

Three Realms 1221

Chapter 1221: The Proud Shura Retreat

Pill King Ce was a smart man. His prior investigation had informed him that Cloudsoar Monarch was the best of Sacred Peafowl Mountain's four. Though he himself wasn't weak, it was unrealistic to claim that the pill king could beat one of Peafowl's monarchs. At most, they were roughly comparable.

When that was the case, a duel between two cultivators depended heavily on their moods and mindset. Pill King Ce wanted to attack him psychologically to create an opening. If one appeared, no matter how small, he would be sure to latch onto it.

Pill King Ce wasn't necessarily the strongest cultivator, but as a pill dao genius, he had instinct and sensitivity superior to most others when it came to sensing battle openings. They were senses reserved for the elite.

However, Cloudsoar Monarch was wholly unaffected by his provocation. He'd already heard from Jiang Chen that Pill King Ce was a bit weaker than Pill King Hui. Though he wasn't sure where young lord Zhen had gotten that information from, he trusted Jiang Chen enough to take it at face value. Therefore, Pill King Ce's intimidation tactics did nothing whatsoever to the monarch mentally.

He had a strategy, and he was sticking to it. Not losing was his priority, based on which he could then attempt to eke out an eventual victory. It was a conservative plan, but that fit the monarch's personality just fine. Cloudsoar had no fondness for impudence and brashness. His line of thought was both simple and potent and countered Pill King Ce's perfectly.

The pill king knew that he had no advantage whatsoever based on martial dao alone. Thus, he planned on overwhelming his opponent with sheer ferocity. It was an approach that sacrificed stamina, but that was an acceptable trade-off. If Cloudsoar Monarch didn't already have a plan, he might be browbeaten into submission through initial hesitance.

That too was what the monarch realized after his shock from the beginning fierceness wore off. Still, understanding his opponent's weakness wasn't the same as exploiting it. Pill King Ce might not be the strongest of cultivators, but he had keen martial senses. Cloudsoar Monarch's every move was predicted.

There was a flurry of experimental attacks from both sides. The back-and-forth was instructive for both combatants of their opponent's abilities. In terms of raw strength, Cloudsoar Monarch was slightly superior. In terms of experience and instinct, the same was true for Pill King Ce. The two were evenly matched. None of their maneuvers seemed to gain any ground for either man.

Noticing that the battle had come to a standstill, Sacred Peafowl Mountain's Plumscore Monarch sighed softly. "If it goes on like this, I don't think Cloudsoar will have an easy time winning."

Chronobalance Monarch smashed a fist against the armrest of his chair. "I don't believe that Shura Retreat has someone that strong besides Sun, Moon, and Star!"

"It's no use saying that now," lamented Wildfox Monarch. "If we win this round, we'll at least have some hope. If we can't, even if it's a tie... it'll be a disaster."

Yes, though Sacred Peafowl Mountain seemed to be tied with Shura Retreat currently with a score of four-two-four, there was no chance the remaining two rounds could be won. Therefore, Cloudsoar Monarch's round was the last ray of hope for Sacred Peafowl Mountain. In the monarchs' eyes at least, this fight was key.

Everyone with Shura Retreat looked a lot more relaxed. Though Pill King Hui had lost to Emperor Peerless last round, there was no other possible outcome. There was no dissatisfaction whatsoever on Emperor Shura's and Li Jiancheng's faces. They'd planned around losing the prior round. It seemed that Pill King Ce's was probably going to end in a tie as well.

"Master, the situation is very good for us now. If Pill King Ce can win this round, then we'll triumph for sure. You'll handily crush that Zhen kid, and I can take down the pretty girl over there with no problem. That will be a convincing victory over Sacred Peafowl Mountain with six wins, three draws, and four losses. Veluriyam Capital's throne is as good as yours."

Li Jiancheng's eyes flared with fervor and he couldn't help glancing over at Huang'er. He was almost champing at the bit for the current fight to be over, for a chance to show off his martial dao skills before the regal beauty who was to be his opponent next round. He wanted to conquer her with his display of talent.

He had faced rejection from her once before but wasn't discouraged by the past. In his opinion, he only needed to get rid of that Zhen guy's brainwashing. As long as he could demonstrate strength immense enough to crush Sacred Peafowl Mountain's dreams into fine dust, the daintily pretty girl would understand the truth of things. He could do whatever to her then. In fact, she should be throwing herself into his arms.

To Li Jiancheng's perspective, the world of martial dao was a very pragmatic one. Female cultivators especially favored the strongest. Huang'er had extraordinary presence and grace, but she was surely no exception. Wasn't her reliance on Zhen because of her enthrallment with his embellished exploits?

Li Jiancheng wasn't satisfied with this. He swore in his heart that he would prevail over Huang'er utterly with martial dao. He wanted her wholehearted devotion.

Emperor Shura saw through his disciple's thoughts. "Jiancheng, I know what you're thinking," he instructed seriously. "It's normal for youngsters to think and act with some salaciousness. Still, in your fight a short while from now, you can't lose your cool or underestimate your enemy. That girl looks soft, but she's no pushover. If you lose because of a miscalculation, I will punish you severely. It is possible that your young lord status will be removed, and you will be exiled from Shura Retreat!"

Young people needed to be disciplined. Emperor Shura was immovable upon this point. He was quite concerned that Li Jiancheng would rush headlong into the battle out of a desire to impress.

Li Jiancheng felt a chill pass over his heart. Cold beads of sweat formed on his neck. He had really gotten carried away a bit too much with his daydreams and fantasies. Emperor Shura's harsh words helped him regain his composure. That's right, this wasn't the time to underestimate his opponent or get carried away. He had to use absolute force to seize the girl's heart!

"Don't worry, master. I won't bring you shame on this day. We'll win the competition for sure!" Shura Retreat's chief disciple guaranteed.

Emperor Shura nodded. Li Jiancheng's reaction assured him that his disciple had shaken free of his prior reverie. As long as Li Jiancheng took the battle seriously, the emperor was very confident that he would do very well against that so-called 'Miss Huang'er'. The girl was mysterious in her own right, but surely she couldn't be stronger than young lord Zhen? Li Jiancheng isn't exactly weaker than the young lord either.

The battle between Pill King Ce and Cloudsoar Monarch was nearing its end. The two were still going at it without much result, the balance of victory not tipping toward either side. It seemed that the battle was about to end in yet another tie.

That was no problem if Li Jiancheng couldn't beat Huang'er. The score would be four wins, two draws, and four losses. Even if Pill King Ce and Li Jiancheng both tied, the score would settle at four wins, four draws, and four losses.

Emperor Shura almost wanted something like that to happen. Only then could his final battle with young lord Zhen be called decisive! It would enhance his victory's value tremendously.

The final fight as the one deciding win or loss... if Emperor Shura won such a fight, it would be a much more forceful hit to Sacred Peafowl Mountain. He was perfectly confident in his martial dao prowess, even more so than he had been with his talismans. With talismans, there had been a small chance of defeat. But with martial dao, there should be absolutely zero.

There were rumors that the kid was half-step emperor realm. Even if he broke through to emperor realm recently, then what?

A youth in initial emperor realm competing with a three-thousand-year great emperor? Did that sound realistic?

Not at all!

The world of martial dao was extremely harsh. There was no denying the strength of the strong or the weakness of the weak. Youths were supposed to strive against youths. It was possible to challenge across levels, but how many levels were there between initial emperor realm and great emperor realm?

It was absolutely impossible. The martial dao world had no instances of something like that succeeding whatsoever. Perhaps there were, but Emperor Shura had never heard of it—nor did he believe that it would happen to him.

The Zhen kid was very talented indeed. The emperor had noticed as much during the Ranking of Young Lords. That was why he was certain about the outcome of their fight. Zhen was strong enough to duel Li Jiancheng at most. He would fall like an ant before the might of Emperor Shura.

The emperor had every belief that the fight would be over in minutes. He was in fact, planning to cut the youth down where he stood. There was no shame in nipping a problem in the bud.

Wasn't he supposed to be a genius? The young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain?

An accidental death in the arena would only elicit gossip in the short term. Who would remember a dead person in the long run? Plus, he'd have control over the entire Veluriyam Capital at that point.

Who would dare speak out against him? The four monarchs of Sacred Peafowl Mountain? Whether they'd still be able to stick around was still up in the air.

Emperor Coiling Dragon? Emperor Void?

If they were tactful, they'd best pretend to be unmoving statues; fit only for show rather than power. If they weren't, then he would do his best to eliminate them. Failing that, they'd definitely have to be sent elsewhere.

Veluriyam Capital would be entirely his then! He barely finished his last thought before the fight on the arena concluded. The four hours were up, and the drawn conclusion was official; neither party had won the fight.

Chapter 1222: Go Teach Him A Lesson, Huanger

A draw. The fight had ended in yet another draw! This draw meant very different things to both parties. Over on Sacred Peafowl Mountain's side, everyone except the three monarchs couldn't help but sigh with disappointment.

They'd all seen that Cloudsoar Monarch was slightly stronger than the enemy. Unfortunately, he hadn't been able to gain a big enough lead to turn it into a decisive victory. It was a round they could've taken off Shura Retreat's hands, but after it'd ended in a draw, Sacred Peafowl Mountain's position was more precarious than ever.

On the surface, their score was four wins, three draws and four losses. Both parties were still at a stalemate. However, anyone with their wits about them would know Shura Retreat was the clear favorite to win the competition. First, there was no way young lord Zhen could beat Emperor Shura. Second, Miss Huang'er was a stranger to most. Although she had participated in a couple of matches and claimed a draw for Sacred Peafowl Mountain in pill dao, her performance thus far hadn't exactly been eye-catching. That was why no one thought well of her chances.

First impressions were important for humans. Huang'er had outstanding temperament, but she was completely lacking in killing intent and forcefulness. In fact, many thought that she was uncompetitive, and that Sacred Peafowl Mountain had picked her because they had no other choice. This impression was also encouraged by the fact that young lord Zhen himself was an incredibly young person. He could hardly show off a worthy true disciple when he himself was young enough to be one.

On Shura Retreat's side, the atmosphere was completely different. It was clear from the joyous looks on their faces that they could see the flag of victory waving at them already. There were only two rounds left in the thirteen-round competition. The remaining rounds and the ultimate victory was theirs to take!

"Congratulations, Daoist Shura." Emperor Vastsea beamed as he congratulated Emperor Shura in advance. "It's been a wild ride, but Shura Retreat's foundation is ultimately deeper than Sacred Peafowl Mountain's. I so look forward to hear their excuses after their defeat."

In reality, Emperor Vastsea had been afraid that Shura Retreat would lose. His fear had been especially profound when Jiang Chen had showed off his contracted beast, a true dragon. At the time, the sense of defeat was so strong that he even regretted taking the fight to Sacred Peafowl Mountain. But the ominous feeling had finally departed. He felt a lot more relaxed now that victory was in sight.

Emperor Skysplitter was also smiling as he made his way towards Emperor Shura. He didn't congratulate the great emperor in advance, but was looking pretty optimistic himself. "Daoist Shura, the next two rounds are most likely in the bag."

Emperor Shura nodded and looked at Li Jiancheng. "Jiancheng, I'm going to say this again. Don't underestimate your enemy, and do your best."

Li Jiancheng's eyes gleamed sharply as he nodded thoughtfully in response. He promised, "Don't worry, master. I won't disappoint you."

Emperor Vastsea laughed. "That girl is most likely just a stopgap, not to mention that young lord Zhen himself is no match for you if you perform up to your normal standard, nephew. Victory will be yours!"

"I wish you luck, young lord Jiancheng!"

Li Jiancheng clasped his hands in obeisance before he flew elegantly to the arena. On the way, he called out to Huang'er solemnly. "Miss Huang'er, I'll be waiting for you on the arena."

Li Jiancheng wanted to dominate Huang'er, so the actions he took were very deliberately planned. Meanwhile, the air was tense on Sacred Peafowl Mountain's side.

Cloudsoar Monarch couldn't stop blaming himself, "Young lord, my friends, Cloudsoar is sorry for being useless. I have failed to claim victory for Sacred Peafowl Mountain and pushed us into a most unfavourable situation. I am guilty."

Despite Cloudsoar Monarch's claims, they all knew that it wasn't his fault. None of them were at fault because they had done their best. If someone had to shoulder the blame, then it would be shameless Shura Retreat who'd hired two reinforcements of dubious origins and ambushed them while they were unprepared.

"Daoist Cloudsoar, this really isn't your fault, or anyone's fault for the matter." Plumscore Monarch was normally aloof, but she sounded astoundingly comforting during a critical moment like this. "You've done your best. Everyone has done their best. Frankly, the outcome may have been worse than it is now if we were in your place instead."

"Yes, you don't need to blame yourself." Chronobalance Monarch sighed. "There's no way these bastards could've won anything if His Majesty was still at Veluriyam Capital."

"Yes. If His Majesty was still around, he would've suppressed these savages already." Wildfox Monarch also sighed.

Emperor Peafowl had incredible talents. His skill with talismans was easily the greatest in the entire Veluriyam Capital. The Imperial Advent Defense Talisman and Onslaught Talisman he made were the best around. While Emperor Peafowl's pill dao wasn't exceptionally good, he was still the topmost out of all seven great emperors of Veluriyam Capital, not to mention when it came to formations.

Emperor Peafowl was superior to Emperor Shura in every way. If he was present, Shura Retreat would be lucky to win three to four rounds out of thirteen. The rest would be won by Sacred Peafowl Mountain because Emperor Peafowl alone could take four to five rounds off Emperor Shura's hands. Even young lord Zhen was capable of winning three to four rounds on his own. The rest of them only needed to

stand by and put on appearances. Emperor Peerless was powerful, but he was only powerful in the area of martial dao. As a wandering cultivator, the great emperor simply couldn't afford to study the other fields even if he felt like it. However, Jiang Chen was a little displeased by the four monarchs' attitude.

"The fight isn't over yet, so why are you all acting like we've lost already? Emperor Peafowl elected you all as his aides because he trusted in your abilities. But why do I feel that your mental fortitude is extremely questionable?"

He was fine with them missing Emperor Peafowl, but the monarchs kept spouting pessimistic nonsense before the competition was even over. Naturally, as the young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain, he was displeased with their attitude.

The four monarchs realized that they had made a terrible mistake. They hurriedly apologized to Jiang Chen for their slip of the tongue.

"We are sorry, young lord Zhen. We have said something we shouldn't."

"Yeah. Please tell us your punishment, young lord."

Jiang Chen snorted coldly and kept quiet. Although the four monarchs had expressed their loyalty to him multiple times already, they couldn't help but doubt him because of his young age. It was a subconscious reaction that they had no control over. Although Jiang Chen could understand their feelings, he didn't want to see Sacred Peafowl Mountain crumbling internally before they even finished the fight. If they lost, they would at least lose with dignity. Laments and sighs from the four monarchs before everything was done was absolutely not the kind of reaction a member of Sacred Peafowl Mountain should display, or the atmosphere that should be fostered.

It was at this moment Huang'er spoke up with a smile. "That Li Jiancheng has his head in the clouds. I'll meet him in the arena."

Huang'er was feeling a little angry herself. One, Li Jiancheng's arrogance and frivolous remarks had enraged her. Two, the monarchs' despondency made her feel slighted. While Huang'er didn't mind being scorned, it was a different story when the target of their scorn was Jiang Chen. Even if they weren't doing it on purpose, Huang'er wanted to show the entire Veluriyam Capital that young lord Zhen was capable of holding Sacred Peafowl Mountain together even after Emperor Peafowl was gone.

Jiang Chen nodded. "Go teach him a lesson, Huang'er. He's been way too arrogant. If he goes overboard, feel free to cripple him."

Cripple him?

Everyone on Sacred Peafowl Mountain's side felt surprised when they heard this. But Huang'er simply nodded and flew into the arena with one quick motion.

"The twelve round is Miss Huang'er from Sacred Peafowl Mountain versus young lord Li Jiancheng from Shura Retreat."

Li Jiancheng's true strength was a mystery to most people in Veluriyam Capital. In the past, Sacred Peafowl Mountain had a young lord Fan who was famed as the greatest young lord of Veluriyam Capital.

Li Jiancheng hadn't been able to overcome young lord Fan at the time. But when young lord Fan passed away, Li Jiancheng naturally became the greatest youth of his generation.

However, it was rumored that Li Jiancheng had been cultivating an extremely powerful and deep secret art of the Shura slaughter dao. Supposedly, not even a reborn young lord Fan would be able to defeat him after his cultivation was complete.

The rumor couldn't be verified because young lord Fan had passed away first. Later on, a few young cultivators, including Sacred Peafowl Mountain's Zhou Yan, had tried to defeat Li Jiancheng during the Ranking of Young Lords, but everyone who'd challenged him had fallen short of beating him. Moreover, Li Jiancheng had fought them regularly without using any secret arts. As a result, he seemed shrouded in mystery.

"Will Li Jiancheng use his secret arts this time? Li Jiancheng's techniques are forceful and domineering. Will this sweet Miss Huang'er be able to hold out for more than a couple of exchanges?"

Everyone who'd fought Li Jiancheng before knew that his fighting style and technique was incredibly forceful and oppressive. It was painful experience to fight against Li Jiancheng to say the least. In fact, many geniuses who challenged Li Jiancheng to battle wasn't able to launch a single counter attack before they were struck down first.

Even Sacred Peafowl Mountain was feeling afraid for Huang'er's sake as they looked back and forth between Li Jiancheng and her. Not everyone was feeling as pessimistic though. Emperor Peerless looked thoughtful as he stared at Huang'er's elegant and lithe figure.

"We meet again, Miss Huang'er." Li Jiancheng chuckled in the arena. "Last time, my skill with talismans was slightly better than yours. This time, I would suggest that you watch out for yourself. Jiancheng doesn't want to hurt a delicate flower like you, but accidents do happen in a martial battle. Please give me a warning if you find yourself in a pickle. Jiancheng will do his very best to preserve your dignity."

Obviously, he was telling Huang'er that he would give her the chance to surrender any time she wanted. He wouldn't force her to the point where surrender was impossible. He was very conceited to say the least.

Chapter 1223: Whos Letting Who Have Three Moves?

Li Jiancheng wasn't the type of man to forget himself. His words were only superficially amiable; he was actually exerting pressure on Huang'er to try to crush her fighting spirit.

However, Huang'er's charming visage showed no hint of emotion.

"You people from Shura Retreat... do you only know how to flap your lips? If you're trying to show off your eloquence, then I must say that you've thoroughly failed at doing so." She flicked a cold glance at Li Jiancheng and spoke with equal frost.

The young lord of Shura Retreat felt his face freeze. He thought he had acted with gentility and style, but the girl before him would have none of it. Had he been trying to charm the blind the entire time?

Li Jiancheng was quite upset, upset enough to go on a rampage. Being treated like a fool by a pretty girl was one of the most infuriating things in life! He finally bristled with murderous intent. However, it was quickly replaced with a more malevolent rage.

Worthless whore, you're more of a glut for punishment than I thought. Fine, fine, fine! I'll utterly humiliate you in this match, and when Sacred Peafowl Mountain falls into destitution, you won't escape my grasp. I'll make you beg beneath me. We'll see how proud you are then!

Li Jiancheng almost wanted to spit those words out on the spot. Thankfully, he didn't forget his station as Shura Retreat's young lord. He could only keep such thoughts to himself. They would take on a whole new significance if he blurted them aloud.

However, Huang'er was a very astute girl. The evil gaze from the man opposite told her immediately what he was thinking. A look of disgust flashed across her clear eyes. "Li Jiancheng, Shura Retreat is challenging Sacred Peafowl Mountain's dominance. Since you're the challenger, you can go first," she declared dispassionately.

What? She's letting me go first? Li Jiancheng thought he was hearing things. Was the girl's brain malfunctioning? Or had she been cowed into submission by his intimidating aura?

"Hahaha, are you sure that you want me to go first?" To him, it was like hearing the funniest joke in the world. With a focused look, he exerted his emperor domain without reservation. The heavy aura rolled toward Huang'er provocatively. His thoughts were depraved enough to want to slam Huang'er to the floor on the spot and use his domain to ravish her.

Huang'er could only furrow her slender brow deeper at his frivolity. This man is so rude and flighty! I should listen to Brother Chen. I'll permanently cripple him if I have the chance. Such malicious thoughts came rarely into her mind. In fact, she suppressed this one too in the end. I can't do that. I just need to beat Li Jiancheng. Crippling him would be inappropriate.

She was attentive enough to remember that Jiang Chen was fighting Emperor Shura in the next round. If she crippled Li Jiancheng, the emperor would be furious. Wouldn't her Brother Chen feel the brunt of Emperor Shura's wrath, then?

Huang'er kept track of all the little details with ease. Despite her displeasure with Li Jiancheng, she didn't intend to deal too harshly with him.

Li Jiancheng didn't realize that the girl opposite him was thinking of how best to dump him. He was still under the delusion that she somehow feared him. Neither did he realize that he'd just had a close brush with disaster in Huang'er's mind.

Instead, he carried on his incoherent taunting. "I've never taken the first move against anyone in the younger generation here in Veluriyam Capital. Even if your so-called young lord Zhen takes the stage, I wouldn't do it to him. Do you know why that is, Miss Huang'er?"

Finally, he had an opportunity to brag. He wouldn't pass it up for the world.

"I'm not interested," said Huang'er emotionlessly.

“Because everybody knows that if I did so,” cackled Li Jiancheng, “then my opponent wouldn’t have a chance to even return the attack!”

This wasn’t entirely a fabrication. Li Jiancheng’s martial dao style was focused on excessive force. Anyone who lost their initiative against him was typically doomed to perpetual stress until they ran out of breathing room. It was quite likely to lose without having gotten a return hit in.

“Is that so?” Huang’er didn’t bat an eyelash.

“You don’t believe me, Miss Huang’er?” Li Jiancheng sounded like he was toying with his prey.

“It doesn’t matter whether I do or not,” Huang’er abruptly raised an eyebrow. “So I take it you want me to go first?”

“I usually don’t fight female cultivators. It’s not sporting of me, you see. Today is an unfortunate exception. This match is unavoidable. But even if I do have to fight, I have to maintain some decorum. You take the lead, Miss Huang’er. If you don’t, you might not have another chance at me, hmm?”

“Are you sure?”

“Of course I’m sure. Haha, an attack from a girl as pretty as you... How dazzling that sight would be, I wonder?” Li Jiancheng was being especially aggravating.

Huang’er remained unmoved, though there was finally a hint of annoyance between her eyes. She inclined her head a little. “If so, then prepare yourself.”

Shura Retreat’s young lord looked thoroughly relaxed, his expression a jesting one. “Yes. You’d better use everything you have, Miss Huang’er. Even tickling requires some force, wouldn’t you agree? How about I let you have ten attacks first, would that be alright with you?”

“Three is enough,” Huang’er declared coolly.

“Then three it is. Your wish is my command, Miss Huang’er. But, and this is just what I think, wouldn’t ten be a bigger gesture of sincerity?”

An inkling of derision played at the corner of Huang’er’s mouth. “You’re thinking too much. I’m saying that if I don’t defeat you in three attacks, then you can take this round home.”

Because she hadn’t lowered her voice when she’d said this, most thought that they had misheard something. What was she saying? If Li Jiancheng could take three of her attacks, then he would win?

Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s supporters were no less perplexed than everyone else.

“What did Miss Huang’er just say?” Cloudsoar Monarch was flummoxed as he looked in confusion towards his fellow daoists.

“She... I think she said she’s going to crush Li Jiancheng in three attacks? That is what she’s trying to say, isn’t it?” Wildfox Monarch was uncertain.

“That sounds about right.” Plumscore Monarch glanced at Huang’er’s sleek figure onstage ponderously, as perturbed by the statement as anyone else.

Jiang Chen's criticisms shortly prior deferred any premature assessments of their own. They didn't dare express any remotely pessimistic indication.

Emperor Peerless looked toward Jiang Chen. "Did I hear her correctly? Miss Huang'er said that she's going to take care of Li Jiancheng in three attacks?"

"Don't be so doubtful," chuckled Jiang Chen. "She did say that, yes. Li Jiancheng is too arrogant. Perhaps she wants to teach him an unforgettable lesson on proper morals."

"But..." The monarchs choked down the pile of follow-ups they had. There was no room for them to say any of it.

Over on the other side, Emperor Shura's eyebrows squared up. He was much more experienced than Li Jiancheng. Huang'er's words had stunned him for a moment, then made his heart skip a beat.

She wanted to defeat Li Jiancheng in three attacks? If those words had come from any other young genius in Veluriyam Capital, Emperor Shura would've thought that they'd gone mad. As Li Jiancheng's master, he perfectly understood the extents of his student's abilities.

Young lord Zhen was probably the city's brightest star, but even he would have a hard time pushing his chances over fifty-fifty. It was probably more likely for Li Jiancheng to win. Was the girl's martial dao as uncommon as her appearance?

The emperor's initial reaction was complete disbelief. But, he remembered, Sacred Peafowl Mountain's people rarely boasted without reason. They typically said nothing that they couldn't personally accomplish. An uncomfortable prospect inexplicably streaked across his mind.

"As contemptuous as young lord Zhen is! Has she been brainwashed by that kid? She doesn't understand that there should be a limit to conceit." Emperor Vastsea judged her far more simply. His dislike of her was clear. He fully believed that she was making things up. Even he wouldn't necessarily guarantee to be able to beat Li Jiancheng in three moves. Li Jiancheng was Shura Retreat's young lord, after all. He had access to many powerful treasures.

Li Jiancheng was still trying to wrap his mind around what she'd just said. It took a long while for him to realize that the beauty before him was thoroughly expressing her contempt.

He smiled in spite of his anger. "Miss Huang'er, it seems that you don't understand me very well. Neither do I you, for that matter. I thought I was the craziest one for miles, but you're definitely crazier. If you're trying to imitate me, congratulations!"

"A man shouldn't waste so much air," Huang'er shook her head. "Did Emperor Shura teach you that skill?"

Li Jiancheng wasn't someone easily provoked by a pretty girl, but today was an exception. He'd been despised by plenty of people before, but a girl as good-looking as her? This was a definite first.

"Alright, alright, alright!" The young lord of Shura Retreat made no effort to hide his viciousness any longer. "I think I've given you enough courtesy, woman. It seems that you're not interested, so you shouldn't fault me for demolishing you very shortly. Prepare to be humiliated!"

Countless hideous ideas flickered across his heart. "Do your worst. I said I'd let you take three shots at me, so here you are!" he shouted callously.

Huang'er was at the end of her patience with the talkative man. She nodded in acknowledgement, then stepped a delicate foot forward. She spread a snowy palm into empty air. A galaxy seemed to be spreading itself across the center of her palm.

At the turning of her hand, the glittering cosmos formed itself into a blue vortex. The ripples it created in space were as chaotic as those from a genuine windstorm. With an opening and closing of her fingers, the vortex filled the space entirely, spreading out into every corner. It enveloped Li Jiancheng in only a second!

Chapter 1224: Bedraggedly Taking His Words Back

The callous and overweening Li Jiancheng had never once lost to his peers in Veluriyam Capital. Even when young lord Fan was still alive, they'd never dueled to see who was stronger. Thus, he was always extremely confident and smug when fighting his peers. Not a hint of fear or trepidation had ever crossed his mind.

However, when Huang'er had made her first move, an unprecedented sense of fear flashed across his mind. Her jade-like hands seemed to be wielding a magical power that could control time and space. After the vortex of energy took shape, Li Jiancheng suddenly felt like he was floundering in the middle of a wide and empty ocean.

His heart shuddered with trepidation. Without any hesitation, he grunted and threw an eerie looking talisman into the air. Those talisman turned into purplish-red runes that exploded with an enormous blinding flash. The powerful explosion collapsed the surrounding air and shattered the energy vortex.

Whaam! Huang'er's attack was a very domineering dimension art that could instantly form a restrictive domain and trap the opponent in a vacuum. One would find themselves trapped in this formless cage if they were inattentive for even a second. If Li Jiancheng hadn't reacted as quickly and used an extremely destructive talisman to deflect Huang'er's attack, he'd likely be a caged beast now.

Baam! Bam! Baaam! Powerful surges of energy collided and repelled each other repeatedly.

The surrounding air was almost on verge of collapse. The arena shook from the sheer forces involved. The scene was flabbergasting and awe inspiring.

It was only their first clash, but the crowd was already dumbstruck by what they were seeing. They held their breaths with eyes as wide as bells. Nobody had thought that someone as graceful as Miss Huang'er was capable of summoning such a powerful attack with a flick of her wrist.

Li Jiancheng was also accomplished in his own right to realize danger so quickly. Most of the audience had been unaware of how profound the attack was when it formed.

"Wha-? It's so powerful!"

"It seems everyone has underestimated Miss Huang'er."

"Li Jiancheng seems to be in a sorry state. Miss Huang'er summoned such a powerful attack in an instant! This duel is going to be interesting."

“Interesting my ass! I admit that I’ve underestimated her, but she’s dumb enough to speak in absolutes. She’ll have to admit her loss if she can’t defeat young lord Jiancheng in three moves. Do you really think that she can do it?”

“She merely said those things to rile up her enemy. Why take it so seriously?” This speaker was clearly on Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s side.

“Casual statements are not allowed in the arena. She’ll have to honor her words.” Those who supported Shura Retreat refused to budge.

“Casual statements aren’t allowed? Do you remember how Li Jiancheng just mentioned that he’ll give Miss Huang’er three moves? What does that mean? It means that he needs to let his opponent to make three moves without retaliating! Instead of doing that, he used a talisman! What a joke!”

“Indeed. Li Jiancheng lacks character and eats his own words for a living. He made a move even though he said that he’d give his opponent three shots. Shura Retreat is full of men like him!”

“Heh. He’d be lying below the stage by now if he hadn’t retaliated. Is this all there is to the number one prodigy of Shura Retreat?”

“It seems that Sacred Peafowl Mountain is destined to guide Veluriyam Capital. Shura Retreat isn’t bad, but they seem to lack a little something. Just compare Li Jiancheng and Miss Huang’er. One maintains a high profile and is excessively proud, while the other is reclusive and rarely shows herself in public. However, the champion of the Ranking of Young Lords can’t even defeat a reclusive girl. Surely we should know by now that which faction possess the greater fortune?”

“Agreed. One must also consider the fact that Emperor Peafowl isn’t even here. If he was, I doubt that Shura Retreat could even win three rounds.”

Winning three out of thirteen rounds meant that there was an enormous discrepancy in strength.

“Three rounds would probably too difficult for them. I’d wager that they’d win one or two rounds at most!” The vassals showed little restraint during their discussions.

The crowd from Shura Retreat grew more and more solemn as the fight unfolded. They hadn’t expected such a sudden turn of events. They were confident that this round would be a sure win for Li Jiancheng, but the duel was going the other way instead?

“This is unexpected.” Emperor Vastsea mumbled. “Jiancheng has underestimated his foe. This wouldn’t have happened if he made the first move instead of giving it to the opponent.”

Emperor Shura’s face darkened as he was quite angry at Li Jiancheng. He’d warned his disciple again and again not to underestimate the enemy, but the young lord had still done so anyway. Li Jiancheng was simply too eager to show off for the girl. His complacency had caused him to be bit in the ankle. If disruptions were allowed, Emperor Shura would surely have given his disciple an earful.

“Daoist Shura, you needn’t worry. Jiancheng surely has plans of his own. But the young lass is incredibly skilled. Has anyone identified the background of her extraordinary technique?” Emperor Skysplitter suddenly asked.

“Her technique is indeed exemplary. It seems to be a dimension art of some sort. Is that lass really Brat Zhen’s direct disciple?” Emperor Vastsea was still hung up about their relationship.

“There’s little reason to be caught up in this. They can spin the tale in whichever way they like.” Emperor Shura answered.

He didn’t want to be overly fastidious because he was just as guilty. If one looked into Pill King Ce and Pill King Hui’s backgrounds, one would find out that they had very little to do with Shura Retreat as well. In fact, the participants from Sacred Peafowl Mountain were a lot more valid. Emperor Peerless was a wandering cultivator and possessed reasonable motives for joining Sacred Peafowl Mountain. He’d even sworn a vow of undying loyalty.

As for Huang’er, she was young lord Zhen’s dao partner and there was proof to back up that statement. The drawbacks were much greater than the potential benefit.

Jiancheng ah... you mustn’t fail. If you can’t win against the girl, you have to make this a draw. Emperor Shura sighed deeply. Shura Retreat had the advantage. Even if Li Jiancheng couldn’t win, he only needed to make the match a draw and the great emperor would finish the rest.

Emperor Shura would obliterate young lord Zhen in the final round. Winning this pivotal duel would improve his image greatly and highlight his importance. Even though he was angry that Li Jianchang had taken his enemy lightly, he wasn’t exactly in a panic. Shura Retreat would be the victors of the competition as long as Li Jiancheng didn’t lose.

Things would be a lot more complicated if he’d lost. Even if Emperor Shura defeated young lord Zhen then, the competition would end in a draw where both factions possessed five victories, three draws and five losses. The entire competition would’ve been for nothing.

Emperor Shura didn’t want that to happen, thus his lowest demand from Li Jiancheng was a draw.

Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s reaction was in complete contrast to Emperor Shura’s faction. They’d already prepared themselves for a loss, but after the first exchange between Huang’er and Li Jiancheng, their expectations had completely flipped over. In a fight that they’d deemed a definite loss, a huge turnaround had occurred?

The connoisseur recognized the artistry while the layman simply enjoyed the show.

There were many experts present who’d realized how incredibly profound Huang’er’s technique was. If Li Jiancheng hadn’t repelled the attack with a talisman, he would’ve lost from the get go.

The crowd saw Huang’er in a new light after seeing her attack. It completely lifted their downcast spirits. They no longer viewed young lord Zhen in the same way either.

When Jiang Chen had initially sent Huang’er to teach Li Jiancheng a lesson, they’d all thought that it was a mere joke. However, they’d clearly realized by now that it was far from a jest. Miss Huang’er was also just as extraordinary in martial dao!

Emperor Peerless’ smile had deepened. “Young lord Zhen, you’ve found yourself a great dao partner. Li Jiancheng is certainly in for it now.”

Jiang Chen smiled gently without shifting his eyes away from the arena.

Li Jiancheng could no longer put on a nonchalant attitude. In its place was vigilance and wariness.

Huang'er despised Li Jiancheng even more when she noticed his complete shift in attitude. Li Jiancheng is exactly the same as those so-called geniuses who like to cultivate a genteel reputation. They're experts at running their mouths, but one strike is all it takes for them to eat their own words.

Huang'er was bore great disdain for the opponent, but she didn't say it explicitly. Unfortunately, her emotions unconsciously showed on her face.

Li Jiancheng was deeply ashamed when he saw the flickering expressions. He knew that he'd gone back on his promise of giving her three moves when he used the talisman. Shameful or not, he could no longer care about keeping up appearances. He wasn't an idiot. He knew how powerful his opponent was in just one exchange.

He took in a deep breath and spoke sombrely. "Appearances can truly be deceiving. Miss Huang, as equals, there is little meaning for me to give you any free shots. Why don't we unsheath our weapons and have a real fight instead?"

Li Jiancheng's skin was truly as thick as a rhino's. He would stop at nothing for his own benefit. When the situation soured, he immediately took back his promise.

"Save your breath. You may go back on your promise if you want to, don't bother brainstorming lame excuses. I don't care whether you retaliate or not. You can have the win if you can block two more of my attacks." Li Jiancheng's antics had truly enraged Huang'er and she was no longer going to pull any more punches.

Li Jiancheng was stunned. The girl dared say such things even though he'd given her face? Was she really that fearless? He had always been the one who treated others this way. But today was the day was when he was getting a taste of his own medicine. What depressed him the most was the fact that he didn't even have the courage to retort back!

Chapter 1225: Huanger Displays Her Might

Li Jiancheng was no gentleman at heart. His expert's sense told him that he had definitely underestimated his opponent. The girl before him looked charming and delicate, but her appearance belied her incredible strength. He felt a very real sense of danger from her, refuting his prior arrogance.

He couldn't maintain his swagger in the face of such a looming threat. The 'three-attack' promise was tossed aside completely. Clutching at the air, he materialized a long spear between his fingers.

The weapon was a bit more than yard-long. Endless killing aura surged out as soon as it showed up in Li Jiancheng's hands, as if the weapon had been brought out from the deepest layers of hell.

Emperor Shura's disciples studied the Shura slaughter dao. For them, the most important temperament to exhibit was a will to kill. Emperor Shura's other disciple, Gao Zhan, had fought it out rather intensely against Jiang Chen back in the Ranking of Young Lords. He was another genius at the Shura slaughter dao. At the time, there had even rumors that in terms of dao understanding alone, Gao Zhan was superior to Li Jiancheng.

The moment Li Jiancheng's spear made its way into the world, his entire person became akin to a demon god who slaughtered his way about hell. He emanated frighteningly dense killing aura.

"Such a strong aura!" The observers were shocked at Li Jiancheng's display of brutality. Almost no one had seen him like that before. Even Veluriyam's other young lords were astonished at his change in character—including his past opponents. They were stunned by the realization that the Li Jiancheng that they had challenged hadn't ever used his full strength. Perhaps this is how strong he truly is?

Jiang Chen was just as appalled as everyone else at Li Jiancheng's transformation. However, Huang'er's unchanged expression was enough to settle his emotions. The girl was determined on her course of action. No shred of hesitation could be found within her.

To her eyes, Li Jiancheng's actions were virtually transparent. The lack of a reaction from his opponent worried Li Jiancheng. She seemed too impenetrable to deal with. Even Emperor Shura was somewhat worried at Huang'er's impassivity. What is up with this girl?

Did Jiancheng's demonic killing aura do nothing whatsoever to her despite their proximity? If that was the case, then she was one to be feared!

In the midst of all the uncertainties about her, Huang'er pulled at the air with her right hand. A jade-green ray of light was drawn out from her sleeve. A whip fashioned that looked very much like bamboo appeared between her fingers. It was fine and thin, but glittered with light. Taken as a whole, the whip was almost indistinguishable from an entire stem of bamboo, albeit a leafless one.

"What is that?" Everyone was perplexed at the whip in Huang'er's hands. Was it a fishing pole of some sort? It certainly looked like a handmade one. Jiang Chen was as curious as the rest of the audience. He'd never seen Huang'er draw a weapon before.

Li Jiancheng harrumphed, tapping the end of his spear against the ground. He pointed his weapon at his opponent. "Hmph. Do you expect to beat my Shura Divine Spear with a mere bamboo stick, Miss Huang'er?"

"A bamboo stick is more than enough for the likes of you," Huang'er shot back coolly.

"You're too presumptuous for your own good. Eat this!" Li Jiancheng's fury couldn't be suppressed. With a slight forward motion, he slid his feet across the ground and into the air.

Unparalleled ferocity lay behind the spear's metal tip, fiery and draconic. There was nothing fancy whatsoever about the attack, but its momentum made it remarkable. Li Jiancheng's martial dao was well known for its fierceness. He attacked his opponents with brutality and ruthlessness, grinding them relentlessly into submission.

Red vapor began to swirl around the tip of the spear, its consuming power evident to all onlookers. Space itself around the weapon began to be distorted, restricting his opponent's range of movement. The entire arena was affected in the blink of an eye, and the spear almost reached Huang'er's face.

But the girl stood completely unmoving in her original place. She seemed to be an old monk who'd settled into a trance. She brandished the whip in her right hand, creating a vortex-like green ripple. The ripple behaved as an incorporeal shield, blocking the Shura Divine Spear squarely in its path. The

weapon missed entirely, stabbing itself into empty space. Li Jiancheng felt his strength being sapped by spacial chaos.

“Hmm?” Li Jiancheng was startled. How could his opponent negate his entire attack with just a furl of her whip? He began to have second thoughts about the fight. He knew that the woman before him was nothing but trouble. Still, the exact extent of this trouble was a little beyond his expectations.

The furl and swing was actually a sophisticated spatial technique. It stirred up the space within Li Jiancheng’s attack range, rendering his offense without a target. Since the young lord hadn’t witnessed that way of fighting of before, he found it difficult to react. An expert with some knowledge of spatial techniques would likely have guessed the reason for missing his first attack, at least partially. Unfortunately, the arena didn’t give very much time for Li Jiancheng to think.

Scarcely did his bewilderment disappear when Huang’er’s whip shook once more. Countless whip-images appeared, seemingly out of nowhere. It had taken only the blink of an eye for the space to be filled with them.

“What? How can this be?” Li Jiancheng was astounded. He instinctively raised his Shura Divine Spear to parry, intending to deflect the images. His spear was suddenly rendered immobile. A green shadow had wrapped itself around the shaft, marking the inevitable appearance of the whip itself seconds later.

A moment of uncertainty was enough for the whip to wrap itself snugly around Li Jiancheng’s spear. More terrifyingly, it continued to snake its tendrils toward his body as well!

“What is this?” The Shura Retreat’s young lord could only watch with jaw agape. He tried to let go of his Shura Divine Spear, tossing a talisman produced out of thin air in an attempt to break free. But another whip-tendrill sealed his talisman before it could activate, grasping both of his arms in a tight lock.

“No!” Li Jiancheng screamed hoarsely, pushing with every ounce of energy he had left in him against his binds. As soon as his skin touched one of the tendrils however, he felt a static discharge pulse through him. The momentary paralysis prevented him from moving for an instant. It was enough time for victory to be decided.

When the numbness was gone from his nervous system, the tendrils had already bound him into a jadeite cocoon. Guided by Huang’er’s hand seals, compelled by spirit energy, the whip’s tendrils dragged Li Jiancheng into the air.

No opponent had made Li Jiancheng feel this helpless before. He’d fought many people, but never had he been so humiliated and impotent. He really couldn’t understand. The whip didn’t look like anything special. Could a stick of bamboo really defeat his Shura Divine Spear? Could it really trap him like this? What kind of bamboo was the whip made of?

Li Jiancheng’s face was ashen. He found that the more he struggled, the more the whip tightened around him. The weapon seemed to have a sentience to it.

“Get out of here.” Huang’er’s declaration carried the same indifference that had characterized her attitude throughout the entire fight.

The young lord of Shura Retreat was flipped out of the whip’s coils and unceremoniously slammed onto the ground. He got a mouthful of dirt for his trouble; he was in a sorry state indeed.

There was absolute silence from everyone. It was as if time itself had frozen in place. Huang'er's disposal of Li Jiancheng was briefly immortalized.

How was this possible?

Was this for real?

Had the arrogant Li Jiancheng been so easily crushed? The girl had said she would defeat him in three attacks, but she'd only taken two, right? The information that Emperor Shura's heir couldn't last even two attacks before an ivory maiden was incomprehensible.

Almost no one had made Miss Huang'er's acquaintance before now. Even those among Sacred Peafowl Mountain's inner circle had had their doubts before the match's outcome was revealed. The sight before them had been unfathomable for the most optimistic, much less everyone else.

Several seconds of perfect stillness passed before the waves of applause began rolling in. This fight deserved such widespread ovation!

Its events had overturned literally everyone's expectations and estimates. Its plot was something that good authors wouldn't even think of writing. Truly a full hundred-eighty turn.

All four monarchs from Sacred Peafowl Mountain felt a painful tug on their heartstrings when they saw Li Jiancheng being smashed into the ground. They experienced a brief moment of petrification like everyone else. Only when the vassals began cheering did they realize that the day was theirs.

Yes, they had won the round!

"This is amazing, young lord Zhen! I'm a bit envious. Your dao partner is an extraordinary girl." Mo Wushuang gave his heartfelt praise. Huang'er's display of strength had won him over.

Jiang Chen chuckled, unsure of how best to reply. He hadn't expected Huang'er to be this strong either. She had crushed Li Jiancheng with incredible ease. It was a serendipitously pleasant sensation, not altogether unwelcome.

Myriad Abyss Island's geniuses are something else, alright. Those not in the know would think that Huang'er's whip is the reason for her strength, but she is at least several levels above Li Jiancheng in terms of cultivation as well.

Huang'er had won a demolishing victory!

Chapter 1226: Why Did He Lose

Beneath the arena, Li Jiancheng flipped back onto his feet. Bedraggled, his face was beet red with indignation. Anger, humiliation and disbelief further colored his eyes.

On the arena, Huang'er lifted Li Jiancheng's spear with a gust of wind and tossed it in front of the young lord. The impact kicked up a small poof of dust.

Li Jiancheng stared as his enemy scornfully tossed back his pride and joy. He felt like a beggar who'd been given a few coins in mock charity. The young lord actually felt like committing suicide at that moment. Humiliation filled his chest to the brim.

“The twelfth round goes to Miss Huang’er of Sacred Peafowl Mountain!” Even Emperor Petalpluck was stunned for a moment before he finally remembered that he was the judge.

Emperor Shura felt like his chest had been struck by a sledgehammer. His complexion took on an ugly bent. When he looked at the defeated and disheartened Li Jiancheng on the ground again, frustration brimmed to the fore. He still failed to be any good in the end!

Even Emperor Vastsea and Emperor Skysplitter standing behind Emperor Shura looked on with shock and disbelief. They couldn’t accept this drastic turn of events at all. Why had Li Jiancheng lost? How had he lost for seemingly no reason?

That girl and her whip hadn’t look like anything special at all. All she did was twist and turn it to annoy from all directions. Was it really as difficult to defend as Li Jiancheng had made it appear? They almost thought that the disciple had thrown the round.

“Brother, something’s not right about this.” When Emperor Vastsea finally returned to himself, he stepped forwards and whispered to Emperor Shura.

Rage frothed and boiled within Emperor Shura. He was so enraged that he wanted to send Li Jiancheng flying with as harsh a slap he could manage. However, he kept reminding himself to stay calm. This was exactly the moment when his character was tested. If he lost his cool and scolded Li Jiancheng harshly, Shura Retreat’s morale would undoubtedly drop and cause the situation to deteriorate further.

He waved a hand and stopped Emperor Vastsea from speaking further. He ordered, “Go help Jiancheng and bring him back here. Victory and loss is commonplace in the martial dao world. Jiancheng has always been arrogant, so maybe this loss will be a good lesson and a wake up call for him.”

It was pure sophistry. Emperor Shura was depressed enough that he wanted to rampage crazily, but he had to force himself to say words he didn’t mean anyways.

Li Jiancheng wasn’t actually too badly injured. He could’ve walked back on his own. However, the loss was so wounding that he felt unable to face his master.

“Your disciple is useless. Please punish your disciple, master.” Li Jiancheng offered despondently.

Emperor Shura was angry that Li Jiancheng had failed to meet his expectations. He sighed. “Jiancheng oh Jiancheng, you didn’t lose because you were less skillful than your opponent. You lost because of underestimation in the end.”

Emperor Shura was a stubborn man. Any excuse for Jiancheng’s loss, other than a weaker cultivation level, would do. The great emperor would save face for Shura Retreat with any plausible reason whatsoever. Frankly speaking, he knew better than anyone that Li Jiancheng had underestimated his opponent at the beginning, but that the disciple had discarded the mindset quickly after receiving that girl’s first strike. The subsequent spear strike was clear indication that Li Jiancheng had fought at full strength. However, neither Emperor Shura nor Li Jiancheng had thought that Huang’er would be able to destroy the near perfect spear strike as easily as she had.

“Master, I... I find it really hard to accept this defeat!” Li Jiancheng complained. He still didn’t know how he had lost the fight. Why had his Shura Divine Spear been so easily caught by his opponent’s whip? The

whip seemed to have ignored the very laws of space itself and wrapped itself around his spear and body out of nowhere. Everything had been indescribably strange.

“Brother, even I think that Jiancheng’s loss is surprising. We underestimated that woman’s cultivation. She might even be more powerful than Jiancheng. However, there still has to be another reason why she managed to defeat Jiancheng so easily.” This time, it was Emperor Skysplitter who spoke up. As a great emperor, his depth of thought was deeper than others.

“He’s right, master. It’s as if that whip appeared out of nowhere and wrapped itself around me. Also, it felt charged with electricity. It was impossible to defend myself at all.” Li Jiancheng voiced his frustrations. He felt like the whip was the main reason he lost, not Huang’er.

Suddenly, Pill King Hui broke his silence with a raised eyebrow. “That whip is no ordinary weapon. Jiancheng, I believe you actually deserve that loss.”

Li Jiancheng was unhappy to hear this. “What do you mean I deserve the loss? I wouldn’t be afraid of her at all if we’d fought without using weapons.”

He was still confident in his own strength.

“You still would’ve lost to her even if you fought her without weapons.” Pill King Hui’s tone was direct. “Do you know where her whip comes from? Do you know the cause behind your defeat?”

“What are you trying to say, Pill King Hui? Whose side are you on?” Li Jiancheng said unhappily.

“Hmph! If I was on their side, this competition would’ve ended already. Shura Retreat would’ve lost a long while ago.” Pill King Hui was clearly displeased with Li Jiancheng’s comment. He was relaying the truth. Not only had Emperor Shura and Li Jiancheng fail to contribute much during the matches, Emperor Shura himself hadn’t managed to take a single victory thus far. For a great emperor plotting to seize power from another party, there was nothing more humiliating than this.

“Pill King Hui, where is that whip from?” Emperor Shura asked with astonishment. He didn’t think that the pill king would know of its origin.

Pill King Hui nodded slowly. “I’ve read about it in an ancient scripture before. In the ancient times, there was an amazing bamboo called the Astral Turquoise Bamboo, or the Supple Lightning Bamboo. This bamboo can be tough, flexible, long or short. When it hits an enemy, it paralyzes them as if they had been electrocuted.”

“What? That bamboo is an ancient divine object?” Emperor Shura’s expression turned ugly. “Who is that girl to possess an ancient divine object like that?”

“That woman probably hails from an extraordinary background. There sure are a lot of concealed talents in Sacred Peafowl Mountain.” Pill King Hui hadn’t come by this knowledge himself. He was simply repeating everything Emperor Pillzenith had told him via transmission. Emperor Pillzenith was supposed to contact Emperor Shura directly, but the latter’s consecutive losses made the former realize that Emperor Shura was an utterly unreliable cooperator. Disappointed, Emperor Pillzenith had sent the information to his own man instead.

Pill King Hui and Pill King Ce were his men through and through. He had raised and promoted them to their current standing. He'd sent them to Shura Retreat to aid Emperor Shura seize power from Sacred Peafowl Mountain and establish themselves in Veluriyam Capital. Emperor Pillzenith was an incredibly ambitious man, and his ultimate objective was to slowly take control of Veluriyam Capital as his men gained influence and power.

"Is an ancient divine object really this scary?" Emperor Vastsea looked a little confused. "My foundation is average, but it's not like I'm completely ignorant of the existence of these items. That fight though..."

"Of course, the Astral Turquoise Bamboo isn't the main reason behind Li Jiancheng's defeat. The biggest reason Li Jiancheng lost lies in his failure to see through the true essence of his opponent's martial dao."

"Oh?" Everyone sounded surprised when they heard this. Since when did Pill King Hui become so knowledgeable? He sounded like he knew the secrets of his opponent's martial dao.

"Pill King Hui, please enlighten us."

Pill King Hui nodded. "Simply put, it is a spatial dao. The girl was using an extremely high level space manipulation technique when she fought Li Jiancheng. Li Jiancheng thought that the whip appeared around his body and his weapon out of nowhere, but in reality she was just manipulating space to instantaneously have her weapon move wherever she wished. That's why her attacks were so bizarre."

"What? Spatial manipulation? Instantaneous movement?"

"That's right. This technique prevents you from glimpsing her attack trajectory. Since you didn't have a path to refer to, it is only natural that you were unable to predict her attacks. You wouldn't even be on guard until too late." Pill King Hui explained everything clearly.

Li Jiancheng was completely stunned. "I know a bit of space myself, but why didn't I sense any spatial manipulation at all during the battle, much less instantaneous movements?"

"Hehe. That means your so-called knowledge is superficial at best. That is why you don't understand your opponent's spatial dao at all." Pill King Hui replied indifferently.

Li Jiancheng opened his mouth but found himself speechless. Although Shura Retreat wasn't completely lacking in this area, their knowledge was indeed so superficial that they could only speak about it in general terms.

Even Emperor Shura himself couldn't find a way to refute Pill King Hui's statement because he wasn't versed in this particular dao. That being said, this dao wasn't completely invincible. For example, an expert could absolutely sense the changes in space with their powerful instinct. They could attack and defend accordingly no matter where the attacks came from.

Long story short, Li Jiancheng was just inferior to his enemy. If his cultivation and level of consciousness were stronger than his enemy's, he could've instinctively dodged out of the way even if he didn't understand her technique.

"Jiancheng, you must remember Pill King Hui's advice and learn from your mistake. Considering that girl's temperament, if you had attacked her with everything you got from the beginning, she may not have had the chance to retaliate against you. In the end, you are your own problem."

Emperor Shura didn't want to think about Li Jiancheng any longer. A loss was a loss. The great emperor had to face reality no matter how much he disliked it.

Li Jiancheng's loss meant that their earlier advantage was completely gone. This final round would literally decide everything. They were teetering on the cliff's edge and couldn't back down. If he couldn't claim a victory during this final round, Shura Retreat would be the ultimate loser of the competition. This sudden, dramatic change depressed everyone in Shura Retreat.

They never imagined that things would spiral down to such a state. Their score had become four wins, three draws and five losses after Li Jiancheng's loss. This rise and fall in charged emotion was simply too much.

Chapter 1227: The Final Battle

Even someone as steady a mindset as Emperor Shura was affected by the sudden contrasting mood. Prior to the two final rounds, he'd been so certain of his victory that he'd nearly celebrated in advance. But with Li Jiancheng's loss, the advantage that he held was now gone. He was now suddenly on the losing side.

Even though he was certain of his victory in the final round, what was the point when the win wouldn't serve no purpose? The Shura Retreat was in possession of four victories, three draws and five losses. Even if he won the final round, all it would do was make things even. Would he have the right to issue any more challenges when there were no conclusive results after thirteen rounds?

Many of the vassals had already begun to lean towards Sacred Peafowl Mountain. The constant surprises had won over many vassals, while Shura Retreat was inching towards their own doom.

Emperor Shura was burning with rage inside. However, there wasn't much he could do to fix the situation. He could only focus on winning the final round. His thoughts quickly shifted towards evil. For him to really make any gains out of this final round, he'd have to make the best out of a bad situation. He wanted to not just win against young lord Zhen, but the entire competition.

If I kill young lord Zhen, Sacred Peafowl Mountain will be without a leader again. As a foreign wanderer, Emperor Peerless will not be able to consolidate power once the brat is dead. Emperor Shura couldn't be bothered to worry about the Huang'er. Without young lord Zhen's presence, what were chances that the lass would work herself to the bones for Sacred Peafowl Mountain?

Emperor Shura was aware that young lord Zhen was the only reason Sacred Peafowl Mountain hadn't crumbled yet. The monkeys would naturally scatter once the tree had fallen. To get rid of Sacred Peafowl Mountain, all he needed to do was kill young lord Zhen. Emperor Shura was clear of any doubts once he arrived at this conclusion and walked gallantly towards the arena.

"Young lord Zhen, I shall await you in the arena. Don't show the world how much of a coward you are by not showing up. If you wish to prove that Sacred Peafowl Mountain's fortunes still exist, come up and duel me! Otherwise, no one in this capital will ever truly respect you!" Emperor Shura issued the challenge as he moved towards the stage.

He was worried that Jiang Chen would admit defeat without a fight and end the competition with a draw. Sacred Peafowl Mountain would definitely end up on top if that happened. Thus, the great emperor issued the challenge to agitate Jiang Chen from taking the easy way out.

The crowd from Shura Retreat immediately understood Emperor Shura's motives for saying such things and were deeply impressed. Sacred Peafowl Mountain was in a festive mood after Huang'er had clinched the victory. Their side only returned back to their senses when Emperor Shura issued the challenge.

"Young lord, the competition will end in a draw even if we don't entertain their challenge. They won't have the gall to challenge us again." Cloudsoar Monarch advised.

"Young lord, you needn't fight him. The world won't ridicule you even if you chose not to. A three-thousand-years old fart like him is issuing a challenge to a young man who isn't even thirty yet. He's the one who should be ashamed, not us!" Plumscore Monarch was deeply vexed by Emperor Shura's provocation.

"There's killing intent emanating from Emperor Shura. I believe he wants to kill you on stage." Emperor Peerless murmured as he assessed Emperor Shura.

"Young lord, we should give this round up."

"Let's give up. The people will understand. They won't blame you for not showing up." Almost everyone advised Jiang Chen to give up.

Jiang Chen raised his head slightly. There was a determined glint in his eyes as he watched Emperor Shura gloat on stage. He understood that challenging the great emperor with his current cultivation level was a little too reckless and that his opponent would certainly attempt to take his life.

Truth be told, he wasn't ready to face Emperor Shura head on yet, but it didn't mean that he would avoid the duel. He wasn't being stubborn. He'd long since laid down that he had to take this fight!

"Emperor Peafowl already foresaw these events when I was chosen as heir. Since the battle between Sacred Peafowl Mountain and Shura Retreat is unavoidable, I shall face him and put an end to this. We mustn't avoid this fight or else Shura Retreat will one day rise from the ashes again!"

If the thirteen round competition ended without a conclusion, Shura Retreat would definitely stir up trouble again in a future date. Jiang Chen didn't want Veluriyam Capital to fall into yet another internal conflict. This issue had to be settled today.

"Young lord! You're walking into Emperor Shura's trap!"

"Right! He's clearly trying to lure you onstage so that he can kill you! Young lord, your existence is vital to Sacred Peafowl Mountain! Losing you would spell the end of us!"

"Young lord, is it really worth it to take such a big risk?" The crowd panicked when they realized Jiang Chen's intentions. They didn't believe there was a need for the young lord to face Emperor Shura head on.

How could a youth less than thirty years old possibly compete against a seasoned great emperor who'd ascended for over three thousand years? They were clearly not on equal levels!

Unfortunately, Jiang Chen's mind was already set.

"Everyone, your advice is well-heeded, but an inner demon will surely manifest if I don't fight him. Don't worry, I have ways to escape if I'm truly no match for him. I won't let him take my life." Jiang Chen comforted the crowd.

"Young lord, Emperor Shura's cultivation is deep beyond measure. Even Emperor Peafowl was barely able to suppress him back in the day."

"Right! A great emperor's strength is beyond imagination. Young lord, you're still a youth after all..."

Jiang Chen burst into laughter. "And I'm hot-blooded precisely because of my youth! A shadow will be cast over my heart if I don't answer this call. Moreover, I wish to see just how powerful Emperor Shura is for myself!" He flew towards the arena after he was done speaking. He seemed as light as a soaring bird.

"This is the competition's thirteenth and final deciding round! Young lord Zhen will be facing against Emperor Shura!" Emperor Petalpluck announced after Jiang Chen set foot on the arena.

Emperor Shura was slightly surprised by Jiang Chen's acceptance. He'd initially thought that the brat would come up with excuses to turn down the fight. However, his opponent had accepted without any hesitation. A shadow of doubt crept over the great emperor's heart, even though he was completely certain of his victory just seconds ago.

Throughout the years, Emperor Peafowl was the only person in Veluriyam Capital who could cast a shadow in his dao heart. Now that Emperor Peafowl was no longer alive, he didn't think that anybody else could ever make his heart waver again.

However, the young lord had caused cracks to appear in his dao heart time and time again. Even though they were engaging in a martial duel, cracks were still appearing.

What on earth is going on? Am I really afraid of that brat? When Emperor Shura realized that a shadow had been cast on his heart, he immediately denied its existence. No! I merely lost in disciplines that don't truly matter! Those irrelevant tricks are the only things that he knows! In the end, martial dao is the discipline that speaks the loudest in our world!

Emperor Shura kept consoling himself. He couldn't believe that a young brat had caused him so much turmoil. He was a great emperor who had ascended for more than three thousand years, while his opponent was a youth that was still wet behind the ears, a toddler who'd just started walking! There was no reason for him to think that he'd lose in a duel like this.

Emperor Shura immediately silenced his mind and set his gaze on Jiang Chen. His incredibly imposing aura bore down on Jiang Chen the moment the young lord stepped onto the arena.

"As expected of a great emperor who has ascended for three thousand years. The pressure that you exude is truly impressive!" The weight of a mountain bore down on Jiang Chen's shoulders. However, he'd been mentally prepared the moment he walked onto the arena.

He would do whatever it took to face Emperor Shura head on. He wasn't pursuing a victory, but a draw. If Emperor Shura couldn't defeat him within four hours, Sacred Peafowl Mountain would be the winner in the competition. He'd accepted the duel just for the sake of achieving that goal.

“Young lord Zhen, I’m impressed by your courage. You have the resolve to die, don’t you, after setting foot into this arena?” Emperor Shura’s voice was filled with killing intent.

Jiang Chen reacted indifferently, as though he’d paid no heed to Emperor Shura.

Whoosh! Eight statues appeared around him when he stretched his arms, shielding him from eight different directions. He’d acquired these statues from the Prince of Shangping and had sensed a powerful will and aura from these statues back then.

The prince had only unearthed a sliver of their potential. After Jiang Chen acquired them, he’d created a formation to control these statues and unearth more of their potential. Even though he had yet to fully utilize the eight statues’ potential, their defensive capabilities had improved immensely under the command of the formation. By taking out the statues, he was clearly putting up a defensive stance.

Emperor Shura’s eyes brimmed with mockery. Defense? Do you really think that you can withstand my attacks?

Chapter 1228: Shocking Defenses

Emperor Shura wasn’t blindly arrogant. He was a great emperor of three thousand years! In his eyes, Jiang Chen was only a young genius at half-step emperor realm. Given the tremendous difference between them, he didn’t think it was possible his opponent could defend himself, even if the young lord dug his heels in.

Jiang Chen himself knew how difficult his task was. He took out and activated one of his Imperial Advent Defense Talismans without hesitation. Immense power from the talisman surged into his body. Blinding radiance from tadpole-like glyphs surrounded the space around him.

This wasn’t his first time using the Imperial Advent Defense Talisman.

One talisman could be used three to five times in total. The one in Jiang Chen’s hand had been gifted to him by Emperor Peafowl. He’d last used it in his fight against Demon Emperor Bloodmalva. The conflict ahead of him was arguably even more difficult than his last.

At the time, the demon emperor had only twenty to thirty percent of his original strength. Though Emperor Shura could not compare to Bloodmalva at his peak, he was perhaps at sixty-five percent the equivalent. This would be a hard fight.

However, the current Jiang Chen had a tremendous advantage compared to the previous him. In his skirmish with Demon Emperor Bloodmalva, he had only been half-step emperor realm. He was a solid emperor realm cultivator now.

After entering the second palace of the Six Palaces of the Heritage, he had broken through to a completely new realm. Furthermore, his acquisition of the Earth Bodhisattva Orb amplified his prowess for formations. Both of these factors bolstered Jiang Chen’s confidence for the battle ahead.

With the talisman in place, his defensive abilities equaled to that of a quasi-great emperor. He only had two hours or so for this use, but there was no problem in activating his talisman back to back. There were still three uses of his Imperial Advent Defense Talisman remaining, after all.

His tempered golden body meant that his flesh was resilient enough to endure the repeated uses of the talisman without any drawbacks, which was what made him different from other regular users of the talisman.

The Imperial Advent Defense Talisman wasn't a particularly rare one among emperor realm cultivators, but it tested the limits of one's physical body. Typically, a cultivator could only use it once before fatiguing. But twice wasn't necessarily even Jiang Chen's limit.

When he'd fought against Demon Emperor Bloodmalva, he'd used two Imperial Advent talismans in tandem—one Defense, one Onslaught. There was no chance he would've been able to fight on the demon emperor's level without them.

Emperor Shura frowned when he saw the talisman Jiang Chen had used. He swore internally at the absent Emperor Peafowl. Why had the emperor given him something so valuable?

"Do you really think that you can match a great emperor just because you've used an Imperial Advent Defense Talisman?" The ambitious emperor's tone was scornful. "You're merely a half-step emperor realm. Using that talisman will only hasten your demise. If this is the only card you have to play, then I'm rather disappointed."

This was a psychological attack. Jiang Chen didn't dignify him with a reply. He was very happy to keep Emperor Shura talking. The more the man prattled on for, the better. The young lord took advantage of this lull to covertly set up preparations.

The eight stone statues were his first line of defense. The Imperial Advent Defense Talisman, his second. His third was underway. A few hand seals was enough to activate his Crimson Heavens formation disk, causing lines of energy to rapidly surge underfoot.

"Hmm?" Emperor Shura frowned, sensing the shift in his surroundings.

The formation was fully in place!

The formation disk was able to imitate all ten great formations of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. The one currently active was the Eight Trigram Boulder Formation. It was a formation purely focused on defense and protected everything within from all cardinal directions with impenetrable stone.

The lack of offensive power was a reasonable trade-off for its incredible durability. Opponents several times stronger than the user would be hard-pressed to break through such a formation. But also due to its potency, the formation was very costly in terms of spirit stone expenditure.

Jiang Chen had simulated the formation in his consciousness several times before he deploying it in the field. The Eight Trigram Boulder Formation wasn't the most lethal of the formation disk's ten, but it was definitely the most expensive.

It was an earth-attribute formation, and thus consumed earth-attribute spirit stones in massive quantities. Jiang Chen's stores were equally massive, but mindless expenditure in the heat of battle was nevertheless painful. His Nine Sparks Petalstorm Formation had cost him a fortune already. Still, he wasn't actually worried about the number of spirit stones he had.

He had chosen the Eight Trigram Boulder Formation for another more important reason. His newfound treasure, the Earth Bodhisattva Orb, was an earth-attribute treasure from the ancient era. It held a terrifying amount of energy within. It was one of the reasons why Jiang Chen dared challenge Emperor Shura.

The formation was mobilized at the movement of the disk. Faint light barriers rose all around Jiang Chen, translucent and half-visible. Stony formation-walls flickered into place, displaying the youth's determination.

The Eight Trigram Boulder Formation was connected to the stone statues on the outer ring, unifying with them into a single defense formation. The statues were backed up by the formation, and the formation directed the statues.

Jiang Chen stood fearlessly at the core of the formation, glancing at Emperor Shura coolly. He was afraid of nothing. The emperor hadn't yet moved because he was brewing up a storm. He needed a thunderclap to strike down his opponent in a single blow. In the same instant as the formation's completion, Emperor Shura's attack came.

His fists whipped up wind, ripping space asunder. The boxing aura from the fists smashed into the air in front of Jiang Chen in the next moment. The space around the arena was in flux. Countless spirit energy vortices roiled about, their noises ear-piercingly shrill. All of the observers felt their ears ring.

Strangely, the boxing aura seemed to have gone no further. An indistinct barrier of air absorbed all of the delivered force. Aside from a momentary wavering in the ocher light surrounding it, the wall was practically undamaged. There wasn't a single crack on it.

"Hmm?"

Despite it being only one punch, its momentum had shaken everyone's hearts. But what followed was even more shocking: the powerful attack hadn't done a thing to young lord Zhen's defensive bastion! Eyes were widened and breaths became ragged.

"How can this be?"

"He didn't break through young lord Zhen's defenses?"

"Is Emperor Shura just warming up? Is he being polite?"

"Ridiculous. Young lord Zhen's defensive formation is what's remarkable here."

"The formation? That can't be right. When did young lord Zhen set up a formation? I didn't see him do it."

"Way to show off your ignorance. You don't always need to set up a formation. There's a little something called a formation disk that can simulate one out of nothing. Though the simulated version isn't as strong as the real thing, it's still very powerful."

"A formation disk? Does young lord Zhen have something that amazing?"

"That has to be the case. Even the best formation masters wouldn't be able to set up a formation in so short a time under everyone's noses otherwise."

“Tsk tsk, what formation is this? It blocked Emperor Shura’s punch! No wonder young lord Zhen was so confident. He was fine with this fight because he has an ace up his sleeve!”

Emperor Shura had thrown his punch with astonishing force. None of the observing great emperors would have wanted to take a similar attack head on.

Emperor Peerless knotted his eyebrows. “Emperor Shura’s strength more than matches his name. He’s a vicious one, alright, and hard to beat.”

Geng Qianzhang gulped. “Old Brother Mo, does young lord Zhen have a chance?”

It was the same question the four monarchs wanted to ask. However, they’d considered it too idiotic to actually do so. They had to keep up appearances, after all.

Emperor Peerless shook his head. “Looks like young lord Zhen is taking a defensive approach. He’s not looking to win, but rather to tie.”

“A draw is fine,” Cloudsoar Monarch suddenly interjected. “If it’s a draw, then Sacred Peafowl Mountain will be declared the winner of these thirteen rounds.”

“That’s right.” Wildfox Monarch’s eyes lit up. “No wonder the young lord has remained so calm all this time. He’s already taken all thirteen rounds into account. Did he... stake everything on this final draw?”

This comment piqued everyone’s collective curiosity.

Plumscore Monarch looked pleased. “If that’s the case, then young lord Zhen is a cunning strategist. It was wise of Emperor Peafowl to have made him young lord.”

Though Emperor Coiling Dragon was ordinarily verbose and chatty, he was oddly silent for the present. Both his eyes were fixated upon the stage.

“Daoist Void, do you think that young lord Zhen will be able to end this round in a draw?” In the end, the emperor couldn’t resist asking his fellow.

Emperor Void was equally attentive to the proceedings. He looked thoughtful at the question. “Young lord Zhen only executes plans that have an almost certain likelihood of success. Honestly, I can’t begin to guess at how many trump cards he has. However, Emperor Shura’s punch is definitely only an appetizer. He hasn’t used any of his signature moves yet.”

“Yes, but I’d wager that to be the case for young lord Zhen as well. The young man’s formation looks quite extraordinary. How can it be this resilient?” Emperor Coiling Dragon tried to pump up Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s other supporters through his analysis.

Chapter 1229: Emperor Shura About to Lose His Mind

The battle had just begun. Neither Emperor Coiling Dragon nor Emperor Void could easily come to a conclusion. However, Jiang Chen’s formation was a surefire shot of faith in everyone. At least it wasn’t likely to be one-sided, like everyone had first expected. Young lord Zhen hadn’t folded like paper to Emperor Shura. In fact, it didn’t like he was planning on giving up any time soon.

Shura Retreat and its affiliates had a drastically different reaction to the affair. There was widespread surprise and consternation at the sight of the emperor's punch being stopped cold. This turn of events was difficult for many to accept.

Even Emperor Pillzenith in the guest area displayed an intense frown. He found the events that were occurring to be completely incomprehensible. "Is this Zhen kid really related to Myriad Abyss Island after all? How can the human domain produce a genius as monstrous as him otherwise?"

Pillfire's ruling emperor was thoroughly unnerved. Veluriyam's young lord had stunned him one too many times. His heart had been unsettled beyond its limits. During their bout for the Longevity Pill, it was this youth that had struck a decisive blow against Pillfire City. Pill King Ji Lang's legendary invincibility had been shattered on that day.

His flair at the Moon God Sect and rescue of their Precious Tree only added insult to injury, though perhaps not intentionally.

Finally, there were the rumors of the Pinecrane Pill, a miracle pill by any stretch of one's imagination. More seriously, the rumors had been verified!

His pill dao aside, the kid also had a true dragon as his contracted spirit creature. His skill in formations made him a force to be reckoned with there as well. Furthermore, he had tied with Emperor Shura in talismans!

That the kid was holding his own against the current strongest man in Veluriyam Capital, Emperor Shura, in a martial arena... He wasn't using his true cultivation, of course. A formation and various potent items were bolstering his abilities. Still, a young genius who was less than thirty years old was fighting against a three-thousand-year great emperor on nearly equal terms. That itself was legendary!

Most importantly, Emperor Shura's fully charged fist hadn't even managed to break through his opponent's defenses. The punch hadn't contained the emperor's most masterful work. It had possibly been a sounding kind of punch. However, it had also been anything but ordinary.

If the attack had landed on any emperor realm cultivator, they would die on the spot if they didn't have any defenses activated. His experiences recently had informed him well enough. Emperor Pillzenith couldn't contain his tinge of fear.

This kid is so talented, and yet he's not even thirty. If he's allowed to have another three or five decades, won't he take over the entire human domain?

I can't let him grow unhindered any more. I can't allow him to rule Veluriyam Capital. Otherwise, given enough time, this city will become Pillfire's greatest threat. He will consume the fortunes of my great city!

Emperor Pillzenith's concern wasn't baseless. He could foresee it quite clearly. Once young lord Zhen was allowed to mature, the frigid relationship between Pillfire City and Veluriyam Capital would make the former his first goal of conquest. Who was worthy to stand in his way?

A threat as grave as he had to be snuffed out in the cradle.

Not too far from Emperor Pillzenith, Han Qianzhan from the Great Yu Skysword Sect slapped his thigh. "Good, good, good!" he roared with hearty laughter. "I've always thought that young lord Zhen was a pill dao genius, but he has the martial dao talent to match. Among the younger generation of the Upper Eight Regions, he is surely the most excellent!"

Han Qiansui nodded in agreement. "Brother, it was wise for us to make friends with young lord Zhen. From what I've seen here, his meteoric rise is both astonishing and unstoppable. Whether or not he can weather this particular storm in the end, Shura Retreat will be the loser regardless. How can anyone from Veluriyam Capital ignore such a young lord as him?"

"You're exactly right," laughed Han Qianzhan. "I don't think it'll be easy for Emperor Shura."

Sect Head Su Huanzhen suddenly cut in from the side. "Emperor Shura won't win this one."

"Oh? Why do you think that's the case?" Han Qianzhan smiled cheerfully at the female sect head. Being in the same generation, he knew that this woman and Emperor Peafowl were old paramours. Perhaps the sect head was just offering her personal support?

Emperor Pillzenith cocked an ear. He wanted to know why Su Huanzhen was so certain about it. How could Emperor Shura fail to crush a young genius? That was patently ridiculous.

"Young lord Zhen's formation is superbly masterful," said Su Huanzhen coolly. "It is very well composed, and its components interlock together perfectly. Even I as an observer can't divine its secrets. Emperor Shura is face to face with it now, so it'll be even more difficult for him."

The round had a four-hour time limit. If Emperor Shura failed to break through the formation in that time, then he would be forced to draw with his opponent.

All on Shura Retreat's side looked quite serious. The eyes of its supporters spun around in their sockets, intently following every move on the stage.

You have to win, Daoist Shura. Emperor Vastsea prayed silently. Given the current circumstances, Emperor Shura was completely done for if he failed to win this round.

Emperor Vastsea couldn't lose because he couldn't afford to. All of his machinations would be for naught. The Shura Retreat would lose the right to challenge Sacred Peafowl Mountain for eternity. If it couldn't beat its loftier rival without Emperor Peafowl around, what claim could it have to the ruling power's seat any longer?

"Master will definitely win." Li Jiancheng glared daggers at the arena, both eyes radiating a fierce light. He almost wanted to step up and help; he wanted to rend young lord Zhen limb from limb.

If one had to pick out someone present who hated Jiang Chen the most, Li Jiancheng would probably be at the top of the list. His embarrassing defeat at Huang'er's hands had ingrained itself into him as an eternal shame. Naturally, he hated Huang'er quite a bit, but he despised Jiang Chen all the more.

If not for the contemptible young lord Zhen in his way, Shura Retreat would have long taken over from Sacred Peafowl Mountain! The present problems would be nonexistent. He was angry and envious. He was absolutely jealous of young lord Zhen, and how an impossibly beautiful girl like Huang'er had given him her heart unreservedly.

He was jealous of the fact that young lord Zhen was an expert in every field. It seemed like he could do everything.

He was jealous that a kid who was half-step emperor realm—or just past its doorstep, at most—could fight on even terms with his master. These thoughts became demons in Li Jiancheng's heart, driving him to the edge of madness.

Onstage, Emperor Shura was equally as mad as his disciple. He'd followed up his initial punch with a full combo of his Monstrous Spirit Fist. He had moved with the destructiveness of a demon breaking out from hell, raining a tempest of flurries upon his foe.

But the formation had repaired each and every one of the small cracks in its fabric. No matter how quickly Emperor Shura struck, he could not shatter the formation's defense. The most annoying part of all this was the eight-statue system. The statues behaved as real guardians, improving their rapport with each passing moment.

Emperor Shura wanted to charge in himself, but was stopped cold by the outer ring before he could try. His boxing aura left scars on the statues, but they were minor injuries at most. The constructs seemed unaffected. Moreover, his damage to them regenerated over time. Any wound on them immediately began to grow smaller and fainter until it disappeared.

"What the hell are these abominable things?" Emperor Shura was driven into a frenzy.

The eight statues weren't very quick, but the arena was only so big. They locked down all cardinal directions. Young lord Zhen was well-protected despite their comparative sluggishness.

Emperor Shura's attacks were very destructive, but he couldn't deliver a lethal blow to any the eight statues. The fight being dragged out so much hurt morale quite a bit.

In this moment, Emperor Shura wanted to feast on Jiang Chen's flesh. The Monstrous Spirit Fist couldn't substantially threaten the defenses. The great emperor's face swelled with rage.

"You, brat Zhen, you over there. Did Emperor Peafowl teach you how to hide inside a turtle shell?" The ambitious emperor was almost at his boiling point and couldn't resist a taunt.

Jiang Chen broke out into laughter when he heard it.

"You can't tell me that you only have this little skill, Shura! Aren't you a great emperor?"

"I'm just warming up!" retorted Emperor Shura angrily. "Don't think that you can stop my path towards victory with just a formation. Today, I will teach you that Sacred Peafowl Mountain is worthless without Emperor Peafowl. You! You are worthless."

The emperor was grasping at straws a little.

Even Emperor Peafowl hadn't made Emperor Shura lose his composure so. The absent emperor was a courteous man and never forced his lesser peers into situations of discomfort.

Jiang Chen was done with niceties. "If Sacred Peafowl Mountain isn't worth anything, then I suppose Shura Retreat, that can't beat us, has negative value."

There was widespread glee in the audience at those words. That's right. The current score favored Sacred Peafowl Mountain. They had won five rounds so far, but Shura Retreat had only won four. How could Emperor Shura call Sacred Peafowl Mountain worthless when Shura Retreat showed worse performance? Didn't that make them worse than worthless?

Chapter 1230: The Rain of Blood Technique

Emperor Shura's expression was a direct reflection of his feelings. Extreme fury. The great emperor's demonic slaughter dao was the same killing art as Gao Zhan and Li Jiancheng's. However, Emperor Shura was far more powerful than his disciples, especially being a great emperor.

The great emperor exuded a fey, purplish-red glow that seemed to be the fires of hell. Fully charged with terrifying bloodthirst, Emperor Shura flexed his hand to grip a purple flash of bloody light. A demonic blade leaking the stench of blood and emanating a stunning presence appeared in his hand.

Is that the Shura Blood Blade? Jiang Chen had previously fought against Emperor Shura's disciple Gao Shan. The disciple had wielded an equally murderous demonic blade. The one in Emperor Shura's hand seemed at least ten times stronger than Gao Zhan's and seemed to be the avatar of an ancient demon god.

The blade took in and spat out shocking quantities of bloodthirsty intent every time it pulsed. Even from a distance, anyone who looked at it felt like their qi and blood were going awry, and their consciousness threatened to scatter at any moment.

Looks like Emperor Shura is going to use an ultimate technique. Jiang Cheng was on guard. His opponent was plainly determined to prevent him from easily getting through the round. Luckily, he was prepared to face any difficulties.

Emperor Shura's killing intent climbed to new heights with a weapon in hand. He seemed to be an ancient demon god who'd barrelled out of hell. Bloody light surged as the edge of the great emperor's blade transformed into a crescent of light, crashing onto the formation.

The light was so swift and powerful that it almost outstripped the ability of the vassals beneath the arena to follow it. The slash was completely different from the aura attack of a punch. The attack possessed incredible sharpness and the power to cut through air itself.

Light rapidly approached a stone sculpture's neck. But before it could do so, Jiang Chen made a hand seal and formed an armor of earth energy around the sculpture with the Earth Bodhisattva Orb.

A harsh, metallic noise shrieked into everyone's ears, causing temporary deafness. The elemental armor was instantly torn apart. The attack left a deep mark in the stone sculpture's neck. If the armor hadn't nullified half of the offensive energy, the attack would've gone in much deeper.

"What a powerful strike!" Jiang Chen gasped after witnessing the sheer power of the blade. He knew just how tough the eight stone sculptures were. Normal attacks wouldn't be able to damage them at all; they'd leave just faint marks at most, not a deep mark like this. He didn't think that the attack was powerful enough to cut a sculpture in half with one hit, but Emperor Shura might very well manage it if he followed up with a few consecutive strikes.

Even Jiang Chen had to respect Emperor Shura's demonic blade for its sheer offensive power.

He was very confident in the stone sculptures' defensive capabilities. Their mobility was average, but their ability to take hits had never failed to meet his expectations. However, Emperor Shura's strike had changed his opinion. Truly, there were no such thing as an indestructible defense in this world.

Jiang Chen grew even warier at this thought. He knew full well that that strike wasn't Emperor Shura's strongest attack. The great emperor certainly had more tricks up his sleeves.

As expected, Emperor Shura didn't lose his cool despite feeling irritated by his failure to cut down the stone sculpture with one move. A second stroke, a third, a fourth...

The attacks surged towards Jiang Chen like a burst dam. Emperor Shura had flown into a true rage now. The technique he was displaying was one of his trump cards, so powerful that even a great emperor would have to avoid the full brunt of the attack.

Emperor Void fixated on Emperor Shura with an extremely solemn look.

"Daoist Void, is that the Shura Rain of Blood technique?" Emperor Coiling Dragon couldn't help but ask. He was a newly ascended great emperor. Moreover, he'd never gotten a chance to spar against Emperor Shura, unlike Emperor Void when he'd rose to power.

Emperor Void nodded slightly, heavily. "Emperor Shura's technique was incomplete at the time, but it would seem that he has fixed that weakness now."

Beside him, Emperor Peerless' forehead also creased. "So Emperor Shura isn't all talk after all. Even I would've to avoid him if an opportunity presented itself."

Emperor Peerless didn't mean that he was inferior to Emperor Shura. He meant that he'd have no choice but to fight defensively if Emperor Shura were to execute this technique in battle. There was no way he could fight fire with fire and bear the brunt of Emperor Shura's attack head on.

Emperor Void apparently had deep feelings about this technique. "Emperor Peafowl is the only one in the entire Veluriyam Capital who can suppress this technique head on."

"Is that so? Shura tried to challenge Emperor Peafowl using this technique before?" Emperor Coiling Dragon's eyes lit up with curiosity.

"He did. Back then, Emperor Shura couldn't wait for full mastery and charged off half-cocked to try the new technique out on Daoist Peafowl." Emperor Void's tone took a heavy bent as he spoke of the matters in the past.

"And? What happened?" Emperor Coiling Dragon asked urgently.

Emperor Peerless' curiosity was also piqued.

"What happened?" Emperor Void sneered and shook his head dismissively. "It took Daoist Peafowl only one feather to suppress the technique completely."

"One feather?"

“That’s right. One feather from a peafowl.” Emperor Void sighed. “Daoist Peafowl dismantled the technique and completely suppressed Shura in just three moves. After that battle, Emperor Shura never challenged Daoist Peafowl to a spar ever again.”

Emperor Peafowl defeating Emperor Shura with one peafowl feather and three moves must have been a devastating blow.

“Emperor Peafowl is truly amazing.” Emperor Coiling Dragon sighed.

“Daoist Peafowl is undoubtedly powerful. However, he also told me one thing very seriously after that battle.” Emperor Void wore an incredibly complicated look. “He said me that I should never attempt to meet this technique head on!”

So even Emperor Peafowl felt the technique was quite powerful. He wouldn’t have given such advice otherwise. This worried those on the Sacred Peafowl Mountain side. Could young lord Zhen really endure a technique that’d won high praise from Emperor Peafowl himself?

Emperor Shura’s technique had been incomplete when he issued a challenge to Emperor Peafowl. The man today fought like he’d unbarred the gates of hell. Could young lord Zhen really endure the might of a great emperor this powerful? Could he really hold the line?

Even Emperor Peerless, despite his earlier optimism, was starting to worry for the young lord. Even he couldn’t tell if Jiang Chen could survive the attack.

Emperor Shura’s murderous aura had reached its peak. He was the most bloodthirsty Shura demon god to ever exist in the field. Every slash seemed capable of ending countless lives.

The pressure that Jiang Chen had to endure increased dramatically when facing a berserk Emperor Shura. If the great emperor had stuck to the same fist technique from earlier, there would be no increased pressure. However, the blade technique was on an entirely different level. It possessed a sharp aura with a unique presence that made it feel like it could cut through anything.

Every time a slash came a stone sculpture’s way, Jiang Chen had to pay an enormous price to prevent it from being sliced in half. The most frightening aspect of this technique was its ability to gather all killing intent into one focal point and create a demonic slaughter field. All living things trapped inside the field would be ground to dust.

“Come out and take a hit from me if you dare, Zhen! You’re shaming Emperor Peafowl’s sterling reputation with your cowardice!” Emperor Shura sounded like a murderous demon god, his words brimming with wrath and violence.

Jiang Chen knew that Emperor Shura was trying to provoke him. However, he wasn’t the sort to let blood rush into his head. He didn’t think he could take even three hits if he were to abandon his current setup and face Emperor Shura head on. The only thing he could lean on now was the layers upon layers of defenses he’d set up for this battle.

Jiang Chen was able to hold on through the great emperor’s fierce attacks thanks to the Eight Trigram Boulder Formation, the stone sculptures, and the Earth Bodhisattva Orb. All he wanted was a draw. That was enough to win Sacred Peafowl Mountain everything. So no matter how hard Emperor Shura tried to provoke him, Jiang Chen simply turned a deaf ear and focused on preserving his airtight defenses. His

defenses were indeed nearly a perfect setup. Although it drained him greatly to maintain them, Emperor Shura found it insurmountably difficult to break through even after employing a trump card.

The Rain of Blood technique churned up bloody winds and gory downfall. Each strike was a summons from hell, and each blow acute imparted the feeling of dancing between life and death. If Jiang Chen hadn't cultivated the Boulder's Heart, his consciousness might've quickly collapsed under the technique's thick bloodthirst.