

## Unfathomable 351

### Chapter 351

With a little click, the lock on the cultivation cave came undone. The large door swung open while a certain someone escaped outside.

“Huh?”

The person responsible for watching these cultivation caves turned his head up but he could not see anything there. The door seemed to be closed but he could spot a bit of snow falling down.

“Must have been my imagination...”

The man shrugged and turned back to the other side. A certain elder had given him some spirit stones to watch one cultivation cave in particular. It seemed that he was interested in keeping a certain disciple locked inside. The man agreed as it was easy money and he just needed to contact the elder if he saw the youth leaving.

‘Those days as the demon hunter sure came in handy...’

Zhang Dong’s figure was coated in a translucent filament which allowed him to blend with the scenery. If he held his breath and didn’t move a muscle it was impossible to be spotted. This and a few other techniques he picked up for when he was out adventuring. It was much easier to go around as a sword for hire than a sect leader so he had to brush up on the assassination skills.

After the guard turned his head some more snow started falling but this time around there really would be no one for him to look at. Zhang Dong descended from the mountain while keeping to the shadows, he arrived at the outer sect just as the sun started to go up which turned the scenery red.

The scenery was quite breathtaking but Zhang Dong was preoccupied with the mission before him. He had already been noticed by many outer sect elders, he could join the outer sect at any moment. The problem was the inner sect elders which he needed to prove his worth to.

‘Will those other old farts try to stop me as well?’

He stopped before a large outer sect building. Inside of this one the last competition would take place. While being a trial disciple he would not be able to refuse any of the outer sect elders. If one decided to walk up to him, they could even take him by force to wherever they wanted.

Some of the pill makers and blacksmiths after seeing his crafting techniques had that look in their eyes. Each one of these old fogies was focused on face and status. Making him not be noticed by any inner sect elders was a silly plan but when face was involved, rationality went out the window.

Thus why he decided to hide his presence and watch for the time being. Even though it was four hours away from the start of the competition the disciples were already gathering.

Just as he had predicted he saw people that followed him from the other four competitions. He didn’t even need to remember their faces as their behavior was a giveaway.

There was only one star disciple but many hungry elders. They all started glaring at each other, it seemed that a brawl could happen at any moment.

The crowds gathered Zhang Dong was sure to take a good look at one of the young competitors. With a quick face change, he made his way inside. With a new appearance, the elders that were looking for Dai Rong had no idea that he just passed them. There was only one entrance so it was impossible for him to sneak in from another side, not with so many people standing on guard.

The first checkpoint consisted of some guards but they weren't checking the permits for taking part in the competition. After sleeping through this part he turned back into Dai Rong once again.

With his infiltration now being successful, he blended in with the crowd of other disciples. Along with them, he made it through the second checkpoint which would allow them to go into the side of the competitors. Time continued to pass and finally, everyone had gathered.

'So that's the inner sect elder?'

Even though this was not an arena building there were many people looking in from an elevated point. There was one large tower in which all of the important elders were sitting in. They could overlook the disciples that could battle on many solid rock-slab-covered platforms.

"Let us get this over with..."

Zhang Dong looked up to the large tower and he could hear a bored voice calling out to everyone. From his vantage point he could barely make out his features, it seemed to be the same elder that greeted the new disciples by the name of Jingyi. The characteristic well-kept red beard and hair made this clear.

If someone looked at the ground from the vantage point of Elder Jingyi, they would see a checkerboard pattern down below. These were actually battle stages on which the disciples would be fighting on.

Each mini stage was quite large with thirty meters in diameter. Without the disciples having the capability to fly there was no need to make them any bigger.

The rules were easy, each of the disciples would be given several tokens. Everyone had three challenge tokens with which they could challenge anyone with a higher number in the ranking.

These ranking numbers were decided by various factors throughout the year of the outer sect. Zhang Dong was a trial disciple that just paid with spirit stones to get in, with this his ranking was dead last. Which meant that no one would ask him to do battle with them as there was nothing to gain.

There were a thousand people here, each one with three tokens but this wouldn't translate to three thousand fights. Anything above the top hundred didn't matter to anyone and the bottom 900 would be only challenging the top 100.

This competition was good for the challengers but not so good for the ones being challenged. Some people strategically waited till the competition was almost done before they used their token.

The disciples were only given five minutes to rest before being forced to fight again. There weren't that many that could last through the continued battles before retiring. If a disciple was crafty enough they would be able to get rid of their competition and do it while everyone watched.

The young masters would use their goons to repeatedly attack their target until this target either lost or was tired. Then they would swoop in for the win while also causing harm to this person.

If the other person didn't have enough backing to use the same tactic it was seen as a weakness. Having other people to help them was seen as just another tool from their toolbox.

'Hm... should just go for it?'

Zhang Dong rubbed his chin while hesitating. His old way of thinking was still ingrained in his very being. He was not a person that liked to stand out but he was forced into a leadership position by the people around him.

If he challenged the number one disciple and beat him it would cause an uproar among the others. He would probably have to go through many more to prove that he was truly strong.

On the other hand, if he waited for too long he could be accused of battling a weakened opponent. This competition wasn't really here to remain in the best spot but to show off to the elders.

While Zhang Dong was deep in thought about his next move the competition was slowly underway.

"I challenge you Xuan Fen! Face me."

The first challenger appeared, he pointed at quite the brutish-looking disciple. Thanks to the comments of the people around him, Zhang Dong was able to figure out that Xuan Fen was ranked number three.

"Mo Huang is really daring, he is only ranked twenty and he already wants into the top three, so insolent!"

"He has no chance!"

Xuan Fen ranked three, Meng Meixiu ranked second and Feng Shi ranked first. These were the top three disciples but only one of them was being challenged for now. This didn't mean that other people in the top 100 weren't being asked for a spar.

'Let's see what these youths have to offer.'

The disciples started to throw their tokens and everyone moved to the stages to do battle. Zhang Dong was greeted to a nice bout of the youthful generation. If he compared them to his own sect members then these Thunderbolt hall disciples weren't anything special. But if he compared them to the old Zhang Clan then they would be slightly superior.

It was clear to him that due to the variation in their cultivation the people here edged out the common cultivator from his own empire. There were fewer in numbers but made up with the quality of their foundation and combat skills.

The sect here also didn't get involved with the common people. None of the sects built their forces inside of large cities like they did in the Azure Dragon Empire. This saved a lot of time on politics and managing.

The resources like herbs and treasures were about the same. This left more cultivators able to get items like pills to boost their cultivation level. Thus their cultivation increased faster than their Azure Empire counterparts.

‘Well then... I should probably make my appearance, best to make a splash from the beginning.’

The top disciples didn’t take long to win their fights. The youth that was ranked 20th fell to the one ranked 3rd just in five blows which showed how much of a gap there was between the two.

Even with those five blows that he managed to utilize the people were surprised that he lasted that long. It seemed that if this youth was smart, he might have been able to raise his rank.

Regretfully he was beaten to a pulp and had to retire fast. Not being able to judge your own strength was also a skill that some people did not have. This young man reminded him of his old friend Huo Qiang, if this worked out he hoped to see the big idiot soon.

“Pathetic, does someone with skill dare to face this Xuan Fen? If not then maybe I should ask you for a bout, Feng Shi!”

Xuan Fen was quite the large young man, he looked like a hairy bear and his body was covered with many scars. Feng Shi on the other hand looked more like your scholar type, it was clear that one trained his body refining skill to the maximum while the other focused mostly on Qi refining.

“You can try but I would rather compete with junior sister Meixiu instead.”

The scholar replied while looking at the second-ranked woman cultivator. She was your typical jade-like beauty that just scoffed at the proposition.

“Xuan Fen? Sure, I’ll challenge you.”

Suddenly an unknown disciple moved forward, most of the people here squinted at his appearance as they had no idea who it was.

“Hey isn’t that... It is!”

But, soon Dai Rong’s name was spread through the whispers as people recognized him as the winner of four competitions. Everyone suddenly leaned forward to see if the new prodigy was a capable fighter.

If he managed to beat the number three disciple then his legend would be cemented. If he failed, on the other hand, his wings could be cut as Xuan Fen was known for crippling his opponents before they had the chance to blossom.

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“You wish to face me?”

The bear-looking youth laughed while nodding.

“Come then, I’ll show everyone what happens to nobodies that challenge me!”

Zhang Dong advanced towards the stage while looking at the smug-looking youth. His opponent was puffing out his chest while smirking. It was clear that the Xuan Fen that he was facing wasn't taking him seriously at all.

The young man was quite large, even if he was in his original form he would be dwarfed by this muscle brain.

"Whose lackey is this?"

Xuan Fen asked while Zhang Dong hopped onto the stage. The young man was thinking that this Dai Rong here was someone's follower. It was more believable that he was one of the many people sent to tire him out.

"I didn't think there would be idiots like you around, whoever put you up to this must have offered you a lot of spirit stones!"

Xuan Fen continued to talk while Zhang Dong just stood there with his hands behind his back. His face was neutral and he didn't look like he had a care in the world.

"Are those trial disciple robes?"

"Is that junior crazy? Doesn't he know of senior Xuan Fen's bad temper?"

From the conversations that the people were having here, Zhang Dong came to a conclusion. Probably the tactic of sending waves of foot soldiers for the top disciples didn't always pan out. Not when people like this Xuan Fen crippled them or beat them down to a pulp.

The young man that battled him was taken away on a stretcher and his arms and legs were in awkward positions. It was clear that no one here was stupid enough to give away their future to offend this monster.

'I guess word hasn't spread yet... maybe the people from the other professions are still looking for me outside.'

This was a large open area but it was set up in such a way that only the elders in those lookout towers could see the fights. The disciples were on the ground, shoulder to shoulder, and looking at the checkerboard combat platforms for a worse angle.

"Begin!"

A judge sounded a large gong which indicated that the battles would start.

"I'll end this quick, if you don't resist I'll be merciful and only break your arms!"

Xuan Fen charged forward with large strides, each time he took a step the ground beneath his feet cracked. His cultivation level was at the middle stage of the Martial Master level and he clearly specialized in body refinement.

Zhang Dong saw it all in slow motion, the young man's body started being surrounded by small arcs of grayish lightning. His body hair began to be charged as he raised his fist and motioned it forward while still being about two meters away from his target.

“Thunder wave fist!”

The moment he swung this large fist a shockwave with tiny lightning bolts was sent Zhang Dong’s way. While everyone expected him to either get hit or try to dodge he did the exact opposite.

He took a small step forward while also moving his palm to meet this electrical attack. The moment the shockwave collided with this hand it was pushed back by an even greater force. Another shockwave appeared with a more bluish hue to its lightning element.

“What!?”

Xuan Fen’s eyes shot open as his attack was deflected right back. There was no time to evade it so he moved his forearms up to protect his head. The electrical attack collided with his body and pushed him back. He remained standing while blocking, his legs formed skid marks on the hard ground.

“What was that... he managed to push senior Xuan Fen back!”

“Yeah... his clothes are also ruined...”

Xuan Fen’s upper body was revealed to the public as his robes burst from this palm strike. Even now Zhang Dong could see Fen’s body contending with the invading lightning Qi.

‘Great, he didn’t blow up... I’m getting the hang of holding back!’

Zhang Dong wanted to pat himself on the back as he managed to analyze the strike that came his way. He then used that to measure his opponent’s strength accurately.

With this knowledge, he just needed to use a technique with a little bit more power to cause some damage while also not killing the poor youth in one shot. This left his opponent with some residual damage but allowed the battle to continue further.

“You... you’re not all talk.”

Xuan Fen roared in a beastly fashion and with a burst of his own Qi managed to remove Zhang Dong’s attack in its entirety. Soon the young man’s body started to change, it expanded in size along with a coat of fur. At the end of this transformation, he looked like a cross between a bear and a werewolf.

“Senior Xuan Fen is having trouble, who is that junior?”

Soon the fight continued, Zhang Dong made sure to dodge each claw swipe and bite that Xuan Fen sent his way. While exchanging blows he chipped away at his opponent’s stamina and health. With this approach, he seemed to be just slightly stronger than his opponent.

“Stop moving around and face me like a man!”

Xuan Fen panted with blood streaming out of his bear-like nose.

“You wish to put body against body? Are you sure about that?”

Xuan Fen didn’t respond but just charged forward, Zhang Dong did the same and the two used their fists. A strange ‘peng’ sound was heard by the disciples that sounded like a fist hitting solid metal. This was followed by Xuan Fen’s knuckle being broken after the exchange.

“ARGHhhh”

The large youth cried out in pain before another fist descended towards his face. He flew in an arc out of the battle stage that he and Zhang Dong were fighting. Out cold he flopped on the ground and the match was over.

“Don’t you have to announce the winner?”

Silence washed over the people and even the judge that needed to be reminded of his duties.

“Ah yes, the winner and new holder of the number 3 ranking spot is... uh...”

“Dai Rong, Elder.”

“Dai Rong!”

His name was announced and the people burst out in cheers. He could even see some people pointing and laughing at Xuan Fen that was down for the count. It was clear that a person that lived his life breaking peoples limbs was not liked.

“Well then... the next one would be Meng Meixiu? Is Meng Meixiu here?”

Zhang Dong shouted out loud to bring everyone’s attention to him. He previously saw the jade-like beauty moving around but it didn’t seem that she had been challenged yet.

“This Dai Rong is too ferocious, he wants to challenge senior sister Meng Meixiu even before he has time to recover?”

Previously the disciples were clapping but it changed to booing soon. This time around it seemed that the woman he was facing had a sort of following. Luckily she heard his loud shouting and decided to show her face.

“Brazen, you might have defeated that idiot but don’t get ahead of yourself, junior!”

The crowd of simps cheered out loudly the moment this beauty descended onto the stage. At the same time, they started with a vengeance at him.

It was clear who the favorite here was. It would be strange that when he was victorious that he would be spammed by many challengers that wanted to show off in front of this beauty.

“I’m getting ahead of myself?”

That is if he allowed this to happen, this was no time to hide his power. With a burst of energy, his body started radiating electrical energies. Small arcs of bluish lightning started shooting from his body in random directions before turning into a more golden coloring in the end.

“Hoh... who is that young man...”

Above in the tower, this outburst of energy was noticed by the elder generation. Some of them glanced during the bout with the bear-like Fen but only now did Zhang Dong garner the attention of the almost asleep Elder Jingyi.

“Elder Jingyi... that is the second-ranked Meng Meixiu, she will probably be moving to the inner sect of Yin-hall...”

“Not her, the other one...”

“The other? That young man is... I don’t know... I have never seen him before...”

Elder Jingyi stretched out while leaning forward in his chair. He was jolted awake by a strange energy signature in this young man’s electric Qi. It felt somewhat pure and even above his own and even though it was just for a moment it seemed like the young man had a lot of potential.

“Well, what are you waiting for? Find me his name!”

“Ah, of course elder!”

The man panicked and quickly moved to the side while Elder Jingyi continued to watch. Little did he know that he was playing along to Zhang Dong’s little game. He made sure to release some of his true Qi into the surroundings.

These cultivators were easy to read, if they thought that they could gain something they would act on it. While posing as a still unrefined disciple he could not just show off his superior lightning Dao. That would be too suspicious and just a ticket to getting thrown into a dungeon. Instead, he started off with the regular version that was in a more pale blue color. It was the lightning that he came into this world with. This was already enough to make all of the peoples mouths water here.

‘I see that the old fart is finally looking at me now, I guess I should give him a good show...’

Meng Meixiu went quiet after the outburst of his Qi. It was clear that she started to take him very seriously.

“Shall we then?”

The young woman was holding a weapon that he was very familiar with. It was a weapon that his wife also used, a set of battle fans. It was also a bit surprising how similar this girl was to Zhang Liena.

The moment she utilized the fans a torrent of green energy gathered in front of her. She created a miniaturized twister filled with arcs of green lightning energy.

“Wind energy with lightning... not bad...”

Zhang Dong had to make this a bit more flashy this time around. He clasped his palms together in one strong move which also produced the sound of a thunderclap. His hands started glowing in a pale blue light that quickly turned into electrical energy.

“That technique... isn’t that the lesser thunder dragon palm?”

The lightning energy that looked chaotic at the start started taking shape. It looked like two small eastern dragons coiled themselves around Zhang Dong’s forearms. They remained floating around while clinging to them tightly while sometimes giving out thunderous shouts.

“Well then, shall we?”



He plunged himself into the battle, one of his palms stretched forward while the other was closer to his body in a defensive position. Some people burst out in cheers while others remained silent, it seemed that this would be a battle that they would remember for ages to come.

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The young disciples cheered as they surrounded the stage where the new trial disciple appeared. They even forgot about offering their challenge tokens for their own contest while gawking at the display of skill.

Everyone was more interested in gaining some insight into the battle techniques this young man was using. With one glance they could see that he had trained them to a very high level. He moved thunder and delivered devastating blows that his opponent had trouble defending.

“Junior sister is losing? How can this be?”

The fans of Meng Meixiu both male and female were looking with eyes wide open. Her opponent was quite brazen but he had a lot of skill to back up that claim.

‘Getting the hang of this...’

Zhang Dong thought to himself while moving his palm forward. A dragon made from lightning shot forward and bit into Meng Meixiu’s battle fan. The girl in panic had to let her weapon go while jumping as far away as she could.

The dragon made from electric energy chomped down on this weapon and made quick work of it. With this, the young lady cultivator was disarmed and would need to use her body to defend herself.

“Senior sister, you may surrender if you wish.”

Zhang Dong smiled while standing upright. This young woman seemed a bit stuck up but this didn’t mean that she needed a good beatdown. She also reminded him of his wife slightly so he was willing to let her quit if she wished for.

“You want this Meixiu to surrender? You must be taking me for a fool!”

It didn’t seem that she was willing to, the only thing he could do was to shrug. While the woman continued to gather her Qi into her body he advanced slowly.

Green energy with a bit of lightning mixed into it started circling around that voluptuous body. Zhang Dong had to wonder if it was something in the food or if it was caused by cultivation. For some reason, the women in this world tended to be on the bouncier side. This one was nothing compared to his own wife but she wasn’t a slouch either.

‘Damn... I should stop thinking like this or I’ll end up as that perverted gramps.’

While remembering his lecherous grandfather he took a step forward. The woman’s attack activated as she swung her hands forward. A gust of wind flew his way, this looked like a ranged attack that turned the wind into blades with an added shocking effect.

Even if the wind blades missed the target, the electricity would shock the target. This is if someone didn't have some kind of lightning resistance or a helpful skill.

Zhang Dong held his palm out while making a grasping motion. The moment he did the lightning dragon that was coiling around his forearm shot forward while opening its mouth. The wind blades that were approaching him were promptly absorbed along with that meager amount of lightning energy that they carried.

"Impossible how could you..."

Before the young woman could finish the sentence Zhang Dong's body blurred. He activated his old moving technique that produced an electric afterimage in his old spot.

"Ugh..."

A foot collided with Meixiu's abdomen before she had time to react. At the exact moment as Zhang Dong's kick connected with the girl's stomach a tremendous thunderclap filled the stage. The girl flew far and wide and finally ended up outside of the ring.

She didn't collide with the rough ground though as she was caught by an old woman with light gray hair. This old lady looked at the person that sent this woman flying.

'Hm?'

Zhang Dong could feel killing intent pressing down on him. The old woman was clearly trying to suppress.

'Bullying juniors with no backing is it?'

It was clear that this old woman was either this Meng Meixiu's master, family member, or maybe even a bodyguard. She was at the level of a Martial Grandmaster so it wasn't something that he couldn't handle. The problem was that his persona that he was using couldn't.

'This calls for some acting...'

The old woman continued to glare at the young man while other disciples looked. They all knew what was happening but they couldn't offend an elder. What was surprising is that the person that was getting his cultivation suppressed was still standing upright.

Dai Rong was seen standing upright while his body trembled slightly. After a few moments, the people could see his eyes getting bloodshot and some blood flowing from his nose. It looked like the young man was unwilling to kneel down before this elder.

"That's enough!"

The booming voice of Elder Jingyi filled the whole competition area and the old woman was forced to back away. The woman looked up to this Elder Jingyi while bowing in apology, soon she moved to the side with the jade-like beauty that had the wind knocked out of her.

'That guy took his time, it's not that easy to fake bleed.'

This was of course just an act, he did force his body to bleed for a moment but it was nothing but a scratch. There were no internal injuries or cultivation damage that mostly came with Qi attacks like that.

To play it up he stumbled forward after the pressure attack was removed. He was sure to look like a thick-headed disciple that didn't know his place yet. Even though most people didn't like when the juniors were impolite to the elder generation, they also had to commend them for their high pride. It was a sign of willpower that could not be easily broken.

"Junior sister lost... this can't be happening..."

"This only leaves brother Feng Shi, will he also challenge him?"

"Not possible, after the elder intervened this Dai Rong must be in a world of pain, he is probably on his last breath."

"Yeah, isn't this a chance?"

The young disciples looked at Dai Rong that just went through the number three and then number two ranked disciples. He had taken out their competition which meant that it would be possible for them to get into the top 3.

Meng Meixiu might have been able to return later but Xuan Fen was out for the whole competition. The second spot that Dai Rong was occupying might have been temporary but the third was a possibility.

"You think that I am weakened?"

Like thunder, Dai Rong's voice spread through the area. Even though the voice only carried the might of a Martial Master there was something in it. The elders that were in their tower overlooking the competition even flinched after the thunderclap sounded.

"Be my guest, come and challenge me and see if you return in one piece!"

Zhang Dong played it up by making his eyes crackle with lightning energy to make him appear like a wounded tiger. Everyone knew that injured beasts were very dangerous and they all quickly shrunk back.

"Feng Shi, you are last and I have only one challenge token left, face me!"

It was time for the climax of this storyline, the number one student was a Martial Master that had already reached the late stage. No one was seriously trying to get his spot as it was not theirs to take.

Feng Shi was apparently someone that took his time to build up his foundation. When he came out of seclusion this year he soared towards the very top. His age was close to the other top disciples which made him an obvious choice to enter the inner sect.

Everyone here knew that even if this senior brother didn't participate he would be taken under the wing of some inner sect master. This was more something he did out of tradition.

Feng Shi as a proper young master that was at the very top of the food chain looked bored. He was sitting to the side under an umbrella with two busty jade-like beauties. It looked like he was here for a picnic instead of the competition.

"You wish to challenge me, junior brother? Won't you reconsider, you've already achieved so much, you need to learn some piety in this long life that we live."

"Senior Feng Shi is so composed!"

"He is right, this Dai Rong is too childish, he needs a few more years before challenging senior brother Shi!"

The people laughed while Feng Shi ignored Zhang Dong's hollering. He on the other hand just smiled while remaining up on the stage.

"It's fine to be scared, senior brother, you can just give me your number one spot if you don't think that you can keep it."

Feng Shi stopped sipping his green tea while hearing Zhang Dong's taunts. His facial expression that was previously relaxed changed into one of rage. He was quick to hide this moment of emotion before putting the teacup to the side.

"Afraid? This Feng Shi would be afraid of a junior disciple?"

"This Dai Rong has no shame, he is barely standing and wants to challenge brother Shi."

"Brother Shi, show that junior that the seniors deserve respect!"

As expected the place got loud. The elders in their tower kept quiet while the juniors down below got into a shouting match. It seemed that they would let them clear this up among themselves.

"Ah, if I must, then I shall teach you some respect."

Feng Shi finally raised his posterior from his spot and made his way towards Zhang Dong. Even though the others couldn't see it, he knew that this was seething with rage.

He was not much different than any other young master. They looked composed and majestic on the outside but turned to cranky little kids whenever their authority was questioned. Even if he thought he would lose here, he would not be able to refuse the challenge, the loss to face would be astronomical if he did.

Feng Shi was greeted on the stage to the applause of men and women alike. It seemed that he had gained a following of some kind. From Zhang Dong's perspective, it looked like a bunch of ass kissers trying to weasel their way into the good graces of someone that was going to the inner sect.

"They don't realize how these young master's act, it would be a miracle if they kept their old promises after gaining power."

"Your fighting technique is refined junior but you still lack cultivation."

"Show me then."

Zhang Dong replied while taking on a battle stance. He produced the exact same technique that he used against the second-ranked jade-like beauty.

It didn't seem that anyone was thinking that he would win. From their standpoint, he looked like a junior that was just an early stage Martial Master. One that made up for his lower realm with high-quality skills and techniques.

The person that he was facing now was two small realms above him. This was not a gap that could be closed with superior techniques. This is something that Zhang Dong knew well and thus he was planning something special for such an occasion.

The gong sounded again and the two charged at each other. Even though no one believed that Dai Rong could win it, his young age caused the elders here to look at him as a prospect. Someone that could be nurtured to become a true powerhouse for this sect.

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"Is this all?"

Feng Shi scoffed while gracefully evading a small dragon made from blue electrical energy. For most of the outer sect disciples, it was an astonishing feat of agility. They could see that this opponent called Dai Rong was no slouch.

The attacks were quick and deadly. Each time those dragon heads chomped down a loud booming sound of thunder riverbed through the whole large field. This only showed how strong Feng Shi actually was as he was managing and doing it with little effort.

"Senior brother Feng Shi was this strong?"

"No wonder sister Meng Meixiu and brother Xuan Fen never challenged him to an open fight..."

To everyone here, it felt that this senior brother of theirs was far above what a Martial Master should be, even more, experienced elders that were at the late stage of that realm would fall before him.

"Submit junior, you have no way of winning!"

A ferocious palm strike that was thrown by Dai Rong was quickly kicked to the side. Feng Shi kick carried his own Qi and caused the dragon made from electricity to quickly dissipate.

"Submit? This fight has only begun!"

Dai Rong replied while using his other palm. The dragon on it combined with it as he fired off a somewhat cone-shaped electrical attack at Feng Shi.

The weapon of choice for this senior brother looked to be a battle umbrella. The moment the palm strike descended in his direction this umbrella was opened up. It started glowing with white light, the palm strike was quickly absorbed into this umbrella that was spinning around.

"I'll return this to you!"

This peculiar weapon continued to spin until it formed a torrent of white energy. It looked like a blade storm that was bathed in electricity. Dai Rong retreated, his feet shuffled on the stage as he left many lightning charges after images.

The electrically charged storm didn't stop, it connected with each after image and started getting bigger. It looked to be absorbing all of the electrical energy from those after images and only getting more powerful.

Dai Rong found himself at the edge of the battle stage. He had no way to run, if he was removed from this stage he would be disqualified. Thus the only thing he could do was to turn around and take the hit.

Everyone looked in horror at the giant cyclone that was composed of sharp wind blades and electricity connected with Dai Rong's body. The young man moved his forearms above his head as he turtled up.

"Senior Feng Shi so brutal..."

"That junior had it coming, how dare he talk like he was senior brother's equal!"

The peanut gallery commented as Dai Rong's body vanished behind the white storm energy. They didn't think that he would be able to survive this unscathed.

Feng Shi's umbrella stopped spinning around and he pulled it back. The young man gave out a sigh while turning around. He looked to his old spot where he was sitting and the girls smiled at him. It seemed that the battle was over and he could return to his original place.

"I must apologize to everyone, I seemed to have lost my temper."

"Senior brother is so humble!"

"Yes, senior Shi did nothing wrong!"

The young disciples cheered while the young master smirked slightly. Before he could make his way back though, he heard a voice call out from behind him.

"Where do you think you are going, this isn't over yet."

Dai Rong's voice was heard by everyone. After the storm was cleared his injured body appeared before everyone. The upper part of his robe had been cut up into tiny fragments. His body looked like it was put through a shredder.

"How can he still be standing..."

"So many cuts..."

To everyone standing here, it seemed that the young man was holding onto his dear life with willpower alone. Feng Shi just started with an empty look in his eyes and quickly laughed.

"It's not over? You can barely stand. This Feng Shi commends you on your bravery and willpower but you should know when to give up. There is no shame in losing to me."

The young lord smiled while speaking and everyone here nodded. It was clear who had won this battle and if it continued then Dai Rong would shorten his cultivation life. Unless a person surrendered the fight would continue, not even the elders would stop it.

"Shame in losing? Who is losing, I just need a moment..."

The people laughed while Feng Shi shook his head in disapproval.

“Even if I gave you a year, you would not be able to best me... ?”

Feng Shi trailed off at the end of the sentence as he felt something strange happening. Soon after, the people could see a certain glow surrounding Dai Rong’s whole body.

“What is he doing...”

“His cultivation... it’s getting stronger?”

Dai Rong’s muscles started twitching and contracting. His long dark hair started floating up while electricity continued to gather in a small area around his already glowing body.

“If this isn’t enough for me to win, then I just need to go further... further beyond!”

“How is this possible... is he really advancing his realm in the middle of the match? Is he crazy!”

Someone from the audience shouted while Dai Rong’s body continued to go through some kind of change. Feng Shi was stunned by this turn of events, unable to comprehend what his opponent was doing.

Going through a small realm during a fight and while being injured was unwise. This was something that only someone that has prepared accordingly should attempt. Otherwise, they risked failing and crippling themselves for the future. For everyone here, it looked like the young man would just ruin his future and fall.

“Alas he was a fool, such is youth. Let us hope he won’t suffer cultivation deviation”

Elder Jingyi commented while other elders looked down to the stage the number one and two prospects were fighting. It didn’t seem like anyone here would go and stop the change. It was far more dangerous to go in, the young man’s chances of bursting through the realm would go down if any elder attempted to move in.

“Elder Jingyi... look... ”

“What? Impossible!”

Everyone expected him to fail but instead of his body bursting with more blood it seemed that the wounds were subsiding. His muscles got larger and his figure filled up while his aura increased in power.

Soon a giant thunder strike was heard by everyone here. Dai Rong’s body crackled with thunderous electrical might and it looked that he had achieved the breakthrough that he had hoped for.

“How could this be... Martial Master... middle stage? Just like that?”

Elder Jingyi rubbed his chin while looking down at the young man. He started examining him from head to toe with his spiritual sense and he could feel the powerful golden crystal palace hidden within this youth. When he compared it to the young man this Dai Rong was facing, it was like comparing a grand castle to an old moldy shack.

“Unfathomable...”

....

‘Did you take a good look?’

Zhang Dong chuckled to himself as he faked a breakthrough in the middle of the fight. He had decided that this would be a better way to show off his might. If he beat someone that was at the late stage while being still at the early stage it would look somewhat fishy. Like this, he would look like a genius but he would still be grounded in reality.

His strength was already over the Martial Master level. The young man that he was fighting was talented but not that much more than your average sect prodigy. It was time to play it up for the crowd, he struck a nice pose and pointed out with his finger.

“Surrender now and I will be lenient!”

He could see Feng Shi’s forehead vein becoming very prominent at this moment. It was clear that this young man was just acting the good senior brother part. In reality, he would probably tear him limb from limb if there was no one looking.

“I have been too easy on you junior, if you don’t want to listen to reason I must show you the truth with my fists! So what if you achieved the middle stage, you are still below this senior!”

“I don’t need to be at the late stage to defeat the likes of you!”

Zhang Dong taunted the young man. He could see Feng Shi’s eyes going bloodshot from rage, it was clear that he was not used to such behavior from his peers.

Feng Shi was the first one to charge forward along with that strange umbrella weapon of his. At the end, there was a spike that would probably be able to pierce through anything it touched.

Regretfully Zhang Dong was done playing around and he would give the audience a nice show. It was the exact reverse of the start of this battle. This time around Dai Rong was dodging everything with no effort while Feng Shi charged at him like a mad bull.

“How could this be...”

“I have never seen such a display of agility, can he predict all of those movements?”

People had noticed that Zhang Dong was evading almost too well. This could be attributed to either ability or experience. Being that the young man was still a realm below Feng Shi, most attributed it to ability.

“That junior must have an innate talent for prediction!”

“Guh”

A palm landed on Feng Shi’s chest and he flew back a couple of meters. The umbrella was used as a crutch as he stood up with shaky hands. During the exchange, Zhang Dong had used a counterattack at a perfect moment.

“I told you, surrender now!”

“Y-you...”



Feng Shi's face contorted to look like that of a devil. He was clearly not enjoying this fight, no one that was similar in age had ever been able to compete with him at an equal footing. Unable to cope with his emotions he turned into a madman.

Zhang Dong found himself deflecting and evading all kinds of electrical attacks and techniques. The longer this fight lasted the angrier the young master he was fighting was acting.

'Time to end this...'

With a well-placed kick to that umbrella weapon, he managed to disarm his opponent. The weapon landed outside the ring which meant that Feng Shi would need to fight without it.

"You dare?"

"Ha ha, yes indeed, but do you dare?"

Feng Shi looked a bit confused at the answer and another clash between the two occurred. This time Zhang Dong was sure to ram his palm in the young master's solar plexus. With some Qi added to it, Feng Shi turned into an electrified puppet that soon flopped on the cold ground.

"W-winner... Dai Rong!"

He held his fist up in the air as if he owned the place. It was clear that he was showboating but everyone here knew it, he had skills to back it up.

"I am number one!"

'This should be enough... I know you are drooling up there, come down and let us get this over with...'

Zhang Dong looked up to where Elder Jingyi was sitting. He clasped his hands in a proper manner before getting down from the ring. Now he just needed to wait and his path towards the inner sect should open up.

## **Chapter 355**

The new number one disciple had emerged from the competition. Not even a full hour went by as he managed to dismantle the top 3 disciples from this Thunderball Hall. Feng Shi, the golden boy that was unanimously agreed upon by everyone as the best, had fallen.

Zhang Dong in his disguise stood tall and walked down from the battle stage that he was on. When he arrived at the edges of this tournament area the youngsters parted to the sides. No one that was around this age range was willing to meet his gaze.

No one knew how they should act around the new number one. Would he be the irritable type that lashed out at anyone that didn't show him any respect? Maybe he would be more stoic as the previous number one or more conniving like some of the other top students.

"What is it? Do I have something on my shoes? Raise your heads, brothers and sisters, there is no need to be afraid."

Zhang Dong called out in a soft-spoken voice which caused a few people to raise their heads.

“See, isn’t that better?”

He laughed out loud while shrugging. Now it was the time to show his magnanimous persona. He knew that everyone preferred a senior that was easy to talk to. Pompous ones like Feng Shi or muscle heads like the third-ranked one were not preferred by many.

Both of them put a certain barrier around themselves. One was hard to approach due to his violent tendencies while the other seemed like an idol that should be observed from afar but never touched. What would happen if the new top student was different, one that was willing to lend a hand to his brothers and sisters.

“Challenge me if you must, I’m sure we can exchange some pointers during this tournament but don’t think I’ll go easy on you!”

With a few nice words he decided to sit down in a lotus position. To some, this might have looked like a break to reinforce his cultivation. In reality, he was using his senses to spy on the elders up in the tower.

His plan was to show off while also looking humble. Instead of boasting about his victory and pointing his fingers at the other disciples, he urged them to take it easy. He made it seem that even if they challenged him, he would not cripple their cultivation like the other top students that despised the lower disciples.

“Hm, not bad he shows some restraint but will he be able to last till the end.”

Elder Jingyi commented while talking with the other elders. It seemed that he did indeed pique the man’s interest but until the competition was over, the old man didn’t seem willing to end it.

“I have returned elder, I have gathered all the information about this disciple!” As if he was waiting for it, the elder that left to gather details about Dai Rong’s other competitions had returned to the tower. He quickly informed Elder Jingyi about how the young man was just a trial disciple that had already won four competitions.

“He has won both the pill-making competition and the blacksmithing competition?”

Zhang Dong couldn’t see the man’s expression but by his tone, he knew that Elder Jingyi was surprised. The tails of his expedition into the sect’s contest were revealed to each and everyone of the elders above. Quickly they became chatty as none of them had paid any attention to those outer sect competitions.

“This Dai Rong, where did he come from... such a talent has made it into our Thunderball hall. It would be bad if it’s cut short, maybe I should...”

“You should what?”

“Take him under my wing of course!”

Soon as according to his plan the elders were fighting with each other. All of them were on the very top of the totem pole.

“Silence! This competition isn’t finished yet!”

Finally, Jingyi interrupted the bickering as the only inner sect elder here, he had all the power.

“We apologize, Elder Jingyi.”

The old red-haired man easily silenced everyone here but it didn't seem that he would be plucking Zhang Dong away just yet. Time continued to pass and Zhang Dong found himself getting challenged by some of the top twenty disciples.

At first, it seemed that they were just testing the waters to see if he was tired enough to be knocked down from the first spot. After easily beating the 5th ranked senior brother everyone was sure that he had a lot more gas in the tank.

The 5th ranked youth was not maimed or injured much which showed them that this Dai Rong did show some restraint. Through this, he was seen accepting more fights through which he showed some of the flaws in peoples fighting techniques.

At the end of the competition, he remained the number one ranked. The night had fallen upon the sect and the people started cheering. Due to the knockouts that they suffered the previous top three was not seen again which caused people to be ranked higher by default.

“With this, we will end this year's outer sect battle competition!”

The

Announcement

was made and it was over. The top ten of the disciples were handed cultivation materials and spirit stones. Zhang Dong received a middle grade mortal weapon and some pills along with the fifth bead.

Each competition that gave him this bead would allow him to redeem it for some treasure. He just needed to visit the outer sect treasure house. There he would be able to redeem his rewards but not like this would add much to his repertoire.

If he was a regular Martial Master disciple this would probably allow him to cultivate much faster than the other disciples. He was already far too strong for these rewards to actually matter.

The elder gave a speech that he could only roll his eyes on and then it was over. This would be the time where the elders approached the young men and women to strike a deal.

Zhang Dong found himself surrounded, there were at least a hundred people around him, one older than the other. He could see some people from the blacksmith's hall as well as the formation and pill-making hall. The elder that lent him the cultivation abode was also there, just at the edge as he was forced out by the more influential elders.

These old men that prided themselves on being composed and stoic were now shouting like angry children. It was as if this Dai Rong that he was playing was some kind of limited edition action figure that everyone wanted.

Before they could start yanking on his clothes, finally the person that he was here for appeared. Jingyi appeared as if he was waiting till everyone gathered up so that he could show off his superiority. His descent from the tower was greeted with bows and clasped hands.

“What is your name, disciple?”

“Dai Rong, Elder.”

‘Like you don’t know by now.’

The old fart was doing all the old tricks, playing with his beard, swishing his long sleeves and acting all mysterious. Zhang Dong knew that the seniors wanted to appear like gods to the disciples. They wanted to establish a hierarchy that could not be easily broken.

“You show potential, where does the junior fare from?”

“I come from the white tiger clan, elder. You’ve probably never heard of it, it’s not a very important clan.”

Luckily this elder didn’t seem too chatty, he just nodded and got right to the point.

“Junior, you show promise, would you like to follow me to the inner sect?”

There it was, the thing that he was waiting for. This was all that he wanted, getting inside of the inner sect before spending months at this small sect.

“The junior would be honored to enter the inner sect!”

The crowd of elders lowered their heads in disappointment as their meal ticket was getting taken away. The young disciples gave out sighs of regret and disappointment as they didn’t manage to attract the inner sect elder’s gaze.

This didn’t mean that the rest wouldn’t be able to enter the inner sect. Jingyi here was the only inner sect elder that was forced to come here but this didn’t mean that others weren’t watching from afar.

Some of the disciples would be asked to enter the inner sect later. If they got famous enough they would be reeled in there via other means. This competition was just one of the many ways of standing out.

“Good, we will leave then!”

Jingyi nodded while not giving Zhang Dong an option to get ready. Lucky for him everything that he owned was in his spatial rings.

“Since you will be an inner sect disciple, you will have to conduct yourself like one, from now on don’t lower yourself to the outer sect standards!”

“Lower myself? I understand elder.”

Zhang Dong nodded while entering Jingyi’s transportation device. It was another flying boat but it was of far greater quality than the one he was previously on. It seemed that this inner sect elder looked down on the outer sect members.

“You’ll be an inner sect disciple, this is the true backbone of our glorious Thunderball hall!”

He was given a long-winded speech about how he should behave and how he was now better than anyone that was not an inner sect disciple.

‘Do the inner sect elders at my sect think like this as well?’

Was the thought going through his head as he listened to this man talk. While he was together with the outer sect elders he was mostly quiet but now his true colors showed. It seemed that he didn’t see anyone outside the inner sect as proper people. Unless someone showed their worth and got into their prestigious club, they were not seen as equals.

Zhang Dong felt that they passed through some kind of barrier. The elder had the item with the code on him so they made it in with no problem. Soon they approached the huge tower which looked a lot wider from close up.

“Elder Jingyi, welcome back... and that is?”

A younger man greeted the two as they descended into an area that was before this tower. Zhang Dong found himself in a large castle-like structure. There were many buildings and also many people in various robes here.

“This is Dai Rong, he shows promise. Show him to his new quarters and explain everything.”

Jingyi dumped him off like a hot potato to this unfamiliar person before flying off somewhere. As he was leaving he also told him to come to look for him after acclimating himself to the inner sect.

“Greetings junior, It’s always good to welcome a new brother to the inner sect! You also gained the favor of Elder Jingyi, that must have been a hard task indeed!”

The man he was left with seemed to be friendly. Soon he was given a tour through the whole inner sect grounds. Similar to his own sect the disciples and elders had different color-coded robes. It also seemed that he was not required to take on tasks like the outer sect disciples.

He was free to train and ask for guidance from some of the masters here and he was also given some monthly pocket change that he could use on various items.

“I will see you around then, Junior Dai.”

“You have my gratitude, senior.”

Zhang Dong was even given his own small cultivation cave, free of charge. The perks of being an inner sect disciple showed themselves quite fast. Though while the young man was explaining everything he was busy examining his surroundings.

‘This doesn’t look too bad... I should be able to sneak in...’

The protective formations looked lackluster and there were not many guards either. It seemed that getting into the tower of thunder would not be that hard, he could even approach it this very night...

## **Chapter 356**

“Elder Jingyi, glad to have you with us. How was the competition?”

“Boring as always but there was one promising disciple. On any other occasion, this would be a joyous moment but how things stand...”

Elder Jingyi that was used as a ticket into the inner sect walked into a closed-off room. In it, there were many elders and seniors from the Thunderball hall. It seemed that all the leaders from each of the halls had gathered here and this probably without the knowledge of the outer sect.

“Yes, the future is shaky...”

“How is the Patriarch?”

“Not good, his cultivation is slowly declining and we have discovered new evidence of a spy.”

“A spy? So it really someone from our sect that had poisoned the Patriarch during his ascension?”

“Yes, the evidence points to... Zheng Ting!”

“Zheng Ting? How could that be? She is the Patriarch’s granddaughter...”

“Yes, she vanished the moment we discovered that there was foul play involved. She is also trusted by the Patriarch, it would be easy for her to slip in the poison into his food...”

“But why would she do it? What would she gain from weakening the sect?”

Elder Jingyi asked as he was clearly out of the loop. Due to the outer sect competition, he was forced to remain in that part for a whole day.

“We fear that the Blood Poison Cult is involved, the poison that was used is also one that they are famous for...”

“The Blood Poison Cult?”

“Yes, our brothers found letters coming from that cult hidden away in Zheng Ting’s quarters. It would seem that she was romantically involved with one of their members which might have caused this...”

“Romantically involved? Does this mean that the Blood Poison Cult could attack us?”

“Yes, we fear for the worst. Normally our patriarch would be able to combat their cult leader but in his weakened state he will not be his match... this might also not be the only problem...”

“There is more?”

Elder Jingyi’s face went pale as the people started listing other problems. Apparently, their spies detected movement in other evil sects and cults that were situated close to their Thunderball hall.

The spot this Thunderball hall occupied was quite sought after. The concentration of lightning energies was not the only profitable resource. Deep inside the mountain range, there was a pocket of dark crystals. These crystals could be used by demonic cultivators to hasten their progress.

This was of course a big secret that the sect was hiding away from the other powers. With the betrayal of Zheng Ting, who was part of the inner circle, the secret might have been found out. It would not be strange if the demonic sects united to take care of them and to take away these dark crystals.

“This... Did our spies find out more?”

“No, It seems that our spies have been silenced.”

“This doesn’t bode well, can the patriarch recover in time? Should we contact the other righteous sects in the area and ask for help?”

“The other sects...”

The gathering of the elders continued into the night. While everyone was busy scrambling around, a certain sect leader was making his way towards the large tower of lightning.

‘Hm, this place doesn’t look that well-protected. Are they that sure that no one will attack them or are their forces somewhere else?’

Unbeknownst to him all the strongest elders and their disciples were gathered at one location all the way up the tower. While they were busy going through the sect’s existential crisis Zhang Dong slipped past everyone.

‘This thing looks a lot bigger from close up...’

He had to strain his neck to look at the giant blocky tower. The lightning storm was circling around this building and discharging lightning bolts into it. If he had the ability to fly he could just charge into the eye of this storm and absorb all of this energy.

His current cultivation realm was that of foundation establishment middle stage. With the help of this energy, he was hoping to enter the core formation level. Maybe if he was lucky enough he could even push it to the middle stage. There was quite the amount of lightning elements here that possibly could boost him further.

‘There are some guards.’

He could see five men being stationed in front of one of the doors that led into this large tower. One of them was clearly the commander while the other four were just part of his unit.

‘It would be better if I didn’t just charge through here like a maniac...’

Zhang Dong felt that these five would not be a problem to beat but this would just put everyone inside on alert. Five guards just vanishing from their post would be quickly seen through. He at least wanted to give himself some time before they figured out that he invaded their tower.

‘This calls for the honey pot trap approach.’

His appearance started to change, from a young and handsome young master to something paler. Two large lumps of flesh started protruding from his chest as his body shrunk down. His hips started getting wider and his highs were now pleasantly plump. His skin was white as a jade as he took the appearance of a once-in-a-lifetime beauty.

‘This disguising technique is scary, at least it doesn’t make my little guy vanish along with it.’

Zhang Dong changed into some short fairy-like robes that showed off his legs and chest area the most. He had to pick a robe on the more flowy side, as from close up his large little brother would be clearly bulging it out.

“Who goes there!”

One of the guards noticed some movement and was shocked to see a beauty coming out from behind a building. The five guards started drooling instantly while checking out all the good parts. Zhang Dong had to hold himself back from cringing and scoffing at the looks that these men were giving him.

“Oh no, I’ve seemed to have lost my way... I just arrived in the inner sect, could one of you senior brothers help a lady in distress out?”

Lucky for Zhang Dong the competition for the outer sect disciples had ended. It wouldn’t be suspicious for some new faces to appear in the inner sect area. This was also what the guards here were thinking but due to the beauty they were seeing here, their perception was skewed. They abandoned all reason while devouring her with their eyes.

“Dear junior sister, you should not wander alone through the night, what if you catch a cold. Let this senior brother escort you back home!”

“What are you talking about? I will be the one to escort this junior sister back home!”

“No, it’s going to be me!”

Soon the group of guards started fighting with each other while Zhang Dong stood there. He took on a strange uncomfortable pose that made his posterior and chest stick out at the same time.

‘How do girls do this stuff...’

“Be quiet all of you and get back to your post!”

Soon the captain of the group of four shouted out. His aura was enough to make the four weaker guards shrink back in fright.

“Show some decorum!”

The man was slightly older than the rest and seemed a bit more composed. This quickly changed as he gave Zhang Dong one of the most lecherous smiles that he had ever seen.

“Little lady, you should not be wandering around at this hour, if one of the elders spots you, you will be reprimanded.”

He started approaching Zhang Dong while the other four guards scoffed. They knew that they could not go against their captain and that he was just as attracted to the woman as they were.

“Oh no, could you show me the right way back senior brother? I seem to have lost my way.”

“Certainly junior sister, let this big brother show you the way...”

The man grinned and the two started walking away. Zhang Dong had to doge a hand going towards his hip. The four guards then looked on in despair as their captain went away with the beauty that was shaking her wide hips side to side like a professional dancer.

“Damn, it should have been me...”

“Hah, why would that fairy even look at an ugly bastard like you!”

“What did you say?”



Two of the guards started shouting at each other but soon they quieted down after they heard a strange scream. It came from the direction that their captain and the beauty vanished into. They all looked at each other with wide eyes, was their captain more of a leech than they had thought?

“Captain?”

Soon the man returned. His clothes were slightly ruffled up and he had a red handprint on his cheek. The group of men started sniggering as they knew what had happened.

“What are you looking at, get back to your post!”

“Yes sir!”

They all nodded while retreating into formation, still their faces were filled with smiles. The captain soon entered the tower while grasping the side of his face. The moment he left the remaining men burst out in laughter.

‘Well, that was easier than I expected, only my pride as a man was damaged...’

Of course, the man that returned was not the guard captain, it was Zhang Dong in disguise. He had made short work of the lecherous man and with a quick zap, he was out. After taking his face and clothes he returned.

He looked around and could see that most of this place was empty. The space was wide open and he could see stairs going up.

‘That’s a lot of stairs...’

It looked like the impossible staircase phenomenon with many of those stairs moving at an angle. It also seemed that there was some kind of illusory formation working here that would make it hard for anyone to ascend.

This only applied to normal cultivators and not to someone like Zhang Dong. With a quick glance, he already knew the correct path to ascend.

‘I don’t see any rooms, they must be up higher...’

Soon he ascended up, his plan was to get as far as he could. The closer he was to that storm the better it was for his cultivation.

While Zhang Dong made his way up towards his destination, there was trouble brewing. Far away from the Thunderball Hall, there was a group of cultivators in shadowy robes.

“You have served me well Zheng Ting, when we crush this Thunderball Hall you will be granted the position of high elder!”

“Thank you, my lord, I just wish to be useful to the Blood Poison Cult!”

The man looked to be in his mid-thirties. He was quite handsome but also quite powerful. Behind him was a swarm of flying boats along with many cultivators.

“Tonight, we shall bathe in our enemy’s blood!”

He raised his fist high up while the other men cheered. Soon all of them faded away into the shadows, the approach would be slow and only when it was too late they would strike.

## **Chapter 357**

“Darn why is it so dusty in here? Do these sect people never clean their precious lightning tower?”

Zhang Dong complained while trying not to get too much dust on himself. Thankfully he was powerful enough to create a little dust shield around his body that would also protect him from getting stuck in cobwebs.

At this point in time, he was making his way through this lightning tower. He had seen through all of the protective formations that were keeping all the secret entrances from him.

‘I have to give it to them, these illusory formations are quite good. I’m not sure anyone that isn’t at least a formation grandmaster would be able to get past this.’

It was a little bit odd that this room that he entered was so well protected. To get here he was forced into a secret passage that was barely large enough for him to fit through.

The moment he entered he noticed that the mechanism was quite old. It was as if it hadn’t been operated in many years. On the inside, it also looked quite old and unused.

The only reason for this place being so unkept and unused was that it was probably some kind of old secret evacuation passage. Maybe it led all the way up to the most important parts of the tower but never found its use.

‘Even if that’s true, they could clean it up every year or something...’

The further he went the worse everything looked, finally after walking for about an hour he finally arrived at what looked to be the end.

‘What is this?’

He scanned this place with his spiritual sense but could not feel any living being. Luck was on his side though as when he looked up he could see a large cristal.

This cristal would periodically give out a burst of light followed by a crackle of thunder. It was actually quite loud but a formation around this room was keeping all the noise from reaching outside.

‘That was easier than I expected...’

Zhang Dong was convinced that on his way through this tower he would need to knock out a few guards. Maybe turn into them to sneak in further before he was discovered. Now on the other hand he was looking at a source of great lightning power.

This crystal was clearly absorbing energy from the storm and radiating power. It was then discharging the residual energy into the walls of this chamber. Each time it did the whole room glowed in a dim blue light.

This chamber looked like a crypt. In the middle, there was some kind of large coffin. Each time the room lit up strange runes on the ground would glow. After a few glances, Zhang Dong already had a theory about what this place was.

“The room seems to be purifying the lightning energy that the crystal is giving off. It’s then injecting it into that coffin for some reason, is there someone in it?”

With another jolt of his spiritual sense, he tried focusing on the object in the middle of the room. Even when he tried he could not feel anything, the inside of this thing had no living being.

“Hm...”

Zhang Dong looked around, without seeing any traps he finally approached the large rectangular coffin. The room around it had some columns and on the walls, he could see some faded pictures with faces that were unrecognizable.

‘Has no one been here for hundreds or thousands of years?’

He wasn’t sure but he was still wary of the inside of this coffin. This world clearly had demonic beings in it. There was always a possibility of some kind of undead creature being in there. He did not feel the presence of any shielding formations but that didn’t mean that there was nothing there. If something exceeded his current cultivation or his old one, he would not be able to detect it.

‘Here goes nothing...’

It needed to be done, trying to cultivate with this unopened box of pandora would be dangerous. What if a bag of bones popped up and tried biting his nape or some kind of evil spirit tried to take over his body when he wasn’t paying attention?

With a swift kick, the large slab of the coffin was removed. Zhang Dong jumped back while in a battle stance.

“Hm?”

He quickly dropped his guard as the only thing that was inside of this coffin were rocks.

“Wait... doesn’t that look like a head?”

He approached and after looking everything over again he noticed that the rocky bits were shaped as a person. It looked like an old statue made from stone was there. It was clearly broken and crumbling. The moment he picked up what looked to be the head, it just crumbled into dust.

“Why would they put this in here...”

It was a big unknown, it looked like someone just placed a stone statue in here and locked it. Was someone trying to fake their death a thousand years ago or was there more to it?

“Hm?”

This wasn’t all, on a part that used to be the right hand he noticed something shining. After looking this up he found a storage ring, it was quite old but still in working order. It was locked but for someone that

studied craftsmanship, this was nothing. After a few minutes, he managed to unlock it and peeked inside.

In the spatial ring, he found a lot of old texts. There were various lightning techniques that were of a higher grade and belonged to this empire. One, in particular, seemed interesting but it was not complete.

‘If someone used this thing they would suffer a large cultivation backlash, it’s easy to fix though.’

With a quick scan, he had taken in all of the cultivation knowledge that was inside this ring. It didn’t say much about the original owner though.

“Good sword.”

After going through everything there was one weapon of note. A white sword, it was radiating lightning energy and was actually a heaven graded item. With it being far above his current cultivation level he couldn’t really use it but when he recovered it would be a nice replacement for his old one.

“This robe isn’t bad either...”

Zhang Dong changed into his original appearance. The dark hair of Dai Rong that he used changed into snow-white as his body expanded into a more handsome and muscular man.

The robe that he found had the colors that he liked to use, it was mostly white. On the back of it, there were some characters that translated into ‘Lightning Lord’. It was not quite the Lightning Emperor or Monarch title but would do nicely for now.

The robe was very similar to his old one as it was not one of the flowy ones, clearly more meant for hand-to-hand combat. There were even leg guards and armguards on it that were made from a shiny white spirit metal.

“Finally some luck, now it’s time to cultivate.”

The only thing that was missing from this spatial ring was a flying sword on which he could escape after he reached the core formation level.

After going through this chamber a few times he did not find anything else. Whatever this old statue was was unknown to him. There was no spirit in it and he could not find any traps that would turn on when he was concentrating.

With some muscle strength, he removed the coffin from the middle of the chamber. He also needed to alter the formation in this room. With a few alterations, he was now making it focus all of the energy into one point. That point was him.

While already dressed in his new robe he sat down. He was now in the traditional lotus position with his palms open. It didn’t take long for the crystal above him to charge up and fire a concentrated lightning bolt towards Zhang Dong’s forehead.

The moment the lightning bolt connected with his body he could feel the energies seeping into his foundation pillars. It was working, he could feel himself advancing further. The lightning strikes continued to descend and each time they hit they were swiftly absorbed.

One, two, three, ten, twenty, and then thirty. He took on all of the powerful lightning bolts before being able to fashion another perfect golden foundation pillar. His power churned and he could feel the electrical energy rising.

“Not enough, I need more!”

He looked up towards the lightning crystal above him. This treasure was somehow storing the lightning bolts but also hindering them from descending. It was like a small dam that only let a certain amount of energy through. For him to advance faster, it needed to go away.

From his eyes, a golden beam of light escaped and connected with this lightning crystal. The crystal unable to contend with this might soon burst into many tiny particles. The light from Zhang Dong’s eyes didn’t vanish but instead of the light being exuded it was now drawn in.

A giant suction force was created that was now continuously sucking all of the lightning energies from outside. Zhang Dong could feel the process being sped up tenfold and it was speeding up.

More and more foundation pillars were created. Five, six, seven, eight... and they continued with no end in sight. After he went through the fifteenth he realized that something was wrong.

There were far too many foundation pillars, they were exceeding what should be possible for a cultivator in this world.

‘I just reached the late stage and I already have this much... how many will I get?’

His cultivation was reaching new before seen heights. The foundation pillars kept being created as he absorbed a massive amount of energy from outside. The whole room began to rumble as the walls were being strained by all of this might.

With this amount of noise, he also believed that he would be found out soon. This is also why he could not stop. Along with his opened eyes, he also opened his mouth and started to absorb everything.

He was not sure what was happening outside but he would not be surprised if the whole lightning storm wasn’t being forced into this room. With another resounding boom, he reached the great circle stage of foundation establishment.

His whole body was now surrounded by a giant golden pillar of light. This pillar shot up and drilled through the ceiling. If they didn’t spot him before, they would certainly be aware that he was here now. The pillar of light reached all up to the sky and he could feel all of the lightning energy being sucked in by him.

‘Hey Bob what’s happening, I should have broken through already...’

There were already over sixty foundation pillars and he had reached the great circle realm but it was still continuing. Without knowing what to do he finally asked his AI companion for some help.

“User’s increased soul capacity has caused a unique cultivation variation... warning... user will die if he doesn’t break through...”

‘Well, thanks a lot...’

Zhang Dong concentrated, the pillars kept increasing and it looked like he would have to wing it. Finally, when the pillars started to approach seventy they started to slow down. Sixty-eight, sixty-nine, and then seventy.

Finally, as that seventieth pillar was formed he felt a jolt in his very being. He could feel something changing in his dantian and also in his soul. This was also followed by a bout of pain, pain that he had never felt before. It felt like his insides were being ripped apart by these energies.

He screamed out in pain as everything started collapsing around him. The whole place exploded and he shot up into the sky as a rocket. But even while in pain, he could feel it. He could feel his core being created and it looked like there was more than one...

## **Chapter 358**

“What’s happening?”

Elder Jingyi asked after feeling the whole place trembling, soon a person burst through the entrance to this meeting chamber.

“Elders! We are being attacked!”

“What!?”

All the people in this room were the heads of the Thunderball hall. All of them were gathered in this room and no one was able to notice any enemies getting closer.

“How could this be? Why wasn’t the alarm sounded?”

“They appeared out of the mist, we only detected the enemies after they started attacking the protective barrier.”

“Who are the enemies, who dare attack the Thunderball Hall?”

All the people looked at the sect member that burst through the door, the man quickly replied.

“It’s the Blood Poison Cult! They have the whole sect surrounded, they must have sneaked in during the night!”

“The Blood Poison Cult? Then it must be true, she really did betray us...”

One of the high elders commented as he recalled the Sect Leader’s granddaughter being rumored to have betrayed them. With their sudden attack right after their strongest member was poisoned this was too much of a coincidence.

“It doesn’t matter now, everyone protect the disciples, we must protect the sect, someone go inform the Sect Leader! Contact the other righteous sects, see if they will aid us in this time of need!”

The elders soon scrambled, this was a life or death situation. Everyone knew that this Evil sect of poison users would not stop until everyone was dead. Fleeing was not an option as they would just be hunted down to the end of the world.

On the outside, everyone was woken up by a blaring alarm. The outer sect elders and disciples were forced to defend themselves as they were the closest. The protective shield that was surrounding the whole mountain started cracking each time it was hit by the enemy's powerful attacks.

"That's it, break it down, kill everyone, don't let anyone survive, no prisoners!"

An elder from the Blood Poison Cult shouted. He was wearing a dark red robe that was surrounded by a purple haze of poisonous energy.

This was a coordinated attack. This sect came to eradicate the Thunderball hall and take their resources. Siege weapons were firing off large boulders filled with poison.

Many demonic cultivators were already in their battle formations and taking the appearances of ghastly demonic creatures. They pounded on the protective barrier with their massive claws and tendril-like appendages until it broke down.

The bloodbath soon started, the outer sect members were no match for the elite army of this sect. The disciples were quickly evacuated towards the inner sect while the elders and seniors tried to stall.

Even though this was the Thunderball Hall's territory the protective formations and weapons didn't slow down the approach of the enemy sect. It looked like the plans of the defenses that this sect was keeping a secret were also stolen.

It seemed that they knew where all the traps were placed and where all of the weak points were. With a lack of defensive measures the Outer Sect was quickly collapsing and people were forced to quickly evacuate into the inner sect where there was a stronger protective barrier.

"Hah, run you little roaches, you will not escape your fate!"

A large booming voice was heard by everyone, in the sky, three people were seen floating around. They were not using any treasures to float around as they didn't have to. Each of these three had a cultivation level of a Late Stage Supreme Saint.

"Brother Ying, your Blood Poison Cult looks ferocious today, it does seem that we won't be needed."

The man that previously shouted was wearing a Blood Poison Cult's robe that showed off that he was the leader. The two people that were floating next to him had other robes and were clearly not from this sect.

"I thank you brother for your words but we must stay vigilant, that Zheng Tengfei might still be alive."

The other two men nodded. They were two sect leaders from allied demonic sects. Zheng Ting was put under a demonic bond with the Blood Poison Cult's leader. She was brainwashed into loving him and revealed to be his perfect spy.

The cult was forced to act after they got news that this Thunderball Hall leader was close to ascending into the Saint Emperor realm. If that happened they would be surely eradicated by this righteous sect's new might.

Before that would happen they planned this out, the two Supreme Saints here were just the backup plan if the old Hall leader proved to be stronger than expected.

“You dare steal away my granddaughter!”

Soon the fight was brought over to the inner sect barrier and the Patriarch was forced to show himself. He was clearly not doing great as he was forced to stand on a floating platform.

“If it isn’t old man Tengfei, you’re not looking so good, is something wrong?”

The cult leader laughed out while the two men to his sides chuckled with him.

“Do you think you can leave here unscathed? Do you think my sect won’t put up a fight? You forget where you are!”

The old man held out a trident in front of himself and raised it up into the sky. When he did the whole lightning tower began to churn with power. The lightning bolts started being absorbed into the tower’s lightning rods as the whole tower started bursting with energy.

“Even in my weakened state, I can still operate the ancestral tower!”

“Hah, are you sure about that?”

The cult leader brought out a strange pendant and while the patriarch was ready to deliver judgment upon the enemies he activated it. The pendant glowed in red and with it, a strange tattoo appeared on Tengfei’s neck.

The old man started vomiting purple smoke and quickly lost focus. The tower that was glowing brightly quickly lost its power and the lightning bolts started firing off in random directions even causing damage to the inner sect.

“Did you really think I would come here to be killed by that treasure? You forget that I’m a master of poison!”

The cult leader knew that Tengfei was the only one able to operate this huge tower of lightning. With the sect leader now down on the ground and vomiting blood, there was nothing to stop them from eradicating this sect.

“Everyone attack! That protective formation will run out of power soon, they lost their trump card!”

But while some of the lesser elders from the Thunderball Hall were trying to activate the patriarch’s trident something strange started to happen. The whole tower started rumbling and the lightning storm above became rowdy.

For a moment the cult was still outside, still attacking the protective barrier. The people only noticed a bit later that all of the lightning was being absorbed by one lightning rod on the tower. This rod soon started melting as it could not contain all of the energy and a large hole was blown from the inside.

At exactly the same moment of the protective barrier giving out the top of the tower exploded. The terrified Thunderball Hall members looked up and could see a massive pillar of bright light shooting out into the sky.

“What is that...”

“Oh no, the tower is no more and the protective formation is done for, we are all going to die!”



While the Hall members cried out in panic the cult members stopped with their approach as their leader shouted.

“Brother Ying, was this also one of your plans?”

The two Supreme Saints next to the cult leader asked as it didn’t look to be so.

“No... did you also notice?”

“Yes, there is a person in that pillar of light... the power is immense...”

“Let us attack!”

The three Supreme Saints nodded at each other as they didn’t like how this looked. It seemed that this Thunderball Hall had another secret that they didn’t know about. They all combined their attacks and fired them into the sky at the person inside of the storm.

This person was, of course, Zhang Dong. He was in a world of pain as he flew up into the sky. He ended up busting his way through this tower of electricity and entering the lightning storm himself. All of the lightning that was in the vicinity was promptly absorbed into him.

“GAHHHhhh”

A massive shout was heard by everyone and prompted them to look up. What they saw there was a giant ball of deep blue lightning energy that looked like a sun. As this energy came to be it lit up the night. The whole place was illuminated and it looked like it was daytime.

The dark energy attack that were fired off by the Supreme Saints collided with this large ball of lightning energy but could not pierce through it. It seemed that Zhang Dong’s ascension was not going to be stopped by external factors.

He could feel it, his lightning core was being formed. It was much larger than the one that he had before and it crackled with deep blue lightning energy. This wasn’t all, there were still more foundation pillars to go as this was only a third.

A second core that was pure gold and radiated the holiest of energies was created soon after. With its creation, the deep blue ball of lightning that he was surrounded with turned to gold and gave out a burst or repulsion.

The demonic cultivators and poison users were pushed back by these holy energies. Some of them were instantly knocked out cold while others started vomiting pitch-black blood.

This was not over yet as Zhang Dong had to focus more. There was one more core to go and soon the rest of the foundation pillars started to melt and be absorbed into a new core. This one didn’t really have a color as it was translucent in nature, it was the soul core.

With one last shout, the ball of electricity turned white and everything was engulfed in it. The people had to avert their gazes while some that didn’t would be temporarily blinded.

Zhang Dong gave out a sigh of relief as the massive pain that took him over was quickly subsiding. The bright light that surrounded his body was also vanishing and he could smell the fresh air outside.

He focused on the cores that he had created. It seemed that they were the three aspects of his cultivation that were the strongest, lightning, holy element, and then his soul power. The three cores floated around each other as if they were harmonizing.

When he was ascending into the core formation realm he had momentarily lost his senses. The first thing that he noticed is his ability to fly, this was not something a core formation cultivator should be able to do.

When he checked, he could feel that his all-around power level was about half of what it was when he was a nascent soul early stage cultivator. Maybe after he digested this unique realm change, he would get even stronger.

Finally, he started glancing around and he noticed that he was surrounded from all sides. Below him were the Hall members while everywhere else there were evil-looking cultivators dressed in black robes.

Before he could ask about what was happening he heard an old man that seemed to be poisoned call out to him.

“T-that robe... that ring... is it possible... is it the great ancestor? Did you manage to survive the dreaded petrification curse?”

‘The what now?’

When petrification was mentioned he could only think back to the coffin that he found a crumbled stone statue with a spatial ring. The same ring he had around his finger as it was of a much higher caliber than the rest.

‘Does this mean that that was a person in there... but what is this situation...’

He started looking around, it seemed that he was right in the middle of a good old-fashioned sect cleansing. Apparently, he was now the ancestor of the losing side.

‘Oh boy, here we go again.’

## **Chapter 359**

Zhang Dong looked at his spatial ring and the new white robe that he apparently lifted off a dead man’s coffin. If he was in a game he would probably have gotten the grave robber achievement.

He expected to be met with strange gazes after he appeared but there were far too many people here. Not only was the whole Thunderball Hall out here but also some other sect.

This other sect was quite evil-looking. He could see many monsters that looked like centipedes and spiders standing along with these cultivators. Their attacking formations were radiating poisonous and demonic energies as well.

It was clear that while he was busy cultivating this righteous sect had been attacked but the other side. He was far too busy with his cultivation to notice anything that was happening outside. The room he was in was also sealed off so no one noticed him either until he blasted off into the sky.

After reaching that sealed-off room he had hoped to silently breakthrough. The plan was quickly discarded after his cultivation effort became a bit chaotic. To not go crazy from the pain he also hastened his ascension by directly jumping into the eye of the storm.

Now the sky above him was devoid of any lightning energies as he had swallowed it up. It would probably take a while till this area recharges itself and years to get back to the previous levels.

“Ancestor? Was there an ancestor like that? How could one still be alive?”

Suddenly the people started talking. With his appearance, the Thunderball Hall members became chatty while the enemies backed away. Zhang Dong was now radiating energies similar to a powerful Supreme Saint. His cultivation was of his own empire so the people were not quite sure where he stood.

“T-there was one... one of the old ones, the long lost ancestor that suffered a curse of petrification...”

The old man that was talking wiped his mouth from the blood that he had vomited out. It was the Hall Patriarch that was affected by the poison. During Zhang Dong’s appearance, he had regained some strength as the Poison Cult leader had stopped using his poison treasure.

“There was a legend the previous Patriarch passed on to me, of our ancestor that gave his life to protect the Hall. The legend stated that he was still somewhere on the sect grounds but the knowledge of where exactly was lost to time...”

Zhang Dong listened to this story and was able to come to a conclusion. This ancestor had died a long time ago but the room he was placed in was probably designed to keep him alive.

Through the ages, it was forgotten and probably the formations hiding his chamber were above the current sect’s knowledge. Only legends remained that no one really took seriously, even the ancestor’s true name was lost.

“So this is their trump card? An ancestor? Do they think that we were born yesterday? He is only a Supreme Saint at the late stage.”

“You are right brother Ying, he is trying to mask his cultivation but it’s easy to see through it!”

“Their whole tower was now destroyed, Tengfei is in my grasp. Aid me, brothers. Let us kill that fake ancestor and reap the rewards!”

Zhang Dong could clearly hear what the trio of gloomy cultivators was talking about. His presence was not strong enough for them to just back away. It looked like he would be fighting his way out of it.

There was also an option of running away. These three might not be able to chase after him or even try. That was not something that he would do, he still felt bad about absorbing the lightning storm that belonged to this sect. He would also not leave so many people to just be slaughtered.

“Hold your foul tongue you bastard, you dare offend the great ancestor?”

The Thunderball Hall Patriarch got really feisty after hearing the enemies belittle his so-called ‘ancestor’. He was quickly put in his place by the cult leader that activated the treasure. It made the old man vomit up more blood and poison, which was quite a sight.

“Be quiet old man, your deaths are already assured, now my brothers and sisters att...”

“You sure have been talking a lot of shit for someone in slapping distance.”

Before the cult leader could finish his speech a booming voice spread out through the whole sect grounds. Zhang Dong finally spoke out which caused all of the demonic and poisonous beasts that this sect brought over to cower in fear.

“What?”

Zhang Dong quickly vanished from his spot in the clouds and appeared before the old man. Tengfei looked like he was close to withering away. His face was purple and he looked very skinny, it was a miracle that he was able to hold on for so long.

“A-ancestor?”

The Hall Patriarch was surrounded by other elders from his sect that were unsure what to do. But they were not even able to react as with one step he appeared right before the dying man.

“Don’t talk and let me heal you.”

He touched the old man’s forehead with his finger that gave out a golden glow. He activated his healing energies that caused his golden core to churn with energy.

The old man’s body began glowing in a radiant golden light. This light uncovered many purple-colored spots in his body and forced them outside. He could see this purple miasma being quickly expelled in the form of smoke out of the man’s body as he was nourished back to health almost instantly.

“Impossible... my poison...”

The cult leader was taken aback after seeing Zhang Dong cure the old man of his affliction. The whole process of healing was far too fast for a high grade poison.

“What?”

There was also more, the pendant that he used to activate the poison started glowing as well. Soon he found himself throwing it into the air before it burst into tiny fragments, destroyed before his eyes.

“My nine hydra poison pendant, how could it be affected from this far away!”

While the cult leader was shouting out from behind, Zhang Dong inspected the old man in front of him.

“You should be fine now, how do you feel?”

“I feel... I feel great, my hip pain has also gone away...”

The old man stood up on his own two feet and his face looked quite rosy. Zhang Dong was a bit surprised at the potency of his own healing arts. Previously he needed to use needles to insert his holy energies into the correct acupuncture spots but now it seemed that he wouldn’t need to do that anymore.

The golden core that he made had all of his healing Dao inside of it. Thanks to it being a whole separate core it wasn't as limited. Then there was his lightning core which looked more similar to the one that he had before he ascended to the nascent soul realm.

It could be just regular lightning as well as golden. There was no drop in power whatsoever and using both at once was also not a problem. Then there was the translucent soul core which was the biggest mystery.

From what he could tell, he could also add it to his lightning attacks. He needed to test it first but he was sure that when he added the soul core he would be able to damage the soul directly.

This would prove quite good against any nascent soul cultivator. They would probably not be able to use their nascent divinity to escape any fights as his attacks would damage it directly. Then there were the phantom and ghost-type enemies that would also not pose a threat.

"Great, then stay here."

Zhang Dong nodded as he could see the patient had recovered. He turned around and looked to the three Supreme Saints in the distance.

"Great Ancestor, let this Tengfei help you!"

With his health being recovered the old man was now also at the level of these three. From what Zhang Dong could tell he was a little bit stronger.

"No need, just protect your sect members, leave the punching bags to me."

"Punching bags, great ancestor?"

Zhang Dong nodded while strutting forward. His body flew forward at a great speed which caused the three cultivators to take out defensive positions.

"Hey you three stooges, let's take this somewhere less populated."

He shouted out while charging forward, the three cultivators reacted by putting up a barrier which was quickly broken by Zhang Dong's charge.

The closest old man was promptly kicked in the stomach and sent flying into the distance. The other two were grasped by the necks and yanked. Soon the three vanished from the area in a matter of seconds leaving both sides stunned. The leftover silence was then broken by the Hall Patriarch.

"What are you doing? Don't you see that we have the Great Ancestor on our side! Defend the sect, their beasts are weakened, their formations are nothing, defend the Hall!"

The old man's shout invigorated the large gathering of lightning cultivators. They just witnessed a powerful ally easily removing the three strongest combatants from the board. This was the best moment for a counterattack.

Everyone nodded and soon they also charged into battle. The charge was led by the Hall Patriarch that now with the disappearance of the sect leaders was the strongest person here. He quickly picked up the

trident that he had dropped, even if it was unable to use the tower's might it was still a powerful weapon.

Zhang Dong could hear the shouts behind him and wanted to give out a sigh. He wished to minimize the bloodshed but it seemed that his new friends were still battle-happy cultivators. Even though he would be fine if they just turtled up until he returned they were going on the offensive.

"This should be far enough."

With another kick the middle stooge found himself forming a crater in the ground. The two men that he was holding up by the neck were also thrown to the ground and bounced around it like stringless puppets.

"Hm, maybe I expected a bit more from you three..."

At first, he thought that he was just a little bit stronger than these three but this didn't seem like it was the case. He was still only an early stage core formation cultivator but his might was approaching the nascent soul level.

"You cur, how dare you do this to me... I will eat your soul."

The man that he had kicked repeatedly while flying here finally floated back up into the sky. Previously he was wearing some kind of mask but now it had fallen off and was showing his ghoulish features.

"You sure you don't mean sole? You were eating it quite a bit back there."

"Ying never told me anything about this, if we survive you better pay up."

"I apologize brothers, I did not expect someone like that to be in that sect but together we can kill him!"

The three finally recovered enough to float up around him. They surrounded him in a triangle formation. The ugly demonic cultivators burst forth with evil energies while chanting, it was finally time

## **Chapter 360**

Zhang Dong hovered in the air while looking down at his opponents. One of them was quite handsome for his age but he could tell that the man was using a disguising technique. Below it he could see a face that only a mother could love.

Behind him, there were the shouts of many people. The battle had reached its focal point and to end it he would need to end these three old farts.

"If you surrender, I promise to only cripple your cultivations and you may live the rest of your lives atoning for your sins."

"Surrender? It's you who should surrender, I don't know who you are but you can not defeat all of us. Now brothers, let us destroy this man and claim what is ours!"

The man that looked younger than the rest proclaimed while the other two just nodded. He knew that there was no use trying to bargain with these types but he liked to give people an option.

"Is that so, well then..."

Zhang Dong pointed out with his finger and behind him, a circle of magic appeared. It was followed by many more such circles which riddled the sky behind him in a mass of bright lights.

“Mass Lightning Arrow.”

From the magic circles, a storm of magical lightning arrows was produced. This was one of the many magical techniques he had learned from the other world. It could very well be used with Qi as a replacement for mana and actually required less energy while still packing a lot of damage.

The three stooges were in the process of chanting a strange ritualistic spell as well. The moment the swarm of bright blue lightning bolts descended on them a dark purple shield appeared before them.

This shield looked to be holding out fine but this soon changed as the onslaught of lightning bolts descended onto them.

“How could he attack for so long...”

The arrow rain was without mercy and the magical circles remained in place. Soon the three men inside the barrier started sweating. It was clear to them that they might not be able to outlast this enemy and drastic measures needed to be taken.

Zhang Dong just looked at them while being calm. This was mostly a test of his new cultivation realm that he had achieved. He was still not used to the three cores inside of him and how they could work independently from each other.

While he was contemplating his move the three demonic cultivators acted. They chose to overload their protective shield and cause it to explode. This caused a massive burst of evil energies to be exuded into the surrounding area.

Plants and insects that were in the close vicinity all died instantly. The whole place was covered by a strange greenish mist that even enveloped Zhang Dong’s body.

Even then he remained calm. It was clear that this was something akin to a smokescreen that these cultivators used to surprise their opponents. Any regular cultivator would be forced to retreat in fear of being poisoned by this miasma.

Zhang Dong on the other hand instead of running he activated his golden core. A radiant glow of holy energy covered his entire body. There was a certain lack of lightning energies surrounding his body.

Now with his golden core being separated, he did not need to use lightning along with his holy energies. This would save him much energy which could be better attuned to his needs.

“Oh no, not the dark mist, what will I do now...”

He chuckled a bit as the poison and evil energies could not penetrate through this thin layer of holy energy. It would be easy to just remove it almost instantly but if he did that, then the enemies would not come to him by their own volition.

Soon the first took the bait as he raised his hand up and added some lightning energies to his palm. With this raised palm a bladed weapon connected, this weapon looked to be a pitch-black battle scythe.

“You demonic types sure like those scythes of yours... wouldn’t a spear or halberd be much more proficient?”

“How did you...”

The cultivator’s eyes went wide as his sneak attack was blocked by Zhang Dong’s palm. Even though his bodily cultivation was still at the silver body level he could block attacks like these by surrounding his body parts with concentrated Qi instead.

This was one of the more basic protective techniques but also one of the hardest to do during the heat of the battle. The cultivator needed to focus on the direct moment of impact. If they timed it badly they would suffer dearly for it.

“I guess you will be the first one.”

The other two cultivators were not far away, one was below while the other one was above him. Before they could finish their combination attack, Zhang Dong grasped the scythe with his hand.

His eyes started glowing with lightning energy which he then quickly discharged everywhere. Most of it went into the metallic item he was holding. The old man that was grasping it was quickly shocked by a mix of lightning and holy energies.

Both him and the evil cultivator lit up like a bright star and caused all of the mist to be consumed by the light. The two men that were trying to attack him from two sides were forced back and had to use defensive trinkets to protect themselves.

“One down, two to go...”

“What!?”

After the bright light subsided they could see their ally’s charred body. It soon started crumbling into dust as it was incinerated by the lightning energies.

“Blast you Ying! This was not part of the deal, I did not come here to die!”

The ones that remained were the Poison Cult master and one of his friends. This friend was clearly not too keen on remaining here anymore. This was one of the most common traits of these types of people.

They were strong against weak people but their confidence quickly crumbled at any sign of resistance. They would not put themselves in harm’s way to help their allies, sooner they would plunge a dagger in their back so that they would have more time to flee.

“No brother, we must fight together if we don’t...”

“Screw you, you are no brother of mine!”

Zhang Dong looked at the two men fighting in front of him. They were quick to blame each other and clearly none of them was concerned about their other allies’ death.

Ying was unable to convince this man who tossed out some items towards Zhang Dong. Some turned into strange creatures that flew towards his way, while others created more poisonous smoke.



“I might have overestimated your strength or I might be stronger than I originally thought.”

He gave out a sigh and released a new aspect of his aura into the surrounding area. It wasn't very flashy as there was a certain lack of a golden aura around him. Instead, his body was covered by a dim transparent glow.

The creatures that were attacking him found themselves dropping down from the sky as if a mountain was weighing down on them.

“Wh-what is this...”

“How could someone like this have been hidden away in the Thunderball Hall?”

“Please, senior, I didn't have anything to do with this. It was all that Ying, he made me do it! Show mercy!”

After the dust was cleared both of the cultivators were seen down on the ground. They were grasping their chest in the spot where their heart was. They could not move and breathing came hard as they were being successfully suppressed by Zhang Dong's soul core.

This core in particular allowed Zhang Dong to affect other people's souls. Soul arts were a forgotten art and very few texts existed on how to harness the power of the soul. Thus for him, that had this soul core it was easy to directly attack his opponent's immortal souls.

With no knowledge as to how to protect themselves, he could disable people that were even at his level. Only much stronger opponents could ever hope to protect themselves from such attacks. It was more or less an advanced version of a suppression attack that would allow him to never have to bother with weaker opponents.

“Your types are quick to change your tune at the drop of the hat, I gave you a chance to surrender.”

His opponents were now defenseless and before him. They were unable to fight back as he was successfully suppressing their souls. If this was the old Zhang Dong then he might have been merciful but after years of struggles, he was not so kind.

“You have killed many and you would kill more if you were left amongst the living, I shall give you a quick death.”

He began concentrating and thought back to one of the techniques he discovered in the spatial ring. It was very similar to one of his old moves that he was unable to do because of the lack of a nascent soul.

Zhang Dong clasped his hands together and his body was surrounded by a deep blue light. This light soon expanded while being followed by crackling thunder and lightning.

It started as a small circle but soon turned to a hundred meters in diameter. Then with a burst of lightning, a draconic head emerged from within. On this head, Zhang Dong was standing proudly.

Soon a huge lightning dragon could be spotted by everyone in the vicinity, its howls filling everyone with fear.

“N-no, I can not die here...”

“No please, what do you want? Spirit stones? Virgins? I can give you all, I will pledge my life to you senior, just let me live.”

Zhang Dong didn't answer while the man pleaded. The time for talking was over as the dragon opened his mouth. A large ball of electricity formed in front of its maw and continued to increase in size.

“I hope you can find solace in your next life...”

The lightning dragon's breath descended on the ground and the two disabled cultivators. The massive burst of energy almost instantly disintegrated both of them into atoms while producing a giant explosion.

The fight between the sects came to a stop as none of them were able to move a muscle while under this lightning dragon's aura.

“Well then.”

Zhang Dong looked down to the giant hole that he blasted with the help of this lightning dragon. It was not quite the same as his soul beast but could be used during his core formation days.

He finally turned back to the Thunderball Sect, it was time to clear things out with the locals and then finally try going back home. With the increase in his cultivation, his system was revitalized, maybe now he could teleport back and see his family...