

Unfathomable 141

Chapter 141

The whole small floating island rumbled due to the energies that were emanated, the source being a floating Zhang Dong who had his eyes closed. He was moving further up into the air going out of the range of his formation. The golden arcs of lightning energies started flying in all directions, scorching the ground underneath.

The man was too occupied with his ascension to the higher realm, not knowing that he was destroying the spirit herb fields that were painstakingly planted by his fellow clan members. Though a strange phenomenon took place. After the herbs turned to ash, new ones started sprouting as if the roots absorbed the divine lightning energies. This allowed them to regrow themselves with an added boon.

Matt had just reached this realm and he was still in the process of reinforcing his cultivation. Just as expected the immortal grade dimensional regalia treasure contained all of his energies as the people outside the pocket dimension had no clue that their Patriarch reached a new height. If they knew what was happening, they would probably pass out from excitement.

He stopped looking inside of his body, moving his attention to the world around him. He could feel the plants, it was as if they were breathing. His senses all got enhanced, he felt that he could hear a water drop fall from many kilometers away if he really concentrated. He was now floating up in the air, without the need of his sword or the aid of his technique just sitting with his legs crossed.

“Huh... well... that was neat...”

He rubbed his head, not really sure what to say or think. He looked at the charred earth below him and the strange golden herbs that were growing here and there.

“I’ll have to take a look at those...but first...”

He stood up while floating in the air, he was now in the higher realm the fabled Nascent Soul was in his grasp. There was one thing that he needed to do first though and this was the perfect place to do it. He looked side to side, making sure that no one was watching. After making sure that he was alone, he stuck out his hands right above his head. It looked as if he was trying to do an overhead press with his hands stretched out.

Then he closed his fists together and flew upwards, yes he was just testing out his new flying technique. He zoomed up high and then right down both his hands in front of him while the wind pressure made his hair shake about. This soon subsided as a golden aura surrounded his body, shielding him from the wind pressure.

“Weeeeeeeeeee.....”

He was just like a little kid now, it was as if one of his childhood dreams had just come true. It was one thing to fly on a sword that was more of a stationary platform, and it was another to do it on your own without outside help. He rocketed around the small floating island, he couldn’t really utilize his new flight as the area that he could fly around was small. If he tried going into the void he would quickly feel the lack of air and the drop in spiritual energies.

He tried various positions, the first one was just the default one that was probably the most popular one. The next one he tried was with one of his arms stretched out and with the other arm bent backward. He then tried bending one of his legs during that position, then he tried holding out his hands to the sides with his palms outstretched. He even tried flying with his feet in the forward position and then while standing out straight with his hands behind his back in his serious senior pose position.

He finally decided that he had enough and landed on the ground, this wasn't any old landing though. No this was the fabled superhero landing, his palm smashed into the ground producing a thumping sound and cracking the earth under him. Both his legs bent as if he was doing some type of crawl, a blush appearing on his face after he did it.

"Well... that was equally epic and equally silly... also I think if I wasn't so sturdy I could have broken something."

This type of landing was quite cool to look at, but it seemed quite dangerous, he hoped none of his clan juniors would try to imitate it if they saw him do it. He stood up and dusted his white robe off, he had a new one at this time. It was different in the way that it had armor integrated into it.

It was a new design that went more for functionality than looks. He ditched the flowy robe parts, trying not to imitate the popular robes in this world. To this day he didn't understand how those people could fight with those wide sleeves and robes that were longer than their own legs.

This was something added to his first robe, it had two modes now. The first one was just his regular white robe, while the other one made him look like a lightly armored knight of sorts. It left him a lot of wiggle room with his legs but kept his torso well protected. He didn't want it to be too bulky, otherwise, they would impede his movements during combat. He turned the second mode on while he was going past his realm, as it offered some nice bonuses to his stats like more energy and more resilience.

He turned off his battle mode and went over to one of the spiritual herbs, analyzing it to see what was the deal with it. He got its name which was 'Radiant Spiritual Sage', which was a rare variation of the Sage herb that his clan was cultivating for pill making.

"Hm, this... I should test it with some pills and see what it does if I exchange the regular ones..."

He looked at the destroyed herb fields, not many of those 'radiant' variants were there, most of the old greenery was just destroyed in the process. Maybe if he did some research he would be able to copy this creating process of this rare herb variant. He pocketed the herbs and then thought back to his flying experience, still not sure about the best pose.

"How do those other Nascent Soul guys fly around, haven't really seen any besides that one guy by the secret ground and he only floated a bit with his hands behind his back...."

He rubbed his chin and contemplated the best pose to take, he couldn't make a fool out of himself. Thinking that his regular hands behind back pose was good for slow floating, it looked the most honorable and menacing at the same time.

"Well, I guess I could fly with my hands behind my back while looking stoic... but that will be probably a bit uncomfortable in the long run."

After having his fun with his new flying skill, that was several times faster than his old sword flight. He decided to see how much his power increased. He took out a pinnacle graded earth treasure that looked like a large tower shield. This thing was made with defense in mind so it would act as a good test item.

He propped it up against a log that he inserted into the ground close to the edge of the pocket dimension. He then walked back a couple of steps so he was standing about ten meters away from the tower shield. He then clenched his fist tightly and took on a fighting stance.

“Okay, let’s see...”

He pushed some of his spiritual energy into his fist and cocked it back, quickly punching forward. His punch produced immense wind pressure along with golden lightning energies, the sound of thunder reverberating throughout the area. He thought that he would probably put a dent in the shield, as it was quite a crafty. Instead, he watched on in surprise as the thing broke into small pieces along with the area around it, exploding in the process.

He whistled and looked at the big chunk of earth missing, thanks to standing next to the edge of the pocket dimension not much of the area was destroyed but he could see some of the shield chunks floating in the distance of the void.

“This will take some time to get used to...”

He fired off a couple of more ranged attacks, the lightning dragon that he could create now was several times larger than what he was able to produce previously. Same thing with his avatar form that made him at least as tall as a popular kaiju from the movies. He felt full of vigor and power. If he faced the demon from that secret ground this time around he could probably defeat him with one well-placed hit.

He was still fresh and had to reinforce his cultivation level, it was a miracle that he was actually able to do everything according to plan. No one was attacking the city or knew that he pushed himself into the new realm. Everything seemed to be working out.

“Okay, let me work on some of those heaven grade techniques a bit, then I’ll craft that heaven graded weapon and get my body refining up... think a dagger should be fine and don’t really have the resources for anything big...”

Getting to the nascent soul level was one thing, being both a body refiner and a Qi cultivator at that level was another one. He felt like he would be undefeatable if he got both of them up to at least the late-stage. He wasn’t sure how long that would take, but with his increased life span now he had a lot of time on his hands.

“No need to rush things, I got all the time in the world. As long as we stay hidden that Dark Palm sect shouldn’t notice anything and it will be too late for them after I get stronger. If I manage to help Liena and Qiang to reach this realm, even if that sect finds out, we should be able to defend ourselves.”

“Well, time to get to work, this is going to take a while...”

He had many things to do, upgrading his techniques was one thing. Crafting a new set of weapons and treasures was another thing. He was even planning to use some black market connections in some more shady areas to get more nascent soul level resources later. He could always change his appearance and no one would actually believe that he was thirty-two. Only old monsters above the age of hundred were

in the nascent soul. It shouldn't be traced back to him, even if someone noticed something off with his disguise.

While Zhang Dong vanished into his crafting abode the last trial back in Jade Grass City was in full swing. There was a lot of fighting happening among the junior members as quite a lot of them had gathered into large groups. The larger camp that was created by the more powerful clans was the one on top, managing to sweep past the more unorganized factions.

The Triforce Alliance wasn't far behind, but some of their members had already fallen in the process of trying to gather together with their allies. Not everyone was with the main group though, the trial ground was way too large for them to find each other in just a couple of days of time. The people also had to fend for themselves against the other contestants. There was no magic teleportation formation that brought people out if they were critically injured, so deaths could happen.

At this time Zhang Liu and Zhang Tai along with a couple other clan members from the other two factions were chatting.

"Still no word?"

"No, brother Kong and sister Xue still haven't been spotted... we were separated from them during a fight..."

One of the Zhang Clan youths replied while talking to his clan brother, one of their main powerhouses in the form of Hou Kong was missing and Zhang Xue that wasn't a slouch wasn't there either. This was troubling as they didn't think that the two could take on that large clan alliance on their own.

"Okay, let's move out... let us form two large teams and let's search the area for more of our brothers and sisters. If you find anyone, be sure to alert the other people from our alliance."

Zhang Liu and Tai were the two defacto leaders, they tried to mix the teams up in a similar fashion to the platoons that they were in at the secret ground. Some fighters along with ranged support and healers, Feng Nuana was sure to stick to Liu like glue so they headed in a different direction than Zhang Tai did, the older brother concerned about his sister that was probably alone.

'Don't worry Xue, big brother is coming.'

Chapter 142

"Hold still..."

A female voice could be heard accompanied by some groaning.

"Ugh...t-that feels strange"

The man groaned out while panting.

"Quite the cute sound there, for such a strong senior brother~"

The woman chuckled while some rustling could be heard.

"Hey, stop teasing... I'm trying my best here..."

The man replied in a shaky voice.

“Don’t worry senior brother, I’ll be as gentle as I can... just stay still for a moment...but you sure are quite large down here...”

The cute female voice proclaimed while more rustling was heard.

These two people were Zhang Xue and Huo Kong. The girl in question had her hands outstretched and a sphere of water was surrounding the man’s abdomen. The youth had a sword wound on the side of his stomach that was slowly getting closed down thanks to Zhang Xue’s healing arts. She couldn’t use the holy element as her master, so she had to use the water arts from her clan. They weren’t bad either, they just worked in a different fashion.

“Yes, those are quite the nice abdominal muscles there, you must have worked on them diligently.”

The girl was apparently impressed by the man’s physique. The girl was around muscular men, in the form of her own master and her big brother, that due to his body refining was turning into quite the beefcake himself. So she was now quite fond of the wider types, finding the manly ones superior to the more feminine dandy looking ones.

“I’m just glad that we got away from that group, we were lucky that those things started chasing after them instead of us.”

The two ran into each other a day after the trial started, they formed a team but soon were discovered by a large troop that was gunning for their tokens. They were lucky enough to run through an area with a hidden treasure. It looked to be a sword surrounded by circular rocks, but when the people that were chasing after them tried touching it the rocks started shaking about.

They turned out to be humanoid looking golems, at least three meters tall and with heavy hammer-like fists. While the large band of monsters was trying to protect the weapon, Zhang Xue and Huo Kong made a run for it. Some of the enemies were indisposed so they decided to force their way through one side, the young man taking some hits as he pushed through the other participants that were blocking their way. He ended up injuring himself, getting a couple of cuts here and there but nothing that Zhang Xue couldn’t heal.

“I’m feeling a lot better now, my thanks junior sister Xue.”

The young man smiled awkwardly while looking at the white-haired beauty. He was quite enamored by the young girl’s beauty and even more after he continued interacting with her. She wasn’t haughty like some women with this type of beauty, she didn’t seem too impressed in him being from a powerful clan either. She felt genuine and just all-around friendly, he didn’t feel like she had an ulterior motive like some of the women that were after the prestige that his clan had going for it.

“No problem senior brother Kong, the elders told us to work together and I think they were right in doing so. There are really a lot of enemies in this trial.”

Zhang Xue stood up after healing the red-haired man. She thought he was quite funny as he was always trying to evade her gaze and was blushing furiously whenever she touched him. He felt like a little puppy for some reason, she was used to getting stared at by the opposite gender. The gazes were quite different, mostly ones of attraction or possession.

It made her feel like the men saw her as some kind of trophy and not like a real person. This man, on the other hand, seemed too pure to even put her in that bracket. Which was quite funny from her point of view, the man's demeanor didn't fit his fiery appearance. He was quite the beast while fighting, she already saw that but the moment the two were alone he looked like a scared kitten.

"Senior brother, I don't think we should remain in this spot for too long. I bet those other people will try catching us again, we have to find out clan members there are too many of them for us to handle on our own."

Zhang Xue proclaimed while looking to the corridor that they came from, there were two other paths they could take. Xue could use her Master's detection technique, so she could somewhat spot people at the distance. But it wasn't as if this place was laced with traps and high levels of danger, like in the secret ground they were in. So she couldn't pick the right path, as well as the elder members, did back then.

"Um... think we should go with the left one..."

Zhang Xue said while focusing her senses on the two paths, the right one looked to be more dangerous.

"Yes junior sister, we should move... but don't worry, I'll protect you with my life if anything bad happens!"

The man proclaimed while smacking his chest with his palm. Xue just chuckled into her robe sleeve and nodded.

"Well, that's quite reassuring, senior brother Kong."

The man just smiled awkwardly at the girl and moved in front of her, he would be the vanguard as he was better in close range combat than the girl. The two had spent some time together, and this junior sister was quite the talented spear user. She even had some powerful range spear attack that could wreak havoc from the backlines.

The two both already had two tokens each as they had battled some other participants here and there. Most of their time was spent on running away though, the two knew that they couldn't really battle twenty cultivators at once. While the two moved through the similar-looking corridors they started chatting, not really having anything better to do.

"So, you are the son of that Huo Qiang... did he ever mention anything about a senior called Zhang Dong?"

The man had introduced himself as a young master from the Huo clan while shouting at the attackers so this much she knew. She knew that name as he was a close friend of her Master, he even made a pair of beautiful ruby gauntlets for the man.

"Did you s-say Z-Zhang Dong?"

Xue looked at the man, she could tell from his body language that something was wrong, he even twitched a bit the moment he heard her Master's name be mentioned.

"Yes, I'm sure they should be good brothers to each other... am I wrong?"

“Zhang Dong... brothers...”

The man mumbled something under his breath while spacing out slightly, then turned his head to the side to see Zhang Xue behind him.

“Could I ask what your relationship is with this... senior Dong?”

The girl didn't really know why the man seemed down after her Master's name was mentioned. She was now curious about the reason.

“Zhang Dong is our clan's Patriarch, but you probably already know that.”

The man nodded, thinking that it would be hard to forget that man's name after what happened back home.

“Well... he is also my Master!”

The girl stopped, quite proud that she could call that man her Master. Her current disposition was all thanks to his superior techniques. Even though he was a bit distant, he was still a great Master that both she and her brother looked up to. She would defend Zhang Dong's honor if she had to, so she squinted a bit as the man in front of her started acting strangely.

“Is there some kind of problem, senior brother Kong?”

The red-haired youth stopped and looked back, his lower lip was trembling a bit. The man started thinking, the girl that he was fancying was part of that Zhang Clan, that was a problem of its own. Now it was even worse, as she was a disciple of the man he learned to despise. There was a reason for that, it started after his father returned from the secret ground.

He was the oldest son of Huo Qiang, also the son of the official wife and not a concubine. He had the highest status, but he still knew that his place wasn't set in stone. He tirelessly worked himself, training like a madman to be the strongest cultivator possible. He knew that his father was in line for the Patriarch spot, but he still wasn't the only one.

There were many clansmen going for that spot, he had uncles and aunts that could replace his father at a moment's notice. The expedition to the secret ground was one such thing. He didn't have any proof but he was sure that one of his family members that were next in line, probably set things in motion. It was lucky that his father made it out alive from that death trap.

Normally he would be proud of his father that proved himself to be one of the strongest. But his father changed, the moment he returned he couldn't shut up about the Zhang Clan or this Zhang Dong that was now apparently his sworn brother. Every day it was Zhang Dong this, Zhang Dong that. His father wouldn't stop, he even coerced the Patriarch to form a binding pact that would last for many years. Apparently he used some techniques that this so-called Zhang Patriarch gave them.

Huo Kong was highly skeptical about this, he thought that the Zhang Clan was of lower status and that this man probably tricked his father in some way. He wanted to even offer his older sister up as a bride, Kong protested this but got trashed by his own dad after saying some hateful words about Zhang Dong in a fit of rage. Due to this, he had a chip on his shoulder and a dislike towards this Zhang Clan and its

Patriarch. Thanks to Xue, he had just recalled why he disliked them once more, he had almost forgotten it due to his hormones.

Huo Kong wasn't one to hold back though, he didn't like the whole cloak and dagger approach that other people used. In his opinion, only weak and cowardly people sneaked around, the truly strong let their fist talk instead.

"Problem... yes there is one...to be totally honest..."

Zhang Xue looked at the red-haired man, he looked as if he was going to say something that she didn't like. But before that could happen she felt a disturbance, someone was coming their way.

"Brother Kong, we will have to postpone our talk, I can sense other cultivators coming and I don't think they are friendly!"

The man stopped, he wanted to ask a couple of questions about this girl's Master. But apparently this would have to wait, he put up his guard and got moved forward, Zhang Xue run next to him as the two bolted further into the corridor some shouts heard behind them as the enemies were closing in.

"Here they are!"

"Quick before they can escape!"

"Halt, there is no use running just accept your fate and give us your tokens and you can leave!"

The two could hear the people shouting at them, but they didn't trust them to leave them be after giving up the tokens. Huo Kong wanted to stop and fight, but there was a large group behind him. Even though he felt that he could take on multiple opponents at once, he wasn't sure if he could take on ten of them.

"Go to hell you cowards, the only thing you can do is ganging up!"

He called out while gnashing his teeth. His lovely companion grimaced as she could feel the enemies closing in on them from multiple corridors. Were they being led into a trap like pigs to slaughter? She was sure that if they continued on their path they would run into another group of those cultivators.

There was nowhere else to go but forward though, would they have to fight it out in the end? Suddenly she felt a familiar aura signature, it was behind a wall quite close to where they were at. She took this opportunity, hoping for the best as she shouted out to her red-haired partner.

"Senior brother, help me destroy this wall, there should be something good on the other side!"

The man just looked at the spot that the woman was pointing out. He didn't really mind but he wasn't sure that they could destroy the wall or how thick it was. He also couldn't detect people behind it, the walls were quite good at blocking their senses.

"That wall?... Fine!"

The man's muscles bulged, and some strange patterns covered his muscular frame that made him look as if he was on fire. He then took off, charging at the spot that the junior sister pointed with a shoulder

tackle. He looked like a mad bull covered in a blanket of flames, hoping that the spot that he was going for wasn't too thick otherwise his shoulder would be in a dire state.

Chapter 143

Zhang Liu was together with a couple of his clan members, Zhang Tai had gone in a different direction as they were still looking for more of their clansmen. Liu had gone through a couple of small skirmishes with other practitioners so he already had an additional token, only needing one more now.

His group was resting at the moment, they were at one of those spiritual herb gardens and they had just taken care of a trap formation that was previously here.

"These herbs aren't of good quality though, we can get better ones back at spirit spring city...still, it's not good to waste resources. "

Zhang Liu and his clan brothers examined this so-called spirit herb garden. They were from a pill making faction, so this wasn't anything out of the ordinary for them. Zhang Dong had also nabbed scriptures and books that described a way of producing rare variants of certain herbs. So these ordinary spiritual herbs weren't valued that highly by these youths. The few members from the Feng clan and the Huo clan saw it differently as they pocketed as much as they could get their hands on.

While this was happening, Liu felt something or someone coming. There was a familiar aura coming their way, but it looked to be behind a near by wall.

"Wait is that... Hey, look out get away from that wall!"

The youth shouted out, trying to get the attention of the people that were standing closest to the wall. The two people that were standing there, quickly jumped back. They knew that something was wrong and trusted Zhang Liu enough to heed his warning. Just in the nick of time as an angry-looking Huo Kong busted through that chunk of rocks.

"It's that guy?"

Zhang Liu noted while seeing the man covered in red energy, but soon after he could see his white-haired sister following after him. This wasn't the end though as many other angry-looking youths, with drawn weapons charged through after them while shouting various things.

"Don't let them escape!"

"Get them, brothers!"

The group poured through the hole that was slightly larger than a human. At least they tried to, the hole wasn't that wide and some of them ended up getting stuck. Zhang Liu used this chance to move towards his sister and the red-haired man that he fought previously.

"Hah, I knew you were alright Xue... oh and you brought a friend..."

He looked at the burning man that canceled his skill after charging through the wall. His hair was slightly scuffed and he had rock debris all over his body, that looked like scorching coals. Huo Kong just eyed Zhang Liu, he already knew that the two were siblings due to the similar features like the robes and their white hair.

“Hmph!”

He just scoffed at Liu, still not happy about the things that transpired back at the betting arena. The two youths looked at each other, the shouts of the charging enemy cultivators making them postpone their argument.

“We’ll settle the things between us after this trial is over, for now...”

Huo Kong turned around, his fists surging with red Qi.

“Let’s take care of these trashies!”

Zhang Liu just smirked and nodded, letting his fist crackle with blue lightning Qi as if he was imitating what Huo Kong was doing. Zhang Xue just looked between the two boys while chuckling. She herself pulled out her brand new spear that her master made and brandished it against her foes. The mix of clan members that was on their side, also charged in.

“Don’t let them get through that hole, we can pick them off one by one!”

The hole that the group was coming through was quite small, so they only had room for one person at a time. This could be used to their advantage. Soon a barrage of ranged Qi attacks rained at the group that was pouring through the wall, forcing the group into a defensive stance while the rest of them remained stuck behind it.

“Quickly, charge through... agh!”

An enemy cultivator was sent flying by a well-placed lesser lightning javelin. Zhang Liu’s group had the element of surprise on their end as the enemies didn’t expect to find anyone on the other side of the wall. They were still outnumbered though and the hole in the wall would just act as a temporary deterrent.

The enemies on the other side could do two things, either risk it all and try to battle it out right here right now, or pull back and reorganize. Being the haughty youths that they were, they went with the former and decided to blast the path open so more of them could fit through.

“Ack, w-what are you doing?”

The problematic thing about that was that they had some of their people crowding at the small opening. The rocky wall was quite robust, made from hard to breakthrough materials. This resulted in some collateral damage in the form of some lesser clan cultivators getting hurt. The youths from the other side belonged to the more powerful group, so they didn’t care that much about the well being of the lesser clans that were temporarily helping them out.

Zhang Liu looked at the spectacle and smirked.

“Those guys have no teamwork what so ever... compared to us...”

He glanced to the side, Zhang Tai and the rest of their group were charging through one of the corridors. This looked to be it, the two largest factions against each other. The so-called triform alliance was outnumbered but not outgunned. From the fifty so Zhang Clan members thirty or so remained.

“Brothers and Sisters... let us show them what the Zhang Clan is made of!”

Everyone shouted in unison and two groups with fifteen people each were formed. This was one of this clan’s specialties, the Spirit Serpent Formation that everyone was required to train from this point on. This was one of the formations that was utilized in the secret ground, that this clan had ventured forth. This along with the Floodarmor Formation was now becoming a staple of their training regiment. The two formations could be switched between and grew in strength with the number of cultivators in it.

Zhang Liu was used as the core of one of the formations, while Zhang Tai was in the other. The larger group of cultivators could see two water serpents entangling with each other and then releasing a deep blue beam of condensed Qi in their direction. They were quick to react, putting up various defensive treasures and techniques to block the incoming attack but after one hit they already knew that this wasn’t something they could take on easily.

The energy beam made everyone scatter to the sides, the place everyone run was in was a more wide-open area. Still, the two blue serpents had barely enough space to maneuver around here. This was also the reason why the Zhang Clan didn’t combine into one large formation.

The other two clans were keeping busy as well. Their teamwork wasn’t as grand but you could see various wind-based attacks getting thrown by the Feng ladies. The Huo clan rained down on their enemies with their scorching fists, quickly turning up the heat. The whole area turned into a battlefield, anyone not involved in the two alliances was quick to escape.

“W-what’s with these bastards... how are they so strong...”

“How did that little Zhang clan become this strong?... are they getting backed by some sect?”

“Stop yapping and fight, we are getting pushed back...attack them you fools!”

The trial ground rumbled and massive amounts of foundation establishment techniques collided against each other. Small craters riddled the ground and walls, showing just how much power these youths were already able to wield.

After a couple of exchanges, an expert would notice which side was the favored one. The larger alliance started to slowly falter, the stronger clans were using the weaker ones as cannon fodder. This was a massive hit to morale and resulted in the breach of their defenses.

What followed was a domino effect in which their offense collapsed. They were then pushed back by the overwhelming might of the trio of clans.

“D-do you know who I am?...m-my uncle is the....Arghh....”

A small palm landed on an enemy youth’s abdomen that propelled him far into the distance. The man slammed into the wall out cold and with foam coming out of his mouth. The small palm belonged to a certain pink-haired lady that just smirked after defeating one of the main young masters from the opposition.

“Hah, serves you right!”

The girl hopped up to the twitching body of the opponent that she defeated and pulled out his token. She could see that the fighting was almost over as her clan members and allies were doing the exact same thing that she was. She looked to the side, spotting a certain white-haired youth.

“Hey....HEY!”

She shouted out in a loud voice towards him as she bounced forward in his direction. Zhang Liu twitched a bit and turned to see the small girl rushing towards him. She came to an abrupt stop, this produced quite the enchanting ‘bounce’.

“Ah y-yes, can I help you with something sister Nuana?”

He asked while not being sure what to do about this bundle of energy, or where to look to not seem rude.

“This is my fourth token, this big sister is magnanimous enough to share it with you! Don’t be shy and take it!”

She held out the token in front of him, her nose sticking up high as she presented it.

“Ahh... I’m fine, I already have enough of those... maybe one of the other brothers or sisters from our clans can use it...”

Zhang Liu had the pleasure of wandering around this place with this strange girl. From his perspective, she was quite the oddball. The girl was nothing like the people that he knew, she was different from his sister or mother. The other girls that he came across were also more refined and reserved compared to this one, but this gave her a certain amount of charm.

“Ah, I only have two tokens, I could use that one...”

A certain Zhang clan member came over, he had unusually large sword-shaped eyebrows that were quite voluminous too boot. Feng Nuana just gave the youth a death glare and threw the token to the side while tapping her foot on the ground furiously.

On the other side, Zhang Xue and Huo Kong were finishing up as well. They weren’t alone though, they were in the company of Zhang Tai that was in the process of glaring daggers at the raid haired man.

“Who is thi...”

Before he could ask his question he was assaulted from the side. A girl wrapped her arm around his from one side and another did the same from the other side. These were quite the tanned Feng clan girls, the man they were holding was quite the looker and was also the strongest person beside Zhang Liu.

“Senior brother Tai... why don’t we go look for some treasures together~”

“Nooo... Senior brother, wouldn’t you rather do it with this junior sister instead?”

The Feng clan women weren’t ones to beat around the bush, the man that was deemed worthy of their time would be chased after. The poor guy was surrounded by young women while Zhang Xue and Huo Kong excused themselves. Tai’s clan brothers weren’t sure if they should be feeling envious of their senior brother or pity him instead.

“N-nooooooo...w-where are you touching... t-that spot it...Ahhhhhhhhhhhh...”

His shouts reverberated around the trial ground as he got pulled away by a group of gyarus. The next time he was seen, he looked quite drained, his hair disheveled and his robe torn.

The last trial’s major battle came to a close but it was still not over. There were still people that managed to get away, people from other factions that were hiding in the shadows. The treasure troves were also open for exploration, but the major obstacle for this trio of clans was vanquished. What remained for them was to either wait it out till the time run out, or to find the exit and end it early.

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The Zhang, Huo, and Feng clan members that were still in the trial made sure to search through the area. The places like that one with the embedded sword could be still visited as the threat of getting ambushed was lowered now. Going through it once more and collecting the treasures was now a possibility, the only problem was the lack of spatial rings to carry things around.

The army of puppets that were guarding the more lucrative areas was the only problem now. This would be their last test, but after battling with the combined forces of the other clans and coming up on top the triform alliance’s spirits were at an all-time high. Everyone gave out a battle cry, those automatons were the last obstacle between them and a fat payout.

While the last trial was coming to an end the people organizing the festival were keeping tabs on the results. The tokens had some weak tracking capabilities and every contestant was marked before entering. Thanks to that the judges had an idea of what was happening inside. The incapacitated contestants would be removed by the puppets inside the trial ground. This also gave them added info to what was happening inside even without being there themselves.

“Looks like that Zhang Clan is going to be the big winner this time...”

One of the judges said to one of his co-workers while noting down something on a scroll.

“Who would have thought that such a small clan could achieve this... we must get more info on them...”

The Zhang Clan was slowly attracting more attention, this was equally a good thing and a bad thing. From one side, the increase in renown would let them expand their influence, forge alliances, and make better trade deals. On the other side, it would alert the more powerful forces to their existence.

The Zhang clan was like a carp swimming upstream against a strong current as they tried leaving the small pond they were stuck in. Would they succeed in jumping over the waterfall that was blocking the way and transform into a ferocious dragon? This was still to be seen, but the probability of success wasn’t low, the problem were the other dragons on the other side lurking to strike.

While the kids were wrapping up the last trial, a certain youth with a small gem in his forehead was walking down the streets. He was wearing an expensive-looking robe and was accompanied by quite the scary-looking cultivators. He had long flowing charcoal colored hair, and his face looked as if it was sculptured by the gods themselves. Still, the lofty disposition that he was carrying himself with kept the ladies at bay. The moment anyone noticed the man they could only shiver in astonishment or fear. Everyone dropped their heads, trying not to look at anyone from that group. They could tell from the insignia of the dark palm, that this was some kind of powerful young master.

“Young lord Cai, the restaurant that was reserved for you should be just around the corner!”

One of the old looking cultivators proclaimed while walking in front, his eyes scanning the area while scaring off anyone that dared to look in his young master’s direction. The young man just nodded and moved forward, hands behind his back looking as if he owned the place.

It was still the middle of the day and people were in a cheerful mood, the Dao Festival was something that even the residents looked forward to. This was mostly due to the fact that they got a lot of tourists that were all big spenders. All the various rich families gathered in this one spot and everyone wanted to give a good impression. This was mostly achieved by spending a lot of money and spirit stones.

Someone like this young master was at the very top of the totem pole though, he didn’t really need to show off as the dark palm symbol on his robe already made everyone drop down to their knees. Still, sometimes accidents tended to happen. A group of kids was playing around with some sticks, fighting it out while pretending to be powerful cultivators.

Kids being kids, they didn’t really know about the rules of this world quite yet. One of them ended up tripping right in front of the dark palm group, the stick that he was holding on to flying forward and hitting one of the bodyguards on the foot. This wasn’t something that could actually cause pain to the man, but that wasn’t the problem. The real problem was, that they interfered making their young master stop in his tracks. If a certain Patriarch was here, he would probably be astonished by another child running into a haughty young master.

“How dare you!”

The bodyguard shouted out, the child shrunk back his friends too afraid to go forward as they saw many angry uncles staring at them. The mother of the children was nearby, but that wouldn’t really help in this situation.

“Please appease your anger my lord, he is only a silly child...”

The bodyguard wasn’t hearing any of it, his life depended on this as well. He could not let people offend his master, he needed to punish this child. He pulled out a whip, cracking it against the ground ready to deliver a sound beating to the peasants in front.

“Stop~”

The man stopped himself, his whip moving to the side while he looked behind himself to his young lord that had spoken up. His tone was cheery as if he saw something interesting.

“You’ll have to excuse my men, they are quite overprotective.”

“Young lord Cai?”

The man asked a bit confused, but stepped to the side. His young lord walked forward to the mother and child. He reached out with his hand and gave the boy a pat on the head a smile on his face.

“It’s fine, the bad man won’t do anything to you or your beautiful mother.”

The youth with the gem in his forehead pulled out something that looked like candy from his spatial ring and handed it to the child. The mother received a bewitching wink that made her face turn into a red tomato.

“Here have this, give some to your friends too.”

The people around the area sighted out in relief. This young lord looked to be on the milder side, the child and his mother left with the rest of the children that were now munching on the treats. The group then went back to their route and towards the restaurant that they were heading towards leaving these commoners to themselves.

“What a nice young man... you wouldn’t think he would be from that dark palm sect...”

“This is quite the scoop, such a benevolent young master, a good fit for my daughter!”

“Dream on, he wouldn’t want her even as a concubine.”

Some people bickered, some laughed while others were a bit skeptical but they couldn’t deny the act of mercy. They dispersed after a while leaving the area a newfound admiration for the dark palm master awakening in some of them.

The young master that was called Deng Cai headed to the most luxurious restaurant in the city. It was a large building that looked more like a small castle than a place you would go to eat. The top floor was bought out for this young master’s needs, this being one of the boons of being a direct disciple of a powerful Master. He knew that his Master would reward him further if he did well in the coming tournament, but he wasn’t worried. The people participating were way below him, he could take them out with his pinky.

“Please follow me, young lord, we have everything prepared for you upstairs!”

A butler looking fellow that didn’t look like he belonged to this era guided the small group of people. They used an elevator like treasure to arrive at the top floor. The people were greeted to a group of scantily clad beauties that were swimming around a large swimming pool.

“Please enjoy yourself young lord... everything on this level is specially prepared...”

The butler grinned a bit while looking at the women on the level, some were dancing some were already coming over to guide the clients to a more relaxing part of the restaurant. The man just nodded and headed out, two voluptuous women at each side. They were treating him like a king, feeding him special spirit grapes and letting him grope the ladies all over.

The guard that was close to punishing the child not long ago just looked at the youth. He was still a bit new to this group so he didn’t know what to make of this. He was smart enough to not bring it up at least, he wasn’t here to party. Still, the way this young man was getting treated was quite envious. This was also a stark contrast to the way he acted previously, gone was the look of a virtuous person, it was now replaced by a lecherous grin.

‘Ah, this is the life... as long as I remain Master’s disciple, women, wine and power I can have it all... maybe even...’

The man thought to the most powerful member of the sect, shaking his head in disappointment.

‘That old fart is a monster... better to wait till his life runs out before even trying to make a move...’

He took a swig from his wine glass while a busty dancer lady offered him some food, feeding him mouth to mouth. While this was happening the youth suddenly felt something, another smirk appearing on his face.

‘Here comes the harvest...’

A little ball of light flew through the window, the people in the area oblivious to its existence. It was followed by two more, even the dark palm disciple couldn’t really ‘see’ those balls of light, but he could feel them moving closer. They came to a stop in front of his head, just hovering there as if their purpose was to be there.

Deng Cai closed his eyes for a moment, not paying attention to the scantily clad women around him for the time being. He was focused on the orbs of radiating energy in front of him. They in response moved in closer and finally entered into that gem on his forehead. The gem gave off a faint sheen which soon subsided after the light orbs were absorbed.

‘Ah, the young pure ones always taste the best... sadly they were just plain commoners with minimal spiritual energy.’

The man licked his lips and laughed out loud in a rather creepy fashion. This startled the dancing ladies, that took a moment to gather themselves. The sound of zither music drowned out the cackling man while another scene was playing out elsewhere.

“Little Tei... what’s wrong, are you feeling unwell?”

The mother from the previous encounter was shaking her son a bit. He looked a bit out of it his eyes glossed over, his hands slumped forward. The boy didn’t react, his arms and legs flailing as if he was a ragdoll without any life in him. He was obviously still breathing and was warm to the touch but something was wrong.

“Why won’t you answer?”

The woman started shouting, this wasn’t the first child the others were all doing the same thing. It was as if something sucked out the very being out of them and left them just a shell of their former self. It didn’t look like anything was wrong with them on the outside, but the kids seemed vacant and unresponsive.

The woman had no idea what could be wrong with her children, they were just fine a moment ago but suddenly dropped to their knees. They weren’t responding to her, she wasn’t a doctor and her husband was still out working. The only thing the woman could do was to gather up her children and place them in bed.

This wasn’t the first or last case like this, soon the clinics in the jade city were getting filled up with unresponsive children and people. The doctors were baffled by the strange symptoms by they all came to one consensus, all of these people were missing parts of their soul. The longer they stayed in this state the worse it would get, the only cure was either to return the stolen soul fragment or using a soul treasure that would allow the soul to repair itself. Such treasures were far too rare, the only thing these people could do was to slowly watch as their loved ones drifted away.

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The time was up and the last trial was over. The participants that were still inside the testing area, were forcefully removed by the teleportation formation that was embedded into the trial area. Even though some of the young cultivators were able to last till the end, not all of them were left with the three tokens. Some of them somehow managed to scrape by while hiding from the stronger participants, hoping to nab a token in the end, but to no avail.

A group of youths was slowly appearing in the large auditorium like room. This was the same room through which they entered into the trial through the large teleportation gate. The number of people that were in this room was a lot smaller than previously. The people that were removed during the trial had already gone back to their hotel or clan members by this point.

The youths from the three clan alliance were there as well, with them all together they finished with about fifty members. This would be considered about half of the contestants in the final tournament. The rest was a hodgepodge of other clans and sects, the people that remained were either very lucky to evade the overbearing three clans, or somewhat capable.

Zhang Xue was standing, just looking around. After the big battle, the youths didn't really have many problems in the trial. They run into some of those puppets and traps while traveling, but it wasn't anything that they couldn't manage. She was walking along with her brother that was getting bothered by the short, tanned girl. This self-proclaimed 'big sister' was quite the oddball.

She looked to the sides trying to find her sibling but spotted her red-haired male friend. Huo Kong looked back at her as everyone was teleported into this area but into random locations. This man had proven to be a good ally to this Zhang Xue so she just smiled at him as he was looking in her direction. The man opened his eyes wider and the young girl could see his cheeks turning into a redder shade.

'For such a big lug, he sure is quite innocent...'

Zhang Xue thought to herself while trying not to laugh. She then spotted her white-haired brother that was inching away from something. This 'something' was a busty looking pink-haired girl, she was shouting something at him while the youth looked like he wasn't sure what to do.

'That girl is sure peculiar... but big brother should take care of that himself... I'll tease him about her later.'

She thought that this Feng Nuana was quite an interesting person. She didn't act as anything that Xue had ever seen, she was one of those eccentric people that she heard about. The small girl was a bundle of energy and apparently had it in for her big brother. She was the strongest member of the Feng Clan so the other girls didn't bother her older sibling. She also scared away any other girls that tried approaching him. Liu's younger sister could only look on from the side and giggle, even if her older brother gave her pleading looks she wouldn't help him out.

Xue moved her eyes to the side, she saw another peculiar thing. It was her senior brother Zhang Tai. He was covered in lipstick marks and his robes looked to be torn. Apparently he had spent the rest of his time in the trial ground running away from a gang of gyarus. The girls were relentless but he managed to safeguard his chastity. The number of girls was probably this large due to not being able to bother Zhang Liu that was occupied by the Feng Clan strongest junior member.

‘Senior brother sure is popular...’

Xue wasn’t really interested in him that much. She knew that the man was vying for her attention, but she wasn’t all that interested. There were a couple of reasons for this, mostly she didn’t like his double-sided nature. He was nice to her and all, but when it came to others he quickly transformed into a haughty young master type. He also didn’t have the body type that this little sister admired, being more on the toned lanky side.

‘Think I just need to wait for one of those Feng sisters to nab him, he looks to be very popular with them.’

Everyone that made it through the last trial rejoiced, they had made it till the end of the road only about a hundred participants remained now. The people responsible for the last test came out, one elder stepped out as he started talking.

“Any fighting past this point is forbidden, please head through this corridor if you have managed to acquire the three tokens.”

The man pointed at a door, if they went through it their tokens would be counted and their names would be recorded.

“If you didn’t please use the other passageway, also relinquish any tokens you might have on you. Sharing tokens among yourselves from this point forth, is forbidden. Anyone not adhering to this will be forcefully removed!”

If allies wanted to share tokens with each other the judges wouldn’t mind if it happened during the trial. For instance, if three people had one token each, they could hand them over to one person to pass the trial. This was also how some of the contestants made it through, either by making deals or threats which were still approved.

The tired group of youths nodded, the winners went to the corridor to get their names recorder and tokens counted. The losers returned theirs to the judges and left in shame. Everyone that made it through would have a number assigned to them, the tournament was an elimination one. This meant that by winning a fight you would move up in the brackets. This was a different method than what Zhang Dong used to test his fighters before moving on to the secret ground. He mostly did that as he thought that an elimination tournament would have a large luck component to itself.

“Zhang Liu... number 42... Zhang Clan... tokens check out... please take your number and move along.”

Liu was handed a number and moved along, from what he knew the actual pairings would be given on the day of the Dao Festival. Papers with the numbers would be put into a closed container with an opening on the top. Someone would then pull them out, making the pairings be random and also give the audience something to look forward to.

“Feng Nuana... number 43... Feng Clan...”

He snapped to his senses, the little girl was still sticking close to him and he wasn’t sure what to do with her. He didn’t have it in himself to get angry at her and whenever he tried hiding or running, she always managed to sniff him out. In the trial area, he always managed to bump into her whenever he tried to ditch her.

‘Think she is sticking to me so closely, so that I don’t try to run away... what is up with this girl...’

He was getting concerned, but he only needed to power through this tournament and then he could return back to his clan. The girl was from an allied clan but he didn’t think that she should be able to bother him at his home turf. The girl had violent tendencies but he didn’t think that she would do anything stupid. While he was thinking the girl in question wrapped her hands around his once again, the familiar feeling of something soft against his arm was felt again.

“Gah!”

“Mmm, what is it? No need being shy, I know you like when Big Sis does this, you always get red in the face!”

Feng Nuana proclaimed while tightening her grip on Zhang Liu’s arm. The young man went red in the face, while furiously denying this preposterous claim.

“W-who is shy? Who gets red in the face? Let me go this instant!”

He tried shaking her off but the more he moved the more he could see those peaks jiggle. He was still a young man and was quickly subdued by the cute girl’s advances. While this was happening he heard a cackle from the side, turning his head he saw a smirking Huo Kong.

“Well, isn’t the mighty Zhang Liu quite the ladies’ man. Think you and my father would get along.”

Huo Kong laughed, his rival looked troubled which instantly made him feel refreshed.

“Just don’t forget about the festival tomorrow you two love birds!”

Feng Nuana looked to be happy about being called that, Liu, on the other hand, was fuming from the side.

“Senior brother Huo, should you be saying such things, yourself?”

Huo Kong looked to the side while still smirking, only to catch Zhang Xue’s face dangerously close to his when he turned. He instantly backed away while stuttering, the white-haired girl just covered her face with a sleeve and snickered.

“Oh my, the mighty senior is so bashful~”

Kong’s face contorted while Liu laughed out from the side, soon everyone left towards the exit with all of their numbers assigned. Zhang Tai was the only one that quickly bolted into the distance, followed by some Feng sisters the girls were apparently still on him.

“Senior Brother Tai sure is popular...”

Liu said while rubbing his head, the shorty that was stuck to his arm was now getting pulled back by the old lady he met in that shop. He was finally free and could stretch out, his arm had quite the girl smell to it now. His sister moved over to him and inhaled, she then poked her own nose.

“Hm... cherries?”

Zhang Liu grimaced and backed off, his sister was looking at him funny and he knew that she wanted to tease him. The two and the rest of their clan members headed back to their hotel to rest. They had limited free time, they had to recover their used up spiritual energy and heal any injuries they had.

Nothing out of the ordinary happened, the elders escorted their juniors back to their quarters. The real festival would be starting soon and the possibility of getting attacked wasn't nil. There were also rumors about some people having their souls drained, there could be demonic cultivators in this city somewhere. So, they had to be more vigilant than ever.

At the headquarters of the Dark Palm outer sect building, an elder with a crooked nose was standing up straight. Opposite him there was a man with a gem in his forehead, it was glistening with an eerie light that was giving the crooked nosed elder the creeps.

"Young lord Kai, the festival will be starting in two days, your disciple already had his number assigned and everything has been prepared for his arrival."

This was the governor as well as the man in the highest position from this Dark Palm outer sect. He was still trying to make a good impression on the young lord, but the man that was standing a bit further back was even more important. Even though Yang Kai had a high position, he was still only a core formation cultivator. The man that was standing in the back was the actual VVIP, even though the man with the gem had a strong backing, the elder behind him was an actual Nascent Soul powerhouse.

"Elder Ming, the auction house is still gathering the items for auction, it will open up in three days..."

The man was worried as he couldn't hasten the auction. That establishment had a strong backing and took a neutral stance. Thanks to this the quality of the items that were put up for sale was quite high. Masters even at the nascent soul could procure worthwhile items for themselves, but this was quite rare.

Even though the Dark Palm sect had a zero-tolerance policy for letting others have heaven grade treasures, it had to allow some powers to sell them. This auction house was a large chain store and was owned by a rather strong clan with their own nascent soul monsters. Even the Dark Palm sect couldn't strongman them around. Still, the auction house was only interested in profit. They didn't care what happened to the item after they sold it. If the Dark Palm sect wanted to chase the buyer down afterward it was up to them. Thus it was rare for people without a backing to go for items of that quality. If you tried it, you'd find yourself on this sect's hit list rather quickly.

"Is that so..."

The man just nodded while leaving the area, the atmosphere got lighter when he left even the man with the gem gave out a sigh of relief.

'Elder Ming is always so calm on the outside... hope everything goes well at the auction'

Yang Kai looked at the elder member from his sect leaving, a glint in his eye.

'Well, if not... then I bet there will be an interesting spectacle to watch...'

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The door shut behind the Nascent Soul elder. The man with the crooked nose didn't give away his emotions but he was glad that that man left. He noticed that the young lord Kai gave out a visible sigh,

making him think that he was feeling the same way as he did. This man was someone that liked to gossip and gather information on various things, so he spoke up and tried to probe this young lord a bit.

"Elder Ming is such a composed man, isn't he? Heard that among the grand peak elders he is one of the more virtuous!"

He smiled while looking at Yang Kai that looked to be taken aback by what this crooked nosed man just said.

"Composed? Hah, that's a nice joke there. Elder Ming makes my old man look like a docile little puppy in comparison."

The cultivator looked to be amused, the man that asked the question was bewildered by the answer. The elder that just left was quite stoic, he never talked much or complained either. But apparently he was a lot more ferocious than even Yang Kai's father, just the mention of that person made this outer sect elder shiver in his boots.

"Young Master must be joking, how could Elder Ming be that fierce?"

Yang Kai's eyes twinkled a bit and a smirk appeared on his face. He leaned back in his seat and got more comfortable. He would tell this ignorant outer sect elder what was really going on.

"Well, you might not know it as you're not part of the inner sect... but let me tell you something... never go against Elder Ming in any way... don't even meet his eyes if you aren't willing to lose your life!"

The outer sect elder was taken aback as he gasped. Was this elder Ming so vicious that he would give you a good thrashing for looking at him the wrong way?

"What, you think that I'm lying?"

The man moved his hands in front of his face and waved them around in protest while replying to that question.

"My young lord, how could I presume such a thing!"

Yang Kai just smirked while taking a swig from some spirit alcohol that one of his bodyguards handed him.

"I don't blame you, If I didn't see it with my own eyes I would probably have a hard time believing some of the stories concerning him..."

The young lord started relaxing and drinking, he got a lot more chatty as well. He started recounting some of Elder Ming's misdeeds and they were quite ghastly. The man even wiped a whole middle-sized clan from the face of the planet, just for a trivial-sounding offense. From the stories, the outer sect elder found out that the man was awfully pedantic. Everything had to go by the book, so if someone of lower status offended him in any way he wouldn't just let it slide. Either they apologized right away in the appropriate fashion or they were in for a bad time.

"You'd better tell your people to keep things nice and tidy around Elder Ming, or he might blame you if someone offends him."

The crooked nosed elder shivered and started sweating profoundly. He soon excused himself from the room that they were talking about and alerted his most trusted aides. He heard some tales about this nascent soul monster, but he thought they were highly exaggerated. But apparently most of those grim stories were the truth, he needed to put more people on the job and keep anyone that might cause trouble away from this overbearing elder.

‘What if he blames me if someone steps on his foot? Then decides to chop my head off along with the rest of my bloodline...’

The man went pale and headed out, he wouldn’t be sleeping much for the duration of this auction. He had to make sure that no one offended this merciless sect elder.

At the break of dawn in Jade Grass City, you could hear people shuffling around. Everyone was putting up various stands with all sorts of items. Food, trinkets, and even low-level magical treasures could be seen everywhere. This was the true beginning of the Dao Festival, the residents were ready to earn some cold hard cash. Milking the tourists was one of the main reasons that this event was set up. The clans would have a stick measuring competition and the residents along with the Dark Palm sect would profit.

The tournament would start before noon and depending on how long the participants fought, it could take more than one day to finish. Everyone knew the rules before going inside the ring. There would be a main judge at the side of the ring that was of core formation strength.

His or her job would be to determine if the opponent couldn’t participate and to point out the winner. There were no life-saving formations that would prevent death, only a shield that blocked any outcoming attacks going into the audience’s stance. The judge was required to jump in if the fight got too spicy.

The juniors that were participating were considered the best of the best at this point, so no one wanted their future leaders to get hurt. Still, accidents did happen, anyone could lose their life in a nerve-racking bout like this. The youngsters mostly weren’t that good at holding back and if you tried, you might be the one to die instead.

The place that the tournament took place looked similar to an old Roman colosseum. It was just much, much larger than the old earthen structure. The center stage was the size of a soccer field and it was circular in shape. There was a body of water separating the battle stage and the audience area.

There were a couple of two-meter wide bridges leading to the stage through which the contestants were guided into it. The audience stands were layered and could fit thousands of people. The more elite members like from the Dark Palm sect had their own VIP area that had the best spot to overlook the battles.

The participants would face each other on that large stage, due to the size of it they had enough space to maneuver and use their foundation establishment techniques to their heart’s content. Even though the distance from the battle stage was far, the eyes of cultivators above a certain level allowed most people to see just fine.

“Is everything ready?”

Zhang Jin asked while standing opposite another older looking fellow from his clan.

“Yes, Grand Elder. Thanks to the Huo Clan’s young master’s help you will be able to enjoy the VIP seats. The young Matriarch from the Feng Clan will be joining us as well.”

The man proclaimed as the triform alliance had managed to pull some strings. They had to pay quite the hefty price in spirit stones but they had one of the better seats in the arena.

“Good, We’ll be able to see the youngsters taking all the glory in style.”

Zhang Jin smirked, knowing well that his junior members were the top batch in this tournament. He was still a bit worried about kicking up too much of a fuss, but some good advertisements would also be very profitable.

“What about the other thing?”

The old man asked while walking forward, ready to head out to the festival ground.

“Ah yes, various clans and sects from the area wanted to have a word with you. They probably want to garner some favor with us after their members lost to our junior members in the trials.”

Zhang Jin nodded, he agreed thinking that it was probably the main motive.

“Yes... but be careful, some of them might have some ulterior motives. Be sure to check their background, be careful who you invite.”

There was still a possibility of some snakes trying to slip their way into their graces along the way. Even though the junior members were doing great, that didn’t mean that their elders were powerful. The other clans could try prodding them to see if they have enough power to defend themselves. The Patriarch wasn’t here to show off his strength so Zhang Jin would have to cover for him if something happened.

“They should know that we are allied with two prominent clans, so I don’t think they will cause trouble. But stay vigilant and report to me immediately if something happens.”

Zhang Jin didn’t really worry about the lower sects and clans. He was powerful enough to defend himself now and had a couple tricks up his sleeve. The problem would be if the Dark Palm sect got involved. But he was an old cultivator. He was confident enough in being able to maneuver in this sea of schemes and politics. This was the reason he didn’t want his grandson Zhang Dong around, he knew that the Zhang Patriarch wasn’t so good with people of a higher status than him.

“Don’t forget to stay in contact with the main house though, you never know...”

He didn’t want Zhang Dong to come here, but he knew that if something went down that the Patriarch was the only one powerful enough to do something about it. He already knew that the boy was edging towards the nascent soul level. He almost passed out when he showed him the full extent of his power, that finger attack that he demonstrated was something that he wouldn’t forget till he died.

There weren’t many opportunities to meet Nascent Soul cultivators. So Zhang Jin wasn’t sure how his grandson compared to an established master at that realm. Zhang Dong told him that he should be able to last a couple of minutes against someone at the early stage. This was already a shocking discovery,

how could someone in the core formation stage and slightly above the age of thirty accomplish something like that?

In Zhang Jin's opinion, Zhang Dong was quite the monster himself. Who in the world heard of a person below the age of hundred with such power? He didn't know that it would be wise to reveal him to the world just yet, so he would have to consider his options before calling his grandson for any help.

The old man sighed out while looking up into the sky. The day was nice and warm, the sky was a nice shade of blue and there were almost no clouds around. This tournament would be over within a couple of days. He really didn't want to consider choosing between his young clan juniors and his grandson. But in reality, there would mostly be one right move he could take and he didn't like the thought of that.

In front of the large colosseum looking structure were many vibrant festival stands. People were shouting and trying to get people's attention to sell their wares. The youths from the three clans were heading through the street altogether. After the last trial, they had gotten closer to each other even though only slightly.

Zhang Xue was covering her face with a veil that only let people see her charming eyes. This didn't stop anyone from staring though as they could tell from the way she conducted herself that she was a beauty. She was walking next to some of her clan sisters, not many remained after the three trials.

Huo Kong had his own entourage but he was sneaking glances at the junior sister that he met in the trial. For some reason, he had suddenly seen the light and wasn't thinking about vengeance against this Zhang Clan. His reasoning being, that no clan with such a gentle beauty could actually be evil. The things that his father said must have been true in the end.

Zhang Liu was stuck with Feng Nuana, he had a concerned look on his face. His arm was already a designated boobrest for the short girl, this making the young man have mixed feelings. He also wanted to know who taught this fiendish arm lock technique to this small girl, was she a demonic cultivator in disguise? Only someone like that could have came up with a ghastly technique like this!

Zhang Tai was surrounded from all sides by the Feng gang. The tanned girls were giving any other women that glanced at their 'target' the stink eye, successfully keeping any other potential contenders at bay.

Soon everyone arrived, the Dao Festival would be officially beginning!

Chapter 147

People poured in like water and quickly filled up the seats. This world didn't have much entertainment with the lack of the internet or TV. So things like fighting tournaments were all the rage. It was very popular among men that were attracted to the contest between two warriors. It was less popular with the women, but they did enjoy seeing the good looking young men participating.

The contestants were led to a side hall while the people in charge were preparing the drawing. The numbers would be announced out loud and a person would write the names of the fighters on a large board. The fighters in question wouldn't be there for the process as they were ordered to wait. If their turn came they would be guided to another room to wait for their turn. This was a long process so most of the people weren't really paying attention.

At the time of the drawing, Zhang Jin was sitting in the VIP booth that he and some of the other elders occupied. He could see Huo Qiang along with his most trusted retainer and bodyguard Huo Qiao, his beard looking pristine as always. The two were sitting together while looking at the stage wondering when Qiang's son's number would be pulled.

On the other side was the Feng Clan elders, Feng Liena and Feng Maling were there together paying attention to the number 43 that belonged to their family members. There were some less important elder members from all the three clans sitting in the back and chatting as well.

"That little rascal has taken a liking to the Zhang boy, even though we told her to not follow the old teachings anymore..."

The old lady shook her head a couple of times before looking to the young Matriarch. The tanned lady was wearing a jade green robe that went well with the green motive of her clan and this city. This was a more modest robe than what she normally wore, and there was a reason for that.

After the explanation Zhang Dong gave her, she started pondering her life choices. One of them was wearing revealing clothes that showed off her peaks, that the old scriptures showed as being the proper attire for their clan members. She didn't abandon the old teachings altogether, picking and choosing as the man said that there were some truths in there. She just needed to find the real ones herself.

The tanned appearance of the Feng clan had nothing to do with makeup or tanning though, it was a side effect of their body refining technique. This was also why Feng Liena's complexion was a lot lighter than the skin tone of the other Feng clan ladies. Her technique was of a higher quality and she didn't suffer such a big side-effect as the others. The same could be said for her younger sister who was using the improved version as well.

"Don't see anything wrong with that... that Zhang Junior seems to be quite the virtuous fellow..."

Feng Liena proclaimed while fanning herself a bit with one of her fans that she received from Zhang Dong as a present.

"Oh? Did you look into him already... or is it because he is the Disciple of that man?"

Feng Maling sniggered while looking at her Matriarch whose face twitched.

"If your little sister gets closer to his disciple you'll probably see him a lot more as a result, which wouldn't be bad... But wouldn't it be better to just send that marriage request?"

The old lady probed as she already had attempted to send one of those requests but was stopped by the Matriarch each time. If they followed the old teachings the Matriarch would aggressively go after her 'love target'.

"I... "

Feng Liena moved her face down and blushed slightly. After deliberating about the old texts and that they weren't all that cracked up to be, she just felt slightly silly about the things that she did back in the secret ground. She also felt like the man in question should do some pushing of his own accord, but besides a couple of techniques and items that Zhang Dong had gifted her, she didn't see him all that much.

She was well aware of the way cultivators lived. They spent most of their days cultivating and trying to get stronger either to better themselves or help out their family. She was also scared of getting rejected by the man she was interested in. Thus she was left with waiting it out, but this approach was proving its ineffectiveness.

“Well how about after the festival finishes we head to Spirit Spring City together young lady Feng?”

Zhang Jin butted into the conversation that the two women were having. He was quite proficient in things like this and also felt that it was high time for his grandson to have some kids himself.

“I’m sure the Patriarch will gladly accommodate the whole Feng Clan and the Matriarch, just leave everything to this old man!”

He smiled at the two women, Feng Maling raised her brow a bit but then nodded as this wasn’t such a bad idea.

“So it’s decided then, we will stop at the Zhang Clan for a week after the tournament is over.”

The two elders were agreeing with each other, the young Matriarch in question just sat there quietly while deliberating some more.

“W-well... I don’t see a problem with that...”

She covered her face with her fan and smiled slightly, thinking that checking out the Zhang Clan’s city wasn’t such a bad idea. Though while she was smiling to herself thinking about the robes that she should wear while meeting with the Zhang Patriarch, someone from the side butted in.

“Oh? What are you talking about? Are you heading over to Senior Brother after this? That’s a great idea, I’ll be able to have a glorious battle with him!”

Huo Qiang slipped into the conversation, which made his retainer grimace from the side while turning his head away in shame. Maling and Liena just glared at him, Zhang Jin just nodded while chuckling.

“Hah, sure thing lord Qiang, just don’t destroy our little clan during that ‘glorious battle’ “

He laughed out loud while moving his attention back to the tournament. The contestant numbers were still being drawn, the process was going slowly. The names of most of the members from his clan weren’t yet drawn. He didn’t know why but he was getting a bad feeling, like something could go wrong at a moment’s notice.

‘Must be my imagination... this is a sanctioned and well-protected place... the boy shouldn’t have any problems of coming up on top in this tournament. Just hope he doesn’t give away too much on the way there though. Xue will be wearing a veil so it should be fine.’

The old man leaned back, hoping that his bad premonition was just him being overprotective in his older years. While the triform alliance members were talking and bickering with each other, someone was looking at them. Right opposite them was another closed-off booth for very important members, it was a lot more exquisite than theirs though. This was the room that Yang Kai was occupying, there was a special tinted glass blocking anyone from viewing inside of it.

‘There you are...’

The man thought to himself, he was alone in this luxury room just sipping on some spirit wine while enjoying the view. His eyes were in the direction of the two Feng clan members that were talking with each other about something.

‘Should I just go there... no, it’s too soon. I’ll let my disciple play with some of those brats first...or should we make it more interesting...’

The man leaned back in his high-quality chair his gaze plastered to someone in that other VIP booth. His face showing a grin as he thought about something interesting.

‘Hm, who would she be inclined to help the most...’

The man had a list of participants of the Dao Festival tournament with him. He glanced at the ones coming from a certain wing clan, his eyes stopped at one name in particular.

“Feng Nuana... this one is from her family... perfect...”

He quickly called a Dark Palm sect retainer and sent him out with a plan. He just leaned back and relaxed waiting for the show to start, the tournament would probably not be done correctly due to his interference but he didn’t care. Who could go against this young master?

‘Elder Ming won’t mind, this place belongs to the Dark Palm sect. I can do whatever I want, he just cares about the things in the auction house.’

The papers were getting pulled and the names on the large blackboard were getting filled out. Suddenly a person run-up to one of the members that were scribbling the names on the board. The worker looked at the messenger and quickly nodded. He looked up at the names that were already there as if looking for someone. After a moment he found the name he was looking for, it was already there but there was no one written in yet as an opponent. This was quickly changed as he wrote one peculiar name into that bracket.

In the main resting area where all the participants were standing about nothing, in particular, was happening. Most of the people were keeping to themselves while sitting in a lotus position. Everyone was circulating their Qi through their body to relax and put themselves in the best possible condition. Even Zhang Tai was left alone by the gang of tanned girls as he convinced them that he might suffer in the coming bouts if he doesn’t get some space and time to relax.

After some time passed, the first two contestants were pulled to the sides, they moved to the two waiting rooms. They were ordered to wait there and go out after the door opened up.

Zhang Liu and the rest finally heard people cheering from afar, the first bout was on its way. It took about ten minutes for it to end, one of the contestants was carried off on a stretcher to another room while a cultivator that they weren’t familiar with sat back in the waiting room. He looked a bit beaten up but still had a smile on his face, he managed to win it in front of so many people and was proud.

‘I wonder when my turn will be...’

Liu wondered if he should take a peek at the fights before his name got called. They were ordered to wait here, but they still were a couple of large windows that allowed them to see and hear what was

happening. Not like they were trapped in here and if they were someone that won a match they could just go out before the next round altogether.

Luckily he was one of the people that got called out sooner than later. He quickly moved to the inner waiting room and soon heard his name getting called out. After walking through the large doors he heard a massive amount of cheers and could see a large number of people just shouting.

“Coming from the East gate we have Zhang Liu from the Zhang clan! Give him a round of applause for our young warrior!”

Liu blinked as the voice sounded quite familiar, this was true as the announcer was the exact same man that was doing the commenting during his bout against Huo Kong. His opponent was already out and standing, luckily it wasn't someone from his clan or from the two other allied clans. His opponent looked to be a youth with short brown hair, just a regular looking young cultivator.

Zhang Liu could tell that his opponent wasn't up to par and it didn't take him long to deliver a strong blow to his opponent's abdomen. The adversary quickly passed out while spitting out his lunch, the audience gasped as it was a one-hit KO.

‘Did I go too hard?’

He shrugged while leaving, the people cheered while the announcer praised his strength.

‘I can leave now till the next round starts, no use waiting here..and Nuana is still in the waiting room...’

Zhang Liu used this chance to slip away while Feng Nuana was stuck in the waiting room. He joined some other people that won their fights. The people gave him odd looks as they were shocked due to the man's one-hit win. Time passed and more and more bouts happened, Liu saw people ripping up some small papers constantly. Those were the betting slips that didn't pan out for the gamblers, the ground was littered with them and it was only going to get worse.

‘Should I got bet on myself...’

While thinking to himself he heard a familiar name getting called out.

“Fellow Daoists, from the East gate we have the lovely Feng Nuana!”

He craned his neck back to the stage, the shorty was going to fight with someone. Her opponent wasn't out yet, and people were drooling at the stacked girl that walked out onto the stage.

‘She shouldn't have problems with the regular juniors from any clan... don't think that anyone besides Tai or that red-head can beat her.’

He waited for the announcer to give the name of the opponent while looking at the stage. Liu's arms were crossed over one another as he waited.

“From the west gate... the glorious, the gallant, the magnanimous and the brilliant young master Deng Cai. He has graced us with his presence and is a warrior from the inner Dark Palm Sect, please give him a round of applause! “

Zhang Liu's raised a brow slightly as that introduction was slightly overdone. He didn't know who this opponent was, but apparently the announcer had a favorable opinion of him.

Chapter 148

The people in the audience went quiet instantly after the name of the next participant was announced. The uncomfortable silence got then replaced by faint whispering.

"Wait... d-did he say, inner Dark Palm sect?... what is a person like that doing here..."

One person asked.

"Why would someone of that status be here... are they here to cause trouble?"

Another person asked.

"How should I know, this was supposed to be an event for the clans and not for the main sect..."

"This looks fishy... probably something big is going to happen!"

People continued speculating while Deng Cai slowly went over the bridge, the shield flickering on as he entered the stage. He had a faint smirk on his face, hands behind his back while not paying attention to what these commoners were whispering about. He looked at the opponent that he was facing, it was one of the two girls that he was slightly interested in.

'So it's that one...so Master wants me to play around with her?...'

Deng Cai sighed inwardly, his plans were slightly different. He wanted to show off during the tournament against the so-called 'best' of the warriors that those clans had to offer. He would let the fair ladies see how awesome and strong he is, garnering their affection in response.

But now things were different, his master had ordered him to 'play' with this busty yet short girl. He knew Yang Kai's character and what this actually meant in reality.

'Hope I don't break her too much... oh well there still is the second one, and she is more my type than this one.'

The young man looked to the audience, there were a lot of gazes on him. He was someone that liked to appear magnanimous on the outside even though he was quite rotten on the inside in reality. But if his master ordered him to be violent he would follow the order with decisiveness.

The two combatants were now facing each other, the mood was tense as the people that were watching didn't know who to cheer for. They kind of had to go with the young Dark Palm sect master, otherwise, they feared that the sect would think they weren't respecting them enough or giving them enough face.

The young lord smiled at the short lady opposite him, he was quite the handsome young man even the girls in the audience had their hearts skip a beat after getting a load of that hunk.

"What a beautiful fairy I have as an opponent, but don't you worry this lord Cai is quite benevolent when fighting against such beautiful opponents!"

He gave her a slight coquettish grin while still standing with his hands behind his back. Feng Nuana's eyebrows twitched as she had her hands out in a more traditional battle position. She as well as her big sister was someone that used combat fans as a weapon. This tournament allowed the use of personal weapons, the only thing that was forbidden was having spatial rings or pills that boosted your battle strength.

She was kind of mad as she noticed that her opponent wasn't taking her seriously at all. Which made the small girl fume in anger, which was shown in the form of a giant pout on her face. The girl moved her hand out and pointed at the yang man she was going to fight, rage in her eyes.

"Who are you calling a beautiful fairy you idiot, you think this big sis would go for shallow compliments like that, huh?"

She gave the man a malicious glare, her battle fans getting moved in front of her face as she got ready for a fight. She didn't know why, but this guy was pissing her off. He was way too smug and if she remembered correctly, smug and overconfident males weren't good partners. You were supposed to go for the awkward boys, the more troubled they looked the better match they would be.

Deng Cai was taken aback, he was giving the girl his best young master smile and he even blew his bangs upwards for an enchanting effect while talking. How could this woman not be affected by his charms, there must be something wrong with her. Was what this man was thinking to himself.

"No need to be shy lovely fairy, how about we play a little game?"

The man proposed still standing there with his hands behind his back while the people in the audience continued whispering among each other.

"I'll give you five minutes, if you manage to strike me even once, I'll admit defeat."

The man stuck his chest out while posing proudly and swished his sleeve to add to the effect, thinking that this made him look really gallant and charming.

"Huh? Stop spouting nonsense you dandy bastard!"

The small girl fumed with anger as her face got red. She really didn't like how this guy was running his mouth, making it seem like she wasn't even worth his time. She was still part of the young master template, so this was quite the hit to her face. She was oblivious to the Dark Palm Sect behind this man and didn't really worry about things like that.

Feng Nuana gripped her two battle fans tightly and swung them forward. Her mortal grade weapon shone with a green light and produced a blade of wind in the shape of a scythe. The ranged attack flew with astonishing speed at Deng Cai that was still standing there without a care in the world.

"Die you bastard!"

The short girl had quite the potty mouth and continued shouting at the man while producing more razor shape wind blade attacks. The young master with the gem on the forehead on the other hand just dodged. He made it look easy as he dodged the wind scythes, each one of them missed and sliced into the rocky ground leaving deep scratches on it.

"My, my... you're quite the interesting girl... but this is child's-play for this young lord!"

The man continued bouncing side to side while using some strange movement technique that Feng Nuana couldn't get a read on. The girl just as the rest of her clan members was a ranged specialist. She continued pelting her opponent with wind blades, the sheer amount of them was astonishing. The number would leave a normal opponent bleeding and defeated by this point. This man, on the other hand, looked to be enjoying himself as he just soared through the battle stage.

The crowd gasped, they weren't expecting such a one-sided battle. The girl was ranked in the top ten of the current young generation that was taking part in this tournament. But compared to this man she was like a tame little kitten, he wasn't even retaliating, just dodging everything with ease.

Up in the VIP booth where the members of the triform alliance were sitting, the elders were sweating bullets. They didn't know where this dark palm sect disciple came from, but everyone here knew well who he was.

"What is the disciple of that bastard doing here..."

Feng Liena moved forward and stared at the center stage. Her younger sister was assaulting her opponent with various techniques, but they didn't look to be effective at all. The granny next to her rubbed her chin and also chimed in.

"Could it be a coincidence..."

"I don't think so, this youth wasn't there during the trials. His name wasn't called out during the draws either."

Zhang Jin replied while also standing up from his seat. He didn't like this one bit, this situation was strange. He didn't know what this was about, but it was probably something relating to the Feng clan. The disciple of that Yang Kai was probably moved to fight this young Matriarch's sister for a reason, but what could that be?

"Do you have any ideas about the purpose of this? Did you offend this disciple or his master in any way?"

Feng Liena moved her face to the side and went a bit pale. She remembered one person from the Dark Palm Sect, she didn't give him much face and stormed out the moment he made a marriage proposal out of nowhere.

"The Matriarch did refuse him, I was there with her that time."

Feng Maling replied while following the rest to the edge of the VIP booth as everyone was trying to look at the fight.

"Think this might have been the reason we were sent to that blasted secret ground two years ago. Though we haven't heard anything from him since then..."

The old lady vaguely remembered the Dark Palm young master, he had a strange look in his face. She was the one to apologize after the whole predicament happened for her Matriarch. The man had a weird smile that gave her the chills that time though.

"Maybe you should tell the young one to give up, that young man is clearly just toying with her at this point..."

The old man spoke up while rubbing his chin. He started measuring the young man's strength and was quite surprised that such a young lad existed. He was clearly in the late stage of foundation establishment, even edging on the great circle realm.

'Is this boy really below the age of twenty-one?'

Zhang Liu and Xue were already progressing fast, but even those two might not be at that realm in just a couple of years. Was this youth lying about his age? Even if his age was a lie, he was from the inner sect. The same sect that owned this whole town, they would probably not care or be too afraid to punish him for it.

"Tell her to give up?"

The busty Matriarch looked to the granny next to her, the older woman grimaced and then shrugged.

"I think it would be easier to find a phoenix feather than to convince that sister of mine to surrender..."

Feng Liena was getting worried, it would be great if the battle just ended. Her silly sister didn't look as if she had any chance of winning. At least not if she used the regular Feng Clan techniques that were widespread. But would her pride allow her to go down without a fight?

"Oh, that's a nice breeze my little cute fairy."

Deng Cai chuckled to himself while doing a somersault backward and landing on his two feet. The audience bursting out in cheers at the nice performance.

'Master didn't really give me any specific instructions, so I'll just embarrass her this way... best to not damage her before I have my fun.'

He licked his lips, which gave his opponent the shivers. Feng Nuana narrowed her eyes and stopped showering the man with the wind scythes. She moved her hand backward, her legs bent while she leaned forward. She looked now like someone that was intending to throw a discus from ancient Greece.

The man noticed that she was gathering some spiritual energy into the fan she was holding and just whistled. He was just going to dodge and then deliver a small attack of his own as the five minutes were almost up.

Nuana gritted her teeth and she felt a drastic decrease in her spiritual energy. The moment she 'threw' her fan forward without releasing it you could see a phantom of an emerald hawk behind her. Deng Cai felt like something was off as the greenish looking ranged attack flew forward him. The bolt of energy transformed into a hawk-like bird that charged towards the young man, the speed of this attack was several times faster than of the wind scythes.

Cai's eyes bulged as he dodged to the side, evading the speeding bird just in the nick of time. This was far from over as the green hawk flew upwards and quickly changed its trajectory. It was chasing after its enemy and gaining more speed with each passing moment.

'This one is a bit tricky...'

The man thought while constantly dodging the energy bird, the attack radiating a strong Dao of the winds. But enough was enough, it was apparent that he couldn't evade this thing forever. He moved both his palms forward and chanted something. People could see a faint phantom of a giant mountain behind him.

A giant slab of rock appeared in front of Deng Cai just a few moments afterward. It looked like some kind of mystical wall with some strange runes and patterns etched into it. The green spirit bird collided with the slab of spirit rock producing quite the loud booming sound. After the smoke cleared people saw some cracks on the defensive technique but it was still there, they couldn't say the same thing for the energy animal that was now gone.

"Nice try little fairy but..."

The man couldn't finish his sentence as he felt something off. While he was defending himself he had lost sight of his opponent, this was something that Feng Nuana was counting on. The small girl was already following her previous attack with a close-range one, her battle fan moving towards her opponent.

"Go to hell you bastard!"

"Why you little!"

The man kicked the ground making it quake from the sheer amount of power. He was slightly late on the uptake as the battle fan that was covered by a layer of green spiritual energy sliced right next to his face. The two finally jumped back after the exchange, the small girl clicking her tongue as she didn't manage to get a clean hit on her opponent.

Deng Cai, on the other hand, was seeing red, as the spot between his eyebrow and nose got sliced and he was bleeding. He moved his finger to the wound, it was a shallow cut but he could feel a stinging sensation. His hand shivered and his eyes trembled as he looked at the blood that was now on his fingers. He looked away from the blood and to the person that managed to injure him, his face going red with anger.

"You dare? You fucking bitch!"

Chapter 149

The red liquid dribbled to the ground, there wasn't much of it but this was enough to make this Deng Cai break out into a fit of rage.

"M-my face...m-my beautiful face...this is inexcusable..."

Feng Nuana was still ready to go, she was dejected that the hit didn't go fully through but she still managed to land a hit. She didn't know what that guy was mumbling about, but someone that lost their cool during a fight was mostly an easier opponent.

"Stop whining you dweeb, this is only the start!"

She proclaimed while charging forward, the momentum was on her side and she would use this chance to tip the scales in her favor. Her opponent was still stunned from the bloody gash that was on his face

and looked to be enraged. Making someone lose their cool during combat was one way to win and Feng Nuana wanted to use this opportunity.

She wasn't that bad at close quarters combat as some people thought. Her clan was known for their long-range repertoire, but that didn't mean that they were defenseless at close range. The girl already managed to get one shot in from a close attack, so she would try for another one.

The energy from the tips of her fans expanded upwards, turning them into a dangerous slicing weapon. Before her opponent could turn to counter he saw a green light right next to his eyes.

"You dare?"

He managed to evade the small girl's next attack, his long hair bouncing into the attack as it got severed in the process. The man cursed out, his seemingly weak opponent was now giving him a hard time. His feet started shuffling and a brown aura started surrounding his frame. The man's elemental Dao was closer to earth as he was using the Dao of the mountains.

Feng Nuana was ferocious with her attacks but soon enough Deng Cai regained his composure. She managed to slice up his hair and parts of his robe, but the youth surrounded himself with a layer of rock that was indistinguishable from his own skin. Even if she delivered a hit to his body, she could only see cracks instead of blood, as if she struck a massive boulder without managing to crack it.

The man was clearly above her in cultivation and skill. She used her movement technique to quickly jump back, it making her look like she was gliding on the winds.

"I have no idea what a dweeb is, but you will regret what you did!"

The man dusted himself off, the cracks on his rocky skin vanished as if he was regenerating.

'Thump!'

Deng Cai stepped forward, the ground cracked underneath his foot and you could see spiderweb-like cracks forming on the floor. Feng Nuana moved into a defensive position and moved backward as she knew that he was coming. The young man blasted forward, every step he took a cracked ground with a footprint was left. The more steps that he took, the deeper the holes in the ground were and the faster he was moving.

This was also a type of movement technique, but instead of evasion, it was used for offense. The practitioner would build-up spiritual force with each step they took, while building up momentum that allowed them to move faster. The longer they used this movement technique they faster they would become and the more damage they would deliver to their target if they managed to strike.

At the time Feng Nuana was skipping backward while using her soaring wing step technique. This technique allowed her to just skip along the ground, each little step propelling her far away from her adversary. This was a graceful technique that conserved a lot of energy while allowing her to dodge with minimal movement.

The audience gasped and cheered. They were now seeing a game of cat and mouse. The young lady was jumping back and to the sides evading the man rushing at her with all his might. He was like a locomotive, that couldn't be stopped. Any spiritual techniques that the girl tried throwing at him just

bounced off without doing any damage. The man was clearly proficient at defense, but his speed wasn't anything to scoff at as he was slowly gaining on the poor girl.

Zhang Liu was also looking at from the side, he could see that the annoying girl was in trouble.

'If she can't deliver any damage then she is done for...'

He looked at her opponent, the young man's eyes were glowing red and the gem on his forehead was also looking eerie. Due to the nature of his movement technique, he was gaining speed fast. Soon enough he was upon her, his hand moving out to strike.

'Peng'

Feng Nuana moved both her fans in front of her chest to defend herself. The palm strike that was thrown by her opponent, struck right at her weapons. The mortal grade weapons cracked a bit while she herself got thrown to the side by the pressure of the hit. This wasn't over though, as before she had the time to recover another strike in the form of a kick was thrown her way.

"Ack!"

She defended herself yet again with her battle fans, but the one closes to the foot just fractured and its pieces flew everywhere. She was even infusing them with her spiritual energy but that didn't do anything to lessen the blow. Her arm felt numb but she wasn't defeated yet, her second fan was still there and could be used for a counter-attack.

Feng Nuana gave it a shot, while her opponent was in a blind rage she spun her whole body around. She was using the momentum that she gained from her enemies kick while making her body spin to receive less damage. It looked flashy and now her remaining fan was getting swung right at Deng Cai's face.

The girl's green wind energy collided against the young man's brownish earth energy kicking up a storm. The people stood up from her seats, their eyes glued to the large tournament stage.

"Was that all?"

Feng Nuana gulped as her enemy just grasped her wrist before she could fully swing down with her battle fan. The energy from her attack got lowered and didn't manage to go through the dark palm sect members' defenses. She was now stuck, she couldn't move her arm so she tried delivering a kick to the opponent's face while she was still slightly above the ground.

"Hmph!"

"Ack..."

Before her kick could go through she felt a sharp pain in her abdomen. Her mouth opened wide and she gasped out in pain, the hit propelling her back. She didn't fly much though as the man was still grasping her slim wrist and wasn't intending to let go any time soon.

"You're not going anywhere, you harlot!"

The short girl didn't have time to even reply as she felt a sharp pain on her face, her cheek in particular. A metallic taste filled her mouth after the slap, her eyes going wide as she protested. She wanted to

retaliate, her legs and hands squirming around but to no avail as the man's defenses proved themselves too tough to break.

"Not so chatty now, are you?"

The sounds of slapping resound around the stage. The people in the large colosseum structure could only gulp as they saw the overbearing young master hit the poor young girl's face over and over again. The person with the biggest shock was Feng Liena, her hands were grasping the balustrade. It was made from hard steel, but even it was bending in odd ways as this woman mangled it in fury.

"How dare he...to my little sister..."

The people to her side looked to the one-sided battle, then back to the woman that was watching the whole thing in fury. They knew well what she felt, but this youth had a large backing behind him and this was a sanctioned battle. It wouldn't look good on their part if they got involved. The other danger was offending the man that was standing behind this disciple, his master who was someone with powerful connections.

"Lady Liena please calm down, things like this happen. The boy was just stronger than her, he might be overdoing it slightly... but if he doesn't target her life than its not our place to intervene..."

Zhang Jin said while moving closer to the woman that was close to jumping down from the VIP booth. She was even getting held back by her grandma that was sweating bullets and not sure herself, of what to do.

"Y-yes listen to the elder from the Zhang Clan... wounds and pride can be healed, but we can not offend the Dark Palm sect!"

Feng Liena was still mad, but the threat of the Dark Palm Sect that was looming over her head was a good enough deterrent to make her stop. There was also another option that they could go with, that was milder even though they would take a hit to their face. While the Feng Matriarch was contemplating her choices, her little sister was tossed to the side.

"Ugh..."

Her face was all red from all the slaps she received, it was even swollen. Her battle spirit wasn't broken just yet though, her eyes were still staring daggers at the haughty young master.

"Oh, still defiant?"

Deng Cai said while smirking, he moved two of his fingers up to his face. The previous gash that was there was covered up by his rock armor now so it couldn't be seen, but he still could feel the wound throbbing.

"You think this is over... you damaged my face... so I'll do the same to you!"

He moved closer while outstretching his hand, his palm visible as something formed on it. It was a small rock that quickly expanded and got thinner, soon it changed into an impromptu dagger with a razor-sharp edge.

"After I'm through with you, your own mother won't recognize you!"

The man got nearer while Feng Nuana tried standing up to defend herself. Her legs were shaky though, the slaps weren't just regular hits they were boosted by the man's spiritual energy. Her own Qi got dispersed while the enemies spiritual energy invaded her body and caused chaos inside. But before Deng Cai could go through with his dastardly deed, Feng Liena finally shouted out her cultivation base of the great circle of core formation blasting out.

"Halt, that's enough! This battle ends now, the Feng Clan admits that Feng Nuana has lost this bout and we request for it to end!"

She shouted out so that everyone here could hear her. The judge that was overlooking the whole thing looked at the VIP booth from where the voice was coming from and could see the woman that roared out. This wasn't anything out of the ordinary but didn't happen too often, an elder member of the participant could announce their defeat if they felt that their junior was in danger. Most of the time this didn't happen as everyone took the matter of pride and face even more seriously than the life of a junior.

The judge didn't really have a reason to refuse the request. He was about to stand up and give his verdict, even though Deng Cai was an inner sect member he still was only a junior so he would have to follow the judge's order here.

"I announce this match..."

"HALT, THIS MATCH WILL NOT END!"

An even more dastardly aura filled the area, this one blasting out from another VIP booth that was right opposite the one the Triforce alliance was residing in. The People in the audience were feeling dizzy, they were lower-level cultivators so when people at the pinnacle of core formation bombarded them with their aura, they felt like puking.

The judge looked up to the other person, his eye twitched a bit. He soon cupped his fists and bowed, he sat back down in his seat as if nothing happened.

"Continue the match, both of the participants are still able..."

He murmured a bit, not being able to go against Yang Kai that was a high ranking Dark Palm Sect elder and from the direct line of the sect Patriarch.

Feng Liena and her grandmother starred at the man that spoke up, recognizing his smug face from the time two years ago. This was the same man that tried proposing to the young Matriarch. Both of them were present at the time, but due to their ancestral teachings, they refused his advances. Now their decision came back to bite them yet again.

Chapter 150

Yang Kai waited for the right time to speak out. His disciple was now giving that Feng Clan girl a good beating, his master was quite okay with the tough handling of the lady. He didn't see anything wrong with it as he only cared about things related to him, other people that got in the way could be used and abused.

"There they go..."

The Feng Matriarch finally got involved in the fight, throwing in the towel to stop it her aura filling the whole colosseum. The guards that were keeping watch were alerted to the spike in spiritual Qi, and it was a lot of it. The woman was already at the great circle of core formation, so even the people from the Dark Palm sect would have some troubles of handling her without someone at the nascent soul to totally overpower her.

"It's time..."

The man smirked and moved his finger out. His spatial ring glowing faintly as a mirror appeared in front of him. He moved his face to one side and then to the other. He grinned widely so that he could see those pearly whites of his, and he made sure not to have any pieces of food stuck there. Yes, he was mostly just checking if he looked presentable.

"Mmm, no woman could resist this smile!"

He nodded to his reflection in the mirror and put it back into his spatial ring. His VIP room had a window that blocked prying eyes from seeing inside. This one-way glass started slowly sliding down as it revealed the Dark Palm lord inside the VIP room. The people didn't notice it yet as this room was positioned above the audience. Yang Kai then cleared his throat and took in a good amount of air before shouting out.

"HALT, THIS MATCH WILL NOT END!"

His intentions were made clear and the Feng Matriarch's eyes went bloodshot. The judge that was overseeing the whole thing just bowed and returned to his seat, not wanting to get involved in this young master's scheme.

"It would be rude to stop a match between two youths just yet, look at that girl she is still standing, she has yet to show us her true potential."

The man said in a calm voice, but it was backed by his cultivation so everyone in the area could clearly hear him. Feng Liena and the rest of the people that were in her VIP booth were taken aback. The man clearly had way more pull here than they could ever have, this was his home turf and they were just some country bumpkins. Still, the young Matriarch couldn't just let her sister be brutally mutilated or maybe even worse, die.

She bowed slightly while cupping her fists and bowing towards the man that shouted out. She might be able to get out of this predicament if the man called Yang Kai could be reasoned with.

"The Matriarch from the Fang Clan greets senior from the Dark Palm Sect."

The man just nodded while trying not to grin too much. This was more or less a signal as he allowed the woman to speak.

"My foolish sister is beneath the junior she is fighting and has clearly lost, please allow us to end this match senior..."

The man looked at his disciple that was holding on to the girl's hair, he had the impromptu rock blade in his hand and was ready to start cutting. He had stopped for the time being as the aura that Feng Liena

released had caught him off guard. He was still only in the foundation establishment so he could handle someone at the core formation level.

The shield that was protecting the ring only partially held the aura attack at bay. Now he was just watching the show, his rage had subsided slightly but he would still like to carve out something on this girl's face. His cover of a wholesome young master was already out of the window, so he didn't care anymore.

"Yes indeed, she was a foolish child... but she managed to injure my cute disciple and I'm not sure he is willing to let things go that easily..."

He looked at Deng Cai that just nodded and moved his blade to the girl's face, inching it closer and closer.

"P-please wait... I'm sure we could work something out, show mercy oh great senior!"

This time Feng Maling moved in, bowing her head while almost hitting the railing in the process. To Cai's surprise, he saw his Master moving his hand upwards that indicated him to stop before he could touch the girl's skin.

"Hmm... work something out you say... yes we could do that... how about..."

The man paused for a moment, making it look as if he was contemplating this matter very seriously. His eyes were closed and he was even rubbing his chin with his own thumb for a dramatic effect. His eyes then shot up and he did a little clap, indicating that he had some kind of idea.

"How about we have a small wager? If you win my disciple will leave your clan member be and the match will be over."

He then licked his lips and continued to talk, no one brave enough to interrupt his speech.

"But if you lose, you'll have to give me something ... something substantively more valuable than that little girl's life..."

The Feng Matriarch went quiet. She didn't know what the wager would be or what the thing that this man wanted was, but she had a hunch about what it was.

"How would we go about this wager..."

She asked, quite curious. The man swished his long robe sleeve and just looked back with a sneer.

"Oh, nothing too serious. This whole thing started as a squabble between the junior generation, so it would be best if they handled it."

The woman still didn't know where this man was going with it, so she just stayed quiet and listened to the explanation.

"What I mean is, have another from your members fight my disciple. They just need to win against my disciple, anyone is fine if you can get them to fight for you."

The man moved his hand outward making it look as if he was trying to hug someone as he finished talking. The gist of it was that he wanted the Feng Clan to get someone to face his disciple in battle, if

that person won they would all be free to go. He didn't think that anyone from these clans could actually beat his disciple, so in his eyes, this was a sure-fire win.

"How about I give you an incense stick of time to make your arrangements? "

The man grinned once more, not really caring if the other side could coax someone to fight for them. The Feng Clan didn't possess anyone stronger than Feng Nuana, so they would have to seek help elsewhere.

The old Feng Maling looked to her Matriarch and then to the other two elders from the triform alliance. Zhang Jin and Huo Qiang were the only two people that could help them out. The problem was if they would offer their help and potentially get themselves in trouble with the Dark Palm Sect master.

They didn't know how strong the juniors from their allies camps were and even if they won, would that Yang Kai keep his promise? The two men were being quiet as they were thinking about what to do. They heard the whole conversation and both of them had an able fighter for this task.

The Huo Clan had the young master that was also the son of Huo Qiang. The man wasn't really too eager to exchange his son's life for this Feng Nuana that he didn't know too well. The Zhang Clan had both Zhang Tai and Zhang Liu that would probably be the only ones capable of giving the Dark Palm Sect young master a good fight.

The problem was the same for the Zhang Clan though, were they willing to potentially give up the life of one of their promising youths. If you thought about it rationally there wasn't. The Feng Clan was weaker than the Huo clan and had fewer resources, the Zhang Clan was on the rise and would probably overtake both of these clans in no time. The only thing stopping them from growing, would be a strong sect like this one that Master belonged too.

Still, these three clans had an alliance. This would probably doom their contract to fail and soil their future relationships if they didn't do anything at all. Before any of the two men could voice their worries, the Feng Matriarch spoke out.

"You two don't need to trouble yourselves, this is something that the Feng Clan has to resolve."

The two men looked at each other and then back to the young woman. She might have sounded resolute, but the two knew that she was shaken. She couldn't hide that quivering lip and her saddened tone from these two. The woman turned to face the grinning man and asked.

"What would the senior want to exchange for the wager, the Feng Clan doesn't really have many things to offer to someone from a distinguished sect like yours."

The two Feng elders kind of knew what the man wanted, but was he really that kind of person to still demand it?

Yang Kai stopped smiling, the question was asked and people were looking at him with curious gazes. Everyone was wondering what this man wanted, why was he bothering someone from a weak clan out in the open and making a huge scene. Were people at high positions just strange and eccentric like this?

"The thing that I want is..."

The man cleared his throat and pointed at the Feng Clan women, he was quite far away but everyone knew at who he was pointing out as his sentence ended.

“You!”

Feng Liena didn’t move back, as the finger was pointing right at her. Her granny just shook her head side to side while thinking back to that strange marriage proposal the man made two years ago.

“Well, the time is up let me hear your decision... I also might be willing to forget about the whole thing if you just offer yourself up to me...”

“I...”

“I will face him!”

Before Feng Liena could reply she heard a voice from the audience. The person that the voice belonged to sounded resolute and young. Everyone looked to the person shouting out, it was a certain youth with mostly white hair and a patch of black strands in the front. Yes this was Zhang Liu that was calling out to the VIP booth.

“Let me fight elders, I’ll be sure to win this wager for you! I bet my Master would agree with me if he was here!”

Zhang Jin almost got a heart attack as the thing that he wanted to avoid was now out in the open. His young grandson was probably the only one from the bunch that had a realistic chance to win this fight. The problem was not the winning part, but the actions that strange Yang Kai would take if his disciple actually lost.

The Dark Palm Master in question just looked at the youth with a raised brow. Zhang Liu shivered as he could feel the man’s oppressive aura wash over him. He was getting probed by the man, Yang Kai just smiled after noticing the low level that this youth was at.

“Well, well. I see that we have someone that is willing, think we can get this over with now.”

The man was quick to react as things were going his way. His disciple would defeat this wannabe white knight and he would go home with the prize. He wouldn’t take no for an answer now and was hoping for a good show from his disciple.

“P-please wait, this...”

Feng Liena panicked, this was Zhang Dong’s disciple. She couldn’t let him get harmed while she was around, this wasn’t going her way at all.

“I-I’ll go with you... let us just stop this...”

The woman trembled and was ready to give up, she didn’t want to get any more people involved in her private matters. She felt that it was more important to get these juniors home safely now, than her own life. She didn’t feel like the man would harm her, at most she would have to become his concubine. This was something she was willing to do, her sister’s life was more important.

“You?... I think you are misunderstanding something here...”

Yang Kai spoke out while sighing. This making Liena and the people around here even more confused.

“But you said that you wanted me?”

The woman pointed to herself while question marks appeared over her head.

“No... I was clearly pointing to that lovely lady... why would I want someone like you?”

The people in the audience went silent, the same thing happened to the elders in the VIP booth. Everyone looked to the person that was standing next to the Feng Matriarch. She was the only other woman there and was standing next to Feng Liena when Yang Kai was pointing out with his finger. The only person that wasn't surprised was Deng Cai, he knew his Master's 'tastes' quite well now. Yes, he was a man that liked his women a bit older...