

### Three Realms 391

#### Chapter 391: The Two Biggest Wild Cards in the Final Matches

Long Juxue stood at the most eye-catching position like a proud peacock, unconsciously showing off her position as number one genius.

Although Lei Gangyang was the type to hold his plans close to his heart, Long Juxue's blatant provocation still enraged him, but he couldn't afford to explode in front of all the sect elders.

He wasn't Ceng Shi, not someone to accept his fate that easily.

He had borne the glorious halo as the first genius amongst the younger Purple Sun Sect generation since youth. He'd enjoyed this honor and privilege for twenty some years. For him to suddenly hand over this title and let Long Juxue be crowned instead, he was far from capable of doing so with serene acceptance.

To ensure that the four venerated ones and the heavyweights of the sects could observe all candidates from all aspects, the final matches didn't start in a flurried manner.

A hard rule was set; only four matches could be held a day.

Two in the morning, two in the afternoon.

Each match was limited to four hours. In this way, the four matches a day would expend 16 hours.

Eight days would be needed to complete the first round, and only four days for the second round of sixteen matches.

After the final sixteen were chosen, the number of fights would only decrease. The total time needed to complete all the matches wouldn't exceed a month.

Although the formation could hold out for another two or three months, none of the forefathers wanted to take the risk and go down to the wire.

Jiang Chen and the two others weren't called in for the four matches on the first day.

However, according to the rules, all candidates had to be present and observe during the matches.

The candidates fighting on the first day were relatively weaker, so the matches weren't that exciting.

None of the three were called in even on the second day. Liu Wencai only had the chance to take the ring only on the third day.

He took the field with great momentum and faced off against rank number 43.

Number 43 was also at the peak of the fifth level spirit realm. On paper, it looked like he was a hair ahead of Liu Wencai's fifth level spirit realm.

Therefore, number 43 was actually secretly delighted before they met in the ring. When he saw that Liu Wencai was a rookie who'd just come up from the earth quadrant, he smiled gloatingly, "Kid, you've just charged in from the earth quadrant and spent so much effort farming points. Your rank is higher than mine, but you're going to be crushed by me all the same!"

This candidate was really quite happy, thinking that he was simply too lucky to be matched up against a rookie candidate from the earth quadrant.

However, when the fight commenced, he discovered just how ludicrous his thoughts had been.

Liu Wencai used less than fifteen minutes to wipe the floor with his opponent, as easy as using a cleaver to dice vegetables. n/-Ove181n

And, he hadn't even exercised a hint of his full strength. He'd only punched and kicked, using brute force to pound his opponent's face in.

This unexpectedly daunting momentum also shocked the examiners. When they saw that Liu Wencai looked unfamiliar, people started pulling up his information for further research.

The heavyweights from the Myriad Spirit Sect also had absolutely no idea of what they could say to forefather Ninelion.

Such a fine seed had had to fight every step of the way up from the mystic quadrant!

"The hell are you guys doing? Such a fine seed was sent to the mystic quadrant?! I'd like to know just how you divided up the disciples! Was someone up to no good behind the scenes?" Ninelion cursed loudly at all the senior executives of the Myriad Spirit Sect.

The division of disciples into quadrants had been according to potential and strength. Of course, there were many who had sent disciples to various quadrants based on personal factors, such as their familiarity with and popularity of the disciple.

The sect heavyweights really didn't know Liu Wencai.

After all, he'd simply been too unseen in the sect before. Although it was a bit less than what he should've deserved with his original potential and strength in the mystic quadrant, it wasn't completely out of line.

His potential had yet to be tapped at that time.

His true explosion into his own had come after he'd met Jiang Chen and the subsequent tempering and occurrences.

Therefore, the senior executives were a bit undeserving of this lecture.

Of course, there was reason to Ninelion's rage as well. Such a good seed had been sent to dither in the mystic and earth quadrant for so long.

If he'd been put in the sky quadrant from the very beginning and caught Ninelion's eye, receiving the proper attention from the sect, he might have been even more stunning and heaven defying now.

"I must pay attention to this seed." Ninelion privately made up his mind and firmly fixed Liu Wencai's name in his heart.

He'd made up his mind that even if this kid didn't make it into the top 16, the kid would gain a place in the plan for further, targeted training.

Ninelion was an origin realm old monster alright. The sharpness of his eye wasn't something that anyone could measure up to. He saw a certain potential and explosive power in Liu Wencai's battles.

Ninelion privately felt that when he was this kid's age, he might not have displayed such potential and explosive strength.

"Haha, to think that my Myriad Spirit Sect would have another young genius such as this one rise after Luo Xi. It looks like the heavens favor my sect." Ninelion was filled with pride at seeing a genius of his sect thoroughly trample his opponent, striking out with might and awe.

Jiang Chen and Tang Hong's turn had yet to come even as the fourth and fifth days passed.

On the sixth day, Tang Hong took the field against rank number 56.

When number 56 saw that he was matched up against the infamous madman Tang Hong, his face drooped. He'd thought to put up a strong front at first, and then leverage his energy and drive to somehow triumph from a weaker position.

However, when he discovered that his opponent was Tang Hong, he knew that his plans had been in vain.

Tang Hong was the number one crazy of the sky quadrant.

This person would never be scared by an opponent's fervor and drive. On the contrary, the more crazed his opponent was, the more insane Tang Hong would become as well.

Tang Hong's madness could change with his opponent. The stronger his opponent was, the more berserk he would become.

Therefore, number 56 was close to listless. He was more willing than anyone to compete in terms of energy and drive, but he knew that this would only make things worse with Tang Hong. He'd just be in for an even worse pounding.

It was finally Jiang Chen's turn on the seventh day.

His opponent was number 59.

When the fellow made it into the ring, Jiang Chen noted with surprise that it was an old acquaintance, Zhou Yi of the Precious Tree Sect.

This fellow was indeed something to make it into the round of sixty four.

However, Jiang Chen hadn't paid any attention to Zhou Yi back in the day, as he and Iron Dazhi had been defeated by him back in the capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Therefore, he naturally easily trampled this kind of opponent.

The swift sword work that Zhou Yi was proud of was as effective as a child playing with a wooden sword in front of Jiang Chen.

If it wasn't for Jiang Chen not wanting to show off his strength beforehand, Zhou Yi wouldn't have lasted even fifteen minutes.

However, even though the match lasted that long, Jiang Chen still used only his fists and legs to throw Zhou Yi off the stage. Jiang Chen, Tang Hong, and Liu Wencai all won without a shadow of a doubt in the first round.

On the eighth day, the top four candidates, the four geniuses of the sects, took the field.

Long Juxue, Lei Gangyang, Luo Xi, and Shi Yunyun.

These four had the highest scores and were the four strong seeds of this time's selection.

Originally, Lei Gangyang had been an undisputed first seed, but with Long Juxue's fierce momentum, her score had surpassed Lei Gangyang's at the last moment, and she had taken the title of first seed.

Their opponents were candidates ranked 61 to 64, candidates on completely different levels of strength.

The four geniuses won easily, not even able to warm up properly.

The next round of 32 candidates were set up after the first eight days. Candidates ranked near the top had mostly won their matches.

According to the rules, all candidates were to rest for two days after the first round.

Truth be told, they also needed the rest. One's situation needed to be adjusted to top condition before a fight.

The organizers also needed to analyze the list of names and understand the candidates who had won.

There weren't that many surprising names on the list.

There were four or five names that hadn't been thought highly of that had actually emerged from the masses. Of course, the most apparent were Liu Wencai and the secular freak genius of the boulder's heart.

Just who was this freak genius? Apart from the Purple Sun Sect, all of the other three sects were full of curiosity.

The three sects had had a few speculations, but their guesses weren't that reliable either.

However, the three sects could also see the enmity that the Purple Sun Sect bore towards the secular genius. Therefore, they were all considering how to entice the secular genius over to their side.

The list of the final sixteen was about to be produced. Once the secular genius made his mark on that list, the four great sects could make their move to recruit him.

Thus, they were all focusing their attention on the secular genius.

As for the Purple Sun Sect, it was intensely analyzing the match line-ups.

They discovered that Jiang Chen's next opponent was their Chu Xinghan!

Chu Xinghan was ranked number 27 and had won on the first day.

"Xinghan, do you need your master to remind you who your next opponent is?" Master Shuiyue said faintly. "I've heard Juxue say that you weren't enthusiastic about suppressing that swine Jiang Chen in

the sky quadrant. I can let bygones be bygones, but you must strive your utmost to kill him this time. Even if you cannot win, you must kill him no matter the cost. Even if he is gravely injured, that would be a great accomplishment as well. If you cannot do so, you will be the sinner of my Shuiyue faction and I would've unjustly reared you for twenty years. Do you understand my meaning?"

How would Chu Xinghan not understand his master's meaning? She was telling him that even if he had to detonate his own spirit ocean and take his enemy down with him, that would be what he'd have to resort to in order to fight his opponent.

This was treating him as a pawn, a pawn that was set up for sacrifice!

Chu Xinghan's heart spasmed with pain as grief flashed through his profound gaze. He hadn't thought that he'd only be a pawn in his master's heart in the end!

### Chapter 392: The Second Round of Matches Begin

It was said that nothing was more lamentable than a dead heart.

Chu Xinghan suddenly felt that he had been turned into a pawn in the Shuiyue faction of the Purple Sun Sect, and the one who'd done so was the master who he'd always looked up to.

The path of martial dao was one of defying one's fate. No one was born to be the pawn of another. That wouldn't do, not even if the one casting the pawns was one's own master.

Seeing that Chu Xinghan had remained silent, Master Shuiyue's brow furrowed. "Xinghan, your dao heart has been unstable lately and you've been thinking wild, random thoughts. Have you forgotten the debt of gratitude that you owe to your master for raising you?"

"Junior brother Xinghan, you only need to drag Jiang Chen down a bit or force him to show his hand. That would be enough of an achievement. It's a bit difficult to expect from you to kill that swine. You couldn't do it that day in the Second Crossing, and you will likely be unable to do so now."

Long Juxue had faced Jiang Chen that day and had nearly been killed. It was Chu Xinghan's timely arrival that had saved Long Juxue.

But she'd wanted him to kill Jiang Chen, and Chu Xinghan hadn't done so. He'd advocated his own agenda to take Jiang Chen alive.

He'd ended up passing up the best timing to kill Jiang Chen and let him be saved by someone else instead.

Long Juxue had always held a grudge about this. What she remembered was how Chu Xinghan hadn't respected her wishes and killed Jiang Chen when she wanted him to. She'd even forgotten that he'd saved her life.

She'd held a grudge against Chu Xinghan this whole time. She was also making use of this opportunity to vent her feelings and had actually called him "junior brother Xinghan" instead!

One had to know that Chu Xinghan was a full seven to eight years older than Long Juxue.

He'd hailed Master Shuiyue as his master for twenty years before Long Juxue. But now, she was actually calling him "junior brother Xinghan"!

The second disciple beneath Master Shuiyue, a top ten disciple in the Purple Sun Sect had now become a pawn, and a disposable one at that!

All for this woman? For this heartless woman?

Chu Xinghan's eyes suddenly grew frosty as he looked coldly at Long Juxue without saying a word.

The phrase "junior brother Xinghan" had made his heart completely die inside.

Because when Long Juxue had voiced this hurtful title, his honored master Shuiyue had had a wooden expression on her face, as if all of this was natural and a given.

Chu Xinghan was as insensate as wood. Like a walking corpse without a soul, standing there dumbly.

"Think carefully, don't betray the expectations your master has of you." Master Shuiyue also furrowed her brow when she saw Chu Xinghan's display and walked away after these cold words.

Long Juxue laughed coldly and ran her gaze without restraint over Chu Xinghan's body, the disdain and contempt in her gaze were as if she was looking at trash.

Chu Xinghan's self-respect had vanished without a trace in front of his honored master and Long Juxue's cruel, stone-hearted actions.

He could almost hear his heart drip with blood.

Chu Xinghan stood dumbly beneath the moonlight, his resolute dao heart struggling in the depths of mire.

"My gratitude towards the master runs deep, but I must repay her with my life? It would be one thing if I had to lay down my life for the honored master. But for that faithless and heartless person, for that Long Juxue, the honored master wants me to be the pawn to kill Jiang Chen? This isn't right!"

Chu Xinghan's martial dao wasn't as strong as Long Juxue's, but that didn't mean he didn't have the will to pursue the boundless path of martial dao.

Even ants held on to their ignoble existence, much less someone with flesh and blood like Chu Xinghan.

He wasn't afraid of death, but he really didn't want to die in such a stupid fashion. There was no worth in this death. He really didn't want to die for someone he hated!

"Forget it, I cannot defy my master's orders. I have my accomplishments of today because of my honored master. Junior brothers Hai Tian and He Yan all paid their lives for the honored master's wishes as well. I, Chu Xinghan, am a true man. Can I be the sort to forget my debts of gratitude? The honored master has given me my accomplishments of today and so I will repay her with my death."

Chu Xinghan sighed lightly, "However, Jiang Chen has no grudge or feud with me. What am I detonating my own spirit ocean to take him with me for? Just for that heartless b\*tch Long Juxue?"

Chu Xinghan was a real man alright, one with his own opinions of what was right or wrong. Although he'd only met Jiang Chen once, and under the guise of enemies, he truly admired Jiang Chen from the depths of his heart and admired his clear delineation of love and hate, of gratitude and grudge.

Whereas Long Juxue had given Chu Xinghan an impression of selfishness and slipperiness, a villain out for her own gains, as well as a feeling of—b\*tches will be b\*tches.

He had to put his life on the line for someone he hated to take down someone he admired!

“Long Juxue, just how are you worthy of this? Should the entire sect fawn over you just because you have an innate constitution? I, Chu Xinghan, am a fine man with a life ahead of me, why must I die for you? I can die and give this life back to my honored master, but I will never do something this stupid as to harm another without benefitting myself!”

Chu Xinghan had made up his mind in this moment.

He was going to fight with the faith of sure death. He wanted to die openly and justly beneath Jiang Chen's hand, but he wouldn't use a method as stupid as detonating his spirit ocean!

.....

His next opponent, Chu Xinghan?

Jiang Chen analyzed the competition and discovered who his next opponent was as well.

Jiang Chen wasn't unfamiliar with Chu Xinghan. A rather tall figure dressed in hemp with its eyes like the starry night with a vague hint of desolation within them, arose in Jiang Chen's mind.

If he were to say that he had any bit of good feelings towards any of the Purple Sun Sect fellows, then Chu Xinghan would be the one.

That person, from beginning to end, had never given off the feeling of overwhelming arrogance nor of considering himself far above the masses. He'd never treated those in the ordinary world as ants simply because he was a sect disciple.

According to Jiang Chen's thoughts, he would kill all Purple Sun Sect disciples on sight.

However, he left a ray of hope for Chu Xinghan. He remembered when he'd saved Long Juxue at the Second Crossing.

Had he wanted to and used his full strength, he would've absolutely killed Jiang Chen.

But he hadn't, and had given Jiang Chen a choice instead.

Although those choices had been meaningless to Jiang Chen, for someone with an absolute advantage in power to not abuse it, giving his opponents a choice instead, this at the very least depicted Chu Xinghan as a cultivator with a sense of morals and ethics.

“I, Jiang Chen, separate my grudges and favors well. You gave me a choice then, I will also give you a choice now.”

Jiang Chen had already come up with a strategy in his heart.

He threw all thoughts of the competition to the side and started training seriously again. Although he still needed some time until he could break through to the sky spirit realm, Jiang Chen's goal was set.

He'd always believed that on the path of martial dao, a bit more effort would lead to a bit more gain.

None of the candidates relaxed during the two days of rest.

The second round officially commenced after two days.

There were sixteen matches in the second round. With four matches a day, only four days would be needed to go through them all.

The matches of the second round would naturally not be as smooth-going as the first round.

After a round of eliminations, the ones left were the elites amongst the elite. The matches between closely ranked candidates gave birth to even greater sparks.

In the four matches on the first day, there were some who paid the price with their lives and others who were heavily injured.

But all of it was worthy it.

Because anyone who won directly advanced to the top 16, becoming someone that the forefathers would focus on training.

Within the ring.

Liu Wencai's heart was as calm as still water. All that he'd experienced after entering the sect flashed before his eyes. His life until the mystic quadrant, the earth quadrant, and the turn his life had taken.

All because he'd met someone who'd changed his life, Brother Boulder from the mundane world.

Although he'd never asked about Brother Boulder's identity up until now, Liu Wencai had long since respected Brother Boulder as an elder brother, like a mentor and like a friend.

"I must win for Brother Boulder. Those who get in my way must die!"

Liu Wencai's faith was resolute as he looked at his opponent calmly. This opponent was Iron Dazhi from the Precious Tree Sect.

Iron Dazhi had received the heritage of the Iron family and risen to sixth level spirit realm. He stood solidly in the top four of the Precious Tree Sect's geniuses and felt that he would have no problem making it into the top 16.

As such, his confidence at the moment was incredibly inflated.

"You're called Iron Dazhi? If you want to introduce yourself as the heir to the Iron family, then save it. I know everything about you, and am only considering one thing here."

"What?" Iron Dazhi laughed coldly.

"How to kick you the hell out of this ring!" Liu Wencai said faintly.



“Tsk, tsk. If I recall correctly, you’re just an ant who made his way up from the mystic quadrant. You know everything about me? So what? That traitor Tang Hong betrayed his own sect, but did he not tell you that an ant like you will never be able to go up against the strength of a sect genius?”

Iron Dazhi gave a long peal of laughter as he made a grasping motion and a long halberd appeared in his hand. This halberd was noticeably different from the one that Jiang Chen had seen in the Skylaurel Kingdom.

This halberd was bronze in color, with some indistinct glyphs leaping around the air as he waved it, giving one a spectacular feeling as the glyphs changed in countless ways.

For the geniuses of the sect, the greatest advantage they enjoyed, apart from high potential, was resources.

Iron Dazhi’s potential wasn’t the best, but he was a direct descendant in the Iron family and had absolute advantage in resources. This Bronze Dragon Ironthreaded Halberd was a family inheritance, and a spirit weapon that Iron Long had greatly treasured for long.

The Black Dragon Halberd that Iron Dazhi had used before was on a completely different level to this one.

The Bronze Dragon Ironthreaded Halberd was an eight times refined spirit weapon. If it completed the nine refinement, it would become a peak existence amongst spirit weapons.

“Iron Dazhi, you’ll very quickly know who’s the ant here.” Liu Wencai’s gaze was faint as his aura flared. “Make your move.”

Iron Dazhi leered. “Stubborn and refusing to see the errors of your ways. Then die!”

Iron Dazhi was highly confident with this battle. His goal was to charge into the top sixteen, and his very minimum goal in this selection.

He wanted to become a personal disciple of the origin realm forefathers! n/.o--**ℓ**.)**e**)-ℓ)/&-(1--n

Therefore, he wouldn’t tolerate any missteps in this fight. He immediately hauled out the legendary weapon handed down within his family and deployed it with his heritage of halberd techniques, transforming into an air current and charging towards Liu Wencai!

### Chapter 393: Thoroughly Trouncing Iron Dazhi

The halberd techniques of the Iron family were renowned within the four great sects.

Iron Dazhi had indeed poured in his life’s blood in practicing them. He’d attained great achievements in this area.

He turned and rolled the halberd. Ripples spread throughout the air as if dragons and fish were dancing. There seemed to be boundless carps bounding through the river waters beneath the setting sun. His aura and momentum were quite impressive.

The most frightening was that this Bronze Dragon Ironthreaded Halberd was an eight times refined weapon. It seemed to be able to draw upon heaven and earth as it moved, turning into a frightening killing machine.

The power of an eight times refined weapon was indeed alarming.

Although Liu Wencai had received some intelligence about Iron Dazhi from Tang Hong, he'd still missed out on one point, which was the Bronze Dragon Ironthreaded Halberd.

Although Tang Hong understood Iron Dazhi, he only knew that he used a Black Dragon Halberd and didn't know that the Iron family had something even stronger in reserve.

Therefore, when Iron Dazhi deployed his furious halberd techniques, he actually held the upper hand for a moment, making signs of danger appear all around Liu Wencai.

It was a good thing that Liu Wencai had recently sparred with Jiang Chen and Tang Hong every day. The experience from that had ensured that he would be able to keep a calm heart even in dire straits.

Iron Dazhi's halberd techniques were as if tempestuous winds and rains one second, surging and charring lightning the next. They seemed to glimmer with endless rippling movements, yet also seemed as immutable as a millennium of long nights.

The mentality projected from the halberd was ever-changing.

Those watching beneath the ring were enraptured. This was the most exciting match since they'd started. Iron Dazhi's domineering halberd techniques were as if bouquets of flowers and piles of brocades—pleasing to the eye and awe-inspiring. His momentum was even more astonishing, and those who normally looked down on Iron Dazhi couldn't help but have a change of heart.

Even Jiang Chen had to admit that Iron Dazhi had improved greatly from that match in the Skylaurel capital.

He'd had tangible leaps in both battle strength and cultivation level.

However, he wasn't unduly worried for Liu Wencai. This was the time to test him, and the first obstacle in his rise.

There would be no limit to the universe if he made it over.

If he didn't, then he'd always only be a stepping stone for others.

However, Jiang Chen believed that, with Liu Wencai's strength and potential, he wasn't one to just sit there and await disaster. Not to mention that there were trump cards he'd yet to use.

With his understanding of Liu Wencai, he'd been so passive before possibly to purposefully create an image to numb Iron Dazhi and defeat him with one blow at a critical moment!

Tang Hong stood beneath the stage, his large hands clenched into fists. His expression was occasionally grim-faced, occasionally glaring with rage. It was quite varied.

Those who weren't in the know would think he was worried about Iron Dazhi, but his heart was actually fretting over Liu Wencai.

The two of them had struck up a brotherhood of life and death after their rocky start, and their relationship had long since transcended lines drawn by affiliations.

The four forefathers also seemed rather interested in this match.

Forefather Ninelion in particular; his eyes sent out an ardent look as he fixed them on the two in the ring.

“Old monster Ninelion, you look a bit nervous, hmm?” Sunchaser mocked slightly.

“Meddlesome old thing.” Ninelion had always had inharmonious relations with Sunchaser. He naturally gave tit for tat when the other mocked him.

Sunchaser laughed loudly. The two of them often fought, so no one would truly erupt in open hostility.

“Thousandleaf, your sect’s disciple has a rather frightening aura. But I think he’ll actually lose.”

Sunchaser then turned his head to Thousandleaf of the Precious Tree Sect.

His words were more-so trying to sow discord than state the obvious.

Thousandleaf smiled faintly, “Sunchaser, you seem to be the most agitated one today.”

These softly spoken words completely failed to go along with his words and in fact dispelled the antagonism in his words.

Ninelion laughed oddly, “He has many geniuses in the Purple Sun Sect and is deathly afraid of us catching up. This is why he’s on edge.”

“Catching up?” Sunchaser couldn’t help but give a snorting laugh. “My sect has taken the top one and two spots of the top four rankings. Catch up? What can the other geniuses bring out to catch up to Lei Gangyang, not to mention Long Juxue with her innate constitution?”

His tone brimmed with confidence.

Thousandleaf smiled slightly but had nothing to say. None of the geniuses of his sect had made it into the top four. He did indeed lack the right to speak.

Ninelion, however, riposted, “Lei Gangyang? If I recall correctly, he couldn’t even handle a secular cultivator a few months ago, hmm?”

Although these old fellows were of the origin realm, none of them were willing to come off the worse in an exchange when it came to verbal sparring.

At this moment, Iron Dazhi’s attacks were as if the mad tides. His aura was even more ferocious, making it seem like he was overturning the seas and shifting the mountains each time he attacked, piercing even the heavens! n))OVεLb1n

Although Liu Wencai continued to remain at a disadvantage, he was never swallowed by the raging tide of attacks.

Iron Dazhi also became frustrated as the fight went on.

He suddenly gave a long whistle as shocking light shone out of his eyes. "Liu Wencai, you don't dare fight me and seek to win through only dodging and evading? Alright, since you know how to escape, I'll make it so that you have no place to go!"

Iron Dazhi's motions changed in between his words.

The halberd technique suddenly changed from complex and intersecting to ramrod straight, as if a silver hook carving out a picture in metal, swiping sideways and downwards, creating various ravines in the air with deathly beams of yellow light.

"Liu Wencai, let's see you dodge this one!"

The Bronze Dragon Ironthreaded Halberd kept carving out vicious light, slicing the air into rhombus-shaped fragments.

This halberd technique was named "Prison of Heaven and Earth". It made use of strong spirit power to carve the air into countless prisons in a short amount of time, sealing off an opponent's avenues of retreat and shutting them into the prison, setting them up for a ruthless trampling.

Liu Wencai's facial expression changed. He knew that this halberd technique was immensely different from those of before.

"Is this Iron Dazhi's trump card?" There was no sign of anxiety on Liu Wencai's face. Instead, there was a trace of ease and relief after a long wait.

Iron Dazhi's manner was imposing and awe-inspiring. He didn't feel that Liu Wencai would be able to escape out of the divisions of the "Prison of Heaven and Earth" once he brought this technique out.

As soon as his opponent was caught, the boundless spirit power would come churning in the span of a moment, slicing and dicing his opponent into pieces.

"Die, Liu Wencai!"

Cold killing intent exploded out of Iron Dazhi's eyes. The halberd was chopping furiously away at everything it pushed the prison towards. It was apparent that he wanted to determine the outcome of this battle here and now.

The halberd flashed out with strong light as it danced, covering the ring as if a myriad of waves, forming the image of turbulent seas.

This momentum had cut off all paths of retreat for Liu Wencai.

Liu Wencai seemed as helpless as a lone canoe afloat in the vast oceans, likely to be swallowed at anytime or overturn with all those onboard.

However—

Change always happened in but a moment in a matchup between experts.

A short stick appeared in Liu Wencai's hand after he made a grasping motion. It looked like white jade, pure and flawless, but seemed to meld in with Liu Wencai's bearing as soon as it appeared.

Liu Wencai's aura seemed to explode by ten, no, a hundred times with this melding. His eyes shot out with the light of a wild beast.

It was as if the short stick of white jade had been suddenly activated. It brimmed with vitality, as if a sleeping divine weapon that had been suddenly awoken.

Its aura was like a dragon emerging from the seas, unable to be restrained.

Faced with Iron Dazhi's overbearing attacks, Liu Wencai gave a long whistle and suddenly roared, "Flowery punches and fancy kicks that can't stand up to a single blow! All of this, break!"

The white jade stick crashed down ferociously, layers of spirit ripples concentrating to smash unerringly onto the halberd.

Bam!

The halberd gave a ghastly, tragic cry.

That awe-inspiring momentum behind the attack fell to the floor in pieces as if a smashed mirror, destroyed beyond a doubt in an instant.

Iron Dazhi's chest felt like an enormous mountain had come crashing down on it. It sent him reeling backwards.

The halberd in his hand kept moaning mournfully, emitting a cry that didn't subside even after a long while. Iron Dazhi was unable to control it no matter how he tried.

He focused his eyes and saw that multiple cracks had appeared on the surface of the halberd. Even though its main body hadn't been injured, it was obvious that the formation of glyphs outside the halberd had been destroyed by this blow.

"How can this be?" Iron Dazhi was flabbergasted.

This was an eight times refined spirit weapon, almost at the peak of its existence!

But his opponent had used that humble-looking white jade stick to hit it just once and break apart the glyph defenses of an eight times refined weapon?

This... this was a devastating blow! What was Iron Dazhi most proud of? This Bronze Dragon Ironthreaded Halberd was his trump card!

He'd never thought that his vaunted ace would be destroyed in an almost primal manner when he was deploying his most acclaimed technique.

A crack appeared in Iron Daozhi's heart.

Liu Wencai smiled faintly as he pointed with his white jade stick. "Iron Dazhi, I've said that we'll only know who's the ant after a battle. Now, go and experience what it means to be the ant of your words!"

Liu Wencai waved his white jade stick and commenced a tide-like flurry of attacks that came crashing down on Iron Dazhi in a vicious assault. He didn't need to use any profound techniques at the moment, using only simple, crude, and the most wild and violent of methods to beleaguer Iron Dazhi.

It could be said that all schemes were useless in the face of absolute power, as one person with sufficient strength could singlehandedly best ten cultivators.

As many methods as Iron Dazhi had, as many trump cards he had, when his ace couldn't win over the other, he would only be suppressed at every step.

Iron Dazhi could only fight for dear life with the halberd in the face of such violent, fierce attacks.

Bam, bam, bam!

Every time he blocked a blow, his body would back up involuntarily.

One step back. Many steps back.

After a few hundred steps back, he had nowhere to go. His body crashed viciously into the pillar. A sweet scent welled up in his mouth as he spat out a mouthful of blood. He could no longer hold firmly onto the halberd. It clattered to the ground and emitted a horrifying sound. His knees buckled, and he sank to the ground on his knees.

His defeat was imminent and irrefutable.

When he saw that Iron Dazhi was kneeling on the ground, Liu Wencai didn't finish him off. They were both disciples of the four great sects, and there was no reason for him to land a fatal blow if they didn't have deep grudges with each other.

Not to mention that the four forefathers were present. If he still killed Iron Dazhi after he was on his knees, it would demonstrate that Liu Wencai's mentality was lacking.

"Liu Wencai of the Myriad Spirit Sect wins this match and enters the top sixteen! Iron Dazhi of the Precious Tree Sect is eliminated!"

#### Chapter 394: The Fight After Comprehension

Liu Wencai's victory made him the first among Jiang Chen's group to enter the final sixteen.

Next to take the field was Tang Hong. He faced candidate number 24, a female disciple from the Flowing Wind Sect. It was obvious that her strength was far from Tang Hong's.

His battle strength had grown even more wild and ferocious after being changed by the Redscaled Firelizard's blood. The female disciple wasn't able to put up a fight for long before she was defeated.

Just as Jiang Chen had expected, Tang Hong and Liu Wencai had both successfully made it into the top 16. n)-0velb1n

On the third day, it was finally Jiang Chen's turn in the ring!

"Xinghan, remember your master's words. If you cannot obtain an accomplishment in this fight, then don't bother leaving the ring!" Master Shuiyue's tone was as cold as the frozen tundra.

She only had Long Juxue in her sights now. Even her once favored first disciple, Ceng Shi, had been placed in a secondary position, not to mention Chu Xinghan, a disciple who'd never fawned on her and was highly principled.

Chu Xinghan's potential was lower than Long Juxue and Ceng Shi's, he kissed up less often than Hai Tian, wasn't as thoughtful as He Yang, nor skilled at fathoming the honored master's opinions.

Apart from being competent and quick with tasks, Master Shuiyue indeed did not have much goodwill towards this disciple.

Chu Xinghan suddenly halted and turned back, bowing deeply to his master. "Honored master, this is the last time your disciple will hail you as a honored master in this life. With this farewell today, your disciple only hopes that the honored master's dao heart is clear and bright, unmarred by outside factors. Your disciple only wishes to tell honored master that even an ant has its own dao and wishes to be the master of its own fate, not someone else's pawn."

Chu Xinghan had long given up any thoughts of living, and had decided to let loose with everything.

Master Shuiyue's expression grew cold when she heard these words. She was about to denounce angrily him when Chu Xinghan bounded into the ring at lightning speed.

"Honored master, this Chu Xinghan has a renegade nature." Long Juxue said coldly. "Judging from his attitude, he seems quite dissatisfied with honored master's arrangements."

"Hmph, his life exists because of me, so it's only right I should control his destiny as well. He is a traitor to my Shuiyue faction if he doesn't respect my wishes!"

Master Shuiyue tone was cold. It was obvious that her experience in the earth quadrant had instilled in her a bone deep hatred for Jiang Chen. This kind of hatred wasn't any less than Long Juxue's enmity for Jiang Chen.

He was meeting Chu Xinghan again three years later.

Jiang Chen had no other stray thoughts in his mind as the scenes of the Second Crossing flew through his mind.

Looking at Chu Xinghan again, although his footsteps were resolute, there were traces of hesitation and desolation within them. Although these details didn't look like much to an ordinary cultivator, they were all completely exposed to Jiang Chen when he employed God's Eye and Psychic's Head.

He was a bit surprised. The Chu Xinghan of his memories hadn't been the sort to drag his feet like this.

He'd been quite dashing and carefree when he'd come and gone back then.

He hadn't lost his bearing even when he'd been faced with a mysterious threat.

The dao heart of this kind of person should be very strong indeed, why was he in a state? This kind of opponent made Jiang Chen's brow furrow slightly.

An unstable dao heart in the ring was equivalent to asking for death!

"Chu Xinghan has the urge to seek death?" Jiang Chen was quite perceptive and quickly identified that Chu Xinghan had come with a death wish.

If any ordinary cultivator had come with a desire to die, he would've done so valiantly and spiritedly, giving one a feeling of martyrdom.

But Chu Xinghan's demeanor wasn't one of fighting to his death, but as though he was heading for the gallows.

"This isn't Chu Xinghan's style!"

Though a bit surprised, Jiang Chen remained silent.

Although he admired Chu Xinghan a bit, their position now were enemies. He never sympathized with his opponents.

"Jiang Chen, I cannot defy my master's orders, so I have come here to die. I have sought virtue and acquired it, you need not show me mercy. However, to expect me to pave the way for that b\*tch Long Juxue and detonate my spirit ocean to harm you, I'd rather die than do so! I hope we can fight fairly. I hope, that I can die befittingly in battle!"

Chu Xinghan scowled as he silently sent this message over.

Jiang Chen was slightly startled and responded in the same manner, "You've recognized me?"

"The entire Purple Sun Sect recognized you in the earth quadrant. Jiang Chen, I didn't think wrongly of you. You are indeed a genius. Come!"

Chu Xinghan had thoroughly seen through and comprehended everything. His emotions were quite ethereal now, and he wasn't drowning in tragedy and sorrow.

He only asked for one fight, a most satisfying fight!

Throwing his head back in a howl, Chu Xinghan's cry ached with the desolation in his heart, as if the very sun and moon would grieve with him.

"Fight!"

Chu Xinghan flourished his longsword as the air current behind him formed a river from the heavens, as radiant as the galaxy.

This radiant river of stars was a method exclusive to Chu Xinghan. When he called upon his spirit power, it would form a forcefield as if a river of stars.

However, Jiang Chen also wasn't the same person he'd been three years ago.

Although Chu Xinghan's cultivation had been steadily increasing, it was naturally nothing compared to Jiang Chen's rate of improvement.

Chu Xinghan's cultivation was also that of a newly broken sixth level spirit realm. Dazzling silver white dots of light coalesced into a sword aura that shot into the heavens.

The sword light formed an aura that surged amongst the skies.

"Sword aura rising to the heavens!"

When it came to using the sword, Chu Xinghan's sword aura was grand and magnificent. That resplendent and majestic aura wasn't just a cover for an empty shell.



Chu Xinghan had already truly mastered the art of the starscape's sword aura.

When he directed this sword aura, it instantly sent seething killing intent fiercely mincing its way towards his opponent.

The sword aura suffused the field and roiled towards Jiang Chen like groups of falling stars descending from the heavens.

"Well met!"

Jiang Chen shouted as his eyes snapped sideways, standing with hands crossed over his chest.

Suddenly, he stepped to the side and flourished his sleeves, punching out with a fist.

"Nine cycles of blooming and wilting, reincarnation is indestructible."

Bam!

Jiang Chen's boxing aura collided hard with the boundless sword aura, giving rise to countless spirit power ripples. In this punch, Jiang Chen had used the Divine Aeons Fist as the catalyst and melded into the magnetic, metal essence, water, and fire powers.

The strong boxing aura formed an explosive energy and swallowed the sky covering sword aura whole. The air in the ring, that had been filled with the endless sword aura, returned to normal.

Only Chu Xinghan knew how powerful the mysteries of his stroke had been. He'd thought that even if he was unable to destroy Jiang Chen with this blow, he could at least throw Jiang Chen into disarray and then gain the upper hand with a string of attacks.

It was true that Chu Xinghan held a death wish, but that didn't mean he'd lost his drive to win.

He was of a mindset that he should die to repay his debt of gratitude to his master.

He didn't want to use the crazy method of detonating his spirit ocean because he didn't want to betray his own principles. If he could use the sword in his hand to win fair and square, then he would have a clear conscience, with no feelings of guilt to the heavens or his own heart, to Master Shuiyue or to Jiang Chen.

Chu Xinghan also knew the saying that a man who has been away three days must be looked at with new eyes.

He had tried his best to overestimate Jiang Chen's strength, but after this exchange, he'd tragically discovered that he'd underestimated the perverse strength of this secular genius.

This had seemed a simple collision.

But there had been many mysteries contained within.

He had made the first move, whereas Jiang Chen had reacted to what he'd brought out. This meant that Jiang Chen had been just reacting, and his control and reactions were incredible.

A careless punch had easily dispelled the starscape sword aura that Chu Xinghan was most proud of!

Chu Xinghan believed that even Long Juxue would be unable to do so this easily.

Jiang Chen's might once again provoked Chu Xinghan's desire to fight. His sword flicked upwards and became one with his body, transforming into a beam of light and chopping down on Jiang Chen as if a shooting star falling to the earth.

If his sword aura couldn't contain Jiang Chen, he would opt for close quarter combat then!

His sword light flashed as he swung at Jiang Chen's neck.

When the concentrated sword aura neared a meter away from Jiang Chen, Chu Xinghan suddenly felt himself lose control as his sword aura seemed to have hit an invisible wall, its motion and speed decreasing noticeably.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and stepped out fearlessly, flicking lightly with his middle finger from his thumb.

Fssht!

An enormous sound shattered the air.

The art from that finger flick landed on the longsword and emitted a crisp sound, ringing without stop, as if the sword had been shocked by the flick.

The mournful ring from the sword was exceedingly ear piercing.

Chu Xinghan quirked his eyebrows and changed the motion of his sword, chopping and slicing in multiple moves as if a raging storm, attacking Jiang Chen's vitals like screaming winds and hurtling rain.

Chu Xinghan had already ascertained the gap between himself and Jiang Chen. He was privately shocked at Jiang Chen's strength while feeling a kind of sorrow for himself.

Jiang Chen was as dashing as ever, only changing his footwork as he smiled, his finger continuing flicking like he was plucking flowers. Each hit landed unerringly on Chu Xinghan's sword, neither too soft nor too heavy.

Each blow however, utterly nullified Chu Xinghan's sword aura's chances to advance, completely destroying the rhythm of his attacks and making him unable to call upon his sword aura from beginning to end without stopping.

This kind of fight made Chu Xinghan tragically aware that his opponent wasn't even exhibiting the fullest of his strength as he sealed off all of his long and short range attacks.

"Again!"

Although Chu Xinghan recognized Jiang Chen's might, it also provoked his boundless battle intent. He had entered a clear state of mind at this point and could look death calmly in the eye.

Therefore, when his posture changed again, he didn't even leave an avenue of retreat for himself. He took a purely offensive stance with no defense in it at all. He only hoped to strike out satisfyingly with his strongest attack and determine the outcome of the battle with Jiang Chen.

To conquer, or die!

When Jiang Chen saw Chu Xinghan's reckless positioning, he suddenly understood Chu Xinghan's earlier words. It looked like Chu Xinghan had been forced by that old woman Master Shuiyue to enter the ring and pit his life against Jiang Chen.

However, this proud man disdained self detonation as a way of fighting for Long Juxue.

And sadly, his gratitude towards Master Shuiyue was as weighty as a mountain.

Chu Xinghan's death wish was only to repay that debt!

"That old woman Shuiyue has eyes but is blind! Her reason had been completely clouded by that b\*tch Long Juxue."

When Jiang Chen saw Chu Xinghan's ferocious attacks, he sighed in his heart. Master Shuiyue was shunting such a good disciple to the side and had been completely turned all around by someone with that blasted innate constitution!

Chapter 395: Others May Forsake Me, I Cannot Give Up on Myself

However, the difference between strength was oftentimes not something that could be bridged by passion.

Setting aside the fact that Chu Xinghan had no intention of detonating his own spirit ocean, even if he did do as Master Shuiyue had commanded, he probably wouldn't have been able to fight back against Jiang Chen.

This was because Jiang Chen's defense amongst his peers was absolutely heaven defying.

His soft armor had been combined with the Redscaled Firelizard scale, and he'd trained the "Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods" to the third level, so the natural defenses of his body were also incredibly strong.

No matter how strong the explosion Chu Xinghan would unleash, it'd be hard for him to injure Jiang Chen.

Chu Xinghan was sixth level spirit realm, just like Jiang Chen.

But it was obviously that these two sixth level spirit realms were on completely different footings.

Chu Xinghan's strength ranked amongst the top of the Shuiyue faction, but he wasn't part of the elite in the Purple Sun Sect, much less than the four great sects.

Therefore, although his aura flared powerfully and was quite dominating, to a true expert like Jiang Chen, this kind of fighting style was actually easier to handle.

This was because that his desperate stance was revealing simply too many flaws.

"It looks like Chu Xinghan truly has no standing in the Shuiyue faction at all. Even when I killed that Hai Tian in the earth quadrant, Master Shuiyue reacted like a crazed demon. However, when she sent Chu

Xinghan up to fight with his life on the line, I see no regret or care at all. It's as if this disciple is a pawn who can be discarded at any time in this old woman's eyes."

When his thoughts traveled here, Jiang Chen became quite disdainful of Master Shuiyue's vision. Apart from having a good eye for unearthing talent, how this old woman had raised Chu Xinghan was absolutely unsatisfactory.

From the way that Chu Xinghan was putting his life out on the line, it seemed that he was returning the gratitude he felt from Master Shuiyue's efforts spent in raising and cultivating him.

Even so, he refused to go against his principles and detonate his spirit ocean and take Jiang Chen down with him. It could be seen from this that he was someone with principles.

He was someone who could give his all in everything he did because of the strong faith he held in his heart.

The strong dao heart of a person like this was absolutely not something that a vainglorious, arrogant girl such as Long Juxue could measure up to.

It was a pity that Master Shuiyue could not recognize the true gem in front of her. She could only see Long Juxue's innate constitution and ignored the truth that there was malleable talent beside her.

As he thought of this, Jiang Chen rather admired Chu Xinghan a bit more.

This was someone who could be molded.

Jiang Chen had dispelled several of Chu Xinghan's advances as these thoughts flashed through his mind.

His advantages over a peer of his level were simply too much. Chu Xinghan's sword techniques were sophisticated, and that he'd likely be able to put up a good fight if he met someone like Lei Gangyang.

Although he would definitely lose in the end as well, he wouldn't be as resigned as he was at the moment.

Those not participating in the match may not have been able to tell, but Chu Xinghan was more aware than anyone else that although he was delivering his attacks above his usual level, Jiang Chen was still coolly composed and hadn't used his full strength.

He hadn't even used a weapon yet.

"Jiang Chen, kill me if you are going to. Why toy with me?" Chu Xinghan was depressed as he sent a message over. n(.o./v--E-)L.-b)(1-)n

However, he didn't slow down the movements of his hands.

"Chu Xinghan, I respect you as a good man and thus, I will make an exception for you in not killing you." Jiang Chen responded faintly.

Chu Xinghan's momentum was like a mad tiger as his sword aura criss crossed through the skies, crashing down upon Jiang Chen like lightning.

“Jiang Chen, I have succeeded in obtaining what I wanted and have long since held a death wish. What need do I have for your mercy?”

Jiang Chen easily called upon his methods as he continuously dispersed Chu Xinghan’s attacks, sending the message back, “It’s easy for one to die on the path of martial dao and difficult to live. You, Chu Xinghan, are a real man. Even if you’re treated as a discarded pawn, even if others give up on you, that doesn’t give you the reason to give up on yourself. When you reach the grand martial dao in the future, your own face will burn in embarrassment when you look back on your decision you made today!”

If Jiang Chen wanted to defeat Chu Xinghan, he could do so with no effort at all in this moment.

However, he hadn’t done so. He’d kept on parrying the moves because he could tell that Chu Xinghan wanted to die. If he didn’t dissuade him on this notion, this person wouldn’t live anyways even if he didn’t kill him in the ring.

He must have to draw forth the confidence to make this fellow live on, make him understand the meaning of life.

Chu Xinghan exhibited loyalty and filial piety to Master Shuiyue. He thanked her with his death, and these were his principles. Jiang Chen rather admired this.

But Master Shuiyue’s character was obviously not worthy of a man such as Chu Xinghan dying for her.

“Chu Xinghan, you must know that your body, skin, and hair all come from your parents. You have the will to die, but have you inquired your birth parents if they wish it so? Although loyalty demands death, have you taken a look to see if the person you die for is worthy of such? Are your actions proper for the cardinal principle of righteousness?”

“When men live in this world, we must lead a dashing and free life, and die a worthy and spectacular death. If you die in such a cowardly and pathetic manner, you might think that you’ve become a martyr, been elegant and unrestrained, and able to do your mentor proud. But have you thought whether or not you can face yourself in dying in such a fashion? Can you face your own heart, the one that has always yearned for dao?”

“The path of martial dao is a heaven defying action to begin with. Fate is in your hands. Even the heavens cannot control my destiny, much less others! I only ask you one question. When you die, will your master shed a single tear for you? Will Long Juxue feel a moment’s pain for you?”

Each of the questions in this successive string rang in Chu Xinghan’s mind like a loudly tolling bell.

That others have forsaken you is not a reason for you to give up!

You have the will to do, but have you asked your birth parents to ask if they wish for you to die as well?

Can you face yourself dying like this? Can you face your dao heart?

Will your master shed a single tear for you? Will Long Juxue experience even a moment of heartache for you?

Chu Xinghan’s aura faltered and his desire to die faded with Jiang Chen’s every question.

Death was easy.

But why must he die for Long Juxue? It would be an act of loyalty to die because of a word from his master, but that would be foolish loyalty.

Just like Jiang Chen had said, would his honored master shed a single tear?

Chu Xinghan truly did want to think of the good, but when he thought of his honored master's frosty face on that stage, her heartless reminder, Chu Xinghan's heart trembled.

In that moment, all the shadows cast upon him from various emotions, relationships, grudges, and favors were cleaved away cleanly, as if a bolt of lightning had flashed through them.

A scene of bright clarity greeted his eyes.

Chu Xinghan's dao heart was firm and his side clear. He was one with great intelligence.

When he had a moment's comprehension, it utterly dispelled all of what he had been agonizing over.

Indeed, his gratitude to his master was as monumental as a mountain, but there was time aplenty to pay that back. Why must he express it in the method of ending his own life?

Chu Xinghan retracted his sword's aura and fell backwards, saying lowly, "I concede."

When these two words were voiced, Master Shuiyue's face beneath the ring changed greatly. Chu Xinghan had conceded the match? This was completely against her wishes!

Long Juxue laughed coldly and added fuel to the flame, "Your disciple didn't view this person wrongly at all. This Chu Xinghan is indeed someone who complies in appearance yet opposes in heart to the honored master."

Master Shuiyue's face was stricken as she ground her teeth silently, a cold expression appearing on her features.

"Chu Xinghan!"

Chu Xinghan presented himself in front of Master Shuiyue after leaving the ring. He knelt with a single knee on the ground as he spoke with an assertive tone, "Honored master, your disciple is inept. I have tried my best, but cannot beat my opponent."

"Have you tried your best?" A violent light dawned in Master Shuiyue's eyes. "Chu Xinghan, you appeared to obey but secretly ignore me in the end, do you still view me as your honored master in your heart? Do you still remember the twenty years I've spent raising you?!"

"Your disciple remembers well his gratitude towards the honored master." Chu Xinghan said remotely.

"Then why didn't you do as I said?" Master Shuiyue's aura flared.

"There are too many sycophants by the honored master's side, and too few who truly have your interests in mind. If I leave the honored master just like this, then there will be none who serve the honored master genuinely in the future. Your disciple wishes to repay the honored master for the long term..."

“Shut up!” Master Shuiyue’s body shook in her anger, the flames of fury burning in her eyes. “You lust after life and fear death, and yet you have so many excuses to show for it? Dare you say that you are the only loyal person in my faction?”

Long Juxue was also highly incensed. Chu Xinghan’s words were pointing fingers at her as well, saying that she was a sycophant and not someone who was truly good to Master Shuiyue.

This was a light that shone on her true thoughts, and an action that revealed her scars.

“Honored master, this person defied your orders and is a traitor. Your disciple will end him for you!”

Long Juxue’s slender eyebrows knitted together as she sent a force from her palm, slamming it down on Chu Xinghan’s chest.

Bam!

Her actions had been exceedingly swift and ferocious.

Chu Xinghan was just beginning to react when he was struck by the blow. His body flew out like a kite with a broken string as he landed viciously on the ground, his status unknown.

Master Shuiyue hadn’t thought that Long Juxue would suddenly make a move either.

There was faint surprise in her eyes that was quickly replaced by indifference. “You made a move on my behalf to clean our house of traitors. That is just as well!”

Eldest disciple Ceng Shi was standing behind Master Shuiyue as the muscles on his face twitched slightly. A look of fear flashed through his eyes.

His relationship with Chu Xinghan was ordinary, but he had sympathy for his own kind, and when he saw that Long Juxue had dared assume so much power, he too was shocked.

He realized that he might end up just like Chu Xinghan.

Long Juxue’s expression was aloof, with just a hint of a vague smile on her face. Her eyes raked lightly over Ceng Shi’s face.

Ceng Shi was frightened and actually didn’t dare meet her gaze.

“Honored master, your disciple will go over and see if he’s dead.” Ceng Shi felt uneasy and wanted to change the subject.

Master Shuiyue waved her hand. “What’s the point? He defied orders and such is the equivalent of betraying his master. What’s dead is dead, what are you looking at?”

Ceng Shi had no response for that as he returned to his position. A complicated look flashed through his eyes and no one knew what he was thinking about.

Seed number five, Lian Canghai from the Precious Tree Sect, took the ring next. Lian Canghai had yet to make it into the top four, but his strength wasn’t any less than that of Luo Xi of the Myriad Spirit Sect and Shi Yunyun of the Flowing Wind Sect.

He was ranked number five due to his score.

Indeed, once Lian Canghai took the stage, he displayed his strength as the first genius of the Precious Tree Sect. He defeated his opponent with almost unquestioned dominance.

Lian Canghai's match was something that Lei Zhiyang and Long Juxue wouldn't pass up.

After all, they were fated to meet sooner or later. Understanding one's opponent was just as important as understanding oneself.

When Lian Canghai disembarked from the ring, one of Master Shuiyue's disciples suddenly called out, "Eh, Chu Xinghan's gone!"

Master Shuiyue and Long Juxue all looked over in astonishment. There were only a few bloody traces where he'd fallen earlier, but no sign of Chu Xinghan.

"How is this possible?" Master Shuiyue and Long Juxue all ran over.

Chapter 396: Top Sixteen, Selection of the Geniuses

Chu Xinghan had suddenly disappeared without a trace, with no clues of his whereabouts left behind.

Master Shuiyue furrowed her brow. "None of you saw what happened?"

Everyone had been watching Lian Canghai's match just now. No one had bothered to pay attention to Chu Xinghan, whose condition was unknown. Therefore, no one responded when Master Shuiyue asked her question.

Long Juxue's glowering expression swept around but she too came up empty handed. She smiled faintly, "The honored master need not grow enraged. That person cravenly clings to life instead of bravely facing death and surreptitiously slipped away. Even if he's not dead, he'd be crippled after my blow. My freezing azure phoenix qi froze all of his blood vessels. Even if he was able to temporarily hold on, he won't be able to survive for long."

Long Juxue was very confident in her strength and wasn't worried about anything at all.

Taking a step back, even if Chu Xinghan survived on a fluke, she still wouldn't be afraid of anything.

She was a vaunted cultivator with an innate constitution, the number one genius of the sect. The Purple Sun Sect had focused all of its attention and fortunes on her, what need was there to worry about a discarded disciple?

Many had actually seen what had happened in the Shuiyue faction, including numerous sect heavyweights present whose ranks were senior even to Master Shuiyue.

However, all of them chose to overlook what was happening.

This was because this matter involved Long Juxue. The sect's attentions and hopes were all focused on her now, so even these old fellows didn't dare take Long Juxue to task.

Otherwise, the sect would have incomparable losses if the genius grew irate.

Forefather Sunchaser witnessed all of this and only smiled faintly. This matter didn't cause a single ripple of emotion in his heart.



In reality, he'd seen too many such happenings. He even admired Long Juxue's actions. Domineering and high-handed, this was the true way of the Purple Sun Sect!

Chu Xinghan's matter was as if a pebble had been lobbed into the water's surface. All was as calm as though nothing had happened after a few small ripples.

No one would pay much heed to this kind of issue.

After all, Chu Xinghan was just a small disciple under Master Shuiyue. He had no impressive background or stunning potential, and even less so of fortune that the sect could not do without.

Having him or missing him, it didn't make much of a difference.

Apart from a sympathetic Ceng Shi, no one in the sect actually spared a single moment's thought for Chu Xinghan.

Ceng Shi himself was weighed down by the matters of the heart not because his relations with Chu Xinghan were that good, but purely because he felt sorrow for his own kind.

In Chu Xinghan's plight today, he saw his own downfall tomorrow.

If he'd merely had a distaste for Long Juxue before, then he truly hated Long Juxue's tyrannical demeanor at this moment.

She had dealt a killing blow even when Chu Xinghan had no conflicts of interest with her. With the verbal sparring that he, the once senior brother, had engaged with her previously, would this vengeful woman easily let him off the hook once she took his place?

Ceng Shi was pessimistic.

Although he'd made it into the top sixteen with his previous match, he wasn't the slightest bit happy at the moment.

On the final day of the second round, the four great geniuses of the sky quadrant once again took their spot in the spotlight. They took their victories without the slightest trace of trouble.

As such, the list of the final sixteen was finalized.

Of them, five were from the Purple Sun Sect, three from the Precious Tree Sect, three from the Flowing Wind Sect, four from the Myriad Spirit Sect, and one from the secular world.

This list was pretty much what had been estimated before the selection.

However, the presence of Jiang Chen was a bit jarring. He appeared quite out of the ordinary when standing amongst the sixteen.

The Myriad Spirit Sect had originally thought that they'd hold three out of the final sixteen; they hadn't factored in the abnormality of Liu Wencai.

The Precious Tree Sect's solid four spots had been decreased because of the unexpected defeat of Iron Dazhi by Liu Wencai.

Now, in this stage of the selection, the four forefathers would determine the outcome.

According to the rules of the selection, those in the top 16 who originally belonged to a sect would basically still remain in that sect.

The exception being Jiang Chen, the secular genius.

But of course, they still had to respect the cultivator's own wishes.

After all, this had to do with someone's future development. If some sect disciple didn't wish to stay in their own sect, then their original sect couldn't force them to stay and would have to let them go.

Such were the rules, but everyone was well aware that they had gone through great pains to stabilize their own geniuses' morale before setting out on the selection. There would basically be no situation of a genius betraying their own sect and going to another.

What was to commence next would be the selection of the geniuses from the lowest ranked ones to the highest.

Liu Wencai's ranking was the lowest of the remaining sixteen. He'd made it into the final sixteen with a ranking of 22, a truly remarkable feat.

One had to know that Iron Dazhi had been candidate number 11, someone solidly destined for the top sixteen but defeated by the dark horse, Liu Wencai.

"Remember, regardless of what sect and background you come from, all of you have a chance to choose. Although theoretically we promote returning to your own sect, there are always exceptions. This is a life-changing decision for your future development. Therefore, I hope that all of you exercise prudence before your choice."

Sunchaser's gaze swept across each of the sixteen candidates.

The other forefathers didn't wish to be outdone and they too surveyed the sixteen geniuses.

It was obvious that they didn't want Sunchaser's words to enchant their own sect disciples. Although the old monsters had given their disciples repeated orders and injunctions before leaving the sects, warning them again and again to not leave the sect, and even made many promises and analyzed the pros and cons, there was always a trace of the unknown.

"Alright, the selection will now begin. Each candidate will receive some promises from us four old monsters, with the final decision choice in your hands."

Liu Wencai was the first to step out since his ranking was the lowest.

He'd won immense popularity after his match. Even someone as strong as Iron Dazhi had been defeated. Therefore, he'd long since become a first rate genius in the eyes of the forefathers.

Each forefather had three minutes to list their promises and conditions, and the sect that the candidate belonged to had first priority.

Therefore, forefather Ninelion was the first to step out and make his case.

"Liu Wencai, I'm ashamed to say that I had never heard of your name before today. This is my negligence. However, your potential has proven that you are naturally suited for the Myriad Spirit Sect.

The sect is a platform for your rise. I only have one sentence, in that you will receive the same treatment as Luo Xi if you remain. I would dearly like to see the day in which you shine with glory in the sect.”

Ninelion was a straightforward person. He saw in Liu Wencai an immense potential and explosive power. It was something that even Luo Xi may not possess.

Therefore, Ninelion adored Liu Wencai so much he couldn’t bear to part with him. He too was worried that Liu Wencai hadn’t been valued in the sect before—would he be resentful and turn towards another sect?

It was a pity that three minutes were too short. As warmly inclined as forefather Ninelion was, it was too small of a time to tug upon Liu Wencai’s heartstrings.

The other three forefathers all gave their promises and conditions afterwards.

It was obvious that they had noticed that Liu Wencai hadn’t been very treasured in the sect before. Thus, they offered quite the generous conditions.

Particularly old monster Sunchaser—he started boasting about how the Purple Sun Sect’s martial dao legacy was unparalleled amongst the four great sects.

Although his words were cliché, one had to admit that they were compelling.

The four forefathers all looked ardently at Liu Wencai after saying their piece, waiting for him to make his final decision.

Liu Wencai smiled noncommittally, “I choose the Myriad Spirit Sect.”

He’d actually never thought of leaving the Myriad Spirit Sect. He knew that his talents were most suited for this sect.

He’d also asked Jiang Chen privately for his opinions before, and Jiang Chen had told him that remaining still would be preferable to moving. He would be an outsider in another sect. Even if the forefather valued him highly, he’d still be ostracized by the others.

Ninelion’s heartstrings relaxed when he heard these words. “Good, good! You’re a disciple of my Myriad Spirit Sect alright!”

The other forefathers all felt that this was quite a pity, particularly Sunchaser. He chuckled oddly as he looked meaningfully at Liu Wencai.

Liu Wencai’s choice had obviously somewhat enraged forefather Sunchaser. He’d thought that with his eloquence and conditions, it would be enough to convince Liu Wencai to defect to the Purple Sun Sect.

He could’ve made use of this to slap Ninelion’s face as well.

But now, his nicely laid-out plan had failed.

The next one up was Luo Huang of the Purple Sun Sect. His decision was very straightforward—the Purple Sun Sect. No surprises about this at all.

Luo Huang's "Heaven Scorching Sutra" was something that marked him as the Purple Sun Sect, through and through. It would be career suicide to go to another sect.

A Flowing Wind Sect disciple was next, and they too remained in their original sect. The brand of the Flowing Wind Sect was equally as deep, and any who left would find the adjustment hard in another sect.

The fourth was Myriad Spirit Sect disciple Yuan Qinglu. He too decided to stay.

The following three came from the Purple Sun, Myriad Spirit, and Flowing Wind Sects. There were no surprises as they all chose to remain put.

Tang Hong of the Precious Tree Sect was the eighth candidate.

Sunchaser once again started scheming when he saw Tang Hong. He knew this kid was the thorn in the side of many, and was renowned for being a loner in his sect.

Therefore, he felt that this was a great opportunity to steal someone's talent.

Of course, forefather Thousandleaf was the first to speak. He had no interest in stealing other sects' disciples, but placed a great importance on his own.

Therefore, he made many promises that he would offer devoted tutelage to Tang Hong as his personal disciples, and the resources of the sect would tilt towards him, with the same privileges as Lian Canghai and Xie Wufan.

Forefather Icemist didn't seem that interested in Tang Hong, so she only spoke a few words.

Forefather Ninelion saw in Tang Hong a kind of wildness, and so he too spent a great deal of effort hoping to recruit him. However, with his understanding of Tang Hong, he felt that the odds were low.

When it was forefather Sunchaser's turn, he felt that this was a once in a blue moon opportunity to headhunt a disciple. He looked at Tang Hong with a confident smile.

#### Chapter 397: Unexpected Betrayal, Unexpected Face-Slapping

"Tang Hong, your potential and strength were the most underestimated in this selection. With your strength of heart, you have great potential in assailing the origin realm in the future. It's a pity that the sect you're in did not fully tap into your potential and didn't develop you according to your aptitude, wasting your time before. I hope you join the Purple Sun Sect as I see in you the same potential I see in Lei Gangyang. I guarantee at least sixty to seventy percent chance that I'll be able to raise you to the origin realm!"

Forefather Sunchaser had carefully crafted these words. He'd first driven a wedge between Tang Hong and the Precious Tree Sect, then placed him on the same level as Lei Gangyang to increase his goodwill towards the Purple Sun Sect, and finally using a sixty to seventy percent guarantee of making it into the origin realm as lure to completely enthrall this young man.

One had to say, Sunchaser's words were quite tempting and well aimed.

He'd also perceptively grasped the awkward circumstances between Tang Hong and the Precious Tree Sect and was making full use of it to sow discord.

The Xie and Iron families in the Precious Tree Sect had always been the gatekeepers of benefits and resources in the sect due to their internal conflict. Forefather Thousandleaf acquitted himself of these conflicts and thus didn't have as much domineering power and sweeping drive over his sect as Sunchaser did.

Thousandleaf's gentle personality meant he had the weakest control over his sect, and was a major reason the endless conflict between the Xie and Iron families continued.

Sunchaser had seized on this point and pointed out that Tang Hong was in the middle of the Xie and Iron families' conflict. Therefore leaving the Precious Tree Sect was really his best choice.

To be honest, Tang Hong did indeed waver in that moment.

"Tang Hong, stay in the Precious Tree Sect. I'll be joining that sect as well." A message traveled to his consciousness as he strived to make up his mind.

Boss!

Tang Hong heard a message from his boss' consciousness.

Boss wants to join the Precious Tree Sect?

Tang Hong no longer hesitated when he heard this and laughed heartily, mussing up his hair with his enormous hand.

"I've decided to stay in the Precious Tree Sect." Tang Hong laughed extremely happily. When this enormous stocky fellow laughed, his eyes were as clear and pure as the boy next door, no impurities within at all.

Thousandleaf's uneasy heart could finally settle back down after he heard these words. In the moment before Tang Hong made his choice, he had had a strong feeling that the Precious Tree Sect was about to lose this genius!

When he thought back, he realized that Tang Hong hadn't enjoyed any special treatment in the Precious Tree Sect at all.

With Tang Hong's unreserved nature, what reason would he have to be nostalgic and grateful to the Precious Tree Sect for?

Therefore, when he heard Tang Hong's decision, Thousandleaf almost couldn't believe his own ears. He was immensely grateful and warned himself sternly that he must take greater interest in the raising of the sect's disciples in the future.

Sunchaser also found those words unbelievable when he heard them.

He'd felt that he had ninety percent chance of success with his persuasion just now. With his observation skills, he could naturally see through Tang Hong's thoughts in that moment and that he was definitely wavering.

But as if he'd suddenly received some kind of revelation in that moment, wild joy had appeared on his face resulting in him decisively choosing the Precious Tree Sect.

"Someone must've given him directions. Who? Who dared ruin my plans?" Rage burned in Sunchaser's mind as his ears surveyed around sharply.

However, no matter how he surveyed around, he came up empty-handed.

When he saw that Tang Hong was about to take his place again, Sunchaser suddenly asked, "Tang Hong, did someone secretly make you some sort of promise just now?"

Tang Hong chuckled, "What does this have to do with the selection?"

He ignored Sunchaser's glowering face after that and retreated.

Sunchaser's headhunting plans had failed once again. The fires of rage had taken hold in his stomach. He'd felt greatly assured of success the two times he'd made a move, but hadn't thought that he'd fail again and again.

He failed even more bafflingly with Tang Hong this time. A genius that had almost been at hand had flown out of his grasp in that single instant.

Suddenly, old monster Sunchaser thought of the relationship between Tang Hong and Jiang Chen. A thought struck him as his gaze shot sinisterly towards Jiang Chen.

One had to say that the intuition of an origin realm old monster was quite stunning. He was sure of his judgement with this single thought.

"Secular brat, did you mouth off just now?" Sunchaser sent this message over. He was aware of Tang Hong and Jiang Chen's relationship, and knew that Tang Hong was completely in Jiang Chen's hands, wholeheartedly treating the latter as his boss.

"So what if I did?" Jiang Chen responded faintly.

He'd long since erupted in open hostilities with the Purple Sun Sect anyways. Even if it was old monster Sunchaser, Jiang Chen had no reason to yield.

"Good, good, very good!" Killing intent exploded in old monster Sunchaser's eyes as he almost grit his teeth. "Brat, you don't understand the greater picture and act against my sect again and again, give me a reason for me not to kill you!"

"Kill me?" Jiang Chen laughed coldly. "An origin realm forefather killing a secular cultivator during the selection? You've lived a hell of a long time, where's your brain gone?"

Old monster Sunchaser wanted to keep conversing, but noticed the next person had already stepped up. It was Ceng Shi, the eldest disciple beneath Master Shuiyue.

Ceng Shi's mentality seemed a bit dejected as he seemed quite glum. A trace of anxiety would occasionally flash through his eyes. Long Juxue's domineering moves in killing Chu Xinghan had already left a great psychological impression on him.

Since he was a Purple Sun Sect disciple, old monster Sunchaser naturally had the first right to speak.

“Ceng Shi, you’re of the Shuiyue faction and I know of your potential as well. But what’s wrong with you today? You seem so distracted and out of sorts. There’s not the slightest bit of the pride and demeanor on you that should be present on a Purple Sun Sect disciple! If you want me to take you as a personal disciple, you should bring forth some more energy! Geniuses are as common as the clouds in our sect, and your faction has Long Juxue as an example. Buck up and learn from her! Otherwise, even if you become my personal disciple, what will you bring forth to compete with Long Juxue and Lei Gangyang?”

Ceng Shi’s facial muscles twitched slightly as he shrank inside, nodding continuously as though he were listening to a lecture.

The Precious Tree Sect and Myriad Spirit Sect patently had not much interest in Ceng Shi. They spoke a few words for formality’s sake, completely different from old monster Sunchaser.

Rather, it was the venerated Icemist of the Flowing Wind Sect who had more of a heart for detail as a woman. She smiled at Ceng Shi, “Young man, your potential is quite good. Your path of martial dao has many areas that align with my Flowing Wind Sect. My sect has an overabundance of yin and lacks yang, a situation that needs to be improved. If you are unhappy in the Purple Sun Sect, you can come to me. I will teach you patiently. At least, I will be more patient and more understanding of your potential than your honored master Shuiyue.”

One had to say, as a woman, venerated Icemist was more attentive than the others. She’d observed the hesitation and conflict in Ceng Shi’s heart, and saw that he had a bit of a fixation on motherly figure.

All along, Ceng Shi had adored Master Shuiyue as if his mother. But ever since Long Juxue appeared, he discovered that he’d slowly fallen out of favor.

Even now, Long Juxue was thus domineering, yet the honored master still cherished her and respected her wishes.

This had all been his treatment before, but had now been replaced by Long Juxue.

Therefore, he was melancholic, depressed, and even worried if he would somehow die to Long Juxue just like Chu Xinghan had!

When his thoughts travelled here, Ceng Shi steadied his gaze and grit his teeth, “I... I’m willing to join the Flowing Wind Sect. Please accept me, forefather Icemist!”

“WHAT?!” Old monster Sunchaser immediately flared up when he heard these words.

He’d kept trying to steal other geniuses from other sects prior to this but had kept failing. He hadn’t thought that his own background would be on fire in a moment’s carelessness, and his own talent had been stolen by others!

And judging from Ceng Shi’s posture, he hadn’t even needed to be stolen. It was more like he’d willingly climbed over the wall to go to someone else!

This was an extraordinary humiliation for Sunchaser, someone who liked to win. His eyes flashed with a terrifying light, like a ball of fire that wanted to reduce Ceng Shi to ash.

Ceng Shi didn’t dare resist the domineering forefather Sunchaser and quietly backed away.

Forefather Icemist had always given others a tender and gentle impression. However, when she saw Sunchaser oppressing Ceng Shi in such a manner, she grew displeased and circulated her aura, blocking Sunchaser's advance.

"Daoist Sunchaser, Ceng Shi is now one of mine. Do not seek to bully him." Icemist had a gentle temperament alright, but it was human nature to try to protect one's own.

Ceng Shi had just defected to her, how would she earn his absolute loyalty if she didn't protect him?

Sunchaser was so enraged that his very lungs wanted to explode. That a Purple Sun Sect disciple had defected to another sect was an immense shame for him.

Master Shuiyue also had a look of disbelief on her face from her position behind forefather Sunchaser. She'd never thought that her eldest disciple, someone who'd always respected her as his own mother, would betray her without a word like this and choose the Flowing Wind Sect.

Therefore, she couldn't keep it in.

"Ceng Shi, I raised you for 20 years such that you owe a mountain of gratitude to me. Is this how you repay me?" Master Shuiyue hectored angrily.

Ceng Shi also felt aggrieved and exploded in this moment. "That's right, you were very good to me before and loved me like my own mother. But ever since you've gotten your hands on Long Juxue, you ask yourself if you treated any of us like people! How many ludicrous things have you done for this heartless b\*tch? You ruined your own reputation for her in the earth quadrant, third junior brother is now dead, fourth junior brother crippled! But let's set that aside. You became even worse in the sky quadrant. Why don't you ask your own conscience how you treated second junior brother Chu Xinghan? You ordered him to go die as if you were giving commands to a dog! This b\*tch even tried to kill him without your permission right in front of you, yet you didn't even say anything to her! I'd like to ask, if I stay in the Purple Sun Sect, who can guarantee that what happened to Chu Xinghan today won't happen to me tomorrow? Who can guarantee that senior brother Lei Gangyang himself will be able to continue living peacefully, and not be relegated to die by this scorpion-hearted woman, much less me?!"

Ceng Shi wasn't keeping a filter on his mouth as he decided to hell with it all. He'd even dragged Lei Gangyang into this.

Contrary to everyone's expectations, Lei Gangyang didn't step out to rebuke Ceng Shi. Rather, his head trailed without a word. It was obvious that he wasn't at liberty to voice these words, but he was quite grateful to Ceng Shi for saying them.

A heavy silence descended upon the scene at that moment.

It was apparent that everyone had been shocked by Ceng Shi's words.

Even old monster Sunchaser's expression had stiffened. He'd always been confident that the Purple Sun Sect was a mass with iron solidarity. He'd never thought that such a large crack would appear after Long Juxue's appearance!

Master Shuiyue was even more livid. She had indeed somewhat deviated from the proper path because of Long Juxue during these times.



Her prized disciples had ended up being dead, crippled, or turncoats.

This was a heartless slap in the face for someone who liked to win as much as Master Shuiyue.

#### Chapter 398: Jiang Chen's Choice

Sunchaser's thoughts spun wildly, but immediately settled down. He laughed coldly. "You yourself are aware of your unsteady dao heart, but you blame it on others? Cowards who are afraid of competition like you aren't wanted by the Purple Sun Sect! One of Long Juxue is worth ten thousand cowards like you. Next!"

Sunchaser changed the topic with decisive charisma.

Jiang Chen felt like he was watching an immensely wonderful show. It turns out that there would indeed come a day where arrogant folks like old monster Sunchaser and Master Shuiyue would have their faces slapped as well huh!

Their expressions were equally as ugly as the others after losing face.

This was an unexpectedly good show! Jiang Chen felt quite thrilled.

It was a good thing that the appearance of the next genius glossed over the awkwardness of Ceng Shi's betrayal.

Xie Yufan from the Precious Tree Sect was up next. A genius like him who was deeply rooted and firmly planted into the Precious Tree Sect would never select another one.

After him came Jiang Chen.

The mysterious secular genius was finally going to make his decision now.

Each of the four great sect's recruitment spiel was each more tempting and fascinating than the one before. n-)0v**ELB**In

Venerated Icemist of the Flowing Wind Sect had had her confidence greatly boosted after Ceng Shi's defection, so she made many promises to Jiang Chen, vowing that she would personally tailor a cultivation plan for him so that he could assail the origin realm with the fastest speed possible.

"Young man, your strength of heart is likely the highest amongst all the geniuses. My Flowing Wind Sect has always emphasized the tempering of the heart the most. Everyone knows that we have an excellent heritage passed down through generations. Our male and female disciples can also engage in dual cultivation, and our sect treasures extraordinarily talented men even more. As an example, there was a male genius in my sect 1,600 years ago with unparalleled gifts and potential, and so, nine great beauties within the sect then all dual cultivated with him, becoming a wonderful legend through the ages of the Flowing Wind Sect."

Dual cultivation!

This was always of the greatest temptation for any male disciple.

With an age old ancestor as an example, to have nine unparalleled beauties dual cultivate only with him, this was incredibly ludicrous treatment. One dragon and nine phoenixes!

This kind of temptation was an absolutely irresistible allure. Particularly as the dual cultivation in the Flowing Wind Sect wasn't something that could cause a cultivator to lose sight of his goals, but would actually result in mutual nourishment and improve upon each other's cultivation.

This was a male cultivator's heaven!

It was a pity that the Flowing Wind Sect had enormously high standards for accepting male disciples. Only the ultimate geniuses would be able to enter their line of sight.

Take Tang Hong for example—his potential was so high, but the venerated Icemist had seen that his appearance was rather crude and rough, so she wasn't of a mind to recruit him.

Forefather Ninelion of the Myriad Spirit Sect had greatly admired this secular genius from the beginning. When the Purple Sun Sect had wanted to suppress Jiang Chen, Ninelion had been the one to stand out in protest.

"Good kid, I quite admire you. Although I know that my Myriad Spirit Sect may not be the most suitable for you, that doesn't prevent me from admiring you. Allow me to say one word. When you were suppressed in the earth and sky quadrant, it was I who supported you from the shadows. It's not that I want you to repay me with anything, but that I want to tell you that the doors of the Myriad Spirit Sect are always wide open for you. In addition, I also want to thank you for uncovering such a genius as Liu Wencai for me!"

Everyone knew of Liu Wencai's relationship with Jiang Chen.

Sunchaser was next, and his tone was wooden. "Young man, there is no grudge that can't be overcome between the two of us. I can tell that in the end your ambitions are towards martial dao. The Purple Sun Sect can give you everything you want in terms of martial dao heritage. It isn't as if there is no place for you by my side and the entire Purple Sun Sect. If you're willing to join the Purple Sun Sect, I will treat you the same as everyone else."

Even Sunchaser felt his words ring of insincerity, much less Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen knew that the Purple Sun Sect had long since guessed his identity. Therefore, given his death feud with Long Juxue, there was no future for him in that sect.

Sunchaser only wanted to trick him into entering the Purple Sun Sect, was all.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and was noncommittal.

When it came to forefather Thousandleaf, an old man with middling eloquence, he smiled wryly when he noticed that everyone else had spoken all there was to say. There wasn't much advantage that he could offer when it was his turn.

"Alright young man, my Precious Tree Sect has the most resources. Your potential is quite high in all areas, but you lack resources the most, don't you? Come to my Precious Tree Sect and all resources will be yours to use."

Thousandleaf thought for quite a while, and finally came to the crux of the problem.

The four great sects had all spoken their part, and now it was Jiang Chen's turn to express his stance.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "I made an agreement with a brother, so I choose the Precious Tree Sect."

When the three words "Precious Tree Sect" sounded from Jiang Chen's mouth, the other three forefathers felt their hearts sink with disappointment—particularly Ninelion, who sighed lightly with great emotion.

Venerated Icemist of the Flowing Wind Sect was also a bit surprised. With the immensely tempting lure that she'd thrown out of dual cultivation with the female disciples of the sect, she'd thought that this young man would choose the Flowing Wind Sect with no doubts whatsoever.

Old monster Sunchaser had long since known that Jiang Chen wouldn't select the Purple Sun Sect, but hadn't thought that he'd go for the Precious Tree Sect.

"This brat could actually bear to pass up the Flowing Wind Sect and its dual cultivation! Someone with such a focused and committed mentality is one not to be easily overlooked." Sunchaser grew inwardly stern. He'd finally realized that Long Juxue's fated rival wasn't as simple a character as they'd thought.

When Thousandleaf had spoken those words before, he himself hadn't had much confidence that he would prevail. He'd felt that no matter what the secular genius' decision, he'd never pick their Precious Tree Sect.

However, an enormous stroke of luck had descended from the sky and struck him in the head like a large meat pie. This made even the normally taciturn old man to be a bit beside himself with joy.

Although this was a selection, everyone's goal was this secular genius. After all, there weren't that many who'd actually betray their original sect.

Ceng Shi was just an accident.

Therefore, when Thousandleaf realized that the secular genius that everyone had discussed countless times had chosen the Precious Tree Sect, he didn't quite know what to say.

Tang Hong started laughing heartily. "Boss, you didn't lie to me alright. Since you've already selected a sect, can you take off that ugly mask and let everyone see your true face?"

Liu Wencai also walked over, "Congratulations boss. Having entered a sect, your future is bright and endless."

All gazes snapped to Jiang Chen's body in unison.

Some were expectant, others were curious, yet more were dejected or projected hate.

Jiang Chen didn't put on airs as he reached out a hand to tug off his mask.

"Jiang Chen!!"

Long Juxue was the first to react and spoke in a voice full of disgust. "Having played games at being mysterious for so long, you're finally willing to reveal your true appearance?"

"It's him! Jiang Chen! He was the secular genius alright!" Precious Tree Sect head Xie Tianshu was standing behind forefather Thousandleaf as he exclaimed with surprise and delight.

Vice head Wang Tuo of the Myriad Spirit Sect, who'd attempted to recruit Jiang Chen in the initial selection, was also incredibly surprised as he murmured with a rueful laugh, "Jiang Chen is the secular freak genius huh? I'm such a fool, I should've guessed this earlier!"

"Pity, what a pity!"

Wang Tuo was besieged by both hate and regret. Why hadn't he succeeded at that time, and just allowed his sect to pass this well rounded genius on by?

Vice sect head Jiang Rou of the Flowing Wind Sect also sighed lightly. "This Jiang Chen was hotly contested by the three sects in the initial selection. It's a pity that although my Flowing Wind Sect has countless beautiful female disciples, we were still unable to win this genius' heart. Why do I have a feeling that a chance to change the fate of our Flowing Wind Sect has just passed us by?"

Venerated Icemist's gaze was deep and full of meaning. She too felt boundless pity when she looked at Jiang Chen's back. She'd almost the exact same feeling as Jiang Rou in that moment.

However, what they didn't know was that all the senior sect executives present, apart from the Precious Tree Sect, all had the same regret of passing over an unparalleled genius.

Even Master Shuiyue had an ugly expression on her face. A slight trace of regret subtly flashed through her heart at that moment. But for someone as headstrong as her, that was the only mark regret left on her.

Xie Tianshu was the happiest one at the moment. "Forefather, Jiang Chen is greatly renowned in the Skylaurel Kingdom. When he rejected the three sects' invitation previously, I thought he was set on the Purple Sun Sect. It looks like I'd thought too much then. Forefather, this child has such talent that this is a great fortune of our sect!"

Forefather Thousandleaf nodded, "I will personally mentor this one."

Of the Precious Tree Sect geniuses, Lan Canghai was the strongest of them, but he hadn't even been able to enter the top four. This was quite awkward for the Precious Tree Sect.

And now, Thousandleaf had found a good seed, an excellent seed who could set the entire Purple Sun Sect on fire. Just look at the Purple Sun Sect now, Shuiyue had been deposed in the earth quadrant, her disciples were either dead or crippled, and even her eldest disciple had betrayed the sect!

When it came down to it, wasn't the source of all this Jiang Chen?

Of course, not all Precious Tree Sect members were happy. Take esteemed elder Iron Long standing next to Xie Tianshu for instance, his emotions were beyond despair at this moment.

He hadn't thought that the secular genius would be Jiang Chen. Now how would the Iron family regain the upper hand and vindication in their grudge with Jiang Chen?

His mouth was full of a bitter taste particularly when he heard that forefather Thousandleaf say that he would concentrate on mentoring Jiang Chen. His own direct grandson, Iron Dazhi, had been eliminated from the final sixteen.

With this contrast, Iron Long was even of the mind to ram his head against a wall.

A hubbub grew at the scene. The Myriad Spirit Sect and Flowing Wind Sect felt quite saddened about losing such a genius, and quite jealous of the Precious Tree sect.

However, their thoughts were actually in accordance in that it was still a good thing since the secular genius hadn't entered the Purple Sun Sect.

If he'd entered that sect, then it would've been adding wings to a tiger, and there would no longer be any room for the geniuses from the other sects.

Tang Hong excitedly drew close to Jiang Chen and admired his boss even more.

"Boss, I've heard that you once captured that idiot Iron Dazhi. I admired you greatly from the depths of my heart then. Haha, I hadn't thought that we'd become peers!"

Liu Wencai wasn't envious. He knew that the Myriad Spirit Sect wasn't the place for boss. Besides, from the contents of the scroll Jiang Chen had given him, his sect may not even be worthy of boss!

"Boss has joined the Precious Tree Sect possibly because he needs its resources?"

Jiang Chen was the sixth from last to take his place. The remaining five were all the top geniuses of their sects. There was naturally no reason to defect to the other sects.

Lian Canghai chose the Precious Tree Sect, Shi Yunyun the Flowing Wind Sect, and Luo Xi the Myriad Spirit Sect. Lei Gangyang and Long Juxue returned to the Purple Sun Sect.

Lei Gangyang's heart had indeed wavered when Ceng Shi called upon him earlier. Forefather Sunchaser had privately warned him and promised him quite a few conditions before being certain this genius' decision.

The selection was over in this regard. Apart from the unexpected factor of Ceng Shi, the greatest unknown Jiang Chen had landed with the Precious Tree Sect, making this sect the greatest winner in the end.

Even though they'd lost Iron Dazhi's slot, they'd gained a secular genius instead. It could be said that the Precious Tree Sect had come into a stroke of fortune due to their disaster.

## Chapter 399: The Ranking Battles

In a secluded corner of the sky quadrant, not too far away.

Elder Shun witnessed all of what had transpired in the sky quadrant. The moment that Jiang Chen had ripped off his mask, a look that this result was in accordance with his expectations appeared on his face.

"Huang'er, I've discovered that old man Qian Ji's divination seems to be more and more the real deal. Jiang Chen is very likely to be the fated person in his divination. Exactly as what I'd thought, Jiang Chen has chosen the Precious Tree Sect. His mind is not a simple one indeed." n.-Ov&lb1n

Huang'er's limpid eyes moved slightly as she walked up gracefully with the posture of a refined lotus.

"Elder Shun, you've been observing this person from the shadows. Why don't you just go to him?" Huang'er was also slightly curious about Elder Shun's intentions.

“Haha, I will go to him, but the timing is not yet right. Huang’er, try putting yourself in his shoes, if you were a cultivator from a secular kingdom, and an enormous being obviously several times stronger than you suddenly came to you, asking you to diagnose an illness—would you agree, even if you were skilled with medicine?”

Elder Shun smiled faintly, the light of wisdom dancing in his eyes.

Huang’er’s eyelashes fluttered as a trace of understanding appeared in a smile on her face with unparalleled beauty.

“Huang’er understands.”

Elder Shun smiled, “I’ve observed him and he is greatly principled. Going at it in a brusque and hard manner will never do. This is why I saved him at the Second Crossing, so that he would remember my favor and slowly accept us. Jiang Chen is one who feels gratitude. If we leave a good impression on him and strike up a good relationship, then he certainly won’t sit idly by. If I hold my identity over him and use my strength to suppress him, it might actually backfire, given his personality. Even if he agrees, he might not act wholeheartedly.”

One had to say, Elder Shun had sharp insight into human nature.

To make an analogy, this was as if someone of the royal household suddenly ran into a commoner’s house and asked the civilian to cure his ailment.

The commoner would absolutely harbor all sorts of suspicions and be afraid of being held liable for risk. They’d certainly think of an excuse to avoid this.

Once Elder Shun used his identity to compel Jiang Chen and caused him to feel very reluctant, then all would be truly over then.

Elder Shun had absolute power, but he didn’t have absolute guarantee in controlling Jiang Chen and making him submit. And with Elder Shun’s personality, he didn’t want to bully anyone.

The most important thing was, he couldn’t risk it.

If Jiang Chen was someone who would rather die than give in and didn’t respond well to tough tactics, then everything would be beyond repair.

Therefore, Elder Shun had been observing Jiang Chen from the shadows, biding his time. He too wanted to take another step forward and verify whether old man Qian Ji’s divination would be fulfilled by Jiang Chen.

After seeing the events of today, Elder Shun finally had more than ninety percent certain of it.

He was now considering on how best to approach Jiang Chen in a manner that wouldn’t lead to contradiction, and how to entice him to act on their behalf with greatest effort.

Elder Shun knew that the difference was great when a healer didn’t exert themselves to fullest effort.

.....

The final sixteen had been settled in the sky quadrant.

What followed next was the ranking of the final sixteen.

“Everyone, although you have your own places, but it’s said that there is no runner up in martial dao. A ranking of the strongest must be determined amongst your martial dao geniuses. Therefore, the ranking matches to commence next are equally important. Who can ascend to the apex of the sixteen kingdom alliance? Who will reign over the other geniuses? Who will lead the future of the sixteen kingdoms?”

“Now, you have the opportunity to prove yourselves in the rings. Bring out all your potential and strength, your enthusiasm and courage, and unleash yourselves in the ring!”

Sunchaser’s words had an unstoppable momentum, with a thick sense of the intent to kill within them.

It was obvious that he wanted to regain all the face he’d lost when Ceng Shi had betrayed him. He wished to reform the Purple Sun Sect’s dignity through the ranking matches!

With the two great insurance factors of Long Juxue and Lei Gangyang, he would definitely be able to suppress all the geniuses and sweep them all.

Forefather Sunchaser’s demeanor was awe inspiring, but the cultivators all had their own plans. It was obvious that they weren’t going to boil with enthusiasm just with a few words from forefather Sunchaser and forget all about their own plans.

Everyone had their own paths for their path of martial dao.

However, they weren’t exactly opposed to the idea of ranking battles.

Aside from the Purple Sun Sect, the one who was most looking forward to this was Jiang Chen.

The rules of the ranking battles were the same as the rules from before.

Number one would match up against number sixteen, two and fifteen, and so on and so forth.

The rankings were the ones previously determined in the selection.

Therefore, Liu Wencai was ranked number sixteen, and his opponent was Long Juxue.

Second place Lei Gangyang would be facing off against his peer Luo Huang.

Third place Luo Xi’s opponent was Luo Shuihan of the Flowing Wind Sect.

.....

Jiang Chen would be facing off against a Myriad Spirit Sect disciple.

Although Liu Wencai’s potential had been excavated, his starting point was far less than Long Juxue’s. So although he didn’t let Long Juxue easily win this match, he didn’t give her too much of a challenge either.

Ninelion also kept his eye on this match, obviously on his guard against Long Juxue dealing a fatal blow to Liu Wencai.

She did indeed have this intention, but Liu Wencai was quite smart and never gave her the chance to land a killing blow. When he knew full well that he couldn't win out against his foe, he conceded the match with a dashing grace.

Jiang Chen also easily took home the victory for his match. The Myriad Spirit Sect disciple's strength was alright, but far inferior to Liu Wencai or Tang Hong's.

Jiang Chen also felt that this outcome was a bit of a pity for Liu Wencai. If he hadn't met with Long Juxue, he absolutely would've had a chance to take another step forward.

The most fascinating match of this round was eighth place Ceng Shi and ninth place Tang Hong.

Having just defected to the venerated Icemist, Ceng Shi was of obvious mind to display his potential and strength. The two of them battled until they sank into utter darkness and chaos, but a victor still hadn't been determined when time was called.

Finally, whoever held the advantage during the fight was used to determine the victor. With Tang Hong's domineering style of fighting, he naturally held a bit more of the upper hand.

Ceng Shi lost the match with resignation, but won the ratification of his peers in the Flowing Wind Sect as a result.

After all, even first genius Shi Yunyun in the Flowing Wind Sect admitted honestly that if she met Tang Hong, she might not have been able to win.

This was because some changes had occurred in Tang Hong's body. These changes had caused his strength to increase explosively in the last three months.

After the first round, the top eight made it into the upper half, and the lower eight was assigned to the bottom half to continue and fight for a ranking.

The top eight were Long Juxue, Lei Gangyang, Luo Xi, Shi Yunyun, Lian Canghai, Jiang Chen, Xie Yufan, and Tang Hong.

The Precious Tree Sect became the greatest winner all of a sudden.

The Purple Sun Sect had held the absolute advantage in the list of the final sixteen, as they'd had five spots.

After a round of placements, there were only two of them in the top eight, but four from the Precious Tree Sect.

That left one each for the Myriad Spirit Sect and Flowing Wind Sect.

Long Juxue's opponent in the second round was Tang Hong.

Jiang Chen's was now Luo Xi of the Myriad Spirit Sect.

As his sect's top genius, Luo Xi had held the title without a doubt before Liu Wencai's appearance. He was at the peak of the sixth level spirit realm and was only a step away from setting foot into the sky spirit realm.



This kind of opponent was indeed the strongest Jiang Chen had met so far.

However, it was Luo Xi's unlucky day to run into Jiang Chen. They were both a step away from the sky spirit realm, but Jiang Chen firmly suppressed him no matter in every aspect.

Therefore, when the battle commenced, even though Luo Xi used all of his trump cards and deployed his fighting strength to its utmost, he was still unable to defeat Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen defeated Luo Xi without having to call upon his trump cards.

However, he was so strong that Jiang Chen was almost forced to do so.

As for Tang Hong, although he was brave and fierce, he didn't pose too much of a threat to Long Juxue. Rather, her azure phoenix freezing qi sealed off his blood vessels and almost took his life.

It was a good thing that forefather Thousandleaf was present to render timely aid.

When he saw Tang Hong injured thus by Long Juxue, Jiang Chen was also greatly incensed. He knew that this was Long Juxue demonstrating her might and prowess to him.

"Long Juxue, I'll let you strut for another two days." Unbounded killing intent surged in Jiang Chen's heart.

Lei Gangyang and Shi Yunyun also triumphed over their opponents in the other two matches.

In this way, apart from Jiang Chen taking out Luo Xi, the four great geniuses ranked in the top four all made it to the semi finals.

However, the greater picture was quite apparent now. Long Juxue and Lei Gangyang were both of the sky spirit realm, whereas Shi Yunyun and Jiang Chen were peak of the sixth level spirit realm.

Therefore, everyone felt that the fight for champion would fall between the two Purple Sun Sect geniuses.

In the semi finals, Shi Yunyun would be of no threat to Long Juxue.

Whereas Jiang Chen wasn't favored to win out over Lei Gangyang either. Although Jiang Chen had had that one experience in resisting Lei Gangyang, he'd left promptly thereafter.

In the eyes of the outside world, Jiang Chen still failed to cross over into the sky spirit realm in the end, so his chances of victory in this match were scant.

"Gangyang, I hope Ceng Shi's matter hasn't casted a shadow over you. You must try your best and suppress that perverse animal Jiang Chen." Forefather Sunchaser warned.

Lei Gangyang nodded, a frightful battle intent shining out of his eyes. "Don't worry forefather, I have my sights set on the champion. Jiang Chen is just a stepping stone on my path of martial dao. I will certainly stride over him and battle fairly and openly with junior sister Long to determine who is the better!"

There were two layers of meaning to Lei Gangyang's words. One in that he was respecting old monster Sunchaser's words and would seek to kill Jiang Chen with all his might, the second that he was also

expressing his stance that I, Lei Gangyang, will not hand over the position of boss without a fight. I will fight openly and fairly with Long Juxue to determine who is the best amongst us.

This also meant that I hope you senior executives won't be biased towards Long Juxue!

The birth of the semi-finalists also meant that the ranking battles were proceeding to the most delightful stages. Fascinating fights continued without end, and the last question was—would Long Juxue overcome all and successfully ascend to the top? Or will others turn by the tide through heroic efforts and halt her rise?

In terms of the general sentiment, whether open discussions or hushed whispers, almost all were favoring Long Juxue with her innate constitution.

#### Chapter 400: Facing Off Against Lei Gangyang, Every Blow Connects Solidly

In an enormous ring of the main square of the sky quadrant.

The first match of the semifinals was about to begin. The two sides were Lei Gangyang from the Purple Sun Sect, one who used to be first in the sky quadrant, and Jiang Chen the secular genius.

This was the semifinal match that had a more uncertain outcome of the two.

It was almost certain that no unexpected results would come from the other of Shi Yunyun and Long Juxue.

Although Jiang Chen was also challenging someone ranked higher than him, he had at least barged into the meeting of the most high before and exchanged two blows with Lei Gangyang, not ending up in a disadvantaged position at all.

This was why the outside world was leaving a bit of confidence for Jiang Chen.

If they had to pick one of the semifinal matches that held a bit more suspense about the outcome, theirs was the one. Jiang Chen seemed more likely than Shi Yunyun to create a miracle, no matter from what angle they looked at things from.

Lei Gangyang was bulky and tall, wearing golden armor and a yellow robe, appearing quite ferocious. His bald headed styling made him appear even more fierce.

His facial features were as sharply defined as if a blade had carved them all out. If it wasn't for Long Juxue's strong rise, Lei Gangyang was indeed worthy of shouldering the title of the foremost amongst the younger generation of the four great sects.

"Jiang Chen, I admit that your rise was quite sudden, and you've created a legend of grass roots defying the heavens. However, this myth ends here today."

Lei Gangyang was full of a domineering air and an irrefutable dignity.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "That's what every opponent thought before they met me in the ring. And yet, I still stand in the ring."

"Hmph, that's because they're incompetent!"

Lei Gangyang emitted a long whistle as the spirit qi around his body began to come vigorously alive. Red mist suffused the air, encircling the surroundings like an ocean of fire.

Lei Gangyang seemed to be the phoenix being reborn in the fiery seas.

“Jiang Chen, I forgot to tell you, I was born with soul of fire and thunder essence. My potential and talents aren’t much less than an innate constitution. My dao heart is strong, and the champion of the ranking battles will surely be mine. You are just a stepping stone on my path as a genius!”

“A stepping stone?” The corner of Jiang Chen’s mouth lifted in a cold smile. “My thoughts are the same as yours. You, Lei Gangyang, are just a stepping stone to me brutally killing that b\*tch Long Juxue. It’s your bad luck to meet me!”

Neither of them wanted to allow the other the final word as their manners were both awe inspiring, like two divine weapons with their edges unsheathed meeting in the ring.

Every word and movement at this time was full of meaning.

What seemed like bickering was actually a part of creating an atmosphere.

Both of them were using words to heighten their bearing and suppress the other.

It was a pity though that after probing each other, they realized that they were unable to control the situation.

Lei Gangyang smiled expansively. “Jiang Chen, I rather underestimated you. Since I can’t suppress you with my bearing, then let’s return to the basics of martial dao and use our strength to determine the better!”

“Hmph, as you wish.” Jiang Chen refused to give ground. “Lei Gangyang, I’ll let you take three free shots.”

“How arrogant!” Lei Gangyang’s eyebrow arched.

“If three moves aren’t enough, then take ten!” Jiang Chen laughed faintly.

Lei Gangyang’s expression darkened, “Jiang Chen, if you think you can provoke me with words, then you’re simply too naive!”

“Why would I need to provoke with words in order to win?”

Jiang Chen crossed his hands in front of him, a regal bearing about him and his feet firmly planted into the ground. He stood there as if a mountain, giving Lei Gangyang the feeling that he was indestructible.

“If that’s the case, then take my punch!”

When Lei Gangyang saw Jiang Chen’s dismissive attitude, rage grew in his heart as he punched out with a single hand and broke through the air with the sound of thunder.

After their exchange at the meeting of the most high, Lei Gangyang had been quite dejected. He’d attacked Jiang Chen from below and had been disadvantaged to begin with.

But now that they were fighting fairly in the ring, he didn't believe that Jiang Chen could rely on trickery any longer!

This punch encompassed the sounds of wind and thunder and seemed to descend as the burning sun from the heavens, bringing with it high temperatures, as if it would set the very air on fire like a volcano eruption.

Those watching beneath the elevated ring all cried out with astonishment.

"It's the Rushing Solar Thunderpalm!"

"The sound of wind and thunder, the depiction of the flaring sun. This Rushing Solar Thunderpalm is one of the top five martial techniques of the purple Sun Sect. Combined with Lei Gangyang's soul of fire and thunder essence, this is practically a technique tailor made for him!"

"He's employing one of his ultimate moves as soon as he acted, it looks like Lei Gangyang wants to quickly settle the match."

"Absolutely, Lei Gangyang has his sights set on the championship. His next opponent is Long Juxue, so wrapping this one up as fast as possible is for the best. Becoming overly tangled and wasting spirit power will only harm the championship battle.

"Mm, what a pity for this secular genius. If his semifinal opponent had been Shi Yunyun, then he might've had a chance to make it into the finals."

"Hmph, it's already ludicrous enough that he made it to this step. If he makes it into the finals, then where would the face of the sect geniuses of our generation be?"

"Indeed! If Long Juxue and Lei Gangyang meet in the finals, then the Purple Sun Sect is still the greatest winner in the end."

Those observing the match still placed the odds of victory on Lei Gangyang.

After all, Lei Gangyang was in the sky spirit realm and had been the undisputed top genius of the sky quadrant before the rise of Long Juxue. No one had been able to shake him from his position.

Lei Gangyang was someone who'd once gathered all the fortunes of Purple Sun Sect.

Even Tang Hong and Liu Wencai was inwardly nervous when they saw Lei Gangyang's momentum. They all believed in Jiang Chen, but when they saw Lei Gangyang's demeanor, they couldn't help but break out in a cold sweat for their boss.

Forefather Thousandleaf's gaze flashed with a piercing gleam, as a trace of nervousness actually grew within him when he stared at the ring.

Indeed, the sudden appearance of this genius and his desire to join the Precious Tree Sect had made the forefather feel that he'd suddenly received an enormous treasure.

Jiang Chen was the face of the Precious Tree Sect and its precious.

When he saw Lei Gangyang's obvious momentum in wanting to swiftly resolve this battle, he couldn't help but wonder, can Jiang Chen withstand this blow?

Those whose hearts tilted towards Jiang Chen were all worried for him.

Only Jiang Chen stood in the ring as immovable as a mountain. His figure was still that dashing, that calm, as if this mighty attack was as intangible as the floating clouds in his eyes.

“Matching off with boxing techniques, are we?”

Jiang Chen’s eyes suddenly widened as they shot out beams of splendor.

His hands drew an arc as boundless meaning behind boxing techniques surged to the fore.

He huffed out lightly as he took a step forward, throwing his own punch forward.

This punch was as if a hundred flowers in full bloom, the feeling of spring in the air.

This punch was also as if the sudden arrival of autumn’s frost, all living things withering and dying.

The wondrous changes of this punch flabbergasted onlookers. Was there such a marvelous boxing technique in this world?

Two different kinds of meaning could be realized in one punch?

In actuality, Jiang Chen’s single punch was two. He’d punched out so quickly that two looked like one punch. One of them was out in the open, and the other in the shadows. This happened to perfectly display the cycle of blooming and wilting in the Divine Aeons Fist, a dictum of yin and yang, fire and water.

Bam bam bam bam!

Continual collisions rang throughout the ring.

Spirit power with impressive momentum crashed into each other, giving rise to numerous wild ripples, as if wanting to flip the entire ring.

This ripped apart the atmosphere created by the Dashing Solar Thunderpalm that had formed about the ring.

All was normal again.

Jiang Chen had been the one to react to this punch, but had actually managed to break through Lei Gangyang’s ferocious boxing aura.

That made those watching beneath the ring all suck in a breath of shock.

Even forefather Sunchaser’s suddenly froze. He’d been calm all along, but his eyes shot out shock at this moment. When he saw Lei Gangyang utilize his strongest boxing skill, he’d understood the intention behind his move. n(-Ov**E**l**b1n**

But Jiang Chen’s performance next completely stunned him.

Jiang Chen had met punch with punch and used a profound, mysterious boxing meaning to disperse the strong blow of the Dashing Solar Thunderpalm.

How... how was this possible?

Everyone knew that this move was as if the blazing sun, accompanied by wind and thunder. Anyone blind enough to use their physical body to take the blow would be crippled with whatever body part they used.

The momentum of the wind and thunder was enough to burn the opponent's arm, or even their entire body to a crisp.

Therefore, when Jiang Chen had punched out, those watching were all sweating profusely, thinking that Jiang Chen was about to be done for.

Even forefather Thousandleaf stood up nervously in that moment.

But after the punches had clashed together, Lei Gangyang's momentum was completely dispersed.

"Whew!" Thousandleaf's bottom hit the chair again, crazed delight in his eyes. He knew that the Precious Tree Sect had picked up a true treasure this time.

Even Lei Gangyang's ultimate move could do nothing against Jiang Chen. Judging from the latter's posture, he didn't even want to lose in terms of his manner. He hadn't used any fancy defenses, but had openly and fairly fought back an eye for an eye.

One had to know that amongst the younger generation of the four great sect, when it came to physical combat, even Long Juxue likely didn't want to go head to head against Lei Gangyang.

But Jiang Chen had did it!

Ninelion sighed with dejection and spoke mournfully, "Ole Thousandleaf, you've really picked up a treasure this time. Pity me, an old man, who recruited this genius with so much sincerity! You just sat there and received such a treasure!"

Venerated Icemist also sighed ruefully, "I have to modify my previous opinions. Jiang Chen absolutely can fight against Lei Gangyang, and his odds of victory are fifty fifty."

The two venerated origin realm forefathers had spoken at the same time, revising their opinions of Jiang Chen upwards.

This ticked off Sunchaser, who snorted coldly. "Is there a need to praise Jiang Chen up to the heavens after one punch? Lei Gangyang is so strong that he's only just started to reveal his talents, like the tip of an iceberg."

Thousandleaf was one of sparse words. He didn't like to flap his lips and spar verbally.

Ninelion laughed coldly, "You speak like Jiang Chen's revealed all of the iceberg."

Icemist also laughed, "Indeed, Daoist Sunchaser, it can be seen that Jiang Chen hasn't used his trump cards either."

Sunchaser was greatly incensed as he fixed a stern glare at the ring, his eyes full of an unconcealed killing intent.