

Three Realms 101

Chapter 101: Tremble, Long Family

It could be said that in the entire kingdom, for both those who had already conceded to Long Zhaofeng and those who hadn't before, there was only one choice, and that was to accede to his rule.

Of all the powers within the kingdom, there were almost none that could threaten the existence of the Long family, much less contend against them.

After all, the Long family had just won the heavens. Their presence as a superior being was enough to roll over all dukes.

Of course, a few people also knew that Jiang Chen was an exception.

Long Zhaofeng had summoned the great army in order to prune the great thorn in his side, Jiang Chen.

Except, no one thought that Jiang Chen had any qualifications to fight against the might of the entire kingdom.

Eastern Lu had been so powerful and yet he barely lasted past a few days.

As for Jiang Chen, Long Zhaofeng placed such an emphasis on him not because of how strong the former was, but because the depths of enmity between the Long family and the Jiang family could not even be washed away with all the waters in the sea.

Upon hearing such wild words come from Jiang Chen, the soldiers of all three armies naturally felt that Jiang Chen was merely voicing his wishful thinking.

"Who will capture this traitor for me? You will be granted one million gold and made the Duke of Jiang Han."

Long Zhaofeng waved his long whip and pointed it at Jiang Chen.

Although he was now the ruler of a nation, Long Zhaofeng was also infuriated and enraged by Jiang Chen's arrogant attitude.

A million gold, Duke of Jiang Han.

These honors tempted all the experts beneath his banner. What did they train for if it were not for wealth and honor?

If a martial dao practitioner couldn't enter the spirit dao, then all was a mirage, insubstantial and fleeting. What they undoubtedly wished to gain was prosperity and fortune in this life.

Being a duke or general would offer the greatest wealth apart from being a king or emperor.

In the span of a moment, all the experts that were on the Long family's payroll stepped forward. They had all recently been promoted to true qi master royal experts.

"Your Majesty, your subjects are willing to capture and kill this traitor."

Long Zhaofeng was greatly pleased. "You are all of one united mind and will all be rewarded when you kill him."

"Our gratitude to the lord." The six true qi masters looked up at the top of the pass with gazes full of fervor. Kill Jiang Chen, seize the dukedom, and gain one million gold.

No one could resist this temptation.

It was surprisingly Long Juxue by Long Zhaofeng's side who warned them gravely, "Do not underestimate your enemy. Jiang Chen is adept in shooting at a great distance and rides a Goldwing Swordbird. This is extremely odd."

"We appreciate the princess's reminder."

Long Zhaofeng waved his hand and Long Er walked forward. "Your Majesty."

"Long Er, tell all the true qi master level archers to prepare themselves. They must shoot Jiang Chen down the moment he tries to make his escape on the Goldwing Swordbird."

"Your subject understands his orders." Long Er bowed as he received his order.

The great army hadn't set forth without any preparations at all this time. The Long family had made specific preparations for Jiang Chen's Goldwing Swordbirds.

They also knew that the Goldwing Swordbird was a violent bird at the level of a true qi master. Ordinary archers would be entirely unable to harm it.

Only experts at the level of true qi masters using strong bows and fierce arrows attacking ceaselessly would be able to keep the Goldwing Swordbird at bay.

"Long Er, this Jiang Chen thinks he's occupied the vantage point of high ground and isn't riding on the back of the Goldwing Swordbird. This is the best time to kill him. When he mounts on the Goldwing Swordbird and takes to the sky again, even the arrows of a true qi master will be unable to keep pace with him." Long Juxue reminded once again.

Long Er contemplated something and nodded vaguely, saying to the six true qi masters who were readying themselves to rush into the fray. "You six must keep him on the ground at all costs and don't let him mount a Goldwing Swordbird."

The six true qi masters responsible for rushing Jiang Chen and the eight true qi master level archers were all ready.

This was mobilizing almost all of the core strength available to Long Zhaofeng.

"Kill!"

The six true qi masters responsible for rushing Jiang Chen all wore soft armor and helmets that could defend against arrows. They were fully armored and charged up to the top of mountain pass.

True qi masters truly did have an extraordinary presence.

A scene of a huge cloud of dust swirling up from the ground appeared, forming six tornadoes of dust as if six dragons emerging from the seas, flying up to the sky above the pass.

As they glided, all of them brandished their weapons and attacked straight towards the top of the pass.

This attack wasn't to injure the enemy, but the best defense was a good offense, and this attack was also to defend against a possible ambush from the top of the pass.

As for Jiang Chen standing at the top of the pass, his eyes were clear and they had the intelligent sparkle of reason. His eyes glared and a cold light shot out in exploding rays.

"Well received."

His powerful arms moved consecutively as six Leathered Feather Throwing Daggers tore through the air like a multitude of shooting stars, drawing out marvelous and cunning arcs, shooting down towards the six true qi masters charging upwards.

At the same time, Jiang Chen gave a long whistle as the nameless blade came up. From the high vantage point, his arms trembled once as they swept up a true qi current like the tidewaters.

Vast Ocean Current Splitter, displaying the true colors of a hero.

This blade was indeed the reversing of a vast ocean current, and was indeed a hero by himself.

"The wave breaker form of the Vast Ocean Current Splitter, cleave!"

Having now ascended to the ranks of true qi masters, Jiang Chen's comprehension of the "Vast Ocean Current Splitter" naturally improved with his breakthrough. This highly knowledgeable move now surpassed all of his previous stages, and did so at a substantial level.

The stroke at the peak of one's skills, a stroke enough to make the rivers and oceans flow in reverse, came crashing down from the top of the mountain pass like a tsunami, sweeping across the entire pass and roiling towards the six figures dashing upwards.

The blade's aura that had formed from concentrated true qi was like a violent beast that selected its victims, quickening the breathing of the six true qi masters in an instant.

The six terrifying throwing daggers brought with them a mysterious power and arrived first at wily and brutal angles.

In this moment, the six true qi masters all sniffed a certain presence at the same time —

The presence of death.

This terrifying presence was unstoppable like the tidewaters. It gave birth to an instinct that if they didn't retreat, they would die.

Hesitation occurred only in that crucial moment.

But the six people had entirely different fates.

Three people retreated after their apprehension. They were hit by the throwing daggers and it was like they had been electrocuted in their chests. Blood sprayed out from their mouths as they backed up, but they retained their lives.

Those who didn't immediately back up after hesitating but rather, still continued up against the current were also hit by the throwing daggers. The strong true qi of "Vast Ocean Current Splitter" also infused into them at the same time, utterly shattering their internal organs as they spat out blood and died.

One move, six true qi masters. Three were dead and three were injured.

Jiang Chen brandished his blade and pointed down at Long Zhaofeng from afar. He was majestic, domineering. "Long Zhaofeng, I killed your son and now you send these worthless things to their deaths. Are these the ways that you should have as the ruler of a nation?"

His manner was imposing, his bearing so steely that he wouldn't even bat an eye if Mt. Tai collapsed in front of him.

It was as if the mountains and rivers had changed color and the rivers and oceans had flowed backwards as soon as Jiang Chen had spoken.

This caused a perfect silence to prevail amongst the million strong army in an instant. It was as if the great mountain valley and the million strong army were just air, without sound or hint of life.

Even Long Zhaofeng was stunned by Jiang Chen's shocking manner in that moment.

"This Jiang Chen, when did he... when had he..." The Duke of Yanmen murmured. He almost didn't believe his eyes.

One had to know that just a few months ago, Jiang Chen couldn't even pass the foundational exams.

Long Zhaofeng was infuriated and he yelled, "Long Er, convey my orders. All true qi masters must step out and kill him. Kill him! Kill! Kill! Kill!"

"Understood!"

Long Juxue's slender brows were slightly knitted as she looked coldly in Jiang Chen's direction, "Jiang Chen, I admit that you have a bit of potential and ability. However, this is the end of the line for you."

"Is that so?" Jiang Chen's expression was wooden. "But you're right. This is the end of the line. I've had enough fun."

Suddenly, Jiang Chen raised his voice and called out, "Gouyu, Eastern Lin, Eastern Zhiruo, open your eyes and take a good look and see how I kill Long Zhaofeng, this treacherous usurper."

"Jiang Chen, smooth talking is useless. A mere mountain pass will be trampled flat with one gesture to my million strong army. My Long family will trample your Jiang Han territory and slaughter all of your Jiang family members." A viciousness like a poisonous viper was revealed on Long Juxue's beautiful features.

“Hahaha, you’ll need to have that ability first. Million strong army? Destroy my Jiang Han territory and slaughter my family members? Not too shabby, Long Juxue, you’ve made my determination to annihilate your Long family even more resolute.”

Jiang Chen ignored the million strong army beneath him after he’d finished speaking, as if they were clay dolls.

Long Juxue had seen people who were bold, who were unafraid of death, but it was truly the first time that she had seen someone still so carefree and leisurely even when an army of a million strong was beating down his doors.

Except, Jiang Chen’s confident and self-assured manner vaguely made Long Juxue a bit bafflingly uneasy.

Why was she uneasy? She had a million strong army behind her, hundreds of true qi masters to support her, and she commanded the most elite strength in the kingdom.

But she couldn’t shake off this uneasy feeling.

Long Zhaofeng didn’t think that much as his face darkened, “Xue’er, there’s no need to argue with him any longer. Attack the pass immediately, kill Jiang Chen, slaughter the Jiang family, and trample the Jiang Han territory!”

The million strong army roared like tigers in unison.

Drastic changes in a political situation, the shouts and yells of a million people in one gathering formed an impressive atmosphere, as if the mountains were collapsing and the earth cracking. This immediately raised the somewhat glum morale.

“Kill Jiang Chen!”

“Slaughter the Jiang clan!”

“Seize the dukedom and become Duke of Jiang Han!”

“Kill!”

The mountain winds howled as war drums were beaten fiercely. Battle cries shook the heavens as soldiers flourished their weapons.

In front of the million strong army, the Second Crossing appeared thin and fragile, as if it would topple down if everyone in the million strong army exhaled one breath.

At this moment, Jiang Chen murmured something and suddenly, a long whistle rang out, followed by several sharp short whistles.

In between this whistle, it was as if the mountains on either side of the pass were collapsing as enormous rumbling sounds roared out. Countless rocks were falling down, as if the mountain would explode at any moment, as if a slumbering ancient beast within this mountain valley was awakening.

“What?”

With her azure phoenix constitution, Long Juxue's potential was exceedingly high. She could vaguely detect a sense of the mountains and rivers changing colors, and the heavens and earth becoming dark and gloomy.

In this moment, a terrifying scene appeared.

Within the mountain valley...

Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh.

Countless Swordbirds and innumerable wings shot out of the mountain valley like arrows loosed from a bowstring, dashing out from their hiding place deep within the mountain.

Within the span of one breath, they covered the sky and blotted out the sun. The sky was black no matter where one cast an eye. There were Swordbirds everywhere. Countless Swordbirds covered the entire heavens like an enormous sky curtain.

Suddenly, the light of the heavens and the direct sunshine of noon utterly vanished from the mountain valley.

Chapter 102: A Crushing Trample

An innumerable amount of disastrous Swordbirds flooded out of the mountain valley.

Tidewaters were often used as a descriptor, but even tidewaters were still contained within the rivers and seas.

This tide of Swordbirds occupied the entire sky, occupied all available space. These fierce and violent beasts were covering every corner and spot of the sky.

Within the vision of the million strong army, countless black dots were as thick as stalks in a field of flax. They were filled with Swordbirds circling and dancing in the sky.

The Greenwing Swordbirds formed a green sea of Swordbirds. It was like the dams of the river in heaven had collapsed and an opening had formed in the sky above the Second Crossing, draining the waters away with abandon.

There were innumerable Silverwing Swordbirds interspersed amongst the green ocean.

There were even many Goldwing Swordbirds within. Many golden shadows, and a plentitude of golden streaks of light could be seen across the sky. There were at least several hundred threading throughout the mass.

The clouds and wind had changed color, the sun and moon without light.

The million strong army finally knew the meaning of these words.

The originally hoity-toity million strong army was suddenly reduced to an exceedingly miniscule existence compared to the sea of Swordbirds, just like the lights of fireflies would pale in the presence of the sun and moon.

“Long Zhaofeng, you are wise and brilliant to have worn the royal robes early to have fun at playing king. You can take these beautiful dreams with you as you go skipping off to the underworld to reunite with your son.”

Jiang Chen’s tone carried a few hints of cruel banter as he looked at the greatly appalled Long family members.

“Protect the king!” Long Er made a prompt decision. Who had the courage to attack Jiang Chen now? He knew that life or death would be decided in this moment.

Jiang Chen circulated his true qi and called down in a clap of spring thunder, “I, Jiang Chen, only want to kill the Long family members and do not wish to harm those who kneel in surrender. Those who do not will be viewed as loyal to the Long family unto death and will surely die.”

“Do you all hear that? Apart from the Long family, those who kneel and surrender will not be killed. Those who do not kneel will be viewed as loyal to the Long family unto death and the sworn enemies of the Jiang family. You will be shown no mercy.” Jiang Feng was filled with magnanimity and kindness, he too didn’t wish to kill innocents.

Although the members of the million strong army were basically the Long family’s dependents, the soldiers and generals of the army were just all following orders. This wasn’t a crime.

Long Er was greatly alarmed and hurriedly called out, “Don’t believe the Jiang family’s blather. This tide of Swordbirds is a natural disaster, their promises cannot be believed. The Swordbirds are dumb beasts, how would they know who is a Long family member and who isn’t?”

Except, at this time, what effect would Long Er’s words have? Those powers who had originally been forced to accede to the Long family immediately threw down their weapons, and thumped to their knees in a continuous wave of sound.

Long Er shouted gravely, “Those who kneel will be viewed as defectors having gone over to the enemy’s side, and will all be executed!”

After he spoke, Long Er dashed into the formation and hacked more than ten soldiers down onto the ground like he was chopping away at vegetables.

Except, how would he kill all those kneeling by himself alone?

Many followed after the first person kneeled. After a short while, roughly seventy to eighty percent of the million strong army was on their knees. The remaining people were either the Long family’s elite troops, the Long family’s loyal confidantes such as the Duke of Yanmen, or the people who had a deep grudge with the Jiang family previously.

A large Goldwing Swordbird suddenly emitted a sharp, long whistle!

With that, several hundred Goldwing Swordbirds launched an attack at almost the same time, transforming themselves into golden-colored shadows as they dived down.

In their eyes, the humans below were the best meal, particularly true qi masters — their flesh and blood were the most nutritious type of food.

Thousand of Silverwing Swordbirds also dived down soon after.

Afterwards —

Waves of Greenwing Swordbirds crashed down one after another as if they were waves from the ocean.

A splendid sight formed in front of the Second Crossing for the span of an instant.

It was as if meteors were falling from the skies. Gold, silver, and green colored ones fell endlessly.

Swordbirds had sharp beaks and razor sharp wings. Their feathers were even harder than any human armor. Normal arrows would absolutely be unable to cause any damage to them at all. A majority of the arrows were brushed aside by them when their claws waved.

Even if an occasional arrow from a strong practitioner managed to hurt them, how would they be able to shoot down all the Swordbirds that were coming at them like the tidewaters?

Even if they could shoot down two with one arrow, or three with one arrow, how many arms were there to raise a bow, and how many arrows were there for them to shoot?

“Ah, my eyes!”

“No, I don’t want to die, don’t eat me!”

“I surrender, I surrender, stop your beaks. Stop your beaks!”

Blood and flesh randomly flew through the air as arrows flew wildly. It was a scene of total chaos in front of the Second Crossing.

In the beginning, the great army managed to scrape together some semblance of resistance, but as increasing numbers of Swordbirds joined into the fray and the strong experts on the ground were continuously divvied up and eaten, the scene almost became a one-sided massacre.

“Awrk!”

“Awrk!”

Eating the flesh and blood of these strong practitioners satisfied the Swordbirds in every respect and they continuously emitted excited bird cries.

“I can’t hold on anymore, run!”

“Everyone escape into the mountain valley, it’ll be good if even one gets away!”

Except, escaping under these circumstances was undoubtedly wishful thinking.

There were Swordbirds everywhere, both within and outside, up and down the mountain valley. Whenever there was the slightest sliver of space or the slightest opening, a Swordbird would immediately appear.

These Swordbirds all vied with each other for the purposes of feeding themselves. How could they let anyone escape?

Long Zhaofeng was also exceedingly bedraggled at this moment. Within a defensive ring of horses, he was making desperate struggles under the protection of his remaining true qi masters.

It was a good thing that the power of several true qi masters was also frightening. Even with several hundred Goldwing Swordbirds attacking them, they were unable to immediately break through this strong line of defense.

After all, this was the decisive moment between life and death. It was impossible for any of the true qi masters to hold anything back. Whether it was their trump cards or their most powerful treasures, they employed them all on the battlefield.

If they didn't use them now, then in this lifetime, they wouldn't have the chance to use them again.

Add to that the fact that true qi masters could always force out their strongest battle potential when in dire straits, their fierce way of fighting that didn't fear death also caused the Goldwing Swordbirds to be unwilling to go head to head with them.

After all, with this situation, the Swordbird army was already engaging in a one-sided massacre. The kings of Swordbirds were also intelligent and unwilling to do something like trading a life for a life.

Therefore, this was why a defensive formation formed by all the true qi masters was able to withstand the Swordbird army attacks raining down like the tidewaters, but the others weren't that lucky.

Each division of the army had formed defensive units, but these units were unable to have any effect in the face of such seamless aerial attacks.

Yet another formation was dissolved and destroyed with a ghastly wail and howl. Every body of flesh and blood was swept to the floor by the Swordbirds, churned up, and eaten.

"No more, damn it, no more! I surrender!"

"I surrender. What the point of fighting for life and death? Who are we protecting?"

"Yes, all the true qi masters have run off to protect that so-called king, and we stand here and await death?"

The soldiers' morale had finally dissipated, and they woke up after those fierce, blindly loyal supporters were continuously swallowed up by the Swordbird army, until only some stubborn resisters were left.

There was no point in fighting like this.

With this, more and more divisions all kneeled down and paid lip service to surrender.

After an hour, apart from Long Zhaofeng still managing to hold on within his crowd of true qi master protection, there were no more stubbornly resisting troops remaining anywhere else.

They could either surrender, or be swallowed by the Swordbird army.

It was an odd thing. Once someone kneeled down and surrendered, the Swordbird army would stop their attacks. Although they would circle over the soldiers' heads endlessly, they really did restrain themselves from the temptation of flesh and blood.

Thick crowds of kneeling soldiers out of the million strong army covered the entire mountain valley. Only white skeletal frames were left of those stubborn resisters. There were fully tens of thousands of these frames.

“Jiang Chen, stay your hand. I am willing to surrender.”

Within Long Zhaofeng’s defensive formation, the Duke of Vermillion Bird, Hong Chunlei, couldn’t take it anymore. He was about to have a mental breakdown.

He had thrown himself under Long Zhaofeng’s banner partially because of the trend of the greater picture, and partially out of coercion and resignation. He had only wanted to retain his position as one of the four great dukes, but now had discovered that he had stirred up such a hornet’s nest by following Long Zhaofeng, and fallen into the dire circumstances of today.

How did he have the courage and faith to continue fighting to the death for Long Zhaofeng?

Brandishing the weapon in his hands, he leapt out of the battle ring and knelt with both knees, intending to surrender.

His knees had just started bending when a cold draft swept over the back of his neck. A blade flashed and his head was sent rolling.

Long Er said sinisterly, “Those who go over to the enemy’s side will die.”

Bloodthirsty shock tactics were no longer enough to awe and frighten others at this moment. The momentum towards defeat had formed. Even though Hong Chunlei was beheaded, many other strong experts still began to squirm out of the battle ring.

Even some of the true qi masters that Long Zhaofeng had bought, those experts who had just been titled “royal experts”, didn’t have the desire to fight on.

Although the battle ring had yet to collapse, the Swordbird army surged like the tides with a momentum that wouldn’t let up at all. They could fight and kill, but their hands were trembling from weakness, having fought until now. The Swordbirds they had killed were merely 1/100, or even 1/1000 of the Swordbird army.

What was the point in a continued battle like this?

Long Er’s body was covered in blood as he called out, “Cover His Majesty’s retreat and all of you will be meritorious subjects and made lord of ten thousand households.”

The stimulus of lord of ten thousand households stirred some fighting spirit in these royal experts’ hearts. Fortune and prosperity was gained in the midst of danger, and they would put their lives on the line to be ruler of ten thousand households.

Long Zhaofeng was overjoyed and promised, “Of those who fight by my side today, those who live will be made lord of ten thousand. Those who die will have their families be awarded one million gold and have endless prosperity passed onto their progeny.”

“Long Zhaofeng, on this day you continue to make promises that you cannot fulfill. Make lord of ten thousand households? Do you think you can leave this place alive?”

Jiang Chen laughed involuntarily upon hearing those words.

Long Zhaofeng was speechless. The situation was greater than the person. It wasn't that he didn't want to kill Jiang Chen, but that he'd never thought that Jiang Chen could deploy an army of Swordbirds. This was something that had never been heard of from time immemorial.

Above the pass, Princess Gouyu, Eastern Lin, and Eastern Zhiruo watched this scene with vindication.

Karma in the present life had arrived swiftly.

A few days ago, Long Zhaofeng had led a great army to lay siege to the palace and killed everything within and outside of the palace, leaving not even the chickens and dogs.

And now, he was surrounded by a Swordbird army and his life hung by a thread.

Princess Gouyu was filled with astonishment and her heart completely in disarray. She finally understood where Jiang Chen's confidence came from, and finally knew why Jiang Chen viewed the million strong army as a trifling nothing.

It wasn't arrogance, it wasn't ignorance, it was just that he had absolute power.

"Royal brother, your noble spirit shouldn't be far. Do you see this? Long Zhaofeng is not far from death. In this moment, Long Zhaofeng is tasting the same death struggles that you experienced in the last moments of life." Princess Gouyu said silently in her heart.

The attacks of the Swordbird army continued.

The Swordbirds attacked endlessly like shooting stars and meteorites, assailing the nerves of every stubborn resistor. It was like they walked along the edge of life and death every time they beat back an attack.

Their nerves had been stretched to the breaking point, and they didn't know either how many more attacks they could fend off.

Chapter 103: Long Family's Desperate Flounders

The worst thing was, high above the mountain pass, the god of death Jiang Chen had yet to make his move.

That life reaping arrow, that presence from occupying an advantageous vantage point. When he had made his move, he had reaped the lives of true qi masters as if he was harvesting crops.

Under such heavy pressure, any true qi master with even a slightly lower level of training, or if anyone was hit by a Swordbird, would be immediately knocked to the ground, hauled away, and portioned out.

The flesh and blood of a true qi master was absolutely a rich meal for the Goldwing Swordbirds.

More than ten Goldwing Swordbirds would divvy up every true qi master that fell. Those who didn't get a portion would become even more ferocious. The desire to feed made them even more violent and ruthless.

More and more true qi masters couldn't hold up beneath the onslaught.

Long Zhaofeng's level of training was also astonishing. The training of an eleven meridians true qi master allowed him to barely protect himself within the crowd.

Long Juxue followed closely by her father's side, staying not even half a step away. A cold, sinister hatred suffused her phoenix eyes that slanted upwards. The gaze of hatred seemed like it could seal others in ice and shatter them.

Long Zhaofeng's heart shuddered as he looked around and discovered that the number of true qi masters by his side had decreased by a full third.

"Can it be that the heavens truly wishes for my death today?" A desperate thought grew out of Long Zhaofeng's heart.

He wasn't willing to accept his fate, and didn't wish to die like this. He still had great aspirations. He wanted to sit on the throne for another hundred years, then look upon his land for another hundred.

"Jiang Chen." Long Zhaofeng suddenly cried out. "Must you and I really fight to the depths of not resting until one side is dead?"

Jiang Chen hadn't expected that Long Zhaofeng would spout such naive words in this moment. He only smiled coldly but said nothing.

All words were in vain now. Following up victory with hot pursuit, pulling out the evil by its roots was the only way.

"Jiang Chen, listen to me. I know you have true ability and that you're a genius. My daughter, Long Juxue is also a genius. To have two geniuses in such a small kingdom is the heavens' concern and allowance of solitude for our patch of land. Why must you geniuses be at each other's throats? Why can't geniuses set aside their differences and form an alliance of the strong?"

Long Zhaofeng's voice was rushed as he rallied all his powers of eloquence. "Jiang Chen, as long as you stop, I'm willing to swear an oath to the heavens and earth and betroth my daughter to you. You know that my daughter is of an azure phoenix constitution and that even the heavyweight of a hidden sect looks upon her favorably and wishes to take her in as a disciple. If you kill us today, then you would be offending the entire sect. In contrast, if you stay your hand today, you can return with a beauty in your arms. You might even be able to enter the sect with my daughter in the future, becoming a story that is on everyone's lips in the kingdom. Then, I can leverage on your husband and wife's strength to expand our domain, expand to new frontiers, and unite the surrounding sixteen countries to establish a dynasty. Wouldn't this satisfy both sides? Your Jiang family would also share in the prosperity and good fortune. Isn't that much better than being a small duke?"

One had to say, Long Zhaofeng's words were quite bewitching, and those shining words seemed to make a great deal of sense.

He would be able to return with a beauty in his arms if he stopped the war. Long Juxue was the most beautiful woman in the kingdom, endowed with superior potential, and had been favored by the hidden sects as well. To marry such a woman was the dream of every young man in the kingdom. If the strong cooperated with the strong, there truly was a high chance of expanding to new frontiers and building a dynasty.

Not halting the war and killing the entire Long family could potentially offend an entire sect and bring about pursuit and hunt.

One could say that Long Zhaofeng's words had grasped a delicate situation and cut straight to the crux of the matter. Anyone with a brain would know how to choose.

Long Juxue also felt quite astonished at first, her cherry lips moved slightly as she wanted to say something, but she decided not to say anything in the end and calmly looked in Jiang Chen's direction.

"Jiang Chen, you've also seen my daughter's attitude. She has been proud her entire life but that doesn't mean she is devoid of appeal. She admires men who can control and dominate her. In the entire kingdom, you, and only you are able to conquer her and win her heart. Look at my daughter, she has good looks, beautiful breasts, and a well-rounded bottom. If I make a general observation of the surrounding sixteen countries, you won't be able to find another woman like her."

A beautiful woman and power, these were the two strongest temptations for men. These were also what men most yearned for, and it had an allure that they couldn't resist.

Long Zhaofeng had thrown out both of these temptations in one breath.

Even Princess Gouyu, who stood atop the pass, was frozen. She became encumbered with troubles and worried about personal gains and losses. Her heart trembled as she stood beside Jiang Chen. She didn't even have the courage to look at Jiang Chen.

She was worried, what man in this world would be able to withstand such temptation?

Even Eastern Zhiruo asked in a shaky voice, "Brother Jiang Chen, do you want that woman? I..."

Princess Gouyu likewise said in a quivering voice, "Jiang Chen, Long Juxue is as poisonous as a scorpion. Wedding her would be like storing a poisonous snake by your side."

Even Jiang Feng spoke up, "Chen'er, it is impossible for our Jiang family and Long family to live together under the same sky. This girl Long Juxue is absolutely not a good match."

Long Juxue stood beneath the pass and called out clearly, "Jiang Chen, I know you have something going on with those two Eastern women. That's fine, if you like them, have them as maids who serve your needs in the bedchamber. That is fine as well. I, Long Juxue, only admire strong men."

Jiang Chen had continued to keep a faint smile on his face the entire time. If it were any other son of a duke, he would likely be unable to hold up beneath Long Zhaofeng's promises and temptations.

After all, both beautiful women and power were a deadly aphrodisiac to men.

Except, although land and women were tempting, did Jiang Chen need to obtain those from Long Zhaofeng's hands?

It was obvious that Jiang Chen didn't need to!

Would Jiang Chen, the exalted son of the Celestial Emperor in his past life, be short of temptations such as land and beautiful women?

Who knew how many beautiful women awaited Jiang Chen's attention?

Who knew how many lands awaited his grasp and control?

In the end, these weren't Jiang Chen's greatest goals.

When Princess Gouyu heard Long Juxue's ridiculous, shameless words, her straightforward personality happened to recall the one sided agreement she had struck up with Jiang Chen before, that if he could defeat the Long family, he could have both her and Ruo'er. When she thought of this, Gouyu's face also reddened slightly.

It was rather the normally bashful Eastern Zhiruo who yelled out with her loudest volume with a flaming hot face, "My brother Jiang Chen doesn't want you for his woman!"

"Jiang Chen, what are you hesitating for? What man doesn't want land and beautiful women?" Long Zhaofeng called out loudly.

Jiang Chen chuckled. He hadn't said anything because he wanted to see how much more of a ludicrous performance the Long father and daughter would put on.

"Lands and beautiful women?" Jiang Chen shook his head with flagging interest. "Long Zhaofeng, under the circumstances, is selling your daughter's looks your last ploy?"

"Jiang Chen, I..."

"Shut up! Long Zhaofeng, I said a long time ago that the Second Crossing was the best place for your burial grounds. Your daughter? Genius? Beauty? Hahaha, so what? A venomous scorpion of a woman, a pink skeleton. Even if she took off all her clothes and presented herself at my door, I, Jiang Chen, would still have no interest in her. Long Juxue, save your affections and airs for tempting the ghosts and ghouls in the underworld."

Jiang Chen's face grew cold as soon as he'd finished speaking as he once again spoke words from the beast language, issuing the strongest call to attack.

All the Goldwing Swordbirds received their commands and called out in succession, sending forth their troops.

Waves of attacks like tidewaters once again flooded the skies above the Second Crossing.

"Jiang Chen... you'll regret this!" Long Zhaofeng was at the end of his road and was making his final struggles.

"My daughter possesses an azure phoenix constitution and had been personally hand picked to be the disciple of Master Shuiyue of the Purple Sun Sect. If you move against my Long family, that is the equivalent of defying Master Shuiyue and the entire Purple Sun Sect."

The Purple Sun Sect was one of the four great sects within the alliance of the sixteen surrounding kingdoms.

Master Shuiyue was one of the nine elders of the Purple Sun Sect with incredibly strong power and influence, enough to rank in the top ten of the Purple Sun Sect. No one dares to defy a sect heavyweight of this level within the entire sixteen surrounding kingdoms, not to mention a mere Eastern Kingdom.

Except, these threats were pale and weak in front of Jiang Chen.

There wasn't a ripple of emotion on Jiang Chen's face. On the contrary, an even stronger urge to kill surged in Jiang Chen's eyes.

"Purple Sun Sect?" Jiang Chen smiled coldly in his heart. "Even ten Purple Sun Sects wouldn't be enough to obstruct my desire to exterminate your Long family."

Offending the Purple Sun Sect was a matter of the future. Who knew the matters of the future with certainty?

In this moment, the Long family had to be annihilated, otherwise there would be no end of trouble in the future. Destroying the Long family, removing Long Juxue – how much would a dead genius be worth?

A heavyweight of the Purple Sun Sect might not be willing to go to such extreme lengths for a dead so-called genius.

Jiang Chen had already stepped onto the back of a Goldwing Swordbird in between his whistles, drawn back the bow, notched an arrow, and sent it shooting towards Long Zhaofeng.

This man had wanted to put his Jiang family down to their deaths on numerous occasions.

Today, Jiang Chen wanted to take down this person first. Once this person was dead, the greater picture would be set!

The arrow breaking through the air brought with it a piercingly cold true qi, attacking with a strong momentum.

"Protect His Majesty!" One had to say, Long Er was an absolutely loyal underling. Just like Long Yi and Long San who had gone before him, they were Long Zhaofeng's most trusted deathsworn.

They were the personal guards that Long Zhaofeng had selected when he had gone through the Hidden Dragon Trials.

They had experienced life and death with Long Zhaofeng for decades, and Long Er had long since given his life to Long Zhaofeng.

Except, once Jiang Chen started his bow and arrow attack, how could Long Er be able to withstand it?

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh...

Continuous sounds rending through the air rang out continuously. Incomparable true qi was infused onto the arrows, ripping through the air. When true qi and air collided into each other, streaks of fiery sparks burned through the air like blossoming fire dragons, shooting towards Long Zhaofeng in cunning angles.

Dong dong dong.

Continual numbers of deathsworn flung themselves at Long Zhaofeng, using their bodies to block these domineering arrows.

Pfft, pfft.

Three or four true qi masters were pierced by these arrows.

Long Zhaofeng was even more bedraggled now. Not only did he have to face the threat of the arrows, but there were several Goldwing Swordbirds circling over his head and sending strong blasts of true qi at him. Their intimidating aura was completely on par with Jiang Chen.

Long Er was covered with blood, as if he was a being made of blood.

“Long Er, protect Xue’er, leave! Don’t mind me. As long as Xue’er remains, there will surely be a day for revenge for the Long family.” Long Zhaofeng also knew that this situation was one of certain death. He couldn’t escape, and Jiang Chen wouldn’t let him escape.

His only hope was to cover Long Juxue’s retreat!

As long as Long Juxue left and returned to the Soaring Dragon manor, taking one or two of the Long’s bloodline with her the bloodlines would remain unbroken. There would then come a day that they would rise again.

“You want to leave?”

Jiang Chen smiled coldly and raised his hand to shoot another arrow, piercing through Long Er.

The arrow drilled through chest, before passing cleanly through his back exiting out the back. A bloody mist arose from Long Er’s chest as his mouth also spewed out blood. He widened his eyes as he looked at Long Zhaofeng.

“Your Lordship, your subject... is going on ahead of you.”

Long Er fell down with a thud after he finished speaking.

Long Zhaofeng had no time to look at Long Er as he madly waved the weapons in his hand. “Xue’er, I, your father, will cover your retreat. Go!”

In this moment, Long Zhaofeng was both bitter and sorrowful. How familiar was this scene? Hadn’t Eastern Lu sacrificed himself like this a few days ago in order to enable Princess Gouyu’s escape?

Was this karma?

Long Zhaofeng was an eleven meridians true qi master. His level of training was much stronger than Jiang Feng and Princess Gouyu. After all, he had entered the realm of an eleven meridians true qi master a long time ago.

Whereas Jiang Feng’s and Princess Gouyu’s realm had only just stabilized.

Therefore, once Long Zhaofeng paid no heed to his life, his battle strength was quite astonishing. One had to say, humans could often erupt with amazing strength when they were forced into desperate circumstances.

There were actually two Goldwing Swordbirds in a row that cried out in ghastly agony and fell lifelessly from the sky when they were hit by Long Zhaofeng’s great blade.

Jiang Chen yelled out loudly once and fired three arrows in quick succession. Whoosh whoosh whoosh. The three successive arrows brought with them an intense momentum as they shot towards Long Zhaofeng.

As strong as he was, Long Zhaofeng was already at the limits of his endurance when surrounded by so many Goldwing Swordbirds.

The three arrows broke through the air like shooting stars.

Chapter 104:

Bang, bang, bang!

Three arrows connected solidly with Long Zhaofeng's critical parts, but he was wearing soft armor that actually prevented the three arrows from penetrating through.

However, even though they didn't pierce Long Zhaofeng, a strong infusion of true qi rushing into his body was enough to vibrate his body so much so that he spat out countless mouthfuls of blood, as his internal organs were heavily injured.

"Xue'er, go!"

Long Zhaofeng roared like a tiger, like he was completely mad as he covered Long Juxue's dash towards the depths of the mountain valley.

Jiang Chen snorted lightly, you want to leave?

More than ten Goldwing Swordbirds with hundreds of Silverwing Swordbirds formed a net from which there was no escape, completely blocking off Long Juxue's path!

Long Zhaofeng spat out more blood when he saw the situation and knew that things were beyond salvation. Even his daughter wouldn't make it out.

At this moment, he only felt a breeze over his head. By the time he reacted, Jiang Feng's Goldwing Swordbird had already swept over like lightning.

Frosty light flashed from a blade as it sliced down.

The gleam raced over Long Zhaofeng's neck as a crisp, breaking sound rang out. Long Zhaofeng's head flew towards the skies with a pair of eyes filled with hate, that didn't even have time to close in acceptance.

He wasn't reconciled to his fate! He had been in high spirits just two hours ago, wearing the royal robes, a sovereign descending unto the world, and controlling an army of a million strong. And now, his head and body were in two different places and he had become a ghost beneath Jiang Chen's blade.

Nothing illustrated more the great peaks and valleys of life!

"Jiang Chen! I swear I'll kill you!" Long Juxue screamed shrilly when she saw her father's head and body in different place.

Jiang Chen's heart was apathetic as he spurred on the Goldwing Swordbird beneath him towards Long Juxue. Swear you'll kill me? How would I even give you the chance to do so?

The Long family had committed countless sins and killed people like they were flies. Whether it was Long Yinye or Long Juxue, dying ten times over was still likely insufficient to wash away the sins on their body.

Therefore, Jiang Chen only had one thought right now and that was to be ruthless and spare none, to pull up everyone by their roots!

Particularly this Long Juxue, she must die!

"You swear to kill me? Why don't you reincarnate ten more times!" Jiang Chen had already urged the Goldwing Swordbird to within fifty meters of Long Juxue as he spoke.

Long Juxue was surrounded by the great Swordbird army, and had patently reached the end of her resources.

When she saw Jiang Chen arrive, a hint of a bizarre smile actually appeared Long Juxue's charming face, a smile disfigured by hate. Suddenly, a string of faint rippling runes surged up around Long Juxue's side. The water-colored runes swiftly expanded, just like an enormous ripple spreading out on the surface of water.

Jiang Chen's thoughts suddenly raced as a feeling of danger he'd never experienced before assaulted him.

Before he even knew where he was, he had already tightly clamped onto the Goldwing Swordbird beneath him and turned, skewing sideways around a hundred meters.

He also emitted piercing whistles from his mouth, warning the Swordbirds attacking Long Juxue.

At this moment, light like the splendor of the moon suddenly flared out in the air surrounding Long Juxue. The silvery, moon-like runes radiated within the surrounding hundred meters within an instant.

With a speed that the human eye could barely keep pace with, all of the Swordbirds, trees, shrubbery, rocks, and corpses around Long Juxue's body turned into dazzlingly white ice sculptures in an instant.

The energy emanated by these runes was ice spirit power that was without parallel!

A piece of paper filled with writings of strange runes in Long Juxue's hands was also being continuously destroyed. It sparkled with a bizarre light, slowly turning into dots of frost white light within her hands. Sparkling dots, like the fragments of stars, slowly disappeared into nothingness.

Upon seeing that Jiang Chen had avoided imminent disaster and escaped from her lethal blow, Long Juxue's hate filled, charming eyes shot out looks of terrible self-pity.

This was her absolute last trump card, the spirit rune that Purple Sun Sect Master Shuiyue had personally left for her that year -- the Shuiyue True Rune!

The power of this Shuiyue True Rune was seventy percent of Master Shuiyue's strength. Its force was exceedingly great, and could spontaneously turn all living things within one to two hundred meters into ice sculptures.

She couldn't bear to use this Shuiyue True Rune even when her father was in dire straights. She'd originally wanted to use it in her final attempt to escape.

Long Juxue had felt like just now was the best timing!

The pity was, with such a good opportunity at hand, she still hadn't managed to kill Jiang Chen.

Even though she didn't wish to accept this kind of outcome, she didn't dare tarry any longer. Her body dashed away as she made for the deep reaches of the mountain valley. Out of all the Swordbirds that had originally been attacking her, apart from a couple lucky Goldwing Swordbirds that had escaped by a fluke, several hundred Swordbirds had been frozen into ice blocks around her and they all crashed to the ground.

"Jiang Chen, you got lucky this time! The next time, when I return from the Purple Sun Sect, it will be the very day your Jiang family is annihilated!"

As Long Juxue spoke, she had already bounded up into the thickly overgrown mountain valley. There were towering trees everywhere within the mountain valley, and they covered the skies and blotted out the sun. When Long Juxue made it into the mountain valley, she was like a bird within the forest or a fish swimming in the seas. Except, Jiang Chen remained unmoving as he looked at the dense patch of mountain valley. A strange smile leaked out from the corners of his lips as he started counting down within his heart.

"Four, three, two, one..."

Indeed, Jiang Chen hadn't even counted to five when he heard Long Juxue's shrill scream. It was like she'd seen a ghost as she quickly dashed out of the mountain valley again, her hair streaming wildly loose.

Hulala!

The sounds of a huge patch of flapping wings traveled out of the mountain valley, as if a sea made of winds was howling.

Countless numbers of Swordbirds shot out of the mountain valley like sharp arrows, once again covering the skies above the mountain valley.

It turned out that after Jiang Chen got into contact with Mang Qi through that tooth carved with weird patterns, the amount of Swordbirds that Mang Qi sent out was truly astonishing.

The army of Swordbirds that had surrounded the Long family army just now had only been half of that number.

There was another half laying dormant on both sides of the mountain valley.

Long Juxue had thought herself clever in escaping into the mountain valley, thinking she could leverage the terrain of the mountain valley in escaping. She hadn't expected that she'd fallen into an even more terrifying trap.

Long Juxue despaired and kept screaming shrilly. The light from her sword flashed as she waved it wildly, marking her death struggles beneath the oppression of the Swordbirds.

"Jiang Chen, if you kill me, the Purple Sun Sect won't let you off the hook!"

It was a pity that such weak threats such as these were like flies buzzing in Jiang Chen's ears. Although they were noisy and irritating, there wasn't any strength to them at all.

He slowly lifted the treasured bow and locked onto Long Juxue with the tip of the arrow from afar.

A long night is fraught with dreams. Jiang Chen didn't wish to give rise to any further complications. This Long Juxue was the disciple-in-waiting of a sect and would eventually have all sorts of endless treasures and ways about her.

Jiang Chen didn't wish to have anymore troubles crop up.

Encompassed with the most powerful strength of Jiang Chen's ten meridians true qi and gathering vast waves of true qi like rivers and seas, a frightening streak of light shot straight for Long Juxue's forehead with an impressive momentum.

As if a shooting star chasing the moon, an arrow that would surely kill!

Jiang Chen was full of confidence. If Long Zhao Feng hadn't died, it would have still been difficult for Long Zhao Feng himself to avoid this arrow under the circumstances.

As for Long Juxue, although she possessed uncommon potential and boasted of an azure phoenix constitution, she was still young, and her training had yet to reach perfection!

When Long Juxue heard the arrow breaking through the air, she too felt the rapid approach of death. But, she was at the end of her tether and was incapable of action.

"Jiang Chen, I'll come after you even when I'm a ghost!" Long Juxue screamed shrilly.

At this moment, an unexpected development took place!

The arrow speeding forth like a shooting star had already come within ten meters of Long Juxue when it was suddenly caught by what seemed to be an invisible hand!

The arrow suddenly stopped in midair like the emergency brakes had been hit!

The next moment --

The arrow broke into pieces and scattered onto the floor with a sharp crack.

"Who's there?" Highly alert, light shone out of Jiang Chen's eyes, his Boulder's Heart activated to the maximum as he sensed the surrounding area on all sides.

There was a dangerous presence that faded in and out of existence. It seemed quite far, yet also quite close, making it difficult for Jiang Chen to pinpoint it precisely.

Even the Boulder's Heart was unable to sense where the danger was coming from. The God's Eye, and Ear of the Zephyr was even more unable to capture traces of the enemy's movement.

The atmosphere in the entire Second Crossing suddenly turned bizarre beyond belief.

Long Juxue has escaped from the face of certain death. Agitated looks of disbelief also shone out from her beautiful eyes. She knew that help must have arrived!

All the Goldwing Swordbirds seemed to have also received some sort of command as they all adopted a posture of facing a great enemy, continuously gathering at Jiang Chen's side.

The knife-like wing feathers of every Goldwing Swordbird were extended, as their sharp eyes alertly monitored every rustle in the bend of the grass.

At this moment, the glimmering rays of sunset wavered into existence in the air of the mountain valley, and two shapes walked out.

One of them wore flowing turquoise robes and looked to be 22 or 23. He was slightly tall, had regular features, and a tapered chin. He also had a rather dashing and uncommon air about him.

The other one was wearing brown clothing and was slightly shorter. The only point of interest about him was the flattened nose on his face, and two eyes that were suffused with a sense of sinister ruthlessness.

There was a purple sun stitched on the right chest pocket of both their clothing, appearing quite unusual and fey.

When Long Juxue saw the purple sun on their clothing, a joyful expression blossomed on her face. "Two senior brothers, are you senior brothers from the Purple Sun Sect?"

"You must be junior sister Long Juxue?" The turquoise attired man smiled slightly as he asked.

"That's me, may I know senior brother's honored name?" Long Juxue was as excited in this moment as if she'd seen her savior, her kin.

"I'm called Yu Jie, one of the ten major disciples beneath Master Shuiyue. Junior sister Long can call me senior brother Xu." This turquoise wearing Yu Jie had several traces of warmth and politeness in his tone, obviously tagging Long Juxue as someone with high importance.

"This is Xu Zhen. You can call him junior brother Xu when you enter the sect in the future." Yu Jie pointed at the brown clad companion next to him.

"Xue'er greets her two senior brothers." Long Juxue was in dire straits right now and didn't dare strike up any airs in front of Xu Zhen. She thus called them both her senior brothers.

Except, Yu Jie frowned slightly. "Junior sister, you needn't be so polite. In the world of martial dao, the strong are revered. It wouldn't be appropriate for you to call him senior brother."

When Xu Zhen heard these words, he didn't find it distasteful, but rather chuckled, nodding his head and arching his back. "Senior sister Xue'er, in our Purple Sun Sect, those who have higher potential and

strength are naturally ranked much higher. If you call me senior brother within the halls of the sect, then I really wouldn't know where to put my face."

Long Juxue laughed lightly instead, "Xue'er hasn't formally entered the sect yet, please allow me to call you both senior brothers for now."

One had to say, Xu Zhen was quite touched by the falsely humble show that Long Juxue was putting on. His shifty eyes suddenly shot out killing intent as he looked towards Jiang Chen in the distance.

"Senior sister Xue'er, who is this fellow that dares to pursue and attempt to kill disciples of my Purple Sun Sect? I, Xu Zhen, will kill him and vent a breath of ill temper for senior sister!"

Xu Zhen rolled his small eyes with a few traces of kissing up to Long Juxue as he stepped out and walked up, the aura around his body suddenly increasing many times.

The strong aura permeated the mountain valley immediately as countless Greenwing Swordbirds simply couldn't withstand the pressure from this aura, and fell down one by one from the sky like dumplings being dropped into a pot for cooking.

Chapter 105: Without Equal in the World

"Hahahahaha...." That Xu Zhen was extremely proud of himself as he threw back his head and voiced a long shout. This call formed a strange undercurrent of strength as ripples of a strange power continuously spread out. Within a hundred meters of his being, those Greenwing Swordbirds who hadn't had time to escape kept crying out in agony as they fell one by one from the sky.

"Oscillations of spirit qi, this is a spirit dao practitioner!" Above the Second Crossing, Princess Gouyu's expression also suddenly changed drastically. She called out to a Goldwing Swordbird and leapt on its back, immediately rushing over to Jiang Chen's side.

Even Jiang Feng, who was always valiant and fearless of nothing, paled when he heard the words "spirit dao practitioner". He also summoned a Goldwing Swordbird and dived down the pass.

One had to know that Jiang Feng had a tremendous amount of self pride such that not even Long Zhaofeng, the first duke, could cow him into submission. But when he heard the words spirit dao practitioner, he too greatly lost his composure.

In such a common kingdom, a spirit dao practitioner was the existence of legends.

Even without Princess Gouyu's reminder, at this moment, Jiang Chen had already made the judgement that these two people were spirit dao practitioners from the Purple Sun Sect.

This Xu Zhen was obviously playing up his strength. The imposing presence of his spirit dao aura increased with each step he took, making the Swordbird army on all sides scatter in disarray and continuously retreat.

Although Jiang Chen was two to three hundred meters away from this person, with every step that Xu Zhen took, the latter was using his spirit dao to suppress Jiang Chen, whether by accident or by design.

This unformed pressure was not like that of the glint and flash of cold steel, and was more frightening than any flashes and shadows of the swords could ever be.

Jiang Chen could clearly feel that by his side, his father's breathing had started becoming uneven, and even his own upper and lower teeth couldn't help but chatter together.

Princess Gouyu wasn't that much better off. Although her self-control was slightly stronger, the sight of her slender shoulders slightly trembling betrayed her current difficult situation.

It was rather Jiang Chen, with only ten meridians true qi, who could just so happen to bear up beneath the onslaught thanks to the aid of "Boulder's Heart" operating at its maximum.

However, Jiang Chen knew very well that if this continued any longer, his father and Princess Gouyu would likely collapse on the spot if this fellow took another few steps forward.

He immediately whistled loudly and longly, his voice thundering out, "Evil spirit, what are you playing at?"

This roar encompassed a divine ability to dispel internal demons. One roar was enough to help his father and Princess Gouyu walk out from under the influence of those internal demons.

This power also washed away Xu Zhen's momentum. Although it wasn't an equal match of strength, it was still able to offset a great portion of it.

"Eh?" The turquoise robed male, Yu Jie, displayed a slightly surprised look. His brow furrowed afterwards, "Xu Zhen, hurry and go about your business if you're going to do anything."

"Understood." Xu Zhen smiled gruesomely. "Kid, you can actually compel these Swordbirds to fight. That's a bit strange. Who's your patron? Let's hear his name!"

Jiang Chen's eyebrows rose slightly but he looked at Xu Zhen with a cold smile, ignoring him.

"Kid, master Xu's patience is limited. I'll ask you again, who's your patron?"

If it was any ordinary practitioner, Xu Zhen absolutely would not ask a single word and would have taken action immediately. He'd display great abilities and kill the other person to curry favor with Long Juxue.

Except, Xu Zhen was both curious and a bit greedy about Jiang Chen's wondrous methods in controlling the Swordbirds. He was also slightly worried that if the other also had an impressive background, he'd take great delight in brashly killing the other now, but he would suffer the repercussions in the future.

"Why should I tell you who my patron is?" Jiang Chen said faintly.

"Jiang Chen, don't you dare be arrogant. These two are genius disciples of the Purple Sun Sect, and you dare talk back at them with your status as a mere common practitioner. You're courting death!" Hatred was written all over Long Juxue's face as she said to Xu Zhen, "Senior brother Xu, this Jiang Chen is only the son of a duke and likely stumbled upon this method to compel the Swordbirds during the trials in the Boundless Catacombs. My Soaring Dragon manor has made a full inquiry into all the generations of the Jiang family and know that he has no patron."

Long Juxue couldn't kill Jiang Chen with her current strength, so she wanted to borrow the strength of her two senior brothers in order to kill Jiang Chen.

Her eyes became red and teary at the same time as she looked at Yu Jie by her side, "Senior brother Yu, this Jiang Chen has killed both my father and my elder brother, as well as many members of my Long family. If he is not eliminated, then he will surely become your little sister's internal demon. Your little sister is a weak girl with no father or brothers, and she is left forlorn without a protector. I ask senior brother to make a judgment for your little sister."

Long Juxue possessed high acting skills and tears flowed downwards as she spoke, a veritable weeping beauty. Yu Jie couldn't help but want to put his arms around her and comfort her with soft words.

"Junior sister, be at peace. Within the territory of these sixteen kingdoms, no matter who his patron is, there are none that our Purple Sun Sect can't afford to offend. This kid has killed your father and brother. This is the equivalent of killing someone from the Purple Sun Sect. Your foolish brother will make a judgment on your behalf today." Yu Jie couldn't hold up against the tears of a beauty and patted his chest as he promised.

After he spoke, Yu Jie took one step forward as his body seemed to waver in and out of existence. He appeared to arrive in front of Xu Zhen with this single step.

"Junior brother Xu, you are dismissed. I'm taking over now." Yu Jie's tone was coldly arrogant. Although they were both disciples of the Purple Sun Sect, Yu Jie had an obvious feeling of superiority in front of Xu Zhen.

Although Xu Zhen was a bit surprised, he knew how to behave and backed down, offering up some fawning words as he did so. "Using an ox cleaver to kill a chicken? Since senior brother Yu wishes to personally torture this kid, it's this kid's fortune of lifetimes past to die at the hands of senior brother Yu."

Yu Jie's face was expressionless as he didn't have much of a reaction to Xu Zhen's bootlicking.

His cold eyes swept the scene, shooting out frosty looks as he looked upon Jiang Chen standing a few hundred meters away. "You're called Jiang Chen? I'll give you two choices right now. The first is to tell me the secret to compelling the Swordbirds, and I'll give you a swift and clean death. The second is that you take this secret with you to the grave. I'll slowly torture you to death first, and then kill your father, then rape and kill the woman beside you, before finally going to your family clan and killing everyone within it."

Yu Jie's tone wasn't opening this up for discussion, it was an order.

The disciples beneath one of the nine great elders of the Purple Sun Sect were close to the existence of a god in an ordinary kingdom, whether in terms of status or strength. This was what gave him the right to take a commanding position and speak in such lofty terms.

In other words, although Jiang Chen had the ability to compel the Swordbirds, this only made him a slightly odd common practitioner in Yu Jie's eyes.

Common practitioners were common practitioners after all. To those sect disciples high on top, accustomed to looking down upon living creatures, common practitioners were like ants.

"Jiang Chen, my senior brother takes pleasure in the welfare of living things and has given you a chance to choose. If you know how to behave, then hurry up and hand over the secrets to compelling the

Swordbirds. Otherwise, your entire Jiang family clan will be hard pressed to escape death.” Xu Zhen called out from the sidelines.

“Takes pleasure in the welfare of living things?” Jiang Chen looked coldly at these two Purple Sun Sect disciples. “I’m rather curious, why is it that every so-called sect disciple must be as hypocritical as you two, and imitate you in having their noses to the sky? Choose? Who do you think you are? Why must I choose?”

“Oh? You don’t choose?” Yu Jie laughed in his extreme anger. “Do you think that with your status as a common practitioner, you can still daydream about a counter attack on us geniuses of the Purple Sun Sect?”

Xu Zhen also laughed in contempt, “What wild fantasies.”

“Genius?” Jiang Chen also laughed. In this world, who dared to call himself a genius in front of him? Which genius would have a better understanding of the heavens than him, Jiang Chen?”

“The power of a sect lies in enjoying all resources under the heavens and the adoration of the common people. It should uphold the peace beneath the heavens and bring benefits to the common people. Look at all your faces. Hypocritical, greedy, arrogant, domineering... I’d like to ask, what part of your entire body is worthy of the label of a sect disciple?”

Jiang Chen’s tone was awe-inspiring as he spoke gravely, “If these so-called geniuses, so-called sect disciples are all people like you, then allow me to topple all of you off your pedestals and firmly stomp on every single one of you. If even people of your quality are called geniuses, then that is the ultimate insult to the heavens.”

Jiang Chen was thoroughly enraged.

In his previous life, he was the exalted son of the Celestial Emperor and had seen countless premier geniuses. Each of these geniuses had a unique personality to varying degrees.

But here, there were no redeeming factors to be found on the two sect disciples standing in front of him, and they dared call themselves geniuses!

And to dare tell him to make a choice with a tone like that of a judge, this undoubtedly enraged the self-esteem hidden deep within Jiang Chen’s heart.

This self esteem stemmed from the heritage of a former son of the Celestial Emperor.

Jiang Chen’s arm had already slowly lifted up when he finished speaking, the arrowhead locking onto Yu Jie and suddenly shooting out.

“This, is my choice.”

Jiang Chen gave a long whistle, and it was as if all the Goldwing Swordbirds, having remained alert and battle-ready, were of one mind. They flew fearlessly in front of Jiang Chen, circling endlessly as they formed a thick wall of Swordbirds.

“Jiang Chen, you’re seeking death!” Yu Jie didn’t move as he watched that arrow moving like a shooting star. A beam of light materialized and flickered between his eyes.

Suddenly, Yu Jie's raised his arm and a beam of cold light formed a shadowy palm, grasping towards that arrow.

A crisp breaking sound rang out. The arrow had turned into dust and scattered downwards.

A random blow from a spirit dao practitioner was more than enough to crush this tried and true metal arrow into dust.

"Jiang Chen, you must die today. No one in the heavens or on the earth will be able to help you."

Yu Jie's footsteps moved again as he seemed to become a beam of wavering green runes. Truth and illusion, falsehoods and reality. He seemed to sway like the willow boughs and fly wildly like the river reeds.

There were countless shadows in the air when suddenly, a turquoise blur flashed across Jiang Chen's eyes. The next moment, Yu Jie seemed to shatter the laws of space as he suddenly appeared within ten meters of Jiang Chen.

"I only need one finger to kill you." Yu Jie's voice was remote as the fingertip of his right hand pointed. Frosty light shot out, as if a cold star had shattered in the heavens and flared out with breathtaking splendor.

Imposing icy air was like a life-reaping rune from hell as it firmly locked onto Jiang Chen's forehead.

Jiang Chen only felt that his breathing was exceedingly harried as a Goldwing Swordbird dashed in from behind, colliding headfirst with this fingertip of light.

Frigid light exploded outwards as the frightening spirit power connected with the Goldwing Swordbird. The Goldwing Swordbird, which knives and swords couldn't even penetrate, immediately exploded beneath the attack of this fingertip and exploded into a mist of blood, scattering across the air.

The Goldwing Swordbird had been fierce and unafraid of death, dying on Jiang Chen's behalf.

At this moment, all the Goldwing Swordbirds emitted desolate bird cries and resolutely encircled Jiang Chen. One layer upon another, surrounding him such that even water wouldn't leak through.

The Silverwing Swordbirds also moved beneath the emotional cry of their wails. The tens of thousands of Silverwing Swordbirds also flew over and clumped together like a pile of sandbags.

In the next moment, the most numerous Greenwing Swordbirds also moved like the tidewaters surging towards the same direction.

This scene utterly flabbergasted those who had stayed behind in the Second Crossing to watch the battle.

This scene would be sure to leave behind an unforgettable memory for the rest of their lives.

"Damned feathered animals, die!"

Yu Jie's sleeves flourished as strong spirit power attacks swept away all the Swordbirds that had surged to his side, like a strong wind forming a tornado.

Layer upon layers of such a protective perimeter could only serve to somewhat slow his forward movement.

Chapter 106: A Mighty Slash

Yu Jie's attack was actually strong enough that it was able to completely ignore the Greenwing Swordbird army. He continuously swept aside the Swordbird army like he was sweeping away trash.

The rings of the defensive perimeter loosened out and were broken up one by one in the face of Yu Jie's powerful attacks. This defensive wall that stretched between heaven and earth was slowly being pried open by Yu Jie, becoming more and more thin and fragile.

"Jiang Chen, I said that no one on heaven or earth would be able to save you!" Yu Jie's voice was remote, as spirit power continuously rippled out from his two sleeves.

Rings upon rings swept away the Swordbirds flying towards him.

Bam, bam, bam...

The lower level Greenwing Swordbirds couldn't hold up beneath the onslaught of this sort of spiritual power. They all turned into a bloody rain under the pressure of this power, as their flesh and blood all exploded.

"Chen'er, hurry and flee. Your father will cover your retreat with these Goldwing Swordbirds!"

"Right, Jiang Chen, take Ruo'er and Lin'er with you. Run as far as you can!" Princess Gouyu also despaired, and was prepared to give up her life to cover Jiang Chen's retreat.

"Flee?" Jiang Chen's bloodshot eyes shot out a frightening light. There was only battling to the death — at this moment, fleeing would only hasten death!

"Father, Princess Gouyu. These are both disciples of a sect, and their goal is me. When your son starts battling to his death in a moment, both of you take advantage of the right timing to leave first!"

Although Jiang Chen was facing life or death circumstances, his inner being was calm, without any agitation. He knew very clearly that if he ran, both Yu Jie and Xu Zhen would use everything at their disposal to attack him.

Besides, with his father and Princess Gouyu's strength, they wouldn't even have the effect of keeping their opponents in check.

"Chen'er, what's the point in us leaving if you don't leave?" Jiang Feng grew agitated.

"If I go, then everyone will die together!" Jiang Chen roared lowly.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen's throat moved slightly as a strange language was emitted from his throat. This language seemed to carry with it a presence from far and ancient times.

Each word and phrase was like the language of the gods and demons of old, making the Goldwing Swordbirds by Jiang Chen's side all call out ceaselessly.

It was as if this was a spell that could speak to the blood of the Goldwing Swordbirds, that could rouse the Goldwing Swordbirds' violent tendencies, and triggered an emotion of being bound by a common hatred for an enemy.

Suddenly, all the Goldwing Swordbirds seemed to receive the same command as they scattered in a great rustle. Their wings danced as they circled in the air.

As each Goldwing Swordbird circled in the air, their golden colored wings flashed golden light and formed a round, golden vortex in the middle of the air.

Within the vortex, Jiang Chen's eyes suddenly widened like those of an ancient deity or a demon opening its eyes, as he shot out in stunning splendor. At the same moment, the nameless saber on his back seemed to receive a certain kind of summoning.

A long howl from the blade came from the unadorned nameless saber. It too bloomed with the silver light of the moon. Jiang Chen's hands grasped it.

"The third form of 'Vast Ocean Current Splitter' – Wave Surge!"

Jiang Chen didn't retreat, but rather moved forward under Yu Jie's threatening advance. His honor permitted no turning back as he thrust his blade outward, drawing a beautiful arc through the sky.

Within this scene, the golden colored sea and silvery splendor from the blade actually coalesced into a stream of gold and silver colored light. Man and saber seemed to have merged as one.

A stunning slash. The mountains and rivers changed colors as the vast seas trembled and were astounded.

Wave Surge!

The slowly advancing Yu Jie had been like a hunter toying with his prey, who held victory firmly within his grasp. In his eyes, whether it was Jiang Chen or that innumerable Swordbird army, they were all ants in the throes of despair — things he could step on or ravage at will.

He hadn't used his full strength to give Jiang Chen and the others a lethal blow, because he was playing with them in order to amuse Long Juxue.

He knew that if he'd killed Jiang Chen instantly, it would've helped Long Juxue get her revenge, but it wouldn't've been enough for her to feel satisfied.

Only when the prey was thoroughly tortured, had lost all dignity, and was showing all sorts of ugly behaviors, would it then be perfect to vent one's anger by slapping them to death with one palm. Only then would there be satisfaction.

Although Yu Jie was one of the ten great disciples beneath Master Shuiyue, his ranking was quite low. It could even be said that he'd barely managed to squeeze in to be a member of the ten great disciples.

Therefore, although it looked like his status was high, once Long Juxue and her innate constitution had entered beneath the tutelage of Master Shuiyue, there'd be a day that she'd surely become the premier genius beneath Master Shuiyue. It was highly likely that she would even surpass the ten great disciples one day.

Thus, although Yu Jie temporarily possessed a higher status than Long Juxue, that was because she had yet to formally enter the sect. She was just stock that had potential.

When Long Juxue's potential was converted to strength, it would become something that Yu Jie would be unable to measure up to.

Hence, Yu Jie's current actions were purposefully to curry favor with Long Juxue, and make it so that she would remember this favor of his.

When Long Juxue grew strong and mighty in the future, she might spare a thought for past relationships, and take care of him in some way.

The Swordbird army was powerful, but that was only to ordinary practitioners and common armies. The advantage of superior numbers was completely nonexistent when faced with a spirit dao practitioner.

Not to mention that, as one of the ten great disciples beneath Master Shuiyue, Yu Jie wasn't on a level that a spirit dao practitioner like Xu Zhen could even aspire to reach.

Everything had been going perfectly at first. Although Jiang Chen had a great Swordbird army that protected him fearlessly, the Swordbird army was unable to form any sort of strong defensive perimeter in front of Yu Jie.

Annihilate, trample, and devastate!

Yu Jie had originally planned on this easy act of crushing dry weeds and smashing rotten wood as a greeting gift to Long Juxue — to declare that he was on her side with action and bloodletting.

However, he himself hadn't expected that such unexpected developments would appear!

In his eyes, not only did Jiang Chen — who he viewed as on the same level as an ant — not flee, nor did he continue to hide like a turtle, instead he rushed out from the defense of the Swordbird army.

Not only did he dash out, but he also made this unsurpassed slash!

Except, the pride of a sect disciple instinctively made Yu Jie feel that this was merely one of Jiang Chen's performances, a last ditch effort.

Snorting lightly, the corners of Yu Jie's proud mouth leaked a trace of a contemptful smile. His finger lifted slightly, as a ring of blue light expanded from his fingertip.

He said faintly, "Floundering desperately before dying, kneel!"

It looked like the strength from a single fingertip, but it actually contained seventy to eighty percent of the spirit power within his body. It formed a beam of white light that was as real and illusionary as wavering runes.

"Lunar Vortex Illusion!"

An accumulated blow encompassing the mysteries of water swept through the air, with strong oppressive momentum.

The Lunar Vortex Illusion was a spirit dao attack containing the mysteries of water.

Wave Surge, the third level of mysteries in Vast Ocean Current Splitter!

It was as if a confrontation preordained by fate had unwittingly appeared in the air over the Second Crossing.

It looked like a coincidence, but it was actually destined!

“Heh heh, senior brother Yu Jie has been forced to attack with the mysteries. This kid can be proud of himself. But this is where it ends.” Xu Zhen sighed in astonishment from afar.

When Long Juxue saw Yu Jie’s mighty blow, its power was so strong that her emotions still surged even when she was so far away. Every inch of her skin was in great discomfort — like needles were stabbing her — and her breathing became hard to control.

Jiang Chen resided in the heart of the attack, and was facing a mighty blow that wasn’t even on the same level. What reason did he have to survive this?

Long Juxue felt greatly satisfied, but also felt that letting Jiang Chen die in this manner was giving him an easy way out.

But, with Long Juxue’s current status, she naturally couldn’t make any further demands of Yu Jie. She only locked her gaze onto the battlefield, not wanting to miss a single detail of Jiang Chen being tortured to death.

“Jiang Chen, it’s your lucky day that you can die just like this!” The hate in Long Juxue’s heart was unabated. “Except, before I send your family and the remnants of the Eastern clan to reunite with you in the underworld, I, Long Juxue, will make them fully taste the cruel tortures of this world.”

The blue ring of light continued to expand from Yu Jie’s fingertip like a blue spirit power dome. It cascaded out layers of blue ripples, as if wanting to firmly enclose everything in its path to attack Jiang Chen.

The slash of Wave Surge finally billowed into its target.

In the moment that the light from the blade and the blue ring connected, the golden-colored true qi being released by the hundreds of Goldwing Swordbirds suddenly coalesced into a golden-colored sea.

This golden-colored sea seemed to form some sort of connection, as it all coalesced into a streak of golden colored light in this moment, infusing itself into Jiang Chen’s fascinatingly enchanting slash.

The saber’s aura instantly grew by ten, then a hundred times!

“What?”

Victory had been within his grasp, and Yu Jie had felt that he was just crushing an ant, when his eyes suddenly shot out a beam of astonishment.

With the perception of a spirit dao practitioner, he naturally had the ability to detect the changes in that moment.

Except, when he attempted to react, the strong slash from the saber had already arrived.

“I say break!”

Jiang Chen roared mightily, as the nameless saber built up to waves and billows as it churned up a thousand layers, landing solidly onto the blue ring.

The blue ring had been impregnable, but started cracking open from the middle when the light from the blade came crashing down.

It was like a peerless master slashing and cleaving through waves, and ending rivers with one stroke.

“No!” When Xu Zhen saw this in the distance, he cried out. “Be careful senior brother Yu!”

Except, how could’ve Yu Jie not realized that something was dreadfully wrong when Xu had also perceived the danger? However, everything was happening too quickly.

When he planned on coalescing his second hit, the light from the saber had already broken through his spirit dome and landed on his chest!

The arrogant sect disciple, the proud Yu Jie, he who had threatened with every step forward, finally retreated backwards in the face of such a powerful blow.

He actually backed up more than ten steps!

Pfft. Even one as strong as Yu Jie couldn’t help but spit out a mouthful of blood, as the spirit meridians within his body had also suffered injury.

“How can this be?” Long Juxue’s almond-like eyes were greatly widened. She had stared without blinking, in order to see Jiang Chen harried and haggard figure — his despair and helplessness.

She had never thought that with her strong concentration, she hadn’t seen Jiang Chen tortured to death, but the unparalleled senior brother Yu Jie forced to back up with one slash!

Her heart began trembling uncontrollably — she didn’t even have the courage to look at Jiang Chen!

This slash had almost completely turned the situation around.

Except, she simply couldn’t understand. How could Jiang Chen have forced a spirit dao practitioner, whose existence was the stuff of legends in the Eastern Kingdom, to retreat with a single stroke?

Chapter 107: Harming a Spirit Dao Practitioner

Not only was Long Juxue perplexed, but even a fellow spirit dao practitioner such as Xu Zhen had a face full of incredulity. He too, couldn’t make sense of what had just happened.

Why had such a large change suddenly taken place in the situation? It was originally a posture of them rolling over and trampling the other, why had Jiang Chen suddenly displayed such powerful battle power?

Even Xu Zhen, who was standing off to the side, could feel the frightening capability of that slash. He knew very clearly that it was only because senior brother Yu Jie was strong enough, that he’d been able to endure that dreadful slash, and only spit out a single mouthful of blood in return.

If it was him, Xu Zhen, on the line, he probably wouldn’t have simply spat out one mouthful of blood.

Even though they all had spirit armor protecting their bodies, the power of that slash was likely powerful enough to damage his spirit meridians, and cause him to lose the ability to battle immediately.

After cleaving down with this one slash, Jiang Chen surprisingly didn't continue to attack.

A shrill bird call rang out, and a Goldwing Swordbird dived down to catch Jiang Chen. He laid on its back, panting heavily, and threw both a Vast Ocean Pill and a Heavenly Karma Pill into his mouth.

To be honest, Jiang Chen had been making a move in difficult circumstances just now. He had comprehended the third form of the Vast Ocean Current Splitter – Wave Surge, in dire straits.

If Jiang Chen was a spirit dao practitioner, even one who'd just entered the spirit dao, he would have likely been able to confront Yue Ji head on with that blow, and even trample over the latter.

But, he was of the true qi realm after all, and his personal level of training was ten meridians true qi.

Therefore, he'd circulated his true qi to its maximum with that slash just now, even exceeding his limits. This thrust had been a breakthrough for his mental strength as well.

But his physical body was still within the realm of a true qi master at the end of the day, and wasn't as indomitable as that of a spirit dao practitioner.

Therefore, this slash had already been outside the limits that his physical body could endure. When he absorbed the infusion of true qi from several hundred Goldwing Swordbirds, it was as if he'd suddenly taken a hit from several hundred true qi masters.

He had leveraged the mysteries of the blade to induce, concentrate, and expel these several hundred currents of true qi. Logically speaking, he was only a medium for such a strong power, and not the recipient of it.

But even inducing it for such a short period of time, for just that one particular instant... the damage brought upon him by that energy had been enough to cause Jiang Chen to feel greatly discomforted all over. It was as if all the meridians in his body were going to burst open. He was temporarily unable to gather his strength, and attack with a second slash.

It was a good thing that this astounding slash had expelled this explosive power in the nick of time.

Even one as strong as Yu Jie was likely unable to withstand a blow that had concentrated several hundred hits from true qi masters, even if he met it with a blow at the peak of his body's condition.

Not to mention that he'd only used seventy to eighty percent of his strength.

Jiang Chen had displayed a weak side to his enemies before, in order to numb his opponents and to create an illusion for them so that they wouldn't take any precautions, and would really think that they'd be able to torture Jiang Chen to death like crushing an ant.

All of these false moves were the line up to this slash, that would rescue him from a desperate situation.

Upon seeing that Yu Jie had only spat out a single mouthful of blood, Jiang Chen felt that it was both a pity and had a healthy respect for sect disciples.

This slash had condensed the strength of several hundred Goldwing Swordbirds, but had only sought the price of a single mouthful of blood from the other.

One had to say, this degree of injury was lower than Jiang Chen had expected.

Except, Jiang Chen was unable to give any further consideration to that at this moment.

Although all the meridians within his body were trembling like they would split open at any moment, he still whistled to make several Goldwing Swordbirds lead the great numbers of Silverwing Swordbirds further up the Second Crossing.

The remaining several hundred Goldwing Swordbirds retained their previous posture, circling in the air. Even though they'd met a strong enemy, none of them had the urge to turn around and flee backwards without Jiang Chen's command.

The Goldwing Swordbird that Jiang Chen was riding on circled back to the rear of these several hundred Goldwing Swordbirds.

Jiang Feng and Princess Gouyu had long since been deposited back onto the Second Crossing by the Goldwing Swordbirds leading the Silverwing Swordbirds.

All the Silverwing and Greenwing Swordbirds seemed to have received some sort of command as they all flew backwards, and landed on the four corners of the Second Crossing, guarding it so that not even a drop of water could leak out.

Above the Second Crossing, all those who were on Jiang Chen's side were already standing on top of the mountain pass.

Jiang Feng, Princess Gouyu, all of the Jiang family's subordinates, as well as Jiang Chen's eight personal guards.

"Guo Jin, don't hold me back. Ah, Qiao Shan, am not a turtle who hides in ma shell. The young duke is being surrounded and us'ns, as personal guards, are just standing here watching. What the heck is this?"

"Yeah, if you don't go, then let us'ns brothers go!" Qiao Chuan also roared like a tiger.

Guo Jin had a completely frosty expression on his face as he stopped the two brothers in their tracks.

"Other than adding to the mess, what else can you do if you go now?" Guo Jin lectured them.

"Even if us'ns add to the mess, that illustrates our loyalty as underlings. Even if we die, if we can gain a little bit more time for the young duke, it'll be a worthy death."

"Right, revenge is never too late. As long as the young duke can leave, he'll have the chance to avenge us brothers in the future."

Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan kept kicking up a fuss, and wanted to summon Goldwing Swordbirds to carry them to the frontlines.

Guo Jin couldn't hold them back no matter how hard he tried.

"All of you be quiet and listen to Xue Tong. He's the captain, and the young duke's cousin."

Everyone's gazes locked on Xue Tong.

Xue Tong's eyes had never left the frontlines of battle. His gaze was calm and steady, and he hadn't been thrown into confusion because of the disadvantageous situation.

"Well, Xue Tong, say something!" Qiao Shan was an impatient sort.

"Qiao Shan, have any of us reached the level of true qi master with our training?" Xue Tong asked faintly.

"No." Qiao Shan was in an ill temper. "So does that mean we become turtles who hide in our shell if we're not true qi masters?"

"Then, have we comprehended a hundred percent of the Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation?" Xue Tong asked again.

"Nonsense, we've only understood sixty to seventy percent of the formation. Why do you keep asking all this nonsense?" Qiao Shan grew impatient.

"Since we're not true qi masters, and we haven't yet understood one hundred percent of the formation, can we really help shoulder the young duke's burdens if we go now?" Xue Tong asked back with a furrowed brow.

"With the young duke's benevolence, he's never given up on us in critical moments. If we brashly proceed forward and delay his plan as a result, then we wouldn't be achieving acts of valor, but being villains instead."

"Plan?" Qiao Shan's brow knit together. "Xue Tong, you say that the young duke has a plan? How can you tell?"

Xue Tong's gaze was deep as he looked at the Goldwing Swordbird army that was circling in midair.

"Look at these Goldwing Swordbirds. Don't you think that their deployment and organization look quite familiar?"

Wen Ziqi had been silent all along, but was a girl beautiful in appearance, and clever in mind. Her brow spread out when she heard Xue Tong's words, as if something she was thinking had been verified. "Xue Tong, you also think it looks familiar?"

"Oh? Miss Ziqi also thinks so as well?" Xue Tong was a bit surprised.

Wen Ziqi nodded. "I think that this is the layout for the Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation. We have eight to make up the formation, and these Goldwing Swordbirds have also been divided into eight parts. Each part has thirty to forty Goldwing Swordbirds. If I'm guessing correctly, the young duke has already passed on the mysteries of the formation to the Goldwing Swordbirds just now, through certain methods."

Although the Goldwing Swordbirds were fowl, their intelligence was absolutely not inferior to humans since they'd been able to evolve into Goldwing Swordbirds.

Even though Goldwing Swordbirds might not have the level of comprehension that humans possessed with regards to understand formations, but Jiang Chen's high fluency in the beast language enabled him to communicate with the Goldwing Swordbirds.

These Goldwing Swordbirds were the strongest level of existence within the Swordbirds. Their enlightenment and development of intelligence was also surely the greatest.

If a couple hundred Goldwing Swordbirds laid out the Eight Trigrams Assimilation Matrix, it would be enough to contend against a spirit dao practitioner, even if they only brought ten to twenty percent of the formation's mysteries to bear.

One had to know that this was the equivalent of several hundred true qi masters setting up a formation.

"Eight... Eight Trigram Assimilation Formation?" Qiao Shan felt that his brain was a bit dull as he widened his eyes and looked carefully. He scratched his head, "That really seems to be the case."

"Do you still want to rush up and add to the mess now?" Guo Jin chuckled.

"Guo Jin, don't give me a slap to the face. What the heck good are we, if Goldwing Swordbirds are setting up the formation?" Qiao Shan's face also reddened as he spoke.

As for Xue Tong, he stared towards the front unblinkingly as several traces of worry appeared in his tone. "The young duke seems to have also been injured in that last, dangerous blow."

"He's the young duke alright. I'd already despaired under these circumstances, and was ready to accompany the young duke in death." Qiao Shan sighed with amazement.

Up in the sky above the pass, it was eerily quiet.

No one out of the million strong army, kneeling where they stood, dared make a sound.

They all knew that whoever emitted a sound to break the silence would likely face a great anger that would topple mountains and overturn the seas.

As soldiers, they had no way of participating when the immortals fought.

As strong as he was, hadn't the Duke of Soaring Dragon died just like that? Those legendary spirit dao practitioners had said they would crush Jiang Chen, yet hadn't they suffered a counterblow as well?

No one could make sense of the situation.

Xu Zhen had also been stunned by Jiang Chen's saber aura. If it was before, he would've been the first to rush up, but he too hesitated in this moment.

Even Yu Jie had spat out blood because of Jiang Chen's saber aura. Xu Zhen's training paled far in comparison to Yu Jie's. Would he win out if he rashly proceeded forward?

Even if he could win, he didn't dare move forward without a word from Yu Jie.

This was a huge taboo.

Even Yu Jie couldn't handle Jiang Chen. What would the outside world say if he, Xu Zhen, ran up to clean up? They would say that senior brother Yu Jie was less than him, Xu Zhen!

Wasn't this creating trouble for himself?

Therefore, Xu Zhen hesitated and didn't move forward in the end.

Yu Jie was likewise shocked and furious when he spat out a mouthful of blood. This result was obviously something completely out of the blue. He had thought that the battle would be over with his carefully readied blow.

Except, not only was the battle not over, but he'd been injured by the other's strong slash.

It wasn't that Yu Jie didn't want to speak, but that this slash had caused a pain in his chest when he breathed. It took several circulations of his spirit qi to barely clear his air passage.

Although this slash hadn't harmed his core, it had caused no small damage to his meridians.

If it wasn't for the extraordinary capability of the spirit armor on his body, it might have even harmed his core and shattered his internal organs, making him instantaneously lose his strength.

Yu Jie's heart was still palpitating, as cold sweat poured down his back.

He was also a bit irritated. What was up with this Xu Zhen? Why hadn't he come up and stalled for a bit at this moment?

It was a good thing that Jiang Chen hadn't followed up that strike with another. Otherwise, he wouldn't've had the spare effort to defend against, it before his breathing had been smoothed out.

When he resolved the pain in his chest, Yu Jie instantaneously recovered his self confidence. His original arrogant demeanor vanished completely, to be replaced with a sinister expression.

"Jiang Chen, I admit that I've underestimated you." Yu Jie's tone turned rather remote, but a sense of great wrath could be felt through this remoteness. Even Jiang Feng, Gouyu, and the others above the Second Crossing, could clearly feel it.

Every movement and gesture of this spirit dao practitioner seemed to be exude a strong influence that could directly point at a practitioner's heart, and shock their very soul.

Chapter 108: Swordbirds Setting Up a Formation

What irritated Jiang Chen the most, was that Yu Jie's lofty and aloof tone seemed to be a hallmark of sect disciples. They looked down their noses at everyone else, and treated all common practitioners like ants.

Jiang Chen was quite put out of sorts by such arrogance.

He hadn't been this haughty during his past life — and he'd been the son of the Celestial Emperor! Jiang Chen had befriended a wide range of people beneath the heavens, without regards to the level of their status. He had also never put on a supercilious face just because his status had been lofty.

"Yu Jie is it? You've said enough bullshit. You said you were going to use one finger to take care of me earlier, and then said that no one could save me between heaven and earth. I'm still right here, perfectly fine, after all that blather. Deploy your true abilities if you have any. If you don't, leave Long Juxue behind, and get the hell back to your sect."

Although Jiang Chen was injured, he'd recovered a great deal from his injuries thanks to the effects of the pills. Not to mention, his injuries weren't a result of a direct head on collision, so the impact on him wasn't as great as on Yu Jie.

He also knew that Yu Jie was likely putting on an act.

Although Yu Jie hadn't been severely injured, he must've suffered somewhat. Otherwise, with his slash as a common practitioner causing Yu Jie to spit out a mouthful of blood, Yu Jie's pride would surely cause have caused him to counterattack with the greatest divine abilities he possessed, and not just stand there flapping his mouth.

"Alright. Good. Very good." Yu Jie laughed in the midst of his extreme rage, as killing intent surged in his heart.

It was just as Jiang Chen had thought, Yu Jie had indeed suffered some injuries. His meridians had been injured, and he'd only have around seventy to eighty percent fighting strength left, if he forced himself to fight.

If he used everything available to him, Yu Jie had a ninety percent chance of killing Jiang Chen.

However, if Jiang Chen once again displayed the same mighty fighting strength that he'd just projected, while Yu Jie tried to go after him with an injured body, the backlash from the power might worsen Yu Jie's injuries.

If it harmed his core, it might bring about severe consequences to him during the prime training period of his life. That, in turn, could greatly affect the progress of his training, and even make him come to a standstill.

The cost would be a bit too great.

But if he didn't fight, he would be sure to lose face in front of Long Juxue. His idea of currying favor with Long Juxue, and thus building a foundation for his future, would become an empty void.

It was a difficult decision.

He had planned on using words to probe Jiang Chen's capabilities, and then make further plans, but he hadn't thought that Jiang Chen wouldn't give him any room to probe at all. He'd riposted with a stream of sarcasm and mockery, forcing his dignity and pride as a sect disciple down a path of no return.

If he, Yu Jie, took one step back after the words had been said, there was sure to be a shadow cast over his path of martial dao in the future. It'd also leave behind a poor impression in Long Juxue's heart.

"Jiang Chen, I wanted to give you an easy and quick death, but it looks like you're dead set on being at odds with my Purple Sun Sect. Since that's the case, even if I pay a small price today, I will still thoroughly cleanse your Jiang family clan, and let the world know that there's only one result for challenging a sect — death."

At this moment, these threats were on the same level as empty blather in Jiang Chen's ears. Even if these things hadn't happened, would these sect disciples let his Jiang clan off the hook?

Yu Jie had blown so much hot air undoubtedly to regain some face.

Smiling coldly, Jiang Chen's lips quirked into a lopsided leer. "Yu Jie, are all sect disciples as long winded as you?"

"You have a slick tongue. I, Yu Jie, will help you understand today that even if you have some potential and talent, you're still a pile of shit in front of a sect disciple."

Yu Jie was also truly infuriated. He realized that even when exchanging words, he was unable to gain any advantage over the other.

Jiang Chen smiled upon hearing those words, "If I'm a pile of shit, then you can't even handle a pile of shit. So what does that make you? Less than the maggots? Display your true abilities! I'm looking down on you because of you only being able to flap your lips."

Yu Jie's face darkened. He knew that he had no chance of winning a verbal spar.

He snorted lightly, and grasped at the air with one hand. A sword suddenly appeared in his hand.

This sword was like a spring of autumn water, exuding spirit power that caused one's heart to tremble.

"Autumn Water Sword!" Xu Zhen's voice cracked as he called out, a trace of envy and jealousy appearing in his eyes. "Jiang Chen is dead for sure. The Autumn Water Sword! To think that the honored master favors senior brother Yu so much as to bestow this kind of spirit weapon on him..."

"Xu Zhen, control the situation for me, and contain those feathered animals. I'm going to personally kill that dumb beast, Jiang Chen."

Yu Jie projected a superior demeanor as he gave his orders.

Since Yu Jie had spoken, Xu Zhen didn't dare to not listen. He chuckled, "It's my honor to put forth effort for senior brother Yu."

The two sect disciples locked onto a section of the sky from right and left.

Jiang Chen still remained fearless. The more the other acted like this, the more it proved that he wasn't on firm ground. Yu Jie was such a proud person, but he was willing to let go of face and call in reinforcements at this moment.

What did this mean?

This meant that he had surely suffered some internal injuries, and that his self confidence wasn't as strong as before.

Although powerful strength was scary when faced with a strong practitioner, that wasn't the most frightening.

The most frightening was powerful strength, and an even stronger conviction.

When in battle and both sides' strength were on par with each other, it was often the one who was fearless in the face of death, and had faith as resolute as steel, who would stay laughing until the end.

With his practice of "Boulder's Heart", Jiang Chen had become aware by now, and understood that he who dares, wins in an unavoidable confrontation.

He was also taking a gamble on the power of the “Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation”, and the comprehensive skills of the Goldwing Swordbirds.

The string of beast language he’d spoken before, was to pass on some of the mysteries of the “Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation” to the Goldwing Swordbirds.

He knew that under the oppression of the two great spirit dao practitioners, the advantage in numbers would halt them momentarily, but it would still be absolutely unable to turn the tide around, and even more impossible to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

His only bet was on the “Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation”.

Although he was only sharpening his spear just before going into battle, Jiang Chen had no choice.

Of course, he had his advantages in the form of several hundred Goldwing Swordbirds. With their numbers, once they set up the formation, even if they could only deploy ten percent of its power, that destructive power would still be exceedingly terrifying with such numbers.

“Senior brother Yu, I’ll contain those feathered beasts. You suppress Jiang Chen.” Xu Zhen said fawningly.

With a wave of his hand, a chain knife appeared unknowingly within his right hand. A length of dense chain was entwined on his arm, and was connected to a sharp, curved knife on one end.

Beneath the glare of the sun, the curved knife at the end of the chain reflected out dark red light. It was apparent with one glance that it had been quenched in the blood of multiple opponents.

Xu Zhen had the desire to put on an act. He shook his right hand, and made the chain sound out crisply in his hand. The chain also started shaking afterwards.

The curved knife formed a cutting, sharp disc as it moved. Frightening glints from the knife flew out continuously from the round disc.

Xu Zhen leapt up and soared through the air, attacking towards the sky.

“Yin Yang Lotus, cleave the air!”

Xu Zhen whistled sharply, as the chain knife gave off the aura of death. He thundered towards the sky as the knife’s light flashed everywhere, flaring out a frightening knife aura of spirit strength.

Jiang Chen’s lips moved slightly as he murmured something.

Suddenly, the Goldwing Swordbirds in the sky started moving, exchanging places with each other.

Although they were moving, their tracks were filled with a mysterious wonder.

Roughly thirty or forty Goldwing Swordbirds moved out in unison abruptly, true qi spewing madly from their mouths, shooting down like rain and hail towards the rising Xu Zhen.

If it was merely the blows of thirty to forty Goldwing Swordbirds in concert, Xu Zhen wouldn’t have thought that it was scary at all.

But, this joint blow was obviously not a blind, disorderly hit. Under the aid of this strange formation, these attacks seemed to form some sort of wondrous rhythm, a magical tempo.

When they were combined, it actually coalesced into a power that was enough to threaten Xu Zhen.

The light from the chain knife had just swept past, when the joint effort from the Goldwing Swordbirds also poured down.

The two forces clashed together, and the light of the chain knife was actually halted.

Another band of Goldwing Swordbirds attacked in unison with the same rhythm, and the same method closely thereafter, pouring down madly — like the rivers of heaven were draining out.

Xu Zhen was greatly astonished. He hadn't thought that these feathered animals would have the ingenuity to be able to form such an intricate partnership, and know how to attack in unison.

And this attack in concert, obviously brought with it a mystery that one couldn't quite grasp fully.

"What the hell, I say break!" Xu Zhen's chain knife moved once again, as he circulated his spirit strength, brushing aside the strength of the second blow.

Except, he could dissipate the first blow, the second blow even, but hadn't thought that this attack would be without ends or limits.

The third blow and fourth blow were all quite orderly, and had nearly no moments of pause between them — as if the waves of the great sea, one after another, were crashing down endlessly.

The "Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation" was the same as its name, locking down all eight directions with spirit power, and dividing the air into eight quadrants, completely locking the space down. Participants were able to attack and defend both inside and outside the formation.

Xu Zhen had brashly rushed upwards, and had already blundered into the heart of the formation. What welcomed him was naturally wave after wave of crazy attacks.

If this formation was deployed by spirit dao practitioners, then it would truly be inexhaustibly marvelous, with innumerable variations.

Although the Goldwing Swordbirds weren't spirit dao practitioners, they were the equivalent of true qi masters. Each quadrant had roughly forty Goldwing Swordbirds.

If purely in terms of summing up their total strength, forty Goldwing Swordbirds were on par with an ordinary spirit dao practitioner.

With the effects of the formation, the combined strength of forty Goldwing Swordbirds had obviously more than doubled. Their offensive capabilities was enough to threaten a spirit dao practitioner on Xu Zhen's level.

These eight quadrants sent out wave after wave of successive attacks. It was almost a seamless string of oppressive attacks, the equivalent of seven to eight equally strong practitioners beating down on Xu Zhen.

The difference in strength was immediately apparent.

Xu Zhen barely managed to fend off the fifth and sixth attacks, when he realized that he'd fallen victim to a trap. He shouted out, "Senior brother Yu, hurry and make your move. These feathered animals seem to know some formation, and it's really quite strange!"

Yu Jie actually had seen that something was wrong even without Xu Zhen calling out. With Xu Zhen's attack power, particularly the "Yin Yang Lotus" method that his chain knife was deploying, it should've been the best way to break through these Goldwing Swordbirds.

Except, Yu Jie hadn't thought that apart from the first wave of attacks, Xu Zhen wouldn't have any chance to make a move. He had been besieged almost immediately.

Yu Jie knew that he couldn't wait anymore. If he waited any longer, and paid the price of Xu Zhen as well, then it really would be losing a tremendous amount of face.

Although Xu Zhen's life or death didn't matter very much to Yu Jie, he didn't want to create the image of a villain who didn't care about his fellow sect disciple in front of Long Juxue.

Particularly when Xu Zhen had gone to attack those feathered beasts under his orders.

"Jiang Chen, die!"

Yu Jie didn't mince words this time, as he brandished the longsword in his hand. The sword vibrated with a humming sound, as if a dragon's call had sounded out, and swept through the wilderness.

Chapter 109: Killing One of the Spirit Realm

Jiang Chen laid prostrated on the back of one of the Goldwing Swordbirds, and had refrained from using his true qi up until now. He was currently absorbing the medicinal effects of the Heavenly Karma Pill and Vast Ocean Pill in order to recover from his injuries and to recover the true qi within his body.

That situationally-reversing blow just now, had expended too much of his true qi, and had overloaded his meridians and body beyond their capacity.

Through the aid of these two pills, Jiang Chen's injuries were finally mostly healed.

He knew that Yu Jie had continuously refrained from making a move, not because he didn't want to, but because he was injured. The injuries within his body made him cautious in taking action, and made him hold back from using his full strength.

If it wasn't for Xu Zhen crying out for help, Yu Jie would have likely continued stalling for time.

However, Jiang Chen wouldn't let Yu Jie stall any longer.

He crouched on the back of the Goldwing Swordbird, both to absorb the effects of the pills, and to construct a strategy. He knew that even with the Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation, the Swordbirds were deploying it as they learned it — and could only bring into play the merest bits of the formation.

If it wasn't for the Goldwing Swordbird's overwhelming strength in numbers, Jiang Chen would have absolutely no advantage in confronting two spirit dao practitioners.

Therefore, Jiang Chen didn't wish to delay and cause undue troubles.

He had to first eliminate one of the two spirit dao practitioners, and prevent them from working in collusion.

If he had eight or ten days to practice the “Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation”, that would be more than enough to take on Yu Jie and Xu Zhen with his numbers in Goldwing Swordbirds.

But deploying a formation that they had just learned... it would be difficult to avoid having flaws appear if their opponent rushed against it.

Killing a spirit dao practitioner sounded quite incredible. If any other practitioner within the Eastern Kingdom had this thought, then it would’ve been because they’d gone completely mad.

But, Jiang Chen wasn’t the same as other people.

He had the ability to, and his trump card.

The first target he wanted to kill wasn’t Yu Jie, but Xu Zhen.

He could tell that Xu Zhen’s level of training was lower than Yu Jie’s, and at this moment, he was already embroiled in the center of the formation. Xu Zhen was flailing about wildly trying to handle the waves of attacks.

Jiang Chen knew that he was still a bit far off from killing Xu Zhen through his own attacks alone. But he had more than sufficient ability to distract Xu Zhen.

When Yu Jie’s Autumn Water Sword was readied to strike at him, Jiang Chen suddenly stood up and released his already prepared bow.

The arrow was like a shooting star as it flew towards Xu Zhen in the middle of the formation.

At this moment, Xu Zhen was already complaining incessantly to the high heavens. He hadn’t ever thought that he would run into danger in a common kingdom, and fatal danger at that.

Before he’d left the sect, Xu Zhen had set off with a mindset of throwing his weight around in a common kingdom, and stepping on others. He felt that when a sect disciple arrived in a common kingdom, everything should be easily crushed as easily as breaking away dead branches.

Except, the scene in front of his eyes filled him with remorse beyond words. He really did regret getting involved in this mess. Why had he come with Yu Jie to this forsaken place?

Just to curry favor with a future genius?

“Senior brother Yu, I’m going to go down if you don’t make a move!” Xu Zhen ignored the pride and dignity of a sect disciple, and called out loudly for help.

It was at that moment that a frightening sound broke through the air, and sounded by his ear.

“Ambush?” Xu Zhen was already unable to cope with the situation, and was in a quandary. The waves and waves of attacks had left him greatly weary.

Although he heard the sound breaking through air, he also knew clearly that if the rhythm of his movement changed, even slightly, he would be ground to death by the waves of attacks.

There was nothing for him to do but to grit his teeth, bend slightly to the side and take the blow from the arrow.

Xu Zhen knew that this sound was absolutely a result from Jiang Chen attacking with a bow and arrow. He had once destroyed one of Jiang Chen's arrows when they'd fought one on one before.

Except, the current Xu Zhen tragically didn't even have the opportunity to dodge.

The arrow penetrated Xu Zhen's back with strong momentum.

Much of the powerful true qi was dissipated by the spirit armor, but a small amount still poured into his body, making Xu Zhen's internal organs tremble and vibrate.

"What? There's more?" Just as Xu Zhen was heaving an easy sigh of relief, he suddenly discovered that the sounds of breaking air hadn't stopped.

Another arrow, with the same tempo, the same curve, and the same path.

"This is bad!" Xu Zhen abruptly realized that Jiang Chen actually had ingenious control over his rapid fire arrows. The second arrow had been concealed behind the first arrow visually, auditorily, and even by feeling, making even an expert like Xu Zhen overlook it.

The second arrow arrived just when Xu Zhen felt things had taken a not too encouraging turn.

Another arrow landed squarely, in the same position.

Although the spirit armor afforded great protection, the destructive power of a blow landing in the same place twice was drastically different.

Hiss. Xu Zhen hastily sucked in a breath. When the true qi invaded and attacked his body, he almost wanted to vomit immediately.

Although the attack wasn't fatal, it made his body suddenly withstand an exceedingly great amount of pain in an instant.

It was this momentary pause that allowed a streak of golden colored light to descend upon, and blast into Xu Zhen's chest.

He was finally unable to evade the more terrifying blow.

Xu Zhen spewed out fresh blood as his eyes went bloodshot, the chain knife in his hand flying furiously as he roared out madly, "You want to kill me? You feathered animals and creatures like ants dare to kill me, a spirit dao practitioner?"

"Die! Yin Yang Lotus, cleave through all in the air!"

Xu Zhen's chain knife whirled furiously like a mad demon, the intention to fight to the death having been goaded out of him. Although he'd taken a blow to the chest, it had stimulated his bloodthirsty fighting tendencies as well.

When Jiang Chen saw this, he wasn't surprised, but was rather happy.

If it was a fight between single opponents, Xu Zhen's brutal counter attack could shock his opponent's heart, and have a slight deterring effect.

But within this attack formation, Xu Zhen wasn't facing a single entity, but hundreds of Goldwing Swordbirds that didn't even have human emotions.

The violent natures of these Goldwing Swordbirds were thoroughly stimulated when they saw their own kind being slaughtered ceaselessly.

So when they saw Xu Zhen's counter attack, these Goldwing Swordbirds didn't retreat. Their violent natures were in fact heightened, as wave after wave of concerted attacks rained down endlessly.

Xu Zhen's counter attack in his death throes didn't even have the chance to fully gain steam, before he was drowned in a sea of formation attacks.

Another wave of attacks landed on Xu Zhen.

The boundless attacks tossed Xu Zhen back and forth like a ball.

"Ah..." Xu Zhen's ghastly screams sounded out continuously, nursing resentment and hatred. He had nowhere to expend his strength in the face of this formation. His dire cries grew lower and lower beneath the waves of attacks.

At this moment, Yu Jie's attacks still hadn't penetrated the formation from the outside.

The "Eight Trigrams Assimilation Matrix" could both attack and defend. When Yu Jie was mobilizing his attacks from the outside, Jiang Chen had already adjusted the formation structure. Four quadrants would attack and four quadrants would defend.

Within the main inner attacking quadrants, they would increase the frequency of attacks with the goal of coming to a quick resolution and getting rid of Xu Zhen.

For the main outward defending quadrants, they were to prevent Yu Jie from fighting into the interior at all costs.

All of this had been within Jiang Chen's calculations, and his successive arrows had been adding fuel to the flame, hastening the speed of Xu Zhen's demise.

When Xu Zhen's body flopped, and fell from the sky, a weight was lifted off of Jiang Chen's heart.

Although this fight had been dangerous and chancy, he could now at least be assured that he wouldn't be defeated.

Within the formation, Jiang Chen pulled on his bow and shot an arrow towards Yu Jie on the outside.

"Yu Jie, this is the performance of you sect disciples? You sent your peer up to spearhead the attack, whereas you were cowardly and afraid of death, cowering in the back."

Rivers and seas were also being overturned in Yu Jie's heart at this moment, and his mind was completely upset and confused.

He hadn't thought that they would meet such an obstacle on this trip to the Eastern Kingdom — an obstacle big enough that junior brother Xu Zhen had lost his life.

Although Xu Zhen's potential and strength had been ordinary, he had still been a disciple of the spirit dao and of the sect. If word got out that he had been killed in the common world, he would likely become a joke amongst the sects.

Jiang Chen's mockery also made him unable to voice his bitterness.

He hadn't truly wanted to send Xu Zhen to his death. His original intention had been for Xu Zhen to distract the Goldwing Swordbirds so that he could kill Jiang Chen in peace, without fear of intervention.

Except, he hadn't thought that Xu Zhen would make his way into a death trap with this move.

Who would've thought that these feathered and clawed beasts would understand attacking in unison — Would understand the dao of formations? Even sect disciples would find this point incredulous.

"How is this Jiang Chen an ordinary practitioner? Is this kid a wolf in sheep's skin, a spy from another sect in the common world?"

Yu Jie almost gave birth to this misconception.

How could a common practitioner be so strange and bizarre? Yu Jie couldn't believe this at all, and wouldn't accept this at all.

He could come up short in front of other sect disciples, but he would never accept being disadvantaged by a common practitioner.

"Jiang Chen, I swear I'll kill you!"

A great change had taken place in Yu Jie's mindset. Hatred and shame intertwined and churned continuously in his mind.

It was as if Jiang Chen's every move and gesture, every blade of grass and tree in this Second Crossing was mocking him, jeering the high and mighty sect disciple.

"Autumn Waters Fill the Sky, cut!"

"Qi of Heaven and Earth, explode!"

One had to say, Yu Jie's strength was more than double Xu Zhen's. It was truly astounding when his divine abilities were continuously deployed.

A domineering sword aura filled the air, cutting so that the empty air trembled, the clouds scuttled away, and the fog scattered.

But, the "Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation" grew stronger when it met stronger opponents. Under Jiang Chen's continual guidance, the Goldwing Swordbirds' confidence grew continuously, as they comprehended more and more of the formation. Their teamwork grew more and more well practiced.

In this way, the battle strength that had grown manifold as a result of Yu Jie's explosion, was dispersed and negated by the continual increase in formation strength.

Yu Jie became more alarmed the more he fought.

He wasn't even thinking of avoiding injuries, damage to his meridians, and negatively impacting his future training anymore. The fighting capability that was exploding out of him was absolutely at least three times Xu Zhen's.

However, even such frightening destructive power and divine abilities were unable to break through the weird formation that the Goldwing Swordbirds had created. He was unable to rush into the formation and kill Jiang Chen.

In actuality, Yu Jie had continuously revised his expectations. He didn't even want to be further entangled with these Goldwing Swordbirds anymore. He only wished to rush into the formation and annihilate Jiang Chen, so that he could offer an explanation to Long Juxue and for the dead Xu Zhen.

He would also have an acceptable explanation when he returned to the sect.

However, he discovered tragically that he couldn't even rush through the outward defenses of the formation, not to mention dashing to the center to kill Jiang Chen.

"This Jiang Chen is so strange, that if he is allowed to develop further, he'll become a thorn in the side of my Shuiyue line. I'll find it hard to sleep and eat at ease in the future, if I don't kill him."

Yu Jie had thought through his emotions by now, but he'd reached the limits of his power unless he threw caution to the winds, and used his blood essence to trigger the secret arts.

Triggering the secret arts could increase his fighting capabilities by another level.

However, the price of triggering the secret arts was also astounding. It would certainly cause grievous injury to him, not to mention impacting his future training.

If even the secret arts couldn't break through this formation, then even a true qi master would be able to take his life when he was so injured.

Deploying the secret arts meant gambling with his life, and his future.

Chapter 110: A Frightened Yu Jie

Should he deploy the secret arts or not? Yu Jie hesitated, but still restrained himself in the end.

He knew that currying favor with Long Juxue was a must, but he couldn't put everything on the line either. If he found it difficult to proceed in his training in the future, then he'd be worthless in the eyes of Long Juxue as well.

Such a price wasn't worth it, no matter how he looked at the situation.

"Yu Jie, you don't have to hold on in the face of extreme pain. I can give you a choice. Leave Long Juxue behind, and you may go." Jiang Chen readjusted the formation, and was actually quite at ease.

"My slash has already caused injury to you. The more you battle, the worse your internal injuries will become. If we keep dragging things out like this, the first one to die will be you."

Jiang Chen attacked psychologically with every step.

The fight was in a stalemate at this moment, and they were competing with endurance.

In actuality, the Goldwing Swordbirds had also fought to an exceedingly weary state, even though they were fighting in groups.

They hadn't dared relax their guard against a spirit dao practitioner, and had brought one hundred percent of their strength to bear.

If this continued, the only advantage that the Goldwing Swordbirds had, was that they could substitute in for each other.

Whereas Yu Jie had to go at it alone from beginning to end.

However, Yu Jie was a sect disciple after all. Maybe he had all sorts of spirit medicine that would help him hold on even longer.

Yu Jie knew that Jiang Chen was making a psychological attack, but he too hesitated under the circumstances. He knew that although his attacks were wild and violent, it would also expend quite a lot of energy.

If he could break through this formation in a short period of time, he would have roughly a thirty percent chance of winning.

But if he still couldn't break it after an hour, then he would be the one in danger.

When his spirit power was consumed, the dominating presence he held, that of a spirit practitioner, would fall greatly, and his battle capabilities would also greatly decrease. With the number of Goldwing Swordbirds, they would be able to swallow him whole, and not even leave scraps of bone behind if they just attacked randomly.

Except, if he ran away with his tail between his lands after a few threatening words from a common practitioner, where would he put his dignity and pride as a sect disciple?

If word of this got out, he would become the preeminent joke amongst all the sects.

And, Xu Zhen had died on this trip. If he couldn't even leave with Long Juxue, this mission would be an undoubted failure. How would he explain himself to Master Shuiyue when he went back?

Yu Jie knew that he could neither advance nor retreat now that things had gotten this far. He could perhaps gloss things over for Xu Zhen's death, but Master Shuiyue would never forgive him if he didn't bring Long Juxue back.

"Jiang Chen, junior sister Long Juxue is a disciple personally handpicked by my Master Shuiyue. If you allow me to take her with me, then the matters of today can still be resolved."

Yu Jie knew that he couldn't afford to continue on in this way. He knew that both sides were gambling on who could hold on longer, but he, Yu Jie was a sect disciple, the golden boy. He didn't want to make a bet with a desperado like Jiang Chen.

"I gave you a chance to leave, but you didn't want to leave. Then stay here together." Jiang Chen's words just now were also a test.

In reality, he knew that if he let even one of them go, he would've been creating endless troubles for himself in the future.

Now that things had developed to this point, he had to eliminate evil at its roots, and not let even one of them go, whether or not that had any effect.

Except, he also knew that the Goldwing Swordbirds had expended a lot of their fighting capabilities. It was an unknown factor whether or not they could outlast Yu Jie.

Therefore, his words just now had been half truth and half falsehood. He'd wanted to probe Yu Jie's attitude.

Seeing Yu Jie waver internally, Jiang Chen formed a covert plan.

He gave a surreptitious command to the Goldwing Swordbirds leading the army above the Second Crossing to have a portion of the Silverwing Swordbirds swoop down and ambush Long Juxue.

When the Swordbird Army had retreated earlier, they were led by a few Goldwing Swordbirds. They hadn't joined the fight earlier, and hadn't expended much of their energy. They still had a vigorous fighting spirit.

After receiving Jiang Chen's command, they brought several hundred Silverwing Swordbirds, and dived down upon pass like arrows loosed from a bowstring.

Their target was Long Juxue.

Long Juxue had already exhausted herself in the great fight earlier. She didn't have the protection of Xu Zhen by her side now, and had abruptly become utterly isolated.

If Long Juxue hadn't been engaged in the battle earlier and hadn't expended her resources, she would've been able to hold out for a while against a few Goldwing Swordbirds, even though they would've given her great trouble.

But now, she had come off the tail end of the great battle and didn't have much true qi left in her. Although she had pills recovering her true qi, it looked like she'd only recovered forty to fifty percent.

It was impossible to hold up against the continued waves of attacks from several Goldwing Swordbirds and several hundred Silverwing Swordbirds with half of her fighting abilities.

She was in a precarious position after a few rounds. Her hair was flying wildly everywhere, and she was utterly run down. She called out, "Senior brother Yu Jie, come save me!"

How could Yu Jie not have seen the situation below?

Except, he had been entangled by the situation on his side as well. Although he hadn't been surrounded by the core of the formation, even the outer rings of the formation wouldn't permit him to leave as he pleased.

However, Long Juxue's plea was incredibly urgent.

If he didn't save her, and Long Juxue was lost, he would absolutely be unable to explain himself when he returned to his honored master.

“Confine him!”

How would Jiang Chen let Yu Jie leave so easily at this moment? Although he couldn't kill Yu Jie, it was completely doable for him to delay him momentarily with the more and more familiar “Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation”.

After receiving Jiang Chen's strong order, the Goldwing Swordbird army became even more fierce. The formation changed, and they clung onto Yu Jie with a death-grip.

The original four quadrants of defense and four quadrants of offense all turned into offense.

Eight quadrants started attacking at once, increasing their power and effect by more than twofold.

If Yu Jie kept attempting to retreat, he would have to contend with countless numbers of blows.

Any of this formation's attacks were enough to worsen Yu Jie's injuries.

Yu Jie's heart was torn with anxiety as he knew that if he didn't make it down there, Long Juxue would be dead without a doubt.

If he were to make it down and disengage from up here in a short amount of time, he'd have to take one or two hits. But these one or two hits would absolutely worsen his injuries.

“What to do?!” The fires of fury burned in Yu Jie's heart as he roared out raspily, “Jiang Chen, don't you push someone too hard. If anything happens to junior sister Long, you'll face the flames of wrath from my honored master Shuiyue.”

Jiang Chen snorted coldly. He was saying this now? This Yu Jie was seriously too childish. With the way the situation had developed, this feud would never be resolved if he didn't kill Long Juxue.

If Master Shuiyue valued Long Juxue this much, she would surely strike out on her beloved disciple's behalf. He'd have to face Master Shuiyue's rage sooner or later anyways.

Jiang Chen chuckled and continued to give orders, “Delay Yu Jie, I'll go kill Long Juxue myself.”

Jiang Chen didn't have the slightest ounce of pity towards the Long family.

If it hadn't been for him, the Jiang Han manor would have long since been bathed in blood by the Long family. This Long Juxue was even more malicious, and had a murderous heart. If he let her go like this, there'd be no end of troubles in the future.

He raised the nameless saber and was about to dive down when his consciousness suddenly perked up. An undetectable trace of danger suddenly flashed through the part of his consciousness training the “Boulder's Heart”.

“What's going on?” The mental strength of Boulder's Heart was exceedingly sensitive and it generally wasn't prone to error.

Jiang Chen visibly held himself back and grasped the nameless saber in his hands, on the alert, and battle ready. His entire being was like a taut bow, ready to fire out sharp arrows at any time.

At that moment, countless beams of white light shone out from around Long Juxue's body down below. Beams of silver light danced around like silvery carp, darting to and fro in the air.

Dreadful screams sounded out in the next instant.

The Silverwing Swordbirds exploded in midair, turning into clouds of bloody mist and spreading out continuously.

Several hundred Silverwing Swordbirds were annihilated almost in the span of a single breath. They blew apart one after another, and fell towards the ground.

Around a hundred Silverwing Swordbirds had been destroyed in the time it took to take a single breath.

The Goldwing Swordbirds had wanted to use their durable golden feathers to stand up to the white light that was like silvery carp, but when their feathers intersected with the white light...

Pfft pfft pfft pfft.

The Goldwing Swordbird's indestructible feathers were ripped apart like paper. Agonized cries rang out as these Goldwing Swordbirds were shredded to pieces by this silver-white light.

Jiang Chen was dumbfounded when he saw this scene.

When Yu Jie and Xu Zhen had attacked together earlier, they had leveraged their strong spirit power to oppress the Swordbird Army. Those killed were mostly Greenwing Swordbirds.

Several Goldwing Swordbirds had also been killed, but those that had died had been the result of solid attacks. The Goldwing Swordbirds had only died because they'd used their bodies to protect Jiang Chen.

And this time, he hadn't even seen the person, just the dancing of the silvery-white light. Six or seven Goldwing Swordbirds, and a hundred Silverwing Swordbirds, had been annihilated within the span of a single breath.

This level of strength was horrifying.

Long Juxue had thought she was dead without a doubt, and hadn't reckoned on this scene happening. Her panicky and frantic eyes finally recovered some semblance of calm.

She knew that even stronger reinforcements must have come from the Purple Sun Sect.

"Yu Jie, what's the matter with you? You couldn't even handle such a simple matter?" A low voice traveled out of the air. The owner hadn't appeared, but a mysterious sense of presence caused the blood of any listeners to churn and roil when they heard his voice.

Yu Jie had been in poor shape indeed, but was overjoyed when he heard this voice — like an extremely thirsty person finding a bubbling spring.

"Senior Brother Xing Han?"

Yu Jie's voice was both agitated and fearful.

Jiang Chen's heart tightened as he commanded the formation to change. All the Goldwing Swordbirds immediately halted their attacks, and resumed a position of defense.

At the same time, his “Boulder’s Heart” began warning him uncontrollably.

This unseen and only heard opponent gave Jiang Chen a powerful sense of pressure — the type of despair that occurred when one absolutely couldn’t measure up to one’s enemies.

Yu Jie ignored Jiang Chen and the others at this moment, and landed back on the ground in front of Long Juxue. His eyes stared fixedly at the empty air.

A slit seemed to be drawn in a patch of clouds in the horizon to the west. A cold beam of frigid light shot out like a shooting star, stepping onto the white clouds and riding on the shooting star, landing in front of Long Juxue.

This person was wearing clothes made of hemp, and his body was rather tall. His originally imposing appearance encompassed a few traces of faint desolation, but a heart pounding sense of depth was able to be found between his brows.

“I greet senior brother Xing Han.” Yu Jie’s previous arrogance and attitude had completely disappeared, as if this newly arrived “senior brother Xing Han” occupied an even higher position in his heart than his own father.