Hao coolly.

As soon as the words left his mouth, Xie Yixian gaped. After a moment, though, he laughed loudly, then waved his hand. A massive roaring could be heard that transformed into a continent of spirit stones. All of the mountains, cities, even the vegetation, turned into spirit stones.

In the blink of an eye, the entire world transformed into endless, uncountable spirit stones.

“You can have however many you wish.”

Meng Hao looked around and then shook his head. “I don’t want these. I want real spirit stones, in the outside world.”

Xie Yixian's face darkened, and he gave a cold snort. The sound started out light, but then rapidly turned into something that sounded like thunder, echoing out with incredible pressure. It was like Heavenly might that crushed down onto Meng Hao.

"Kneel before me!" said Xie Yixian. His voice echoed out shockingly, filled with a will that seemed almost impossible to resist.

Meng Hao looked up, his expression the same as ever.

"That's all the pressure you can exert?" he asked. Suddenly, he transformed into a vulture that shot toward Xie Yixian. A boom rang out as Xie Yixian's body collapsed. A moment later, he reappeared some distance off.

"My life force is limitless in this place," he said coolly. "You can't kill me!" He raised his right hand, coalescing the power of the world into a huge palm that shot toward Meng Hao.

Energy raged, and boundless pressure emanated out.

"Can't kill him?" thought Meng Hao, frowning. "Is that because the magic is an illusion? Or because I haven't affected the essence of his life force?" He extended his right hand and made a grasping gesture. Instantly the Blood Demon Grand Magic surged into action. An enormous blood-colored vortex appeared, which spread out to cover Xie Yixian, enveloping him completely.

A boom rang out as his body collapsed into pieces. At the same time, another image of him appeared off to the side. But this time, his face was pale and filled with astonishment.

"What magical technique is that!?!?"

"Ah, so it was because the essence of his life force hadn't been affected." Meng Hao smiled, and then suddenly, his hand turned bright red. He immediately flew out, closing in on Xie Yixian. Even as the young man stared in shock, Meng Hao slapped out with his palm.

A bang could be heard as Xie Yixian once again collapsed into pieces. Actually, his battle prowess wasn't very high to begin with. What was truly shocking was his magical technique. Unfortunately, that magic wasn't very useful on Meng Hao.

In the past, whenever someone killed him in this world, he would come back to life. It could happen over and over again, without end, leaving opponents completely dispirited.

Now, though, every time he died, some of his life force was actually drained away. It was something that had never happened to him before, and in his shock, he tried to evade Meng Hao. However, he was no match at all. Were it not for the magical technique he was using, Meng Hao could have killed him numerous times in the blink of an eye.

Rumbling echoed out. Every time Xie Yixian died, one of his statues would shatter. Every time Xie Yixian reappeared, his face was covered with astonishment, and he would instantly fall into retreat.

“Elder Brother Fang, stop! I’ll let you out, you can leave....”

“You don’t need to let me out,” Meng Hao replied calmly, “I can get out on my own.” With that, he slammed his foot down onto the surface of the ground. A huge boom could be heard as his Dharma Idol appeared, towering 300 meters into the air, its energy surging.

Xie Yixian’s face flickered, and he was just about to say something else when Meng Hao suddenly stamped his foot down again. Rumbling could be heard as his Dharma Idol rapidly grew in size. Now it was 3,000 meters tall!

Monstrous energy surged, and the power of a true Immortal erupted out. Xie Yixian’s face instantly fell as Meng Hao stamped down a third time.

BOOM!

Meng Hao’s Dharma Idol grew again. In the blink of an eye it was now 6,000 meters tall, seemingly big enough to prop up the sky.

“Tear this place open!” said Meng Hao, his eyes flickering with killing intent. As he spoke, he raised both hands high into the air, then slammed them down. Rumbling filled the air as his Dharma Idol also raised its hands up, grabbed ahold of the air, and then began to rip it in two different directions.

Massive, shocking rumbles echoed out. Xie Yixian's face flickered as he performed incantation gestures, causing the world to begin to rotate and stabilize. However, despite his efforts, a massive rift appeared in the sky.

The world was actually being ripped apart!

“Impossible!” shouted Xie Yixian. “This is my Burning Incense World! I am God here! Maybe you can hurt my life force, but if I say that nothing can destroy this land, then no power exists that can do so!”

“I'm afraid your cultivation base is simply... not high enough,” said Meng Hao, his voice cool. He stamped his foot down onto the ground a fourth time, and his cultivation base surged with eighty percent of an Immortal meridian, and eighty percent of the power of a true Immortal. His Dharma Idol grew again; it was now 12,000 meters tall. It lifted its hands up, then violently ripped at the sky. The earth quaked and bright colors flashed in the sky. A massive rumbling sound echoed out.

The rift in the sky opened wider, and an enormous rumbling sound filled the air. Meng Hao's Dharma Idol was literally tearing the sky open!

As the sky was ripped open, the entire world, as well as Xie Yixian, suddenly shattered. When things grew clear again, Meng Hao was standing in the same place as before in the arena. Xie Yixian was there in front of him. Only about ten percent of the incense stick in front of him had burned so far. A cracking sound rang out as the incense stick suddenly collapsed into pieces.

When that happened, the smoke dissipated, revealing Xie Yixian sitting there cross-legged. He opened his eyes and coughed up a mouthful of blood. Face pale, he looked at Meng Hao and smiled bitterly.

“Elder Brother Fang, you are quite powerful... I concede!”

Even as the words left his mouth, he coughed up another mouthful of blood. Suddenly, a rip appeared on his forehead, a wound that seemed very difficult to heal. It was a Dao Wound!

The cause of the wound was none other than the tearing open of his Burning Incense World.

This fight had been a very strange one. From start to finish, barely a hundred breaths of time had passed, and all the other matches were still in progress. The audiences in the Ninth Mountain and Sea were instantly in an uproar.

“Four battles, four victories!!”

“The last battle seemed ordinary, but actually, the disciple from the Burning Incense Stick Society was in grave peril!”

“A tear appeared on Xie Yixian’s forehead! I heard that if the magic of the Burning Incense Stick Society is broken, it can cause a backlash that will turn into a Dao Wound! Don’t tell me... that’s a Dao Wound!”

Chapter 877: Unleashed!

Everyone watching in the Ninth Mountain and Sea was stunned. Even the Patriarchs in the starry sky palace were looking on with surprise. It was clear that the most-watched person in this trial by fire and these arena matches was Meng Hao.

From the beginning of the trial by fire, all the way to the end of the arena matches, his path had been one of power and prominence.

The qualifying matches for the semifinals were still underway. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, Zhao Yifan finished his battle. He easily defeated Xiao Luo from the Paleo-Immortal Mausoleum, who had long since lost his will to fight. His connection with his nine most powerful corpses had been severed, making it impossible for him to fight for a spot in the semifinals.

Zhao Yifan was now the second cultivator to secure a place in the semifinals. Throughout all four of the battles he had fought, he never left his arena. He looked over at Meng Hao, who was two arenas over, and their gazes locked for a moment. Zhao Yifan’s eyes brimmed with the desire to fight, but Meng Hao’s expression was calm, and after a moment, he looked away.

An hour later, the other two battles concluded. Li Ling’er, with four battles and three victories, had successfully made it to the semifinals.

Li Ling'er had made quite the comeback. She fought her way from the bottom four into the semifinals, which caused a big stir out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, especially in the Li Clan, where everyone was very excited.

Qian Duoduo had also won three out of his four battles. His only defeat had been at the hands of Li Ling'er. All of his other opponents had temporarily gone insane to some degree or another. Only Li Ling'er did not react to his magic at all, which secured her victory.

Fan Dong'er was eliminated. She had been defeated twice, once by Xie Yixian from the Burning Incense Stick Society, and once by Li Ling'er. All of this was a huge blow to her.

Her expression was gloomy as she sat there cross-legged on the lowest layer of leaves, staring off into the distance. Mentally, she replayed the various battles she had fought, and finally bowed her head. As of now, she understood that the reason for her failures was that her Dao Heart had been split.

That split was caused by the female corpse.

She took a deep breath, after which her expression brightened.

"This is my personal tribulation," she thought. "However, master said that it's actually good fortune for me. Therefore... from now on, I won't hide the corpse. I will reveal her for all to see, and will not resist her, but accept her!" As of that moment, the mist behind her vanished to clearly reveal the female corpse.

She completely ignored all the people who suddenly turned their heads to look at her. Her eyes gleamed with determination.

In the starry sky palace, the Patriarch from the Nine Seas God World nodded his head slightly. From his perspective, this huge defeat for Fan Dong'er was actually a good thing for her.

The semifinalists had been selected!

These four people were the subject of the complete and utter attention of everyone in the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

Ling Yunzi glanced cautiously over at the white robed woman floating above the Dao Tree, and then spoke out.

“You have three days to rest, after which... we will find out who is qualified to make into the final round!”

Meng Hao sat there cross-legged, his eyes closed, not speaking. The half-headed man had remained floating near his arena this entire time, staring at Meng Hao, not even blinking.

That gaze was enough to cause anyone to feel so terrified that their hair would stand on end. However, after all this time, Meng Hao had gotten used to it, and ignored the man completely.

A day later, the Nascent Soul and Spirit Severing arena matches produced their semifinalists.

Three days later, the semifinal rounds began!

When Ling Yunzi’s voice rang out, a buzz of excitement rose up among the spectators in the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

“There’s no suspense at all! Unless Fang Mu and Zhao Yifan fight each other in the semifinals, then the final match will definitely be between them!”

“You’re absolutely right. Li Ling’er already lost to Fang Mu, so the only person for him to fight is Qian Duoduo. Qian Duoduo’s cultivation base is mysterious and unfathomable. That would be an interesting matchup.”

“Well, we’ll just have to wait and see how the matches are arranged!”

As the audiences waited in anticipation, Meng Hao vanished from his spot in the arena. Before he or any of the other semifinalists reappeared, a virtually imperceptible flicker could be seen in the eyes of the woman floating outside the Dao Tree. Apparently, that flickering did something to the Dao Tree.

Moments later, everyone appeared.

When Meng Hao emerged from the light, he was just beneath the golden leaf at the top of the Dao Tree.

The leaf he currently stood on was silver-colored, one of only two such leaves on the Dao Tree.

When Zhao Yifan appeared, the person he found facing him... was not Meng Hao! Instead, Li Ling'er emerged from the glittering light.

As for Meng Hao's opponent, it was the crazy old man, Qian Duoduo.

These were the exact match ups that the audiences in the outside world had wanted, and the excitement and anticipation was building. Of course, the Patriarchs in the starry sky palace noticed that something odd had just happened, and many faces flickered. The old men from the Three Great Daoist Societies took deep breaths, and looks of excitement appeared in their eyes.

"So, she actually did something to interfere with the Dao Tree!"

"That shows that she approves of the competition!!"

Back in the arena, Meng Hao's face was calm as he watched Qian Duoduo approaching. In this group of semifinalists, Meng Hao and Qian Duoduo had both risen up from through the trial by fire to reach this point.

Qian Duoduo looked at Meng Hao silently for a moment, and a bright light could be seen coalescing within his eyes. His energy began to rise up, reaching a level far beyond that which had been seen in previous matches.

Not even when he was defeated by Li Ling'er had he focused so much energy.

"I am Qian Duoduo. Greetings, Fellow Daoist Fang. During this battle, I will use all the power I can muster. I want to take first place, and my only chance to do that is by defeating you!"

Meng Hao gazed at Qian Duoduo. He had been paying attention to this old man earlier. The fact that he had made his way through the trial by fire all the way to here proved that he was beyond ordinary.

That was especially the case considering he had won a victory over Xie Yixian. Although Meng Hao had seemed relaxed in his fight against Xie Yixian, if he didn't have the Blood Demon Grand Magic to steal the young man's life force, the battle would have been very difficult. Of course, based on the power of Meng Hao's cultivation base, the Burning Incense World would not have been able to restrain him forever.

In any case, Meng Hao wasn't sure exactly how this old man had managed to win out over the Burning Incense World.

"Every person who fought him went crazy," he thought. "Even Xie Yixian and the other people he defeated all showed signs of insanity to some extent or another." Meng Hao's eyes glittered brightly. "Interesting."

Clenching his right fist at his side, he nodded at the old man.

Qian Duoduo took a deep breath, and then all of a sudden, his body began to inflate like a balloon. Cracking sounds could be heard as his emaciated frame suddenly bulged with muscles. In the blink of an eye, he had grown taller by two heads, and his energy surged with power.

The sight of it caused Meng Hao's eyes to shine. The audiences in the outside world were shocked; Qian Duoduo had never done anything like this in his previous matches, not even when he fought against Li Ling'er.

Rumble!

Qian Duoduo flew into the air with incredible speed, leaving a ghost image behind as he shot forward to appear directly in front of Meng Hao. He immediately sent out a punch that was met by Meng Hao's palm.

As a massive boom shook the arena, Qian Duoduo's foot spun through the air toward Meng Hao in a roundhouse kick.

Meng Hao's eyes were shining even more brightly now. He didn't retreat, but rather took an exploratory step forward. He waved his hand, causing numerous streams of water to materialize around him, which then formed together into a massive river that swept across the entire arena.

A bang rang out as Qian Duoduo fell back. However, he immediately performed an incantation gesture, causing the image of a sun and moon to materialize. They rotated rapidly, creating a vortex that surged toward Meng Hao. Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever as he transformed into a vulture that charged toward the old man. It was at this point that a look of surprise appeared in Qian Duoduo's eyes, and he suddenly let out a loud shout.

“Wicked!”

The word seemed to contain some bizarre power that poured into Meng Hao's ears and entered his mind. Suddenly, his mind began to spin, and wicked thoughts suddenly rose up unrestrained within his heart.

Because of the wicked thoughts, Meng Hao was incapable of maintaining the vulture form, and once again returned to human shape. Qian Duoduo then performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and then waved his finger. Meng Hao snorted coldly and was about to attack when...

“WICKED!” roared Qian Duoduo.

This time, the sound was like a thunderclap that exploded in Meng Hao's mind. Wicked thoughts multiplied in him with an unbridled frenzy. He was incapable of controlling the thoughts, which filled him with a sensation of insanity.

Gradually, Meng Hao realized that the Devilish will that he had severed during his time of Severing the Devil and Seeking the Dao... was now reappearing. In the blink of an eye, the Devilish will consumed the wicked thoughts. Apparently, the Devilish will had been inside of him all along, hiding deep inside of him, sealed away.

Now, in response to Qian Duoduo's astonishing magical technique, the Devilish will was forming once again!

In the blink of an eye, Meng Hao and Qian Duoduo exchanged dozens of moves. Qian Duoduo ended up calling out the word 'wicked' six times. Each time, it caused Meng Hao's magical techniques and attacks to be interrupted. For the first time in all of his arena matches, Meng Hao was now forced into constant retreat.

Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth, and his eyes were bloodshot. A terrifying aura seemed to be on the verge of being unleashing from inside of him. Qian Duoduo was the one responsible for releasing the Devilish will, although he actually had no idea what he was unleashing. Despite not

knowing what he was dealing with, he was still very excited, and continued to unleash monstrous attacks.

When the crowds out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea saw what was happening, their expressions flickered in astonishment.

“Fang Mu is actually being beaten back!!”

“Just what magical technique is Qian Duoduo using to be able to stifle Fang Mu?!”

“Could it be that Fang Mu will finally be defeated!?!?”

As the audiences buzzed in astonishment, Qian Duoduo attacked relentlessly, causing repeated booms to echo about. Meng Hao’s face was pale, and his eyes were completely bloodshot, as if he were on the verge of going insane. Blood oozed out of his mouth, and yet, a faint grin suddenly blossomed on his face.

“You’re finished!” Qian Duoduo transmitted into Meng Hao’s mind, so that only he could hear. “My magic can steal good fortune from Heaven and Earth! It doesn’t matter how strong your willpower is, if you have even a scrap of wicked thoughts in your heart, they will be evoked by my magic!

“When the wicked thoughts explode out, they will cast your body into flames, and you will be defeated!

“I must use this art on you in order to secure my chance at taking first place. I’ve been holding back this entire time, and I even let myself be defeated by Li Ling’er because I was sure I would make it into the semifinals, and I didn’t want you or Zhao Yifan to be on guard..

“The only thing you can blame is your own bad luck, since you’re letting Zhao Yifan off the hook by giving him a chance to prepare some defenses!

“I will unleash all of your wicked thoughts, transforming them into a fire of retribution to burn your soul, to destroy you in body and spirit!

“WICKED!” he roared, performing an incantation gesture and pointing at Meng Hao. This was... the ninth ‘wicked!’

As soon as the words left his mouth, the Devilish will inside of Meng Hao surged and was completely unleashed. His eyes were bright red as he was wrapped up in a gloomy, ruthless madness. Deep within that madness, was an unprecedented coldness.

Black flames leapt from his skin and raged madly high into the sky. However, the flames didn’t hurt Meng Hao in the least. He looked up at Qian Duoduo, and a rumbling filled the old man’s mind. His face instantly fell.

“These aren’t wicked thoughts! What... what exactly did I unleash!?!?”

Chapter 878: Eclipsing Everything

Qian Duoduo’s face fell, and he staggered backward several paces, his face ashen and his eyes wide. An intense sense of deadly crisis crashed through him.

“What exactly did I unleash!?!?” said Qian Duoduo hoarsely. “These aren’t wicked thoughts! Wicked thoughts would form fires of retribution, a fire that can burn a person up in moments, destroy them in body and spirit!

“This... this feeling, this aura, even the black flames of retribution are incapable of burning it. This will... is so powerful that it’s suffocating!!” As Qian Duoduo backed up, his heart filled with incredible regret. Were he given another chance, nothing could have convinced him to unleash whatever it was he had just unleashed.

He had the feeling that he had opened a sluice gate, unleashing a horrific Devil.

The spectators out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea were all astonished at the sight of Meng Hao on the vortex screens, covered with black flames that seemed completely incapable of harming him whatsoever.

Meng Hao’s red eyes seemed to be filled with the utmost insanity, and yet... they were also unshakably level-headed. Furthermore, his energy was rocketing higher and higher.

“He... he....”

“What state is he in? What technique does he cultivate? Why did he instantly become so blood-chillingly terrifying?”

“Devil! Heavens! It’s a Devilish will! A monstrous Devilish will! Only someone who has carried out endless slaughter, who is cold and ruthless to a Heaven-defying extent, could possibly have a Devilish will like that!”

In the starry sky palace, the Patriarchs were all on their feet, panting and watching with serious expressions.

“What a shocking Devilish will! But earlier, he seemed completely normal! This kid... this kid has shocking willpower!”

“A Devilish will like that can never be fully expelled, nor completely severed! It will even accompany him through reincarnation!”

“From ancient times until now, anyone who possessed a Devilish will like that has ended up facing countless deadly twists and turns throughout their lives!!”

Up above the Dao Tree, the white-robed woman had floated there absolutely expressionlessly for this entire time. However, as of this moment, her eyes began to shine with a curious light as she looked at Meng Hao.

As for Qian Duoduo, he hadn’t ceased backing up, and was trembling with fear. His scalp was numb and he was scared witless. Meng Hao hadn’t even attacked yet, but the energy of the Devilish will and the fire of retribution had astonished Qian Duoduo to the extreme. The sensation of blood and gore, the towering murderous aura, left him shaking in his boots. He almost felt like what he was looking at was not a cultivator, but mountains of corpses and seas of blood, an evil star risen up from the Yellow Springs.

“I conc—” Before he could even finish speaking the words, Meng Hao’s eyes turned to look directly at him.

Those eyes were like oceans of blood, with pupils that emanated brilliant rays of eternal light that seemed capable of absorbing the soul.

As soon as their gazes met, Qian Duoduo's mind roared, and felt as if it were about to explode. His body trembled, and he felt as if sharp blades were piercing into his eyes, stabbing into his soul. They exploded inside of his brain, transforming into a battlefield covered with mountains of corpses and seas of blood. He saw a person on the battlefield, surrounded by a vortex. Wherever that man went, countless cultivators let out bloodcurdling screams as their bodies were withered up, their flesh and blood was absorbed, their souls were consumed. In the end, the only things left behind were desiccated corpses staring wide-eyed up into the sky.

Qian Duoduo coughed up a mouthful of blood, and then, suddenly his vision cleared and he saw that Meng Hao had appeared directly in front of him, covered with raging black flames. Meng Hao lifted his right hand and grabbed the old man's neck, then lifted him up into the air. His eyes burned with cold madness, and his mouth twisted into a brutal smile.

"Thank you. This feeling is... wonderful. It's too bad that this state doesn't conform with my Dao Heart. I thought I had completely severed it away, and never imagined that it still existed...."

"In any case, I still have to thank you for helping me to realize that it was here all along. And now... I will give you a grand burial ceremony!" Meng Hao chuckled, and Qian Duoduo's eyes went wide. He was currently incapable of speaking a single word, and was trembling violently. Within his wide eyes could be seen extreme terror.

As soon as Meng Hao finished speaking, the black flames that surrounded him surged up, transforming into the shape of a huge mouth. The mouth twisted with savagery and insanity as it shot toward Qian Duoduo.

It took only a moment for the black flames to inundate him. He let out a miserable shriek that didn't even sound human. The wretched sound echoed about in all directions, causing all of the cultivators on the Dao Tree to feel not only shock, but sympathy. Then they began to shiver.

Li Ling'er's face went pale when she saw what was happening. Even she began to shiver from the intensely terrifying feeling she got from Meng Hao.

Zhao Yifan's face was covered with an expression of intense concentration as he looked over. Both he and Li Ling'er were panting.

Qian Duoduo screamed as his body rapidly withered. As he slipped into death, he gazed blankly at Meng Hao, and his mind filled with intense regret. He knew that he should never have unleashed wicked thoughts inside of his opponent. In the end, he had personally... unleashed a Devil!

In the space of only a few breaths of time, Qian Duoduo transformed into nothing but drifting ash.

Meng Hao lowered his hand, and the flames winked out, transforming into black sealing marks that were visible on his skin. As he stood there, his energy raged.

At this point, he suddenly flew up out of the arena and landed on the golden leaf at the top of the Dao Tree, then turned and looked back at Zhao Yifan.

“Zhao Yifan, you wanted to fight me, didn’t you? Well, come on!”

The half-headed man who was watching Meng Hao apparently sensed the Devilish will, after which he trembled almost imperceptibly. Apparently, even he was in fear of the Devilish will.

A tremor ran through Zhao Yifan as he looked up at Meng Hao. A very serious expression covered his face, and his eyes burned with the desire to fight. Completely ignoring Li Ling’er, he also flew up into the air and landed in front of Meng Hao on the golden leaf.

He reached his right hand out, and suddenly, an azure sword appeared.

The sword was two meters long, and glittered with greenish light, as well as a coldness as vast as a sea. Zhao Yifan looked at Meng Hao, then raised the sword and slashed toward him like an arrow loosed from a bow.

The sword caused the air to vibrate, and wild colors to flash about. Intense coldness surged out in all directions, and dragon-like sword qi formed together into the shape of an Azure Dragon. The Azure Dragon had vicious claws that slashed the air into pieces, and long whiskers that shattered its surroundings. Rumbling filled the air as the dragon shot toward Meng Hao. The entire arena quaked, and the air was ripped apart. It almost seemed as if this Azure Dragon could smash through any and all obstacles in its path.

In the blink of an eye, it was directly in front of Meng Hao. In the moment before it impacted, Meng Hao’s expression was cold, and his eyes were bloodshot. Unexpectedly, he did nothing to avoid it, but instead, lifted his hand up and pushed it out toward the dragon.

Massive rumbling could be heard as beams of sword qi rapidly expanded out in all directions, transforming into an arcing barrier formed of ten thousand swords. Meng Hao's hair whipped about him... as he stood there unmoving, using only that one hand movement to send sword qi out in defense.

It was as if his one hand could eclipse everything!

Everyone looked on with astonishment at this final, decisive battle!!

In the starry sky palace, the Patriarchs were also watching with full concentration.

The decisive battle had begun too quickly. As of this moment, everyone in the Dao Tree now served as foils to Meng Hao and Zhao Yifan, who were the complete center of attention.

Meng Hao gazed coldly at Zhao Yifan, and slowly clenched his hand into a fist. As he did, the arcing barrier that had spread out began to emit cracking noises, and then suddenly shrank down.

As it shrank, the Azure Dragon within it struggled, but to no avail. Meng Hao's hand closed into a fist.

Boom!

The sword qi obstacle shattered, and the Azure Dragon collapsed into pieces and then exploded. The sword attack vanished, and all that remained behind to show for it was a white mark on Meng Hao's palm. It seemed like it should have been a wound, but in the blink of an eye, it was healed, and the mark vanished.

This development was noticed by the audiences in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, and they were astonished.

“He has regenerative powers!!”

“He used a single hand to block Zhao Yifan's sword, and all it did was cut him a little! Heavens! He already recovered!”

“This is Fang Mu’s true power! Before, he was concealing his cultivation base!!”

As the crowds were in an uproar, the Patriarchs in the starry sky palace were panting, and staring fixedly at the image of Meng Hao on the screens.

“That must be... an Eternal stratum!!”

“He actually possesses the Eternal stratum of legend!”

“With a stratum like that, he can be considered invincible to his peers!!”

Meanwhile, outside of Planet East Victory, Patriarch Reliance was staring blankly at the vortex screen, eyes wide. He began to pant, and then moments later, started muttering curses.

“Little bastard, I can’t believe he has an Eternal stratum!!”

Another strange gleam appeared in the eyes of the white robed woman floating above the Dao Tree as she looked at Meng Hao.

At the same time, outside of the arena where Meng Hao stood, the half-headed man hovered there, motionless. However, his one remaining eye stared dead at Meng Hao, glowing with what seemed to be avarice.

Zhao Yifan’s face flickered, and he took a deep breath. His Dharma Idol suddenly appeared behind him, and the image it depicted was of himself!

It was an enormous giant, 3,000 meters tall, that radiated shocking energy.

In order to have a Dharma Idol like this, one had to possess one’s own power of true Immortality, at least sixty to seventy percent. Back in the Southern Domain, Zhao Yifan had been strong, but not this strong. In fact, it was even possible to just barely see some sort of glowing vine on the Dharma Idol!

It was... an Immortality Illumination Vine!!

“Heavens! Zhao Yifan is actually engaging in battle at the same time as he’s using an Immortality Illumination Vine! Most other people would be in secluded meditation right now, but he dares to come out and fight!!”

“Is he using battle to contemplate enlightenment? Using a duel to illuminate Immortality and open his path to true Immortality? This Zhao Yifan definitely deserves his reputation as one of the two most powerful successors to have appeared in years in the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto!”

Even more shocking was that his Dharma Idol gripped a mighty longsword, upon which were inscribed two characters.

Cloud Sealing!

The words were somewhat indistinct, but everyone could see them.

As soon as people caught sight of the two characters, everyone was sent into an uproar.

“A Cloud Sealing Sword! His Dharma Idol actually produced a Cloud Sealing Sword!”

“The Sublime Flow Sword Grotto has three types of divine swords, and the Cloud Sealing Sword is one of them! They are swords which don’t exist in reality, but can only be summoned by cultivating Daoist magic from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto. There are only a few Chosen who have the magical techniques and divine abilities to do it.

“But... but for the sword to appear in the hands of a Dharma Idol is completely unheard-of! Doesn’t that mean that he can use any magical technique and divine ability he wants, and still unleash the power of that Cloud Sealing Sword at the same time!?”

Chapter 879: Peak Battle!

Zhao Yifan suddenly looked up at Meng Hao, and his eyes overflowed with the desire to fight. Before his trip to Planet South Heaven, there had only been two people of his same generation who filled him with such a desire to fight.

After Planet South Heaven, there was another, Meng Hao. And now... yet another, Fang Mu.

Monstrous fighting desire raged inside of him. Behind him, his 3,000-meter Dharma Idol held the Cloud Sealing Sword, and was radiating shocking sword qi. As Zhao Yifan raised his head, he also lifted up his hand. Simultaneously, his Dharma Idol raised the Cloud Sealing Sword.

“First Sword, Felling the Mortal!” cried Zhao Yifan, and the sword descended!

The sword did not transform into an Azure Dragon, but rather, a green beam of light that instantly caused the entire golden arena to quake. A huge rift was ripped open in the air, and a massive rumbling sound echoed out. Wild colors flashed, and the heavenly bodies shook. Radiating a monstrous will, it shot toward Meng Hao, seemingly incapable of being blocked.

Almost as soon as the first sword descended, Zhao Yifan’s energy surged upward, and in the midst of the already intense power, more explosive power appeared. Zhao Yifan swept forward like a whirlwind, and then gave a piercing shout.

“Second Sword, Shocking the Spirit!”

After that, a third sword appeared.

“Third Sword, Severing the Immortal!”

This sword caused rumbling to fill the air as it followed the first two swords, splitting Heaven and Earth, surging forward invincibly!

After that, a fourth sword appeared.

“Fourth Sword, Shattering the Ancient!”

Each sword was faster than the previous sword, and more powerful. The four swords caused colors to flash, and the air to vibrate. Everything began to shake, and all the other cultivators on the Dao Tree looked on in astonishment.

The heavenly bodies seemed to grow dark, as if all the splendor of the world was being replaced by these swords.

However... Zhao Yifan wasn't finished.

“Fifth Sword, Trampling the Heavens!”

Shockingly, a fifth sword appeared. This fifth sword was far more incisive than all the previous four swords. Everyone who could see it with their own eyes felt as if they were being suffocated. The spectators out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea made a collective gasp, and the Patriarchs in the starry sky palace looked on with shining eyes.

Five swords, shocking to the extreme!

Meng Hao remained standing in his original position. Although his expression was calm, a nearly undetectable desire to fight flickered in his eyes. As the five swords descended toward him, the black sealing marks all over his body began to move, swirling across his skin. His Devilish will exploded out, distorting the air and even affecting time. To him, it seemed as if everything he was seeing was now moving in slow motion.

He didn't move, but instead lifted his hand, performed an incantation gesture, and then tapped the first sword.

A boom could be heard as black light spread out from Meng Hao's finger. The first sword, with its astonishing energy, came to a stop in front of the fingertip. A howl of rage could be heard echoing out from the sword as it suddenly transformed into millions upon millions of swords. Just when they were about to try to sidestep the power of Meng Hao's finger attack, they began to tremble, and then simply exploded. Sword qi spread out in all directions, causing the golden arena to shake violently, seemingly on the verge of collapse. Meng Hao took a step forward, then pointed out a second time with his index finger to tap the second beam of sword qi.

A massive boom rattled out in all directions. Everything shook as the second sword collapsed in response to Meng Hao's finger attack, transforming into even more swords than had appeared just moments before, all of which then exploded.

When the spectators on the outside saw this, they were astonished. Everything was happening too quickly, giving them virtually no time to react. Meng Hao took a third step forward, right into the middle of endless sword shadows. Boundless sword qi swirled around him, and the number of swords was innumerable. It was almost as if he had entered a world of swords.

The third sword attack formed a globe of swords that began to shrink down as soon as Meng Hao stepped into it, transforming into one sword that slashed down toward him. Meng Hao's right hand lifted up, and a third finger attack was unleashed.

When it touched the third sword, a boom rattled out that shook the whole Dao Tree. A massive wind kicked up, and everything went dark for a moment. Even the mists outside of the Dao Tree began to churn.

In the midst of all the noise, the third sword attack... shattered into pieces. Everyone in the outside world watched as the sword world collapsed, and Meng Hao stepped out, his fourth step.

All of this takes some time to describe, but actually, Meng Hao's four steps took place in the space of only a few breaths. By this time, the fourth and fifth sword attacks were bearing down on him simultaneously. They were like two lightning bolts that slashed through the air, bearing monstrous sword will.

Meng Hao's eyes flickered as he raised his right hand. He waved his finger two times, once for each of the two beams of sword qi. Shocking rumbling could be heard, booms that caused everything to quake. The air surrounding the arena twisted and distorted, and even the barrier separating the Dao Tree from the outside world seemed to be affected.

The sword qi collapsed, dispersing as Meng Hao took his fifth step. By that time, he was directly in front of Zhao Yifan, whereupon his right hand stretched out in a claw.

Zhao Yifan immediately fell back, waving his arm and causing a sixth sword to appear. After that came a seventh sword, which descended toward Meng Hao amidst massive rumbling. Two beams of sword qi swept toward him, although they did nothing to prevent him from advancing.

"Seven Swords Slaughter Mount Heaven!" roared Zhao Yifan in an earth shattering voice. His Dharma Idol took a step forward, raising its right hand to lift the 300-meter Cloud Sealing Sword. In this moment, it looked incredibly realistic, as if it truly existed.

Colors flashed, and a will of invincibility exploded out as the sword descended toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao stopped in place and looked up. A vicious smile then appeared on his face, and he stamped his foot down onto the surface of the arena. Rumbling could be heard as... his own enormous Dharma Idol materialized!

When the Dharma Idol appeared, it was 3,000 meters tall, filled with shocking energy. It stepped forward and performed a double-handed incantation, then punched toward the huge sword descending from above.

From a distance, it was possible to see the two enormous Dharma Idols engaged in fierce fighting. Down on the surface of the arena, Meng Hao's body was wreathed in black flames, making him look like some sort of terrifying Devil. He advanced toward Zhao Yifan, waving his hand to cause millions of streams to appear, which then transformed into an enormous river.

Zhao Yifan's face flickered; he bit his tongue and then spit out some blood, each droplet of which transformed into an enormous sea, all of which then formed together into an even larger shocking composite sea. This was a sea that was not composed of water, but countless swords!

It was... a sea of swords!

The sea of swords immediately slammed into the massive river that was Meng Hao's Mountain Consuming Incantation. A shockwave spread out in all directions, causing everything to tremble. The dazzling light of magical techniques and divine abilities radiated out in all directions.

Meng Hao didn't stop for a moment. His body flickered as he transformed into an enormous black, flaming vulture. He whistled through the air, piercing the sea of swords to appear in front of Zhao Yifan and viciously slash razor-sharp claws at him. Zhao Yifan's face darkened as he fell back in shock. At this moment, he finally understood why all of Meng Hao's previous opponents had suffered setback after setback in combat. Now that he was experiencing the same thing himself, he truly felt terror of Meng Hao.

Meng Hao had an aura of invincibility, and he only attacked, sparing nothing for defense.

Facing this energy, one had no choice but to retreat, and by doing so, involuntarily fall into Meng Hao's rhythm of battle. Eventually, the continuous retreat would lead to one end... defeat.

Booms echoed out as over a hundred exchanges occurred between Zhao Yifan and Meng Hao. The golden arena was wracked with massive booms. As for the crowds outside in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, they watched the scene unfold with pounding hearts. The only thing they were paying attention to was the groundbreaking championship battle between Meng Hao and Zhao Yifan.

“I can’t keep retreating!” thought Zhao Yifan, blood oozing out of his mouth. Suddenly, a fierce gleam appeared in his eyes as his Dharma Idol, which was currently locked in combat with Meng Hao’s Dharma Idol, grew to a height of 6,000 meters, causing something like a violent windstorm to spread out across the arena.

Taking advantage of that blast of power, Zhao Yifan took a deep breath, and looked at Meng Hao with an unprecedented look of solemnity.

“Five Cleaving Swords, First Cleaving... Rising Sword Form!” As he spoke, he lifted his right hand. Sword qi began to swirl around each of his five fingers, and his speed suddenly increased to shocking effect. He waved his hand, causing numerous beams of sword qi to shoot out.

In the blink of an eye, 100 swords appeared in the form of sword qi. Shockingly, they flew up into the air, then spun and began to fall down toward Meng Hao like a rain of swords. Meng Hao’s eyes glittered as he stretched out his right hand and made a grasping motion, which caused the long spear with the World Tree shaft and the bone spearhead to appear. He immediately swept it out in front of him, causing rumbling sounds to be heard as the 100 swords were deflected and sent stabbing into the surface of the arena.

However, Zhao Yifan’s divine ability was still unfolding. 1,000 swords appeared up above, which then whistled down toward Meng Hao. The long spear danced, and more booms could be heard as the thousand swords were scattered and sent plunging into the ground. However, it was at this point that 10,000 swords appeared up above.

Rumbling filled the air as they began to fall. The arena had now become a world of swords. Meng Hao was surrounded by a whirlwind, which was the long spear. Banging sounds could be heard as the 10,000 swords were vanquished and sent stabbing into the ground.

However, it was at this point that Zhao Yifan spoke again.

“First Cleaving, Swords Cleave the Heavens!” Instantly, the 11,100 swords that had been stabbed into the ground rose up into the sky, where they merged together to form one huge sword.

One shocking sword appeared, a sword that caused the entire world to go still. For the first time, Meng Hao’s facial expression changed as he looked up to stare at the huge weapon. He took a deep breath, raised his right foot up, and then stamped it down hard.

A boom echoed out, and his Dharma Idol suddenly began to expand until it too was 6,000 meters tall. It took a step forward and then punched out toward the huge sword.

The resulting boom was deafening, and the entire world trembled. The sword slashed through the fist of Meng Hao's Dharma Idol, then continued to cut down until it was only seven inches away from the top of Meng Hao's head, where it came to a stop. A defiant droning sound could be heard from the sword, and then it collapsed.

When the sword fell to pieces, Zhao Yifan coughed up blood and staggered backward.

Meng Hao looked up at the collapsing sword, and then turned to look at Zhao Yifan.

"You're pretty strong..." he said. "But now, it's my turn." With that, he vanished. When he reappeared, he was directly in front of Zhao Yifan, whereupon he clenched his hand into a fist and punched.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Meng Hao punched nine times; this was none other than the Nine Heavens Destruction.

The final blow unleashed violent upheavals. Zhao Yifan was sent tumbling backward, blood spraying from his mouth. He toppled head over heels along the ground, but before he could get very far, Meng Hao transformed into the vulture and swooped down toward him.

Chapter 880: Shocking Transformations!

The vulture's claws could shred metal and crush stone!

Blood sprayed from Zhao Yifan's mouth, and his chest was a mass of mangled flesh. However, his mouth was twisted in a cold grin and he suddenly opened his mouth, causing a sword to fly out. In the blink of an eye, it pierced through the air and was about to stab into Meng Hao. Meng Hao's eyes shone with a gleam of surprise, and he let out a mighty roar.

The sound of the roar caused ripples to spread out, and the sword stopped in place for a moment. In that short pause, Meng Hao's right hand moved like the wind, unleashing the Star Plucking Magic to grab the sword and crush it violently. Cracking sounds rang out as the sword shattered. Zhao Yifan coughed up blood yet again.

However, he also took advantage of that moment to leap up into the air.

“Dharma Idol True Body!” An expression of madness flickered on his face as he held his ground and refused to concede. As his words echoed out, his Dharma Idol suddenly vanished as it merged into his body. A moment later, a 6,000-meter giant appeared in midair.

It was Zhao Yifan.

“Fang Mu, our battle isn’t over yet!” With a roar, he lifted his right hand, within which appeared the Cloud Sealing Sword, which he slashed down toward Meng Hao.

Almost in the same moment in which the sword began to fall, Meng Hao closed his eyes. When he opened them, his Dharma Idol vanished and merged with his body, whereupon another 6,000-meter giant appeared. His foot sped through the air in a roundhouse kick, smashing into the sword. Then, the two of them began to fight back and forth up in the air.

Booms echoed out, and the audiences in the Ninth Mountain and Sea were breathing heavily.

“They’re too powerful!!”

“Neither Zhao Yifan nor Fang Mu are Immortals, but even false Immortals would be like ants to them! They could kill them without expending any effort at all! They could probably even fight true Immortals!”

“They’re both only at the peak of the Spirit Realm, but they’re shocking even to me, and I’ve opened 30 meridians!”

“Too powerful!”

“If the two of them actually become Immortals, then of the ten stages in the Immortal Realm, they would definitely have at least 90 meridians!”

In the starry sky palace, the various Patriarchs were staring fixedly at the proceedings. Although any one of them could easily defeat Zhao Yifan or Meng Hao, the battle that was playing out in front of them was stunning and spectacular. After all... even though it was only a Spirit Realm battle, the

Patriarchs were able to sense that both Zhao Yifan and Meng Hao both had the potential to be future Paragons.

“They both have 6,000 meter Dharma Idols. That’s comparable to a stage two Immortal. In the ten stages of the Immortal Realm, each stage adds 3,000 meters to one’s Dharma Idol!”

“Both of them have built a strong foundation for success. Zhao Yifan has been suppressing himself in the Spirit Realm for a long time, just waiting for true Immortal destiny to appear. Then, he can use his Immortality Illumination Vine to achieve true Immortal Ascension. One thing is for certain, once he enters the Immortal Realm, his cultivation speed will be explosive. He’ll most likely reach the peak of the Immortal Realm in less than a hundred years!”

“It looks like Fang Mu is in the same position. In fact, the Chosen of the all the important sects in the Ninth Mountain and Sea are all like that!”

Back in the arena, Meng Hao and Zhao Yifan were fighting fiercely. However, Meng Hao had not yet unleashed his full power. Even though his Devilish will had been rekindled, making him stronger than ever, he could sense that Zhao Yifan was still hiding some sort of terrifying aura, so because of that, Meng Hao was also holding back.

Rumbling filled the air, and Zhao Yifan’s eyes were completely bloodshot. By this point in the battle, he was already using everything that he could exercise control over, and yet was still not a match for his opponent. In fact, he was consistently forced into retreat.

“I refuse to accept this!” he thought. Killing intent flickered in his eyes, and even as he fell back, he suddenly took a deep breath. It was at this point that a vine suddenly appeared, wrapping around his body and emanating gentle light, as well as Dao music. It was none other than an Immortality Illumination Vine.

Zhao Yifan threw his head back and roared. At the same time, the Immortality Illumination Vine began to glow radiantly. He began to tremble, and then grew even larger. He was now 9,000 meters tall!!

His 9,000-meter tall body radiated shocking power, a power that Zhao Yifan actually found difficult to control, a power that came from sacrificing the Immortality Illumination Vine.

When the crowds out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea saw what was happening, they were sent into an uproar.

“He was actually suppressing his cultivation base before!!”

“Heavens! He’s actually... comparable to a stage three Immortal!”

“Fang Mu is finished!!”

Zhao Yifan’s vision had grown blurry. The only thing that he could see now was Meng Hao, and the only thought that existed in his head was that he had to defeat Fang Mu!

BOOM!

Zhao Yifan’s body flashed, and his energy surged to the heavens. He closed in on Meng Hao, sword qi raging in all directions, shattering the air. Rumbling sounds rang out as they once again began to fight.

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered. Black flames surged around him as his Dharma Idol body suddenly grew with explosive speed. Now he was 9,000 meters tall too!

In that instant, a collective gasp of disbelief could be heard out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, and even from the cultivators on the Dao Tree.

“Heavens! Fang Mu was also concealing his true cultivation base. I can’t believe that he... is also comparable to a stage three Immortal!”

“Just who is going to win this battle!? Who... is going to take first place!?”

Booms rang out as Meng Hao and Zhao Yifan fought back and forth. In the blink of an eye, hundreds of exchanges had taken place. The ground quaked, the entire golden arena was shaking, and rifts could be seen in the air in all directions.

Finally, Zhao Yifan staggered backward, blood spraying from his mouth, a look of despair on his face. He had unleashed all the power he could muster, had done almost everything he could do, and yet still could not gain victory over his opponent.

“No,” he thought. “I still haven’t used everything. I still haven’t used the Second Cleaving of the Five Cleaving Swords. But....”

Zhao Yifan’s eyes radiated madness, and as he fell back, he suddenly stared straight at Meng Hao.

“Fang Mu, unleash the battle prowess of your most powerful cultivation base! We’re going to determine victory and defeat with one move!” With that, Zhao Yifan tilted his head back and laughed uproariously. His lips were twisted with madness, and the obsession to win. Suddenly, he began to shake, and a burning aura exploded out.

In that instant, his Dharma Idol body began to emit blinding light. The light spread out and then all of a sudden... shrank back down!

This was... Dharma Idol self-detonation!

“Sublime Flow Sword Grotto, Five Cleaving Swords, also known as Five Immortal Swords. With my current power, I can unleash the First Cleaving. Now, I will utilize the power of self-detonation to unleash the Second Cleaving!

“Fang Mu, if you can’t stand up to this attack, then you will be defeated!” As Zhao Yifan spoke, his Dharma Idol rapidly grew smaller. However, his terrifying aura grew more and more powerful.

The audiences in the Ninth Mountain and Sea were in an uproar. In the starry sky palace, the Patriarchs had all risen to their feet. The old man from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto stamped his foot onto the ground.

“So impulsive!” he thought, frowning. As he watched the scene playing out on the vortex screen, his expression darkened.

“Fang Mu,” cried Zhao Yifan, “after this attack, I will be powerless to do anything. If I don’t die, then at the very least, I’ll have to go into secluded meditation to recover, and it will be difficult for me to create another Dharma Idol. But I, Zhao Yifan, have no regrets!

“This battle, this attack, contains all of my hope! Show me... exactly how strong you actually are!” By now, Zhao Yifan had shrunk from 9,000 meters tall to only 900. His energy continued to surge, and the air around him shattered. Even the arena itself was trembling.

Meng Hao looked in Zhao Yifan's eyes, and what he saw was a madness inspired by the heat of battle. He nodded his head silently, and suddenly, the Devilish will inside of him exploded out. Black flames surged into the Heavens, and his Dharma Idol once again began to grow!

9,500 meters. 10,500 meters. 11,500 meters.... All the way to....

12,000 meters!

He stood there, surrounded by intense rumbling. All of the cultivators on the Dao Tree were flabbergasted. None of them had ever heard of someone in the Spirit Realm who was comparable to a fourth stage Immortal!!

They could understand Zhao Yifan's extraordinary display of power, especially because he had an Immortality Illumination Vine to rely on. But Meng Hao's Dharma Idol had no Immortality Illumination Vine!

Such a thing was... completely terrifying!!

Out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, the crowds were going wild. The buzz of conversation echoed about everywhere, and anticipatory shouts drifted about.

“Zhao Yifan is detonating his Dharma Idol and drawing on his life force to unleash his most powerful sword attack! And Fang Mu... is actually comparable to a fourth stage Immortal!!”

“Victory and defeat will be determined right now! I wonder which of these two... will take first place!!”

The most anticipated moment of the entire trial by fire, and of all the arena matches, had now arrived!

The audiences' eyes were glued to the vortex screens as Zhao Yifan's body shrank down to the size of a normal person. His 9,000-meter Dharma Idol had collapsed, and all of the power of that collapse had been coalesced into the sword that he held in his hand.

This was no ordinary sword!

“Five Cleaving Swords, Second Cleaving.... Immortal: Why Sever the Mundane World?!” As Zhao Yifan’s voice rang out, he lifted his right hand, and his eyes shone with unprecedented brightness. This sword attack contained his life force, his Dharma Idol, his willpower, his everything!

He raised his sword up, and then swung it downwards. It transformed into a Heavenly sword, something that could sever mortality. It was as if the sword were asking an Immortal, ‘will you sever the mundane...? Or not?!’

Rumbling filled the air as the sword slashed down. Meng Hao took a deep breath. He had eighty percent of the power of a true Immortal, and the power of an Immortal meridian. All of that power exploded out as his Dharma Idol performed a double-handed incantation, then prepared to punch out. Shockingly... an Immortal meridian appeared in the air around his Dharma Idol!

The Immortal meridian looked like a strand of silk, swirling around him, bursting with shocking Immortal qi that coalesced onto his hand, creating the most powerful punch he was capable of. The punch slammed out into the air above the arena.

When the sword and the punch collided, a massive boom rattled out, shaking the entire Dao Tree. The air churned, and even the people outside in the Ninth Mountain and Sea could sense it. In the starry sky palace, the various Patriarchs were all panting.

BOOOOMMM!

The sound seemed capable of ripping open the Heavens. A gigantic vortex appeared, instantly spreading out to cover the entire golden arena. The aura inside the vortex grew more and more intense, as all of the power unleashed by Meng Hao and Zhao Yifan gathered together. At the same time, the entire arena began to collapse!

It was at this point that a massive backlash of power rose up in the vortex, which then swept down directly onto Zhao Yifan. It was far too much power for him to bear, and a wan smile suddenly appeared on his face as he realized that he had been defeated.

Blood sprayed from his mouth, and cracking sounds could be heard all over his body. More than half of the bones in his body were shattered as he was violently thrown out of the Dao Tree itself.

“I lost...” he murmured. In the moments before he lost consciousness, he saw Meng Hao standing there, fighting back against the power. Then Zhao Yifan passed out.

After Zhao Yifan lost consciousness, Meng Hao coughed up a mouthful of blood. Instantly, the flames from the Devilish will were extinguished, and a peaceful glow appeared in his eyes. However, the force of the attack against him sent him tumbling back, out of control. Rumbling could be heard as he was sent flying off of the arena and outside of the Dao Tree!

In that exact moment....

The half-headed man who had been lurking outside of the arena the entire time looked over with an expression of excited greed. Utilizing incredible speed, he shot from his position by the arena toward Meng Hao, who was tumbling through the void above the Ruins of Immortality.