

Three Realms 311

Chapter 311: A Massacre Between Two Kings

It was a good thing that the enormously strong creature wasn't paying attention to its surroundings and it hadn't detected that a human was hiding in the neighboring rocks.

The sounds of thunder rumbled through the rock as the being moved further and further away, until it disappeared.

Jiang Chen sighed slightly, "The spirit creatures of the Valley of Destruction are really strong. Although many fortuitous encounters await the secular disciples in this valley, danger also looks behind every corner."

He finally knew why no one would be eliminated in this trial.

Was there a need to eliminate people? How many would make it out alive?

What was the point of eliminating anyone with such a high mortality rate?

Jiang Chen was almost starting to wonder if even three thousand would survive from the eight thousand that had entered the valley.

The four sects had said they wanted to select three thousand people to enter the sects, but Jiang Chen felt that not even three thousand would survive after this trial.

But of course, this was a pessimistic estimation.

"I don't need to worry about these things. Everyone has their own fortune and we all walk our own paths. I, Jiang Chen, must focus on my own road."

Jiang Chen thought no more of the matter after his thoughts had travelled here.

However, after that enormous disturbance, Jiang Chen was even more cautious.

It didn't seem like the world below ground was that much safer either. The one behind that disturbance was something not in the slightest bit inferior to the Fire Raven King.

This kind of creature could very well threaten his life, so it was logical for Jiang Chen to be so cautious.

A lotus vine squeezed out of the rock wall in a nondescript corner of the cliff, probing the proximity whilst Jiang Chen remained hidden in the crack in the wall.

His scalp tingled with numbness as he gazed downwards with the God's Eye.

Everything was charred cinders, like it was the aftermath of Armageddon. There wasn't the slightest bit of green or life that greeted the eye.

It was like this area had been abandoned by the heavens and had become a barren wasteland in the universe.

Jiang Chen once again looked at the mountain face with the Cloudflame Flower. Complete destruction was present, the flower no longer existed.

The most frightening thing was that there were countless criss-crossing gouges and deep swipes on the pockmarked mountain face. It looked like a strong power had raked over it as the gouges were several meters deep.

Jiang Chen was flabbergasted by the destruction.

To create such deep and long gouges on the mountain face meant that it wasn't an ordinary powerhouse that created them.

Jiang Chen knew that this was something that he never would've been able to do. It wasn't hard to form gouges on the rock walls, what was difficult was to create such organized, deep, and long gouges.

They didn't look like they'd been done on purpose, but they were natural traces left by a strong creature walking past.

"Just what happened here?" Jiang Chen dumbly looked at the tattered surroundings as he murmured to himself.

Through the God's Eye, he could tell that there was no life left in the surroundings. It was like the Fire Ravens and the strong lifeform had never existed.

Or, perhaps this strong power had vanished with the arrival of this scene of desolate devastation.

"Impossible!" Jiang Chen didn't believe his eyes. If such a power could make all the Fire Ravens disappear in a second, it would be simply too frightening.

Jiang Chen squirmed out of the crack in the wall and he had the sudden feeling that he was the only one left beneath the heavens as he trod upon the cracked, burnt earth.

There was still a bit of warmth left in the earth beneath his feet, seeming to remind Jiang Chen that it hadn't been long since this scene had taken place.

Charred soil greeted his eyes wherever he walked. The vast forest had been reduced to cinders and the towering trees had been reduced to ashes.

The closest things that he could find to life were the countless number of skeletons. He could judge from their shapes whether they were humans or spirit creatures.

When he looked at this scene of utter destruction, Jiang Chen could only sigh. He'd seen at least a hundred skeletons on his way.

And this was only the area that he was passing through. Given that there was a radius of a hundred li, the numbers of those who died was surely greater than three thousand.

Jiang Chen met swift time. He wasn't met with any harassment or danger along the way.

It seemed that all of those alive in that radius had been burnt to death, and all life had been buried in the rampaging flames.

"The Cloudfire Flower is gone and the Fire Ravens are also gone... just what happened here?" Jiang Chen's mind was full of questions.

However, he was a broad-minded person and so even though he hadn't obtained the Cloudflame Flower, he didn't feel particularly regretful. All gains and losses were up to fortune and luck.

Even though he hadn't obtained the Flower, it didn't seem to be such a bad thing now.

When he looked at the scene of misery and suffering, and the skeletons strewn all over the ground, he rejoiced in that at least he was still alive.

To have the ability to travel through the end of the world after all of this had hit, he felt a kind of happiness that was something that the skeletons lying on the ground didn't have —

The happiness of living.

As for the Cloudflame Flower, since it was destined not to be his, Jiang Chen naturally didn't care much about it.

Although the item was nice, it wasn't as good as being alive.

When he walked a bit more, Jiang Chen suddenly took a sniff. He had fully extended all his senses and he had abruptly detected a hint of blood in the charbroiled air.

Although this hint of blood was faint, seeming to be far away, Jiang Chen was certain that it absolutely was blood.

Practitioners were very sensitive.

"The scent of blood is in the air, is there a battle taking place?" The thought flashed through Jiang Chen's mind as he quickly followed that hint of blood.

The fires had raged for a hundred li for three days and nights, so logically speaking, there should be nothing left alive after this. Without living creatures, why would there be a battle?

"Can it be the Fire Ravens? Or have more humans barged in?"

He considered it carefully and felt that it wasn't quite right. The few survivors lucky enough to be alive would be scrambling to leave this destroyed area, how would they dare come in here?

"Hmm? What's that?" Jiang Chen could smell the blood scent becoming heavier and heavier. His God's Eye suddenly wavered as he saw blood spots on the road in front of him.

Jiang Chen followed the blood forward and he suddenly halted his footsteps.

There were many corpses on the path in the plains in front of him — the Fire Ravens.

Each Fire Raven was the size of a human being, but these Fire Ravens were all in an exceedingly gruesome state at the moment. It looked like they'd been hit by some enormous power and they were all a bloody mess.

Some had even been flattened into a meat pancake.

If it wasn't for their unique red feathers and the sharp beaks, Jiang Chen probably wouldn't even have been able to recognize that these corpses had been those proud Fire Ravens from a few days ago.

“The Fire Ravens alright!” Jiang Chen’s heart grew stern, the memories from the past three days resurfacing in his mind. How arrogant and surefire had the Ravens been then?

They’d been high spirited and vigorous, considering themselves to be without peers three days ago. They’d practically been the ultimate ruler of this area with the leadership of the Fire Raven King.

However, their corpses were now haphazardly thrown all over the ground, and judging from the looks of things, there were at least three to five hundred corpses along the path.

What kind of frightening power was this that it’d been able to slaughter almost five hundred Fire Ravens like this?

Cold strands grew in Jiang Chen’s heart as he looked at this scene.

This didn’t halt his forward progress however. The more bizarre things were, the more he wanted to investigate the matter.

Chirp chirp chirp chirp!

Ear piercing chirps suddenly disturbed Jiang Chen’s thoughts. He wasn’t unfamiliar with these chirps — they were from the Fire Ravens.

These chirps seemed extremely anxious and even panicked at the moment. In addition, judging from their numbers, it seemed that a large group of them was chirping at the same time.

“What’s going on?” Jiang Chen could tell from these sounds that the Fire Ravens were all hurtling in the same direction without care for anything else.

Things seemed rather urgent.

“I’m going to go take a look.” Jiang Chen came to this conclusion and he also moved swiftly in that direction.

Roughly thirty li away from his current location, an uncountable amount of Fire Ravens were circling anxiously over a destroyed and desolate patch of land.

The Fire Raven King that Jiang Chen had seen last time was also here. What was different was that he was covered with injuries, and many of them kept seeping blood. His proud, flame red feathers were also askew and he looked quite bedraggled.

However, even though he’d lost the look of a king, the Fire Raven King was still just as ferocious. His feathers were all upright and his vicious gaze was nailed firmly on the ground, brutal and ruthless.

There was an enormous spirit creature on the ground almost a hundred meters long. It was crouched on the ground and panting heavily.

It kept snorting heavily and sending the dust on the ground flying all over the place.

The beast was enormous and its waist was four or five buckets thick. It was covered with red scales and each of them gleamed with a cold, sinister light.

“Stupid bird, so I stole one of your Cloudflame Flowers, is there a need to fight to the death for it?” The enormous creature panted as it asked lowly.

The Fire Raven King was incensed, “Idiot bug, don’t you know that this Cloudflame Flower is my only hope of assailing the saint rank? Your theft of my flower is destroying my only hope of advancing. I want you to die and then I will swallow your flesh and blood!”

“Pfft, you? Half of your children and descendants are dead and you yourself only have half a life left, and you still want to kill me? When did a peak of the spirit rank dare speak so loftily as to kill me, a saint rank spirit creature?” The enormous creature’s tone was filled with disdain.

The Raven King sneered, “Saint rank creature? That’s right, you are of the saint rank, but don’t think that I can’t see that your life is at an end and your cultivation is about to dissipate. This is why you threw caution to the winds to seize my Cloudflame Flower in an attempt to slow down your cultivation draining away. It’s a pity that your strength and noble bloodline are still no match for age in the end. You’re old, so old that you can’t even handle me of the peak of the spirit rank. So today will be the day of your death!”

The Fire Raven’s tone was full of hate and killing intent.

Chapter 312: Desperate Battle, Each With Their Own Plans

This enormous creature was a saint rank spirit creature?

Jiang Chen hid himself and observed from afar. He couldn’t help but glance at the enormous creature when he heard the Fire Raven King’s words.

A name immediately floated up in his mind — the Redscaled Firelizard.

As an offshoot of the ancient dragon tribes, there was indeed a bit of the dragons’ lineage within their bloodlines. Although it had been continuously diluted through the generations, the Redscaled Firelizard still possessed many of the dragon tribe’s characteristics.

The scales on its body, for instance, were formed in a shape unique to the dragon tribe.

Its limbs, although slightly different from the dragon tribe’s claws and possessing far less attacking power, was still quite similar in form to the dragons.

Regardless of how diluted their lineage had become, they were still the descendants of dragons.

Therefore, the Redscaled Firelizard possessed heaven defying strength, and equally incredible potential to ascend. Being at the saint rank, it was equivalent to one of the old origin realm monsters overseeing the selection.

A saint rank sounded quite impressive, but when considering a dragon lineage, the level of this Redscaled Firelizard was actually rather low.

The fact that this Firelizard was about to die at the saint rank indicated that it had a minuscule amount of a dragon’s lineage within its body.

Otherwise, with the might of the dragon lineage, it shouldn’t have stopped at just the saint rank.

When a saint rank spirit creature passed on, it would've usually lived for at least ten thousand years.

After all, spirit creatures enjoyed a longer lifespan than humans.

If a human origin realm practitioner didn't run afoul of disaster, they could usually live for three to five thousand years. Luckier ones lived for seven to eight thousand years. There were even rumors of ones living past ten thousand years.

In contrast, under normal circumstances, spirit creatures would live for even longer.

Whether a spirit creature or a human practitioner, when the end of their lifespans approached, it was unavoidable that their cultivation would slowly dissipate. They would revert back to a mortal being, finally withering away and dying of natural causes.

Judging from the Raven King's words, the sun was setting on the Redscaled Firelizard. It was nearing the end of its life.

It was also obviously unwilling to accept the fact that its cultivation would slowly start to dissipate.

Even if it was an old monster that had lived for tens of thousands of years, it still couldn't face death noncommittally. Before the light in its eyes would fully extinguish and it had passed on, it would continue to struggle.

Jiang Chen suddenly recalled that he'd felt a strong disturbance in the ground when he'd still been traveling through the depths of the rocks.

Now that he thought about it, that must've been the Redscaled Firelizard moving.

It must've been targeting the Cloudflame Flower.

The Redscaled Firelizard must've been pursued all along the way because it'd stolen the Flower. The dead Fire Ravens along the way was also most likely because of the Firelizard.

The Cloudflame Flower was a heavenly treasure, and if the Firelizard swallowed it, it would indeed nourish it to a certain point and decrease the rate at which its cultivation would dissipate, slowing the arrival of death.

However, to the Raven King, the Cloudflame Flower was its life, the key point of whether or not it'd be able to evolve to the saint rank.

It had naturally flown into a rage after the Flower had been stolen and brought the entirety of the Fire Raven army down in hot pursuit.

They'd fought continuously along the way and had finally stopped the Redscaled Firelizard.

At the battle's end, both sides were grievously injured, unable to dispatch the other with another blow.

As strong as the Raven King was and as numerous as its descendants were, at the end of the day, he was still at the peak of the spirit rank. His advantage lay in the numbers of his army and his agility.

The effectiveness of a peak of the spirit rank was largely mitigated when faced with a saint rank spirit creature. Therefore, it couldn't do away with the Firelizard all at once.

Although the Firelizard was a saint rank creature, its candle was nearly burnt out, and was barely clinging on with its claws. It was highly likely that half its cultivation had already been lost.

It was because its current level of cultivation was only twenty, perhaps thirty percent of its peak that it had been run into the ground by the Fire Ravens.

Otherwise, with the Firelizard's usual level of cultivation, wiping out the Fire Ravens would've been a matter of minutes.

"A saint rank spirit creature is indeed something not to run afoul of. A saint rank creature in the last stages of life is still strong enough to kill half of the Fire Ravens. It looks like as fierce as the Raven King is, he doesn't have much of an upper hand."

Jiang Chen could tell that although the Firelizard was heaving, obviously exhausted, the Raven King wasn't much better off.

At least, it wasn't fully confident of being able to thoroughly kill the Firelizard.

Otherwise, with the Raven King's ferocity, why would he waste so much time in empty blather? He would've commanded his children and descendants to besiege the Firelizard.

Crouched on the ground, the Firelizard let out a low roar and spoke in a conciliatory tone, "Stinky feathers, I've already swallowed the Cloudflame flower. If you keep forcing me, it will only cause great devastation to both sides. How about this, we stop, you let me refine this Flower so that I can recover part of my cultivation. If I have a chance of living, I will be certain to repay you in the future with something ten times more valuable."

The circumstances were greater than the person.

If this was during ordinary times, the Firelizard would've never spoken in such a humble tone to a creature sitting at the mere peak of the spirit rank.

But now, it couldn't afford to waste time. One more minute wasted meant one less minute left in his life.

In order to live, the Firelizard didn't mind lowering its posture and trying to strike a deal with the Raven King.

The Raven King wasn't having any of it as it sneered, "Stop? Are you senile in your age or do you take me for a chick? Where do I go to find you after I let you go? Besides, even if you refine the Flower, you're just slowing the advent of death. Do you think you can defy the heavens? Do you still hold onto the hope of prolonging your life and returning to your peak? Stop dreaming! Even if you can prolong your life and return to your peak, how will you repay me? Your first task then is likely to kill me in revenge!"

The Firelizard hastened to say, "I can swear to the heavens that I will never seek revenge upon you."

"Forget it!" The Raven King cawed. "I won't let you go even if you talk a hole through the heavens. You'll be dead sooner or later, so why not die now and let me get a mouthful of fresh meat. Although your body is old and life is fleeing you, the matters of lineage will never age. Your heritage will always be there. If I devour you, breaking through to the saint rank will be an easy matter even without the Cloudflame Flower. Hahaha, stupid lizard, you said you're about to die, so you should've stayed in your

cave to await death. Yet here you come, running into my territory. This is a fortuitous occurrence that the heavens have given to me to break through to the saint rank!”

The Raven King was beside himself with pride as excitement gleamed in its fierce eyes.

It turned out that the Raven King’s goal hadn’t been to retrieve the Flower at all, but to devour the Firelizard!

The bloodline of a saint rank spirit creature were exceedingly noble. The Raven King was naturally very clear on this.

He would only have a fifty percent chance of breaking through with the Cloudflame Flower, but if he could devour a saint rank spirit creature’s bloodline, he’d have at least a ninety percent chance.

Not to mention that he would access the heritage of memories written within a saint rank creature’s bloodline. This would be an added bonus for the Raven King.

Therefore, even without the Cloudflame Flower, the Raven King would never let the Firelizard go.

A violent beam shot out of the Firelizard’s bright copper eyes as it started laughing crazily. “Eat my flesh and blood? You soggy excuse of a bird, what a lofty tone you have. A base creature of the spirit rank dares cast covetous eyes on the bloodline of a dragon’s descendants?”

“Hahaha, descendants of the dragons alright. This is precisely why this king must devour you and take the heritage of memories from within your bloodline!” The Fire Raven King’s tone was crazed and arrogant.

The Raven King suddenly threw its head back and cawed.

The surrounding Fire Ravens suddenly shot madly towards the Firelizard from all directions like loosed arrows .

It looked like the Raven King had hardened his heart to use strength of numbers to exhaust this Firelizard to death. nove-~~lb~~-In

The Firelizard was at the end of its tether as it crouched on the ground. There wasn’t much left of its cultivation.

However, it was still a saint rank creature. The Raven King knew that his opponent may die at any time, but still didn’t dare to take the field himself.

He knew that once this saint rank creature started rampaging, even if it was its final breath, the power it could call upon would be exceedingly frightening.

As greedy as the Raven King was, he didn’t dare take the Firelizard’s last strike.

Therefore, he sent his children and descendants to mob the Firelizard and use them as cannon fodder to chip away at his enemy.

It only had one breath left. Given enough time, the Raven King would be able to bash it to death with all his troops!

The Firelizard had been noticeably enraged by the Raven King, and the repressed emotions within its heart were about to explode. It'd enjoyed a noble bloodline throughout its entire life, when had it ever been so humiliated?

Today, it was being subjected to indignity because it had lost its position and influence!

To be thus bullied by a pack of lowly Fire Ravens — it, a saint rank creature, a descendant of the dragons, had lost all face!

"Feathered dumb animals, die!"

The Firelizard roared as its tail swept in an arch, forming a devastating whip several hundred meters long and sending out countless sparks of lightning.

Crack crack crack!

The very air seemed to collapse from this blow. The hundreds of Fire Ravens diving down were caught up in the light and churned into bits of flesh and blood, scattering randomly to the ground.

The weakest of these birds were at the human small spirit realm.

However, all of them had died with a single sweep of their opponent's tail.

The Firelizard was a saint rank spirit creature alright. The power encompassed within this sweep had completely exceeded the spirit rank, giving the Fire Ravens no time to even escape.

However, this blow had exhausted even more of the Firelizard's feeble, remaining strength.

Huff, puff.

The Firelizard panted heavily as it rasped out, "Stinking feathers, let's see how many more you can sacrifice! When you're done, you'll be alone. Even if you advance to the saint rank, who will you rule over? Keep sending them if you're not afraid of death. I won't be able live, but I still have some confidence in taking you with me!"

The Firelizard also knew that it would be hard pressed to escape from this situation.

However, spirit creatures tended to be fierce and violent by nature. Even if they died, they would take down their opponents with them!

Chapter 313: Earning a Profit Without Working For It

What the Redscaled Firelizard had mentioned was precisely what the Raven King was most fearful of.

Although the Firelizard was in its death throes and could breathe its last at any time, this didn't mean that the Firelizard lacked methods to kill the Raven King.

The Raven King clenched its beak tightly and stared hard at the hundreds of his children and descendants that had been killed in an instant. His heart was also constantly dripping blood.

Until now, he had always been quite proud of the scale that the Fire Ravens had proliferated to.

But the price paid for chasing the Firelizard had simply been too great. At least half of his children and descendants were dead.

At this rate, he wouldn't have many left after he had killed the Firelizard.

He was caught between a rock and a hard place now.

He could either continue to attack until the Firelizard died, or wait until it breathed its last.

However, it was obvious that it wouldn't die that quickly.

Even if a saint rank creature was at the end of its life, its life wouldn't be drained that easily. Particularly after the Firelizard had swallowed a Cloudflame Flower and had greatly replenished itself.

Given enough time to refine the Flower, even if that couldn't extend its life, it would be able to recover fifty to sixty percent of its cultivation for a short period of time.

When it had recovered that much, the Raven King knew that he wouldn't be able to take on the Firelizard.

Therefore, he couldn't afford to wait and had to keep fighting.

Only through continual battles and harassment could he ensure that the Firelizard didn't have enough time to refine the Flower.

But of course, if this was the case, the price would be heavy. The Raven King himself didn't dare take the field, so he'd have to fill that gap with the lives of his children. nove-~~lb~~-In

Even though the Fire Ravens followed whatever orders their king issues, he felt the twinges of a guilty conscience in commanding them to continuously go to their deaths.

He had less than one third of his original descendants left. At this rate, they would be quickly eliminated.

"Children, don't dive, use your wings to engage in long range attacks!" The Raven King gave the order.

Although wing attacks weren't as powerful as diving, it could at least harass the Firelizard.

The Raven King didn't seek to immediately kill the Firelizard, but drag things out until it died.

Long range attacks could both chip away at it and not have to worry about counterattacks.

This was one of the advantages of the Fire Ravens.

The feathers on the Fire Ravens had quite a specialized function. They protected their bodies like a layer of armor, making it difficult for even an arrow to penetrate.

Therefore, shooting out their arrows meant that they lost a feather with every shot taken.

This was actually a self detrimental method of attack for the ravens.

However, self harm was better than suicide. After receiving their orders, all the Fire Ravens escaped the Firelizard's damage range and shot their arrows at their enemy.

The feathers were like arrows and may not have caused great damage by themselves, but given this large scale attack, it was still a trial for the belaboring Firelizard.

Pop, pop, pop. These feather attacks connected with the Firelizard like a shower of rain, emitting a crisp tinkle when they connected.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but sigh from the distance, "The Firelizard is almost invincible with the defensive power of its armor. Attacks from within the same level of cultivation won't make a dent at all. Its thick flesh and skin behind the scales possess equally astounding defensive abilities. These long range attacks likely won't do anything at all. However, the Firelizard is remaining where it is without moving. It looks like it really has exhausted quite a bit of its energy. It also looks like the dissipation of its cultivation has been quite severe."

However, even so, to be able to completely ignore the missile attacks from hundreds of Fire Ravens still made Jiang Chen inwardly tsk in amazement at the Firelizard's defenses.

"Such heaven defying defensive capabilities is definitely of the dragon tribe alright. If a Firelizard on the brink of death can still muster such defenses, it's likely that human practitioners on the same level would be completely outclassed if it was at its peak?" Jiang Chen sighed.

His footsteps became even further glued to the ground as he watched this battle.

He'd been a bit worried beforehand, but now he'd fully relaxed. Neither the Firelizard nor the Raven King were at their peak.

The Firelizard was hanging on to life by its claws, and the Raven King was covered with injuries after such a ferocious battle and likely possessed less than half of its strength.

Jiang Chen had no fear of two spirit creatures in these conditions.

When a kingfisher and a clam were locked in combat, that was only to the advantage of the fisherman.

Jiang Chen decided to stay and see if he could become that fisherman.

If the Raven King had hardened its heart to pursue this to the end, then he would take the field himself in the end.

But as long as the Raven King and Firelizard clashed with each other a few times and mostly exhausted each other, it'd be much easier for Jiang Chen to earn a profit without working for it.

As for the remaining Fire Raven army, although Jiang Chen was still cautious of them, he had his ways of handling them.

After all, the numbers of Fire Ravens left now were less than a third of their original number. After such a long battle, their battle strength had been greatly depleted as well.

Even if Jiang Chen didn't have the Goldbiter Rat army, he'd be able to use the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice and the magnetic golden mountain to take on the Fire Ravens.

Of course, the caveat was that both the Raven King and the Firelizard were heavily injured.

The situation was now laid out in front of him, and only a single last push was required.

Jiang Chen could also see that the Raven King had the utmost confidence in his strategy. However, the Firelizard didn't care about harassment tactics like these at all.

These feather attacks weren't having the slightest bit of effect.

Perhaps, the Firelizard was enduring the attacks in order to start refining the Flower.

He'd be able to thoroughly absorb the spirit power from the Cloudflame Flower as long as he utterly refined the Flower, and recover at least fifty to sixty percent of his cultivation.

The Fire Ravens would be in grave trouble then.

Jiang Chen almost wanted to remind the Raven King that these kinds of attacks were futile and was basically giving the Firelizard time to refine the Flower.

However, reason told him not to be impulsive. Jiang Chen was well aware that if he showed himself now, the Raven King would rain crazy attacks down on him.

It wasn't that they were enemies, but that the Raven King wouldn't allow a third party to appear in this moment and disturb its plan of devouring the Firelizard.

"Raven King, ah Raven King. You're so afraid of death, yet seek to devour the descendants of the dragons? The moment the Firelizard refines the Cloudflame Flower is the moment you die!"

When a saint rank creature recovered fifty to sixty percent of its cultivation, killing a peak spirit rank creature was as easy as playing with a toy.

Even though the Raven King was highly mobile, he likely wouldn't have time to even flap his wings when faced with absolute power and a fully formed aura.

When a saint rank creature expanded its aura, all spirit rank creatures within a radius of a hundred li would be reduced to cowering in fright.

A trace of anxiety flitted across the Raven King's fierce eyes when he saw this.

He could also see that this stalemate wasn't the right move, and only grew more and more anxious as time went on.

He cawed shrilly and shook his enormous wings, folding them in a dive.

He'd decided that even if he'd had to take a risk, he'd personally attack and not allow the Firelizard time to refine the Cloudflame Flower.

Otherwise, the Fire Ravens were doomed for extinction!

The Raven King shook his wings and turned them into two gleaming knives, churning up a frightening presence and diving down like a flash of lightning.

The Raven King's agility and speed were its greatest advantages, and these two blades that flashed like lightning happened to deploy his advantages to the limit.

Red light flashed as bright as the sun, making for the Firelizard's head.

Its target was clear — the Firelizard's eyes!

The Firelizard was covered in defenses as strong as iron. Its scales would be something difficult to break through.

However, weaknesses existed in even the strongest of defenses. The Firelizard's weakness happened to be its eyes. There were no scales covering it and it was the only weak point that the Raven King could attack.

"Filthy lizard, die!"

The Raven king leered and the red light cleaved into the Firelizard's eyes at the peak of the Raven King's speed.

"Auragh!!!!"

The Firelizard was in the midst of refining the Flower and was already distracted to begin with. Adding the Raven King's extreme speed and his opponent's less than ten percent availability of strength, the latter actually didn't react in time!

Pfft, pfft!

A bloody crack formed in the Firelizard's lantern-esque eyes as blood splurged out.

This sudden blow overwhelmed the Firelizard with pain. Blood shot out of both eyes as it started howling in pain.

The Firelizard was even more passive after losing his vision.

His enormous body rolled around on the ground, and his sturdy metal whip of a tail lashed through the air wildly like a crazed demon.

Bam, bam, bam!

The Firelizard's tail continuously smashed into the ground, forming a deep moat whenever it landed.

The ground started caving in beneath the Firelizard's maddened attacks.

Before too long, the ground around the Firelizard had sunk in by quite a few meters.

"Amazing, amazing." Jiang Chen swallowed, as he witnessed the destruction wreaked by the wrathful Firelizard.

It looked like the deep gouges on the mountain face had indeed been formed by the Firelizard, surely left behind when it went to take the flower.

"The Raven King is also quite wily to attack the Firelizard's eyes. Without its vision and its decreased strength, the Firelizard will be in great trouble then!"

Jiang Chen was also paying a great deal of attention to the situation, and he actually started cheering for the Firelizard in his heart when he saw its injuries.

“The Firelizard won’t die this easily. It’s best if it can give the Raven King a fatal blow before it dies. Only then will I be able to profit handsomely.”

Grievous injuries on both sides was something Jiang Chen wished to see the most.

He didn’t care about the Cloudflame Flower at this point. Either one of the spirit creatures in front of him was worth more than the Flower!

Chapter 314: A Crazy Battle

The Firelizard seemed to have completely lost its mind.

Its tail smashed the ground continuously as its head butted randomly, its body arching and flexing.

It was as if the ground had attacked it instead of the Raven King. Therefore, it wanted to vent all of its ill temper on this great patch of land.

Dust and dirt flew as the sound was loud enough to shake even the heavens. n--OveLb1n

Jiang Chen’s ear drums throbbed even though he was so far away. It was fortunate that his Boulder’s Heart was abnormally resolute so that he would not suffer any mental damage.

“Strange, how strange, even though its eyes have been attacked, this Firelizard, this saint rank beast, shouldn’t have flown into such a violent rage?”

Jiang Chen felt that things were quite amiss. As violent as the Firelizard was, it still wouldn’t attack so randomly. It was a saint rank spirit creature after all!

To expend its energy like this was to add fuel to the flames, didn’t it understand that?

Bam bam bam!

The ground caved in a bit more whenever the Firelizard pounded the earth. Dust and dirt covered the skies like a smokescreen, making it difficult for the Raven King to approach.

Suddenly, a thought flashed across Jiang Chen’s mind — the Firelizard wanted to escape!

Indeed, the Firelizard did indeed burrow into the ditch that was several meters deep. Half of its body was already beneath the ground, and only its tail kept pounding the earth, sending gouts of mud waves into the air and befuddling the Raven King.

The player in the game is blind, whereas bystanders see through everything.

Jiang Chen had seen through the Firelizard’s intentions, but the Raven King still hadn’t seen things clearly.

The Raven King only abruptly understood the Firelizard’s intentions when the latter’s body had completely drilled into the ground.

He threw back his head and cawed sharply, the fires of his fury began burning as he commanded the remaining Fire Ravens to attack the ground together.

This species, the Fire Ravens, were most adept at breathing flame.

However, this technique was ineffective against the Redscaled Firelizard, so the Fire Ravens hadn't bothered attacking with fire until now.

This immunity was naturally still the case.

All of the Fire Ravens immediately angled their wings into blades one by one when they received their orders and hurtled towards the ground.

The Firelizard may have burrowed into the ground, but with the current condition of its body, it wouldn't get far.

The Fire Ravens hacked into the ground as though their lives depended on it and kept digging, continuously breaking into the deep ditch on the ground.

The Firelizard's tail was quickly exposed.

It only had a sliver of strength left, so its speed had naturally been greatly affected. Originally adept at flying through the earth, the Firelizard actually hadn't had time to flee due to the pursuit from the Fire Ravens.

The Raven King sneered as his wings turned into blades and chopped viciously at the Firelizard's tail.

A clear collision sound rang out, as though metallic weapons were clashing against each other.

The Raven King became even more ruthless and increased his speed, crazily raining down blows in the same area without a pause in momentum.

The Firelizard's scaled armor was indeed strong, but it still required physical strength to maintain. There was less than ten percent of its original strength and spirit within the Firelizard's true body and it was truly at the end of its tether.

The strength it had left in its body was negligible, so it could only depend on the natural defenses of its scales for protection.

With a blow or two, only faint marks appeared on the scales of the tail.

But the blows kept crashing down and after thirty or so hits, a deep injury was apparent on its tail.

It was clearly a deep cut as fresh blood seeped out of that wound.

The Fire Ravens were a bloodthirsty race and the Raven King's violent nature was completely provoked after he saw blood. He cawed and summoned flock after flock of Fire Ravens to attack the same areas.

Gouts of blood shot out and the Raven King started cawing excitedly, opening its beak wide to swallow all the arrows of blood.

This was the blood of a descendant of the dragons, the Raven King was naturally not going to let that escape his reach.

"Caw!!!" The Raven King was extraordinarily proud of himself when he tasted the blood. He cawed and strutted around, venting the glee in his heart.

He would take his opponent's life while it was injured!

When The Fire Ravens spotted fresh blood being shed, they attacked even more fiercely.

The Firelizard's lower half continued to be revealed as more dirt was excavated.

The Fire Ravens were obviously not satisfied with just attacking one injury as they began to strike to other areas.

The Firelizard seemed to have completely lost its ability to defend itself and allowed the Fire Ravens to attack it with impunity.

As the saying went, a sufficient number of ants would be able to bite an elephant to death.

Since the Firelizard had no ability to counterattack, the Fire Ravens grew even more bold in their attacks. Add that to their advantage in numbers, their consequences of their assault was quickly apparent.

Injuries started dotting the Firelizard's body as the Fire Raven army carved out new wounds.

Blood shot in all directions, stirring the Fire Ravens into abnormal excitement as they cawed madly and attacked crazily.

"No way, the Firelizard is going to croak just like this?" Jiang Chen found the current scene of one sided torture from the Fire Raven army quite unbelievable.

But just at this moment, there was a small movement in the surrounding ground.

Wham!

Abruptly, the surrounding earth convulsed violently, as though it had exploded.

An enormous vortex had formed beneath the ground and was rapidly rising, churning up various bits of dirt. Under the influence of a strong aura, the dirt was transformed into attacks as lethal as violent arrows.

Bam, bam, bam!

The pieces of dirt were all harder than metal and connected solidly with the Fire Ravens in the surroundings with a frightening aura.

Because they'd been too close to the vortex, the Fire Ravens were left defenseless. As fast as their reactions were, they had no time to dodge or evade.

Ghastly cries rang out as almost none of the Fire Ravens had time to escape. They were hit by the rocks and dirt and crashed down one after another.

At almost the same time, the Firelizard's body suddenly straightened like a legendary dragon emerging from the seas.

Its enormous body rose in a straight line, like a small mountain ascending from flat plains.

Its mouth opened as those alarming teeth bit towards the Raven King.

The Raven King also responded extraordinarily quickly as he retreated with a shake of his wings. He wanted to use this speed to evade the Firelizard's last strike.

It was a pity though; the Firelizard had perfectly calculated everything. How could it possibly let the Raven King escape?

As the Raven King moved backwards rapidly, he suddenly felt an aura churning towards him from behind that could topple mountains and overturn seas.

The Firelizard's scar-ridden tail had swept up to attack with a thunderous force, blocking all avenues of retreat for the Raven King.

"Stinking feathers, die!" The Firelizard had weathered the blows for so long in wait to strike out with this lethal blow.

It hadn't made a move before this and had taken all the hits in order to numb the Fire Ravens so they would relax their defenses.

It had nurtured those schemes for this one blow.

Its goal? To swallow the Raven King!

The Raven King swept his tail in an arc and was uncontrollably shoved forward thanks to the strong wave of aura.

The Firelizard's maw had opened in front of the Raven King and its tongue was protruding as well. It seemed that it wanted to wrap its tongue around the Raven King and swallow him alive.

As calm as the Raven King was, this time, his expression underwent a drastic shift. He was well aware that if he was swallowed by the Firelizard, he would completely become its food.

The Firelizard was likely going to receive more nourishment from swallowing him and absorbing the spiritual energy in his body than it would from the Cloudflame Flower.

This might even greatly slow its advent of death!

However, one had to know that the Raven King had no place to go at the moment. His body had been fenced in by the Firelizard's aura, and he had no strength to soar upwards.

This was because his speed had already been restricted and if he were to take to the skies, he would likely be bitten in half by the Firelizard.

Life or death would be decided in this second.

The Raven King's violent nature had been completely provoked in this instant. He made up his mind and decided not to keep running, but to leverage the aura being projected by the Firelizard's tail to turn into a streak of red light and shoot towards the Firelizard's maw like a flying sword.

He shifted all the strength on his body as he accelerated.

He was betting everything on this final strike.

If he could dive into the Firelizard's mouth with this charge, straight into his opponent's internal organs, he'd be able to attack the Firelizard's insides.

The Firelizard was covered with scales on the outside that were incredibly difficult to break through.

But its internal organs were its weakest point. As long as the Raven King could evade the two rows of blade-like teeth and dive into the Firelizard's mouth, he'd was assured a seventy to eighty percent chance that he'd be able to finish off his opponent once and for all.

After all, the Firelizard was a spent force now and he lacked even a tenth of his usual strength.

The Raven King felt that whoever lived or died would be decided in this moment.

Either he'd be bitten into two by the Firelizard, or he'd be able to fly through and grind up the latters' organs!

This was a battle in which death was guaranteed, and one of them had to die after this!

Jiang Chen immediately understood the Raven King's intentions when he saw this decision and he couldn't help but admire the Raven King's violent nature and decisiveness.

The blur of red light streaked forward like a shooting star and it charged into the Firelizard's bloody maw.

The Firelizard smirked, most likely seeing through the Raven King's intentions as it abruptly closed its mouth.

Crunch!

The Raven King had pulled himself into a straight line with his claws at the very end.

The Firelizard's mouth was like an enormous pair of forceps, it just so happened to close on the Raven King's legs!

The Raven King had fallen just a bit short in his last strike.

However, he paid no heed to that now as he used his blade-like wings to furiously cut into the Firelizard's mouth.

One had to say, the Firelizard had used up almost all of its remaining strength in these consecutive attacks. Although it was biting down on the Raven King's legs, it had no ability to stop the Raven King from rampaging in his mouth.

Clack, clack!

The Raven King continuously sliced away at the Firelizard's tongue and fresh blood oozed out between the two rows of sharp teeth. The scene looked truly horrifying.

Even so, the Firelizard was still abnormally resolute, grimly biting down and stopping the Raven King from penetrating further into its body.

It was apparent that this was the final stand in the battle between the two spirit creatures.

If the Firelizard loosened his mouth, the Raven King would be sure to dive further in and churn up all his organs. Even the gods or immortals then wouldn't be able to save him.

And if the Raven King couldn't make it into the Firelizard's insides and remained clamped here, his injuries would slowly worsen as well. Not to mention that he was expending a great deal of effort in this

battle, and he had no faith in how long he'd be able to hold out as well if the battle of attrition continued!

The two spirit creatures were both at the ends of their energies, but neither one of them wanted to give up. This was when they were competing on who was more ruthless and who could make it to the end!

Chapter 315: Jiang Chen's Rich!

Jiang Chen's mouth also grew bitter when he saw that the fight between the two spirit creatures had escalated to this point.

To think that a saint rank creature and peak of the spirit rank creature had devolved to beating each other up like children. They were using the most basic, most shameless, and most primitive ways to fight now.

The Raven King pierced the air with shrill screeches as his two wings kept hacking every which way in the Firelizard's mouth.

The Firelizard's several meter long tongue was almost completely minced by now.

The enormous pain made it start spasming.

But even so, the Firelizard still grimly hung on to the Raven King's legs and didn't let go.

Legs pinned, the Raven King could neither advance nor retreat. There was nothing left for it to destroy in the immediate surroundings.

It was also apparent that the damage within its mouth wasn't enough to immediately kill the Firelizard. If this dragged on and the Raven King was the one to run out of strength first, then he really would become food for the Firelizard.

The Raven King's brutal nature fully emerged at this time.

He pushed off on his legs and snapped the tendons and flesh of his legs amidst a mess of bloody gore!

He folded his wings in a dive and streaked down the Firelizard's throat, into its chest.

The Raven King had actually given up on his legs and crippled himself to dive into the Firelizard's chest in order to give it a fatal blow. n-(OvEIlbIn

Jiang Chen couldn't help but admire the Raven King's character and courage when he saw this.

He was also slightly delighted to see that the battle had developed to this point. He knew that his chance had arrived.

The Firelizard knew things had taken a bad turn when he discovered that the Raven King had forsaken his legs to dive into its body. It kept roaring and slamming its body on the ground, trying to shake the Raven King out of its body that way.

However, the Raven King's target was clear. How was it possibly willing to come back out after it'd entered its enemy's body?

The Firelizard's harsh cries died down slowly as time went on. Its writhing, crashing body slowly quieted down into listless struggles until its breath finally stopped.

A pair of bloody eyes was still open despite being destroyed by the Raven King. It looked like it'd died with everlasting regret.

A spirit creature of the saint rank still hadn't made it through in the end.

Jiang Chen's heart was also pounding as he watched what had happened. A being as strong as a saint rank creature had seen its cultivation continuously dispersing at the end of its life and had been so helpless in the face of a life threatening disaster.

The cruelties of the path of martial dao were quite apparent. Even one as strong as a saint rank creature could be brought down by a group of beings inferior than it in moments of weakness.

"It looks like there is no realm of everlasting life on the path of martial dao. We are all as minuscule as the ants in the face of an overwhelming disaster."

Jiang Chen's emotions were also greatly shaken at this time, and he further reaffirmed his goal to pursue the paramount existence of martial dao. Only at the paramount existence would one enjoy eternal life and revel in the heavenly law.

A dragon swimming in the shallows would be teased by the shrimp, just as a tiger is insulted by the dogs if it goes down to the low lands.

This saying was fully illustrated by the Firelizard's body.

Jiang Chen knew that his chance had finally come after watching for so long. He had been taking the risk in not leaving because he was waiting for an opportunity such as this to arise.

When a kingfisher and a clam were locked in combat, the one who benefited was the fisherman.

Jiang Chen strode out leisurely from the corner. His sudden appearance shocked the remaining Fire Ravens and they all started cawing.

The Firelizard's last blow had destroyed almost all of the Fire Ravens. There were less than ten left and each of them was more or less injured.

These Fire Ravens were naturally of no threat to Jiang Chen.

He walked lightheartedly towards the Firelizard corpse as eight of them came diving down at him, as if he hadn't seen them.

As the Ravens dived, eight vines, tipped by enormous fire lotuses, erupted out of the ground. The petals were as if large mouths, with each lotus devouring a Fire Raven.

Despite their level of cultivation at first or second level spirit realm, the Fire Ravens could put up no resistance whatsoever as they were devoured by the fire lotuses.

They didn't even have time to caw out desperately.

Jiang Chen circled past the Firelizard's body and released the Goldbiter Rat King. "Ole Gold, leave me the core and scales of this Firelizard. You and your tribe can have the remaining flesh and blood. By the way, this Firelizard is a saint rank creature."

"What? A saint rank creature?!" The Rat King's shifty eyes gleamed with excitement as he licked his lips greedily, almost drooling in his desire.

"Mm hmm. You've been yammering on about bloodline evolution. Here's a chance. I forgot to tell you, this Firelizard has the bloodline of the dragons. Although it's been quite diluted after being passed down through so many generations, but a dragon's descendant is still a dragon's descendant. Do you understand what I mean?"

The Rat King bobbed his head up and down rapidly. "Understood, understood. Young master, just what happened? How could a saint rank creature..."

The Goldbiter Rats were a cautious and timid race by nature. Even if one placed it in front of a lavish meal, it would still ask detailed questions about who, what, when, where, and why just in case it somehow got into a great deal of trouble.

Jiang Chen smiled, "Just tell me if you want it or not."

"Yes, yes I do!" The Rat King hurriedly said.

"Then that's the end of it. However, you need to take care of a problem first before you can enjoy this lovely meal in peace."

"What is that?" The Rat King hastened to ask.

"It's very simple. There's a Fire Raven King within the stomach of the Firelizard, but it's at less than 20% of its full strength. It may be just a bit stronger than you in its prime condition if it kept its aerial advantage. If you were to really battle with him, he wouldn't be able to withstand your drilling abilities. Tell me, are you afraid of facing a Raven King that's missing his legs and at less than twenty percent of his full strength?"

"Less than twenty percent of his full strength?" The Rat King asked cautiously.

"Twenty percent would be an overestimation. But you need to be quick. It may break through to the saint rank if it eats the Firelizard's core. You should make haste since it's only just gone inside. If you pass this chance on by, it will no longer exist."

The Rat King didn't dare linger when it heard these words and quickly slipped into the Firelizard's bloody maw.

Jiang Chen felt a fierce struggle ensue from within the Firelizard after a short while. It looked like the Raven King had met the Rat King in battle.

However, the fight didn't last long. It was exactly as Jiang Chen had guessed, the Raven King didn't even have time to swallow the Firelizard's core before it was interrupted by the Rat King.

Two spirit creatures at the peak of the spirit rank started laying into each other right in the middle of the Firelizard's stomach.

The Raven King, at less than twenty percent of its strength, was quickly overcome.

The Rat King came drilling out with the Raven King's corpse in hand shortly. The Raven King was now unrecognizable thanks to the Rat King nibbling on him.

Jiang Chen conveniently stored the cores of the Raven King and Firelizard.

The value of an original spirit creature's core was priceless, worth cities.

The Raven King's core was at the peak of the spirit rank and equally valuable.

The Rat King didn't dare lust over these cores. He knew that he couldn't set his sights on anything Jiang Chen wanted, or his tribe would lose a great deal because he tried to save a little.

A sumptuous feast greeted the Goldbiter Rats next.

There were so many Fire Raven corpses and the Firelizard corpse at the scene. It was enough for the Goldbiter Rats to eat handsomely.

Just the Firelizard alone was astonishing enough.

There were also thousands of Fire Ravens, each as big as a person.

This feast lasted four hours, and the Goldbiter Rats were still not quite fully satiated. However, they'd gained quite a lot from this meal.

The Rat King licked his lips and belched. As the king, he'd eaten the most and further had eaten the best, most nutritious parts of the Firelizard.

After the flesh and blood were devoured, Jiang Chen put the Firelizard's scales away. This being had been so big that its scales were enough to forge armor for a hundred, two hundred people.

Of course, he would never do such an extravagant thing. It would be an absolute waste to use the scales to make armor for others.

Jiang Chen didn't overlook the remaining Firelizard skeleton either.

These bones were so durable and hard that apart from the Rat King being able to munch on a portion, the other Goldbiter Rats had insufficient levels of cultivation to even bite down on them.

That even the Goldbiter Rats, a race eminently adept at devouring their food, couldn't bite down on the bones, spoke to how hard this skeleton was.

"These are all good items. They'd make fine weapons." Jiang Chen would naturally never pass up anything that had value.

The Raven King's feathers, particularly his tail feathers, were all as sharp as arrows. It was a prime choice to craft them into weapons, flying daggers, or arrows.

"Haha, these gains are much better than one Cloudflame Flower!" Jiang Chen was in great spirits as he took inventory of his gains.

He'd almost been buried in a sea of fire when he tried to go for a Cloudflame Flower. Who would've thought that he'd have such an encounter after evading that disaster.

The Valley of Destruction was indeed a place of great heights and depths. What was heaven one second could be hell the next.

Jiang Chen didn't want to waste anything and collected all the feathers of the ordinary Fire Ravens as well.

These Fire Ravens were all of the spirit realm, having strength equivalent to the small spirit realm. Their wing feathers would be fantastic for crafting into flying daggers and arrows.

When one used spirit rank material to forge weapons, the resulting weapon would be a spirit weapon without needing further refining by a weapons master.

If a weapons master had a high degree of skill, then the capabilities of the weapon would be even more amazing.

How could Jiang Chen waste such good material? Even if he had no use for it, he would be able to give it to his people.

These items would be an incredible treasure for them.

A thin figure stood on top of a slope on the outskirts of the charred area, staring off into space at the destruction in front of them.

"Jiang Chen ah Jiang Chen. If my guess is right, you're that freak with the boulder's heart. I hope you weren't in the path of the fiery blaze."

The person murmured to themselves and was lost in thought for a while.

Chapter 316: Since You're All Courting Death, Then Go Die!

This person was wearing the uniform and mask of a candidate, but a strong sense of concern and even a bit of worry flashed through their eyes.

This person had been searching the Valley of Destruction for a few days at this point. But no matter how far they searched, they never found a sign of the freak with the boulder's heart.

Although this person kept telling themselves not to think wild thoughts, they couldn't help but consider a few pessimistic ideas as time passed.

The person's eyes suddenly gleamed as they looked incredulously ahead of them.

A figure had dashed out of the charred land and destruction ahead!

It was as shocking as seeing a survivor after Armageddon.

"It's him, the freak genius with the boulder's heart!" The large stone hovering over the person's heart was abruptly laid to rest when he saw the figure dash out of the burnt area. "Thank goodness he's not dead. I knew that he wouldn't die that easily..."

The person standing on the slope felt waves of emotion upon seeing this figure dash out from the rubble. An uncommon light shone out of his eyes; he was both gratified and proud that this freak genius had escaped from sure death.

This person only tamped down his emotions when he saw the outline of the freak genius approach. He sprang back and vanished quickly into the thick growth of the forest.

“A happy journey and great success to you, Jiang Chen.” The person said silently in his heart.

It was obvious that this person was treating Jiang Chen and the freak genius of the boulder’s heart as the same.

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The figure who’d run out from the rubble was indeed Jiang Chen, the only survivor within a hundred li. However, he didn’t know that another person on the outskirts of the destruction had already realized his identity.

He stopped outside of the zone of destruction and detected the unique fragrance from the flowers and trees in his surroundings. He suddenly felt like he’d been reborn again.

His nose had been wrecked by the charred smell that had pervaded the air over the past couple of days.

When he took an estimation, he realized that only half of the allotted time had passed since he’d set foot into the valley.

With the rewards he’d reaped, Jiang Chen no longer took great risks and instead decided to proceed slowly and surely.

The strength of the Firelizard and the Fire Ravens had given Jiang Chen a thorough lesson, letting him know that he couldn’t run about at will within the Valley of Destruction.

One could easily be swamped by calamity.

Standing at the top of the slope, Jiang Chen’s gaze suddenly cooled slightly as he snorted softly. “These bastards. They’re charging over here with such aggressive momentum, do they think to make a target of me? Reckless and blind!”

More than dozens of figures had already appeared around the slope. Their auras were imposing and it was obvious that they were headed straight for Jiang Chen.

He was rather surprised at first. Where had all these people come from?

However, he immediately understood afterwards. This immense blaze must have alarmed many, and the nearby candidates must’ve gathered to either watch the show or observe the happenings.

However, with his emergence from this patch of rubble, he’d immediately become a walking target.

These people all acted in marvelous accord, charging for the top of the slope without discussing it beforehand. It looked like they all wanted to do something as despicable as robbing an owner when his house was on fire.

It was several dozens at first, but it became apparent as more and more candidates surged in from all directions that all the practitioners in the surrounding area had come over when they received the news.

A hint of a cold smile appeared on Jiang Chen's lips.

Although there were no rules in the Valley of Destruction, and it wasn't forbidden to fight each other, these candidates should've first weighed up their own abilities before wanting to so blatantly take advantage of the situation.

"Idiots who don't know the meaning of death."

Jiang Chen's expression remained fearless as he gazed at the continuously growing crowd of candidates in front of him. When one was at his level of cultivation, strength in numbers meant absolutely nothing.

Jiang Chen sat down cross legged on a high piece of rock. As if a deity, he exuded a stern aura even without flying into a rage.

The candidates all stopped when they reached a distance of several hundreds of meters from Jiang Chen.

However, the candidates all started forming concentric circles around Jiang Chen, subtly wanting to encircle him with rings of restraint.

Jiang Chen's closed eyes suddenly opened as they shot out a stunning, stern light. He laughed coldly, "What? Are all of you coming here to beg for food?"

Although no one knew the identity of the one beneath the mask, everyone was quite clear that this was the genius freak of the boulder's heart that had swept the first four trials.

If they'd been in ones or twos, they wouldn't have dared to approach.

However, courage grows in numbers and this group had miraculously lost a bit of their fear and gained a bit of ambition instead.

"Sir, let's speak frankly here. You must've gained quite a bit in walking out of that ocean of fire. We've all dithered around here for so many days, worrying and fretting. You should show us your sincerity, hmm?"

A candidate who had likely been chosen as the de facto leader smiled coldly.

There were two others by his side, forming a triangle of power with the leader.

Jiang Chen could tell that their strength was likely the strongest amongst the group. This was why they'd been nominated as the leaders.

"Worry?" Jiang Chen could help but break out in laughter. "I have no relationship with any of you and thus I have no need for your worry. Speak fast if you've something to say, and let it out if you have to fart. Don't approach things obliquely and bullshit with me. I haven't the slightest interest in listening to your drivel."

Worry?

How could Jiang Chen believe utter tripe like this?

All of those present were strangers, and who would worry about a stranger in the world of martial dao?

These self righteous excuses were both fake and disgusting.

If they'd come out forthrightly and said they were going to rob Jiang Chen, he would've at least acknowledged them as petty criminals who were willing to stand by what they'd said. He only felt complete repulsion when they tried to engineer these crude reasons.

"Hahaha, looks like you're a direct person!" The person in charge laughed heartily. "Since this is the case, we won't conceal our thoughts. You have two choices."

"One, leave behind all that you've gained and get the hell out!"

"Two, stubbornly resist and make enemies out of all of us."

The leader waved and indicated the nearly one hundred strong group around them, putting on a "I've got you in the palm of my hand" expression.

The candidates all assented when they heard these words. They all shouted in high spirits, applying psychological pressure to Jiang Chen.

Their postures were absolutely one of taking advantage of their numbers to bully the few and engage in open robbery.

"I can also give you two choices." Jiang Chen's tone was faint as he completely ignored the crowd. He extended two fingers, "One, get the hell out now! Two, die!"

"What?!" The leader actually thought he'd misheard. He was both angry and entertained. "Kid, are you crazy? It's one against a hundred of us spirit realm practitioners here. Do you think you can really defy the heavens? What a clueless idiot!"

"Yeah kid! You're not going to give up until failure stares at you in the face, huh?"

"Stop wasting time with him. He's refusing our good natured toast and wants to drink a forfeit instead. This kid's asking for a beating!"

"Yeah, this fellow hogged the limelight in the previous trials. It's about time that we destroy some of his arrogance in the Valley of Destruction. Otherwise, won't we be continuously trodden underfoot by him?"

Those assembled finally voiced their real thoughts.

They weren't here to just rob things, but to publicly suppress Jiang Chen.

An unsurpassed genius whose scores were far in excess of everyone else to the point of being a crane amongst a flock of chickens. How would these mundane geniuses be able to accept that?

Therefore, everyone had unconsciously formed an accord that they had to defeat this freak genius and not let him take away everyone's glory, making it so that no one could make a name for themselves.

"So noisy."

A shrewd light suddenly shot out of Jiang Chen's God's Eye as he spat out two words, roiling up waves of qi that rippled outwards with the sound of thunder.

The one hundred candidates suddenly felt it difficult to breathe. Their ear drums kept reverberating as if thunder was crashing right in front of them. Their blood thrummed through their veins as dizzy spells caused them to waver and feel nauseous.

"Useless trash!"

Jiang Chen laughed coldly and pushed off on both feet, shooting towards the outside as if an eagle taking to the skies.

It wasn't that he wouldn't be killing anyone, but that it was meaningless to kill the group assembled here in one go. Although they were greedy, not all of them deserved to die.

Therefore, Jiang Chen planned on ignoring them.

However, everyone's thoughts when he dashed out was that Jiang Chen was afraid and didn't dare meet them all in battle. He was running away!

No one detected his sliver of kindness.

"He's getting away, kill him!"

"Stop him, kill!"

Crazed roars and yells sounded behind him.

The three designated leaders all had levels of cultivation between third and fourth level spirit realm. They were quite remarkable amidst this year's candidates.

It was because they were stronger that their courage was correspondingly greater.

When they saw Jiang Chen make for the outside and expose his back to them, they all felt that this was a perfect chance.

The three of them all wielded their weapons at the same time as they blasted their auras, bringing all their strength to bear in attacking Jiang Chen's back.

At that moment, the air seemed to freeze.

A hint of a chill travelled down their necks in the next moment. Their bodies all seemed to freeze in the air.

Crack!

Crisp breaking sounds rang out at almost the same time.

Three large heads, still wearing their masks, separated from their necks and shot into the sky.

In the next moment, three headless bodies crashed into the ground, emitting dull thuds.

Bam, bam, bam.

Dust, sprays of fresh blood from their necks, and a strong sense of bloodshed flew and permeated everywhere on the slope.

The three heads landed afterwards, with their eyes still open. Wide open with despair, their final expression was one of shock and deep fear.

Everyone was shocked senseless by this scene.

They hadn't seen how Jiang Chen had made his move at all. They've only seen a flash of light and the three strongest amongst them lose their heads.

This kind of strength, this speed, and these devastating moves made the hundred or so assembled here shiver with cold, as if they'd fallen into an icy cavern.

How... how was this a fight? This was pure slaughter!

Chapter 317: No Doubt About the Champion of the First Selection

Three corpses, three heads.

They had been overweeningly arrogant just a second ago, haughtily demanding Jiang Chen hand over his possessions or die.

Their heads had been separated from their bodies in the next second. They'd died with everlasting regret, and had been subjected to a fate even worse than dead dogs as their corpses were randomly strewn.

There was nothing more convincing than death.

Fear was writ deep in the other candidates' eyes. Their masks hid their faces, frozen in rictuses of horror, from each other.

How could strength in numbers overcome this kind of strength?

To put it bluntly, if the other wanted to kill them, he'd be able to do away with all of them in fifteen minutes. Not a single survivor would be left.

Too fast! The speed of his move had been faster than a shooting star.

Even combined, the three strongest among them hadn't been able to take one of the other's blows.

If it came to the rest of the group, the other would likely kill them in a second even if they charged as ten apiece.

The difference between them was akin to a grown, stocky man trampling a baby. They weren't on the same level at all.

Pairs of terrified eyes looked at the three corpses. They didn't even have the courage to look at Jiang Chen. Only fear was left in their hearts.

Jiang Chen had executed three people with a single move rippling the air.

He vanished beneath the slope with a twist of his body.

He had no interest in paying attention to a group of senseless practitioners.

After this battle, their dao hearts had been stripped away and they were now useless. They would never see any improvement on the path of martial dao.

Jiang Chen didn't even have the interest to kill such trash.

"Birds die for food, people die for wealth. These people dared scheme against me when their own skills weren't up to par. They were truly seeking death!"

Jiang Chen shook his head and had vanished without a trace with a few leaps and bounds.

The one hundred candidates finally breathed sighs of relief after Jiang Chen had disappeared.

They hadn't even had the courage to breathe in that moment. They were deathly afraid of attracting a life threatening disaster if they caused the slightest sound. *no vE-lb*.In

The feeling of having narrowly escaped death soaked their backs with sweat.

They tragically discovered that this freak genius didn't even have the inclination to kill them.

This was the truest tragedy.

This was also when they truly discerned the gap between them and the freak genius.

They now fully understood how weak they were, so weak that others couldn't even be bothered to kill them.

"Frightening, that was simply too frightening." A lucky survivor spoke in a trembling voice.

"I didn't even see him flash a weapon with that move! Three spirit realm practitioners were dead, just like that. Are... are we dreaming?"

"Laughable. So laughable. We may not even be an ant in his eyes, but us laughable ants dared scheme against him."

Jiang Chen's figure vanished into the great forest, and the figure who'd disappeared into the forest earlier suddenly reappeared beneath a large tree.

"Someone who could survive in the ocean of fire isn't a simple character indeed. How comical that that group of clowns tossed away their lives like that because they were too overconfident."

This person had always been keeping an eye on Jiang Chen, and their mind was even more certain now that the one who had survived the ocean of fire was definitely Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen kept a low profile over the next couple of days, keeping to areas with few people. He wasn't afraid of other candidates raising a hand against him again, but he didn't want to be dragged down by those idiots.

The Fire Ravens had been irritated by those two groups of practitioners last time and set a two hundred li diameter circle on fire.

After his travels over the past couple of days, Jiang Chen knew full well that this Valley of Destruction was hardly a simple place. If they had even a saint rank Redscaled Firelizard, they would certainly have other stronger beings.

He'd been lucky once and met a saint rank creature at the end of its life, but that didn't mean he'd always be this lucky.

If he ran afoul of a saint rank creature in normal condition, he'd be in dire straits even with his extraordinary abilities.

After all, a saint rank spirit creature was the equivalent of an origin realm cultivator. They'd be able to easily trample all cultivators below the spirit realm.

He maintained a low profile over the next couple of days, prioritizing safety above all.

Therefore, although he ran into a few challenges now and again, he was able to resolve them all without much effort.

Although he didn't run into any more opportunities to strike it rich, he still gained quite a bit from these small skirmishes.

The Valley of Destruction was indeed a place where treasures were littered all over the ground. Jiang Chen made great use of the experiences from his previous life and uncommon powers of judgement. This resulted in the occasional surprise from these small skirmishes.

As the days passed without unexpected developments, the end of the ten days finally arrived.

All of the candidates were sent out of the valley.

Jiang Chen took a look around when they exited and noticed that there really was less than half left of the original eight thousand!

Even the four great sects were quite surprised by this casualty rate.

When they took a tally, they discovered that there were only 3,500 candidates left. This meant that 4,500 out of the original eight thousand that had entered had fallen into eternal slumber within the valley.

This death rate was greater than fifty percent!

Jiang Chen also knew though, that if the Fire Ravens hadn't gone on a rampage, the death rate wouldn't have been so high.

"Everyone can see that only 3,500 are left of the original amount that entered. However, instead of depression, you should rejoice. Compared to those who died in the valley, you are the lucky ones. With this, you've passed the trial of fortune and are the ones who are truly lucky."

Honestly speaking, not many of the survivors felt any remorse for those who had died. They were actually privately delighted.

That so many had died meant half of their competition was gone as well. This also meant that their chances of entering the four sects had greatly increased.

The four great sects were recruiting three thousand. There were only five hundred more than that left now.

"I must congratulate you here, because most of you are destined to receive the right to enter the sects."

"The first selection is complete. We will rank you according to your participant tokens. Your rankings will also be transferred over to the three year second selection, becoming your advantage there. However, I must also remind you that in the second selection, you will be facing competition from sect geniuses. Your scores will become meaningless in front of the true geniuses."

The overseers doused the lucky survivors with this note of warning.

"Alright, rest for a moment and hand over your participant tokens. We will announce the ranking tomorrow and award you tokens for the second selection. Remember, your number for the second selection will be the same as your ranking for the first."

Jiang Chen was without a doubt the champion of the first selection, and he was far ahead of the pack at that.

Because he was this confident, he was different from the others and wasn't worried about his personal gains and losses.

"Are the sect geniuses finally putting in an appearance?" He was actually a bit excited instead.

The ordinary cultivators amongst the sixteen kingdom alliance no longer posed any challenge to Jiang Chen. What he needed now was experience and sharpening from the sects.

These so-called sect geniuses would be the best starting point for Jiang Chen's rise.

He sat cross legged, without a word, all night.

Everyone's emotions became agitated the next day, because the ranking would be announced in a short while.

Jiang Chen lifted his eyelids slightly, his heart as calm as water in the face of this fervent atmosphere.

The results of the first selection caused no ripples of interest in his heart now. His goal was the second selection, the final sixteen, and the so-called premier geniuses of the sects.

"Everyone, please be quiet. The rankings are out. Now, we will hand out participant tokens for the second selection according to your ranking in the first selection."

Each participant token had its corresponding number and results.

But realistically speaking, everyone knew that there was no doubt about first place. It was surely the freak genius with the boulder's heart.

They were more curious about just who this person was? Who was behind the mask? This was their primary concern.

Indeed, there was no suspense whatsoever about who ranked first!

The overseer handed the first token to Jiang Chen and smiled quite amiably. "Young man, you're the undisputed champion of the five trials. This number one token to you is both an honor and a burden. I hope you understand its weight and meaning, and prepare yourself accordingly."

The overseer spoke sincerely and offered earnest wishes. He moved to award the second token after a small speech of encouragement.

The second token was given to a skinny candidate. There was also some speculation about this person's identity.

However, the owner of this token had also kept a low profile and never gave away any hint of his identity.

The tokens were awarded one by one to every candidate.

Of those who ranked towards the front, they were those that were happy, proud, and some who felt this was rather matter-of-fact. Of course, there were those who felt they hadn't shown off their best side.

Those who ranked towards the back were correspondingly more subdued.

After all, five hundred of those remaining would be eliminated. Those that ranked lower naturally ran the highest risk of having that happen.

Jiang Chen hung the token for number one on his waist, completely ignoring the looks of envy aimed at him from all sides.

"Alright, everyone has received their tokens now. The number on it is your ranking for the first selection. You will face the even more competitive second selection next. Remember, although not many will be eliminated in the second selection, the ranking from this round will impact your fate in the sects. Your scores will determine what level of benefit you receive from the sect. The higher your score, the greater your benefits. Therefore, if you've reserved any strength in the first selection, release it all in the second!"

Everyone's blood frothed with excitement at these words.

The sects! They were finally seeing the doors of the sects open wide and wave at them!

Chapter 318: Rules of the Second Selection, The Eternal Spirit Mountain

The 3,500 qualifying candidates from the initial tests were led to the foot of an enormous mountain.

The mountain extended into the distance and was wreathed in cloud and mist, giving off an impressive, yet sacred feeling.

There seemed to be a few buildings and pavilions fading in and out of sight amidst the clouds.

"Do you see that? This is the Eternal Spirit Mountain, and the site of the second selection. The Eternal Spirit Mountain has been present in the legacy realm since the ancient times. Countless eons have passed, and only this Eternal Spirit Mountain has remained steadfast."

The overseer's tone was full of respect. He too seemed to be filled with great admiration for this mountain.

"I have to say, you're all quite lucky. You've passed the initial selection and can train on this mountain for three years. Three years here is equivalent to thirty years in the outside world."

Three years here was equivalent to thirty years in the outside world?

This meant that the concentration of spirit qi within the mountain was ten times that of the outside world? Surprise showed on all of the candidate's faces after hearing these words.

They also reaffirmed their faith to endure and not be eliminated. Even if they didn't gain the identity of a sect disciple, they would do this for the three years that was worth thirty years of cultivation!

"The Eternal Spirit Mountain is split into four quadrants: the sky spirit quadrant, the earth spirit quadrant, the mystic spirit quadrant, and the yellow spirit quadrant. Without a doubt, the sky spirit quadrant is the best out of all of them. However, it's something that you can't even think of just yet. That quadrant belongs to the premier geniuses in the four sects, and only a hundred of them have been arranged to occupy the sky spirit quadrant in this selection. They were all handpicked from their sects, and any one of them could trample any one of you here!"

The overseer's tone was faint, but still embodied that pride unique to sect members.

Trample all of us? Jiang Chen smiled coldly in his heart. He didn't think much of these words, but also couldn't be bothered to retort.

Only after a fight was one revealed to be a dragon or a worm. It wasn't something that could be settled by flapping one's lips.

"You're ordinary practitioners, and although you've emerged from the first selection, you're still only the foremost amongst ordinary disciples now. You still need to undergo another stage of evaluation before being acknowledged by the sects. As such, to receive the true acknowledgement of the sects, you must start from the bottom. Therefore, most of you have been assigned to the yellow spirit quadrant."

Sky, earth, mystic, and yellow. Four levels.

The yellow level was without a doubt the lowest.

As heaven defying as the ordinary practitioners were, they still truly hadn't undergone the sects' real testing yet. Therefore, it wasn't too absurd that they'd be allotted the yellow spirit quadrant.

So although a couple of dissatisfied murmurs came from the assembled candidates, no one reacted too strongly. As much as they didn't want to accept things, they knew this was the harsh reality of the world of martial dao.

It wasn't that easy for an ordinary practitioner to receive the acknowledgement of the sects.

"Of course, not everyone is going to the yellow spirit quadrant. To commend those who displayed exemplary performance in the first selection, the top ten will be sent to the mystic spirit quadrant."

"The mystic spirit quadrant has roughly double the concentration of spirit qi in the yellow quadrant. It is undoubtedly greatly superior to the yellow level."

Jiang Chen smiled sarcastically when he heard this. So it seems that he'd been assigned to the mystic level. At least his starting point wasn't too low!

The overseer continued, "Of course, these levels aren't set in stone. You each have the chance to change your destinies in this trial. It's up to you if you can alter your fate. You may be in the yellow level now, but you can absolutely challenge the mystic level if you work hard enough. In the same vein, even if you start off in the mystic quadrant, don't think you can remain there and enjoy the peace. If you don't work hard and improve fast enough, you too may be kicked down to the yellow level."

"You must be very curious if there are any rules for advancement here? I can tell you clearly that yes, there are. Moreover, they are very fair and very clear."

"The rules of advancement change every three months, and the basis for the change is your talents and strength. To be more precise, it's a reflection of your battle strength. Every person in each quadrant must complete a hundred challenges a month. The win rate of these hundred challenges will determine your rankings. The strongest ten will advance one level, and the lowest performing ten will be demoted a level. You may ask, how will one be demoted from the yellow level? It's already the lowest. I can tell you that forty candidates will be eliminated from the yellow quadrant in three months. 160 of you will be eliminated each year. That will make 500 in three years. Therefore, those of you in the yellow level are in the most precarious position. Those in other quadrants will be demoted at most, but the last 40 of you will be eliminated."

Three months was the duration of a cycle, and each candidate had to complete a hundred challenges in each cycle, with their ranking determined by their win rate.

This was rather fair, but there weren't that many slots for advancement.

There were only 10 in each quadrant every three months.

However, as little as that seemed, it wasn't that paltry either. If one couldn't even make it into the top ten of their level, then even if one was a genius, in the end, their potential was limited.

Not to mention that with three months being a cycle, one year had four cycles, and by extension, twelve cycles in three years.

This meant there were twelve chances.

If a person couldn't even grasp twelve chances, then it wasn't fate being unkind, but their own lack of ability.

However, how would they go about these challenges, and who would they challenge?

Jiang Chen was perplexed, and so were those around him.

Three months was roughly ninety days, and it wasn't a difficult thing to complete a hundred battles in ninety days.

"Master overseer, who are we challenging with the hundred challenges? The overseers? Or others?"

"Yeah, you should at least talk about our targets?"

Indeed, this was the issue that people were most concerned about.

The overseer smiled slightly, "I knew you would be concerned about this question. I'll explain the further division of the four quadrants first. The four quadrants are divided into the sky, earth, mystic, and yellow levels, but this is only an overall division and not particularly fine tuned. When it comes down to you, all of you will be divided into four levels of first, second, third, and fourth." n-(OVerlIn

"Taking the yellow spirit quadrant for example, the 3,500 within it will also be divided into these four levels. The levels are naturally determined by your selection scores. As for the sect disciples, they will be divided up according to their potential and strength. Overall, this is fair."

The four quadrants of sky, earth, mystic, and yellow spirit.

The four levels of first, second, third, and fourth.

This meant that the participating candidates had been divided into sixteen levels.

First level sky quadrant, second level sky quadrant... all the way to fourth level yellow quadrant.

"In summary, there are a total of sixteen levels amongst you all across the four quadrants. Each level within the quadrant is labeled the first, second, third, or fourth level. The one hundred challenges will be comprised of challenging the twenty five candidates in each level in three months. Do you understand?"

It wasn't hard to understand such rules.

Four levels and twenty five challenges each made precisely for a hundred challenges.

However, how would they choose their opponents?

"You must also be wondering how you would choose your opponents? Very simple. It will be random selection within the levels. In order to ensure the rights of each candidate, the same opponent won't appear twice!

Random selection!

This meant that they would meet a hundred different opponents for each cycle's challenges.

This meant that certain people would be luckier and others unluckier, to a certain degree. It was a good thing that twenty five challenges had to be made per level. Being unlucky once didn't mean always being unlucky.

So speaking overall, this was actually quite fair. Each challenge would equally be against a strong candidate or a weak one. Unexpected surprises would have a very low chance of occurring with a hundred challenges, so one had to rely on their strength to the end.

"Remember, the scores are calculated from your win rates. If you're the one receiving the challenge, you can only accept it, but whether it's a win or loss — that won't affect your win rate. Therefore, it's a hundred challenges in name, but there's no way that you will be fighting only a hundred times. You could be the challenger or the one being challenged. When we calculate the rates, we will pay attention only to the times in which you were the challenger."

Jiang Chen had thought of this question before as well, and his confusion had been finally resolved with these words.

With this, the frequency of battles would be quite high! One had to both complete a hundred challenges and fend off an unknown amount of challenges.

On average, each person would likely fight two hundred times.

This meant that there would, on average, be two battles each day.

This was far more difficult.

"I trust that you realize that you will not have the same number of battles as the person next to you. If someone is unlucky, they will fight many more times. However, this may not be a bad thing. To use an example, if two candidates have the same win rate, then the one who was challenged more frequently will have the advantage and the higher ranking."

"Don't dismiss this advantage. According to our simulations, multiple people will have the same win rate. Therefore, it's very likely that the final ten that advance will all have the same win rate and the list will be determined by the number of challenges."

The rules were quite detailed, and so thorough that each one of them could affect the outcome.

Chapter 319: Fourth Level Candidate in the Mystic Spirit Quadrant

One was at a certain disadvantage if they were challenged too often. Therefore, it was quite reasonable that the one who had been challenged more often would rank further ahead when multiple people had the same win rate.

"I've already explained the basic rules to you. The majority of you are in the yellow spirit quadrant. The keeper of the yellow quadrant will assign you to various levels according to your ranking in the first selection. Those who are first shouldn't be proud, and those who are fourth should not lose hope. This is because you have three months to change your destiny. Will you rise to the mystic spirit quadrant or be eliminated? You have three months to decide what kind of fate you want."

"If you don't rise to the next level this time, you still have eleven more chances. There are still many opportunities, and you yourself will decide if you're a worm or a dragon. The strong control their destinies and the weak complain about their fates. I hope that you are all of the former and don't complain about the rules or whine that they're unfair. All of you are under the same rules and although there are possibly some differences in difficulty, they are still fair overall."

The overseer had gone to quite a bit of effort to warn these candidates.

"Alright, this concludes the explanation of the general rules. Each quadrant is different, and the keeper of each quadrant will explain things in greater detail when you enter the mountain. Now those who were ranked in the top ten please step forward. The others can follow this path and go up to the yellow quadrant."

When he looked at the top ten cultivators of the initial selection, the overseer's expression grew a bit warmer and he smiled slightly, "I will personally lead you to the mystic spirit quadrant."

The yellow quadrant was filled with ordinary practitioners and so there was no point in the overseer overly fawning up to them.

These ten however, were the strongest in the first selection and so they had a bit of a future ahead of them.

Thus, it was understandable that the overseer would have a slightly better attitude towards them.

The overseer placed his hands behind his back and he walked in another direction, while they followed.

They finally reached another passageway after four hours. The words 'Mystic Spirit Quadrant' were carved on a stone marker in large, ancient script. A powerful, ancient presence exuded from them, as if dragons were flying and phoenixes were dancing.

"Come, you will be candidates of the mystic quadrant once you enter. There are advantages and disadvantages to being here."

"The advantage is that your starting point and environment is different to the yellow quadrant."

"The disadvantage is that your opponents are sect disciples. As low as their levels may be, they are still sect disciples in the end."

The overseer admonished them repeatedly, "It's best that you know beforehand that sect disciples aren't like the opponents that you met previously. Any of the sect disciples that could make it to this place are not ordinary characters. Even a fourth level disciple in the mystic quadrant is stronger than the most exemplary of the ordinary practitioners. You must conduct yourself well when you enter and eke out space for survival amidst the cracks. For you, if you can ensure that you aren't demoted at the end of the first cycle, that will be a great victory already!"

The overseer's heart still tilted towards sect disciples. Even if an ordinary disciple was at the peak, they were still heavily disadvantaged when it came to sect disciples.

Therefore, he felt that although these ten had been sent to the mystic spirit quadrant, their final destiny was still demotion and being beaten back to the yellow quadrant in three months time.

Shaking his head, the overseer didn't seem to want to overly knock down their confidence. He smiled, "All is possible within the world of martial dao, and there is no meaning in merely overtaking others. You must continuously improve and trample your opponents beneath your feet. This is the true path to a genius' rise. Let's go! We reach our destination, which is in front of us."

Jiang Chen also heard the overseer's words. However, his heart was like a boulder and so he treated those words as only reference. He didn't become dejected because of his words, and he wouldn't become too full of himself because of the overseer's encouragement.

Jiang Chen had his own rhythm and plans.

He would remain true to his own heart and walk his path.

He sensed the subtle ripples of spirit power along the way and he couldn't help but sigh that the Eternal Spirit Mountain well deserved its name. The concentration of this spirit qi was extraordinarily high.

It was a type of enjoyment to be able to cultivate in such surroundings, especially when it was compared to the ordinary world.

“The spirit power ripples of the mystic quadrant area are already thus, then what about the earth and sky quadrants? What kind of strong power is encompassed in those?”

A hint of expectation grew in Jiang Chen’s heart regarding the earth and sky quadrants.

“Three months!” Jiang Chen thought silently. “I must be part of the top ten in these three months and enter the earth spirit quadrant. I’ll only have the right to compete for the sky quadrant from there!”

Jiang Chen was well aware that only the most exemplary of disciples from the four sects had the right to take up residence in the sky quadrant.

The overseer had said that the disciples in that quadrant had all been carefully selected. There were only a hundred slots.

It was easy to see the fierce level of competition that existed.

“The sky quadrant...” That region had now risen in his heart as his goal.

“Long Juxue possesses an innate constitution and she has enjoyed the various resources of the sect. She has more advantages compared to me, and her constitution must’ve been fully deployed over the past two years. She must be in the sky quadrant this time. If I don’t go there, how will our previous grudges be resolved?”

Jiang Chen hated Long Juxue from the depths of his heart.

This wasn’t just that they had absolutely irreconcilable differences, but also because he was well aware of Long Juxue’s scorpion-like personality.

If she grew in strength, she would never let him off the hook.

Although Jiang Chen was confident, he didn’t think that he would be able to fight against the entire Purple Sun Sect by himself right now.

Even though Long Juxue wasn’t the equivalent of the Purple Sun Sect, the sect would absolutely pour forth all of its strength and resources for her.

An innate constitution was an ultimate treasure for a sect on the Purple Sun Sect’s level — a treasure found once in a thousand years!

If they didn’t put her on a pedestal, a stronger power would steal her away sooner or later.

Therefore, Jiang Chen was clearly aware of the fact that the selection was likely the best opportunity to make a move against Long Juxue.

If he missed this opportunity and allowed her to soar to the skies, it would be much more difficult to kill her in the future.

The overseer’s voice sounded once again as Jiang Chen was deep in thought. “Here we are, follow me inside.”

An enormous building sat on the mountain, presenting a grand sight. It looked as awe inspiring as a sect.

There was a world all of its own within. It was an exceedingly spacious area, giving one the feeling of an endlessly twisting and turning landscape.

The courtyard was even more majestic.

The expansive courtyard could accommodate tens of thousands of people.

Several thousand sect disciples were listening to some overseers' lectures. All of them stopped when they saw that there were newcomers.

The keeper in charge was tall and stocky, with a well rounded forehead and a deep gaze in his eyes.

"Master Fang, these are the top ten from the secular disciples. I've brought them here according to the rules." The overseer in charge of the secular selection smiled a bit fawningly at the keeper.

"Mm, allow them to approach." The tall Master Fang had on a stern expression on his face.

"Alright, you guys, go on over and stand at the back." The secular overseer said and turned to Master Fang again. "My mission is complete. I will take my leave then, Master fang."

Master Fang nodded his head aloofly and didn't keep him.

Jiang Chen and the other nine secular disciples all walked to the back of the formation.

When they passed the sect disciples, all of them had hints of jeering smiles on their faces and their eyes were full of disdain.

It was obvious that the sect disciples thought nothing much of these so-called secular geniuses.

Genius?

It was almost public opinion that all the geniuses beneath the heavens came from the sects.

The ordinary world had geniuses? That was a colossal joke! In the eyes of sect disciples, all secular geniuses were village buffoons. They were wandering practitioners if put nicely, country bumpkins when not.

Therefore, they didn't bother concealing their disdain when they saw the ten secular disciples join the formation.

How were mere ordinary practitioners worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as sect disciples?

"Alright, your identities are all the same from this moment on. You are all candidates of the mystic quadrant in the Eternal Spirit Mountain." Master Fang said faintly. "That the ten of you could emerge from the masses means that you have your uncommon areas. However, the rules are the rules. You've just arrived from the ordering world, and you can be ranked as only fourth level mystic quadrant candidates."

As they'd expected, although the ten of them had been lucky enough to enter the mystic quadrant, they were assigned to the lowest level in that quadrant.

The fourth level was the lowest and the bottom of the barrel in all of the quadrants.

However, Jiang Chen had no protests against such an arrangement. So what about the fourth level? There was no meaning to the current divisions in either case.

The real determinant of advancement wasn't one's level, but one's win rate at the end of the cycle.

Jiang Chen's heart was rather calm when he faced the blatant scorn from the sect disciples.

It was the natural order of things that sect disciples had their eyes on top of their heads and looked down on secular practitioners. Jiang Chen had no plans to huff and puff at them.

That was simply too boring!

True strength was gained through fighting!

Chapter 320: An Explosion of Enmity

Master Fang's voice sounded again, "We are all assembled here now and you all know the rules so I won't say much more. Now, I'll just go over some details you should take note of."

"The first detail -- in each three month cycle, you must each complete a hundred challenges. If you don't complete this number, whether due to injury or other reasons, then each challenge you miss will become a loss. For example, if you complete only eighty challenges in three months and you won forty challenges, then the twenty that you lacked will also count as losses. In this regard, your score will become twenty wins and sixty losses, and your win rate calculated from this."

"The second detail is that if you feel that the opponent challenging you is too strong, you can choose to forfeit to protect yourself from injury. Your opponent will win without having to fight, and each forfeit will also be deducted from the fights you win."

"The third detail is that although we encourage only determining who is the victor instead of death matches, casualties are inevitable amongst these challenges. Each person is responsible for their own life."

"The fourth detail, all forms of personal fighting are strictly prohibited during this time. If you're lucky enough to avoid being caught, we can't do anything to you. But if you are caught, you will be punished harshly."

"The fifth detail..."

Master Fang listed out all the details without a hint of impatience.

Jiang Chen listened quite carefully, fully committing each detail to heart. Victory lay within the details, so under no circumstances could they be ignored.

"Alright, I have clearly gone over the details. If you still have any questions, you may ask me within the next two hours, after which I will no longer entertain your queries"

Upon hearing this, the sect disciples all asked questions proactively. Everyone was quite eager and touched on a variety of issues, but the questions raised all revolved around this trial.

Although Jiang Chen didn't ask any, he listened quite carefully, focusing especially when he heard someone ask something he was more concerned about.

"Master Fang, I'd like to ask how many people are within the earth spirit quadrant?"

"There are a hundred within the sky quadrant, five hundred within the earth quadrant, three thousand in the mystic, and 3,500 in the yellow." Master Fang provided precise numbers for everyone.

"Then will they be undergoing the same tests in these three months?"

"The content of the tests in the yellow and mystic quadrants are basically the same. They vary upon reaching the earth spirit quadrant, and become even more complicated in the sky spirit quadrant. The tests may not all be the same. If you can make it to the earth or even the sky quadrant, then someone will naturally explain their general gist to you. Don't think that much for now for there is no advantage in reaching beyond your grasp." Master Fang's tone was distant.

"Master Fang, I'd like to ask if the sixty four selected for the final competition will all be chosen from the sky spirit quadrant?" Another disciple asked.

"Yes indeed. The sixty four candidates will all be chosen from the sky quadrant. Therefore, you must try hard and aim for the sky quadrant, even if there is only a slight hope of success. Although the great majority of you will be destined to fail, but as the keeper of this quadrant, I'd rather like to see how many geniuses will emerge from my area and make it into the earth and sky quadrants, and even the sixty four places. If even one of you number amongst the sixty four, then I will feel proud in this regard!"

The sky quadrant were filled with the most premier geniuses.

On the other hand, the mystic quadrant was filled with the weaker sect disciples with lower potentials.

This division was drawn up according to their usual performance in the sects. Ordinarily speaking, there might be some hope for someone in the mystic quadrant to challenge the earth level.

However, it was a farfetched daydream to think someone in the mystic realm could shoot to the sky quadrant.

For someone in the mystic quadrant to make it into the list of sixty four was even more impossible!

"Alright." Master Fang waved his large hand. "I will now split up the territory. First level disciples will have a residence to themselves. Second level disciples will live two to a residence. Four to a residence for third level, and eight to a residence for fourth level."

The candidates naturally had to have a resting place throughout the testing period of three months.

The differences between the four levels were thoroughly apparent with the division of residences.

The first level candidates had the highest honor of having a residence to themselves.

Although the second level disciples didn't live alone, they would naturally have more peace and quiet with fewer people around. During cultivation, the largest taboo was an excess of people and noises since cultivation would be adversely affected by too many distractions.

One naturally possessed a larger advantage with fewer people around.

As for third level candidates, although there were more people with four to a residence, their treatment was still better than the fourth level candidates.

Eight people to a residence was undoubtedly quite crowded. The most critical thing wasn't just that it was crowded, but also with such levels of noise, small conflicts were inevitable.

"The fourth level candidates do indeed face discrimination wherever they go." Jiang Chen sighed inwardly. However, he also knew that these were the rules and couldn't be changed.

What he could do was to shake off this identity as soon as possible.

All the candidates were allotted their residences after around two hours. As a fourth level candidate, Jiang Chen was assigned to one of the residences closer to the back.

The number of his residence was nine hundred something.

Jiang Chen didn't mind. Since he couldn't change anything at the moment, he might as well make the best of what he was given.

He grasped his residence token and searched according to his number, finally locating his residence after walking twenty to thirty li.

The mystic spirit quadrant had built layers of residences at the halfway point of the mountain.

The first level residences were at the peak, with second, third, and the fourth level residences following beneath them.

"Heh heh, the fourth level candidates are lower than everyone alright. Not only do they live eight to a house, but they're located on lower geographic terrain compared to the others. Indeed, when one's rank is low, one is stepped upon wherever one goes," Jiang Chen reflected.

Although this wasn't literally being stepped on by others, the layout of the residences made it very apparent -- the first levels sat loftily on high ground, stepping on the other levels beneath them.

Jiang Chen finally saw where his house was located as he continued walking.

There was already a figure loitering outside the house. The thin figure walked up to Jiang Chen in welcome.

"Are you staying here as well?" The person wore the uniform and mask of a secular disciple.

"Yes, and you're the first runner up of the first selection, candidate number two." Jiang Chen had an impression of this figure.

The person started slightly and smiled, "I didn't think you'd actually remember me. I observed you when they were handing out the tokens and you didn't pay any attention to anyone at all. How do you know of me?"

Jiang Chen had indeed not paid much attention to the rankings of others, but that didn't mean that he didn't remember them.

His memory was quite strong. As long as he paid a little attention, he'd basically remembered all those who ranked in the front.

However, he naturally wouldn't explain anything now and smiled, "You live here too? This means that all the secular practitioners live in this house?"

Jiang Chen actually didn't mind that. All the secular candidates were wearing masks and no one knew anyone else which meant that no one would have to put up with attitude from anyone else. This was rather nice.

Jiang Chen felt that he'd rather live with the secular candidates than with the sect disciples.

The skinny candidate number two smiled ruefully, "That's what I thought too, but we've actually been separated into five groups. Each group has been arranged with six other fourth level sect disciples. This means that we're the only secular candidates in this house."

Jiang Chen was rather surprised that the secular disciples hadn't been all grouped into one house.

It looked like cohabitation with the sect disciples was inevitable.

He didn't like that, but wasn't particularly against it either. Although it was the same house, each person had their own room.

"Let's relax and enjoy it since we're already here. Let's go in instead of loitering around outside." Jiang Chen smiled faintly and walked inside.

Candidate number two caught up to him and asked, "There's not that many of us secular candidates and we'll be discriminated against wherever we go. What should I call you, brother? We should rally together since we're beneath the same roof. What do you think?"

Jiang Chen smiled, "Since everyone called me Boulder during the first selection, you can call me Boulder."

Candidate number two blinked blankly before replying, "Alright, Brother Boulder, you can call me Xiao Fei."

Jiang Chen nodded and the two were about to walk in when they heard a crude and arrogant voice complaining inside.

"The f*ck. I heard that two ordinary candidates were assigned to our house? How freaking unlucky. We, noble sect disciples, need to share a roof with ordinary trash. Who the hell arranged this?! This is an insult to us!!"

Before even seeing him, it was likely the speaker was just as vicious as his tone.

He was likely one of those tyrannical and domineering bullies.

Another sinister voice spoke up afterwards, "Brother Tiger, we all know that you're someone who values face. In my opinion, you should show them up in the very beginning. Let them know that ultimately, ordinary practitioners are just village sparrows with no right to live together with us phoenixes from the sects."

“Yeah, Brother Tiger, let them know who’s boss! They need to know that sect disciples are an existence they always have to look up to, not something these mundane ants can be on par with.”

That vicious voice chuckled now, full of self pride. “Don’t worry, we’ll teach those two bumpkins a lesson when they come so that they’ll obediently carry out our commands.”

“Brother Tiger is Brother Tiger! We brothers will leave it all to you! Come to think of it, it’s not a bad thing to gain two slaves to order around.”

Jiang Chen and candidate number two looked at each other, a wry expression in their eyes.

Enmity had already exploded before they’d even set foot into the house!