

Walker 381

Chapter 381 - The End Of Second Round

The people in the audience had underestimated Lin Mu at the start and even after finding out that he was representing Wu Hei they hadn't thought much of him. But now the overwhelming manner in which he had defeated his opponent made them think thrice about him.

Lin Mu looked at his opponent who was now lying unconscious on the ground and he wondered if he used too much strength by accident. Lin Mu was still learning to control his strength well and thus needed more time. But thankfully after the healers came and helped Pigu Shan, he turned out to be okay.

Lin Mu walked down from the ring and towards the seating area. The people watched him closely and could not take their eyes off him. Especially the ones from the cultivation sects. They were looking at him as if he were some prize that they needed to get.

Since Lin Mu had represented Wu Hei and was also an aristocrat in their eyes, they thought that they had the chance of recruiting him. For them, he was a potential future powerhouse, that if they obtained would increase the status of their sect.

"Nicely done, brother Mu Lin!" Wu Hei praised.

"Indeed, Lord Mu Lin is impressive with his skills." Zhen Sui added.

"HAAHAH! Brother Mu Lin is a true man who fights with his all! But even that isn't enough for a good fight if your opponent is a weak chicken." Wu Teng said in his boisterous voice that spread all around the seats.

The people that came with Pigu Shan looked at them but didn't show any wronged expression or anything. Rather, they just had wry smiles on their face as they could only sigh. But the other aristocrats seemed to be a bit agitated and were whispering amongst themselves.

Enlai Lan was doing the same and was talking with his subordinates. The only person that seemed to be the least bothered was Qing Yuan Tiu, who was simply sitting on her seat with her eyes closed in meditation. Lin Mu didn't know if she had seen him fight or not, but then pushed that to the back of his mind.

Finally, the referee began his next selection and pulled out the stick. The contestants fought and soon it was the time for the last match. Qing Yuan Tiu had still not been selected, so people were wondering if they would get to see more of her again.

"The next contestants are Pidao Wuyun and Tianjin Shu!" The referee declared.

"Oh seems like Qing Yuan Tiu gets the free pass in this round."

"Yeah, still at least we know she's good enough and it wouldn't have mattered even if she fought." One of the sect personnel said.

Lin Mu was also a bit disappointed as he wanted to see more of her moves but was now unable to. Soon the fight between Pidao Wuyun and Tianjin Shu started and people watched it. These two were some external cultivators that the aristocrats had hired and their strength was above average.

Lin Mu sensed their spirit qi fluctuations and found them to be at the late stage of the qi refining realm.

"Huh, so they were lucky having each other as opponents." Lin Mu said.

All the cultivators that were below the peak stage of the qi refining realm had already been eliminated at the first round, and thus now only peak stage ones were left. These two were the lucky ones that had met a late stage qi refining realm cultivator at the start and had passed the first round.

But now it was quite obvious that this would be the last round for both of them. One of them would be losing at this very round, while the next one will lose in the next round for sure. The fight was a bit strange this time, as both of them were being Cautious.

They mostly used probing attacks and defensive skills to avoid damage. This was quickly starting to bore the people as the fight had gone on for about 30 minutes now.

"Come on already! Finish it!" Someone from the crowd shouted.

"This is what I was talking about. Chickens that can't do much but strut out their chests and run away when they're in a fight." Wu Teng taunted.

Eventually, forty minutes had passed and now even Wu Hei and Zhen Sui were getting irritated. It was as if they were watching two kids fight, and it did not entertain the guests at all. This was meant to be an event that increased the reputation of the marriage, not lower it by frustrating the guests.

"This is enough!" Wu Teng said as he stood up.

"No! Teng do not go down." Zhen Sui warned.

Seeing that his brother was getting agitated now, Wu Hei sighed. He then turned his eyes towards the two fighters in the ring and stared at them. Lin Mu could feel the faint spirit qi fluctuations coming from his body and the spirit sense that had been released.

This spirit sense was quite strong, even stronger than his own. Lin Mu didn't know what its range would be, but just from the potency that he could feel, he estimated that it should be more than double his own range. This made Lin Mu interested, as from what he knew most early stage core condensation realm experts had a spirit sense range of hundred meters.

It was around two hundred for a mid stage core condensation realm cultivator, three hundred for the late stage and four hundred for the peak stage one. Just from this, it meant that Wu Hei was at the late stage of the core condensation realm at the very least.

Wu Hei's spirit sense reached the two fighters, and they flinched for a moment. This made one of them stumble as he was in an imbalanced position. The first of the other one hit him in the stomach, which sent him rolling on the ground.

Seeing that his opponent had taken the hit, he took advantage and easily pushed him out of the ring.

"The winner is... Tianjin Shu!"

Chapter 382 - Qing Yuan Tiu Versus Dumu Ao

Lin Mu raised his brows at what Wu Hei had done and this was a new method of using spirit sense that he had seen. He wondered if he could use it too.

"You can also do it rather easily, but it will only work on cultivators that are much weaker than you or the ones that have a frail mentality. Those with a stronger will not be affected by the pressure of spirit sense." Xukong advised.

"Oh... I understand senior." Lin Mu replied in his mind.

"Though, this is kind of obsolete for you. The Nine Divine heart sutras that you have are much better at mental disturbances and stronger to affect too. You may as well practice them more." Xukong added.

Lin Mu then realized that what Senior Xukong was telling was quite right. The effect that Wu Hei's spirit sense had shown was basically a lower version of his severing heart sutra. The spirit sense was only able to momentarily make them lose their focus and disturb them, but his severing heart sutra could fully send them in a daze.

'Wait a minute... can I...' Lin Mu suddenly realized something.

He waited for the next round to start and prepared for it. There was a chance that he could be the very first person to be chosen, thus he would have to test it out later instead. Besides, in the third round, only four matches were going to happen and they were all going to involve contestants that were stronger.

But Lin Mu had not expected that the very first round would be involving the person who had just fought.

"The first contestant is Tianjin Shu who will be fighting... Nie Li!" The referee declared.

The face of Tianjin Shu instantly fell after hearing this, and he knew he had lost already. But still, he walked to the ring, as was the etiquette and formally forfeit the match.

"I forfeit!" He announced.

Nie Li nodded his head in acceptance, as he had already expected this. He was also secretly thankful as he was still a bit tired from his previous match and needed to recover.

"Nie Li is the winner!" The referee quickly declared.

Lin Mu didn't even get to test out what he wanted to do, and the fight was over.

"Looks like I'll have to wait for the next one." He muttered to himself.

The referee pulled out the next match up and announced it.

"Qing Yuan Tiu will be fighting... Dumu Ao!" The referee annoyed.

"Oh it is Qing Yuan Tiu, this will be a good fight." Someone from the audience said.

"Yeah, even Dumu Ao is a good contestant and his fight was good too." Another person added.

Lin Mu had seen this man Dumu Ao's previous fights closely and knew that he had good skills. He was also an aristocrat that was additionally a cultivation sect disciple. He belonged to the Cloven Sea sect, which was actually a medium sized sect comparable to the Tri cauldron peony sect.

This sect existed in the western border of the Shuang Qian Kingdom and was active in the Black Dawn kingdom as well. Lin Mu had read up on this sect before and knew that they were specialized in emission type qi skills with water based one's being their specialty.

Lin Mu watched as the man went down the seats along with Qing Yuan Tiu. But the thing that Lin Mu wondered was if he would even get to test out what he wanted in this fight. The balance of power was rather skewed on one side as both of the contestants use emission type qi skills, but Qing Yuan Tiu was much more powerful.

The two of them stood at the ring and took their places.

"Senior sister Qing Yuan Tiu, I would like to invite you to our sect. I believe both our sects could have a good conversation." Dumu Ao said while cupping his hands in greeting.

"I'm thankful for the invitation junior brother Dumu Ao. I'll inform my elders about this invitation, but first we need to give a good show to the people." Qing Yuan Tiu said in a more genial tone.

"That would be great. I hope senior sister will guide me and teach me today." Dumu Ao said before taking a defensive stance.

He had already known that there was no chance of him winning this round as he was heavily outmatched. Still, he had his honor that he couldn't afford to lose. His clan was not that high up in the aristocratic circles, and all he had today was gained through his own hard work and the cloven sea sect.

"FIGHT!" The referee ordered.

~Shing~

~Crack~

Qing Yuan Tiu did the same thing she had done before, and six metal rods appeared from her legs and pierced into the stone floor. But Dumu Ao was ready for this and acted differently than he had shown. Instead of defending like he was presented before, his hands glowed in a blue hue before he swung them at Qing Yuan Tiu.

~kua~

The blue hue turned into an illusory whip that seemed as if it was made out of water, yet it was not. Lin Mu was observing it clearly and sensed that the method of using this technique was rather complex compared to the basic fire ball technique.

He had thought that it also used basic attributes qi and converts it to elemental qi to execute the technique, but this one seemed to have more complex qi circuits. He would have to directly probe Dumu Ao body to be able to see it clearly.

The whip swished ahead and was about to touch Qing Yuan Tiu when suddenly she swirled her hands.

~Whirl~

A wave of greening energy was released from her hands and spun around her body blocking the blue spirit qi whip.

~Thuck~

It was as if someone had slapped a plate filled with water with their hands. A few ripples appeared on the green wind barrier before the whip dissipated.

Chapter 383 - The Gale River Palm

The audience watched with wide eyes as the attack faded away like nothing. The green wind barrier that was surrounding was like a shredder that ripped the blue qi whip into nothing.

Lin Mu was also watching this and was impressed by the green wind barrier that Qing Yuan Tiu had created. From her style of fighting, Lin Mu could tell that she would be immobile a lot and thus would need a method to protect her.

Normally she should have been part of a team, but since she was alone now, she had used a different method of defending herself against the attacks. But when Lin Mu took a closer look using his spirit sense, he realized that the green wind barrier was not something that could be used for a long time.

He could see the fluctuating spirit qi that was circulating in her spirit qi circuits and it looked as if it was going to fade away at any moment.

'Looks like her defense is for a short term but can block a lot of damage.' Lin Mu thought.

Dumu Ao who had been dumbstruck by this was trying to attack again but could not do so as Qing Yuan Tiu attacked before that. She spread her palms away before pushing them towards him.

~Shua~

"There it is again, the gale river palm!" The Junior disciple of the Tri cauldron peony sect said.

The greenish wind that was spinning around Qing Yuan Tiu flowed to the front and turned into a pillar of wind that hit Dumu Ao.

~Thud~

Dumu Ao was thrown out of the ring and his back hit the ground. Though it seemed like Qing Yuan Tiu was a bit more lenient this time and there was no excess force behind the attack. It had merely pushed Dumu Ao out of the ring, but had not made him slam against the wall and break his bones like Qing Yuan Tiu's previous opponent.

Dumu Ao took a couple of seconds to recover before standing up.

"I thank senior sister Qing Yuan Tiu for her lenience!" Dumu Ao stated in a respectful tone.

Qing Yuan Tiu simply nodded her head and looked towards the referee, who raised his right hand.

"Qing Yuan Tiu is the winner!" He declared.

"Impressive fight!"

"I wonder if the Autumn valley sect is still accepting disciples."

"Still, Dumu Ao did have some good skills. It was his misfortune that he had to be paired up against someone that was an entire cultivation realm above him."

A cacophony of voices came from the audience, and the people cheered with joy. While this fight was also quite short, the people still got to see the different skills which had exacted and entertained them.

Qing Yuan Tiu and Dumu Ao went back to their seats after this, and no healers were needed in this match. Now two more fights were remaining, and there was a fifty percent chance that Lin Mu would end up fighting in this match or the next one.

The referee shook the wooden cylinder and pulled out the next match up.

"The next match will be... Bu Lang versus Cai Wen!" The referee declared.

Lin Mu's eyes lit up as soon as he heard the announcement. Bu Lang and Cai Wen were the perfect candidates to test his skills on. What Lin Mu wanted to do was to see if his range with the Nine Divine Heart sutras had increased or not.

He had not had the chance, neither had he remembered to check it in the recent few days. And with his increasing cultivation, there was a chance that it had increased. Bu Lang and Cai Wen were aristocrats as well and were both at the peak stage of the qi refining realm, making this match rather fair.

The two contestants headed towards the ring and waited for the referee to start it.

"Fight!" The referee ordered.

Bu Lang and Cai Wen both had similar fighting styles and were even using similar techniques.

"This Cai Wen... is there any chance he's related to Lord Cai?" Lin Mu questioned, seeing some familiarity between them.

"Yes, you are right. Cai Wen is the nephew of Lord Cai and lives at the capital city. He's come to attend the fight to represent lord Cai." Wu Hei answered.

"Oh? Is that so... but then where is lord Cai? I can't see him here." Lin Mu asked further.

"Lord Cai was attending the previous competitions these past four days and wanted to attend this one too, but he had some kind of an emergency and had to give up on it." Wu Hei answered.

Lin Mu furrowed his brows as he wondered what could have been important enough for Lord Cai to miss this tournament. From what he had seen, the old man liked to be social and made a lot of connections in the aristocratic circle.

But he was willing to miss out on a great chance such as this for some reason.

"What about this Bu Lang?" Lin Mu questioned.

"Bu Lang is also from the capital city and is one of the younger generation members of the Bu Clan." Wu Hei said.

"Is that why their fighting styles are similar because they both learned in the capital city?" Lin Mu questioned curiously.

"Both of them went to the same martial academy in the capital city that is popular amongst the aristocrats. That's why they have similar fighting styles. But if you consider just talent, then Bu Lang is above Cai Wen. He reached the peak stage of the Qi refining realm two years earlier than Cai Wen." Wu Hei answered.

Lin Mu nodded his head and turned back to look at the fight.

Bu Lang and Cai Wen had already exchanged a few blows, and their clothes were in disarray.

"Haa" Bu Lang shouted as he did a palm strike to Cai Wen's back.

Cai Wen was a bit slow to block it and ended up taking the full force of the attack.

~Thwack~

No bones were broken, but Cai Wen had been shaken due to the impact. Lin Mu looked at the two closely before chanting the severing heart sutra in a very low voice.

Chapter 384 - End Of The Third Round

Bu Lang was about to follow up with a kick to Cai Wen's legs when he suddenly became a bit dazed. Cai Wen who had been bracing for the impact became shocked at the man's sudden change. His eyes lit up as he realized that this was a good opportunity for him.

A grey hue covered Cai Wen's arms as he raised both of them high up to the sky and brought them down together with his hands clasped into a fist. The attack landed on the top of Bu Lang's head and he was knocked down.

The impact was strong enough to shake his brain and render him unconscious for the rest of the match.

"STOP!" The referee ordered.

"The winner is Cai Wen!" He announced.

"Whoa! That was unexpected." Someone from the crowd said.

"What happened to Bu Lang suddenly? Why did he stop moving?" Another person questioned.

It seemed like the audience was more interested in why Bu Lang had acted like that rather than Cai Wen winning. Even Cai Wen, the man himself was a bit surprised that he had won. He furrowed his brows for a bit before simply shrugging.

The healers quickly went to check up on the unconscious Bu Lang before a troubled expression appeared on their faces.

"Bu Lang's... Bu Lang's not breathing!" One of the healers said.

Another one checked his pulse and said, "he has no pulse either!"

The people who had accompanied Bu Lang were now agitated.

"Quick, do something! You cannot let him die!" they shouted.

The healers quickly took out healing pills and fed them to Bu Lang. They checked him for injuries and discovered that except for small cuts and bruises, the only injury Bu Lang had suffered was the blow to his head.

They checked his head as well, but didn't find any fractures on it and neither was it bleeding.

"Wu Hei, you need to check it." Zhen Sui said, seeing that the situation had turned dire.

She couldn't let a guest die here, not to mention that the Bu Clan was not a clan they wanted enmity with. Their power was quite strong in the capital and would have control over a lot of businesses. Besides, the Wu family was already in quite a bit of trouble with Wu Xun being interrogated by the King.

The audience was also anxious and didn't expect something like this to happen. But the most scared was actually Cai Wen.

'I'm doomed if Bu Lang dies by my hands...' He thought to himself as his hands trembled.

About five minutes passed before the healers were finally able to get Bu Lang's heart working again.

"Bu Lang is breathing!" The healers spoke.

"Take him to recover and call some Senior healers to do a more detailed check." Wu Hei ordered from the seats.

"As you command Lord Hei!" the healers said before swiftly carrying Bu Lang away on a stretcher.

Cai Wen could only go and sit on the seat and wait to see the result. Even if he had won the fight, he was not feeling excited. Even winning the entire tournament would not be worth it if Bu Lang died.

"We shall continue now!" The referee announced.

The people calmed down a bit after hearing his words and waited for the next draws. There were three people left in the pool and two of them were something that the audience wanted to see fight. These were none other than Enlai Lan and Lin Mu.

Enlai Lan was simply the popular choice, while Lin Mu had defeated his opponent in a rather overwhelming manner.

"The next match will be... Enlai Lan versus... Zuo Hen!" The referee announced.

The crowd was a bit disappointed as they wanted to see Lin Mu as well. But it seemed like his luck was good, and he had easily reached the fourth round. Lin Mu was didn't really feel anything about this as he already knew that he would have to fight one of the two core condensation realm cultivators, eventually.

He just looked towards the ring and saw the two contestants descend. But as soon as they got on the stage, Zuo Hen spoke up.

"I forfeit!" Zuo Hen said.

"Oh? Are you sure, Lord Zuo Hen?" Enlai Lan asked.

"Yes... I know my limits and better than to challenge them for now." Zuo Hen stated.

"Alright." Enlai Lan said as he nodded his head.

"The winner is Enlai Lan!" The referee announced.

"Lord Enlai Lan is the best!" one of the women from the audience shouted along with the other fans of Enlai Lan.

Zhen Sui and the rest of the people in the top seats watched with indifference as they had already expected this result. Wu Teng looked extremely bored from his expression and was busy playing with the snacks instead.

Lin Mu took a look over to Yi Zi Jin and found her to be sitting there with her eyes closed.

'For a bride to be her behaviors are rather strange...' Lin Mu thought.

Now the third round had been completed, and only the fourth round and the final round were left. It had been about five hours since the tournament had started and it was now afternoon.

"We will be taking a break now and let the contestants rest. The next round will begin in one hour!" The referee declared.

The people stood up from the seats and walked down. A small banquet area had already been set up for the guests to enjoy near the battle ring, and all of them moved there.

"We may as well enjoy some food till the next round begins." Wu Hei said to Lin Mu.

Zhen Sui and the people from the Tri cauldron peony sect did the same and went to the banquet area. There tables had been set up for the guests, and the servants were already serving food and drinks to the guests.

Lin Mu accompanied Wu Hei to a table and was joined by Wu Teng. They were waiting for the food when Lin Mu suddenly felt something.

"This... from the caves..."

Chapter 385 - Disturbance In The Tunnels

Lin Mu could sense the strange aura that was now coming from beneath the ground. He tried to estimate where they were currently according to the position of the tunnels and realized that there should be a sludge pool below them.

'This... could it be the new blood sludge that is being expelled from the main blood pool?' Lin Mu wondered.

His spirit sense pierced the ground but could not go much deep. Still, he had not done this to check the area inside but just to see the aura that was coming from it. He looked around, and it looked like no one had actually sensed this, only him.

"You've sensed it before and your sensitivity is also higher, that's probably why you are able to feel it." Xukong spoke.

Lin Mu silently nodded his head and looked around again to confirm if anyone else had sensed it. But it looked like everyone was still focused on the food.

Lin Mu leaned towards Wu Hei and whispered. "I sense something in the tunnels below, perhaps new blood sludge is being expelled."

Wu Hei's eyes went wide for a moment before calming down. His spirit sense immediately extended from his body and pierced the ground, traveling deep. But even then it was stopped half way through without reaching anything.

Wu Hei's brows furrowed as he was unable to sense anything.

"It's too deep for me to check... I'll send someone to take a look." Wu Hei spoke.

"Alright... if needed, we may need to stop the tournament. Would that be possible?" Lin Mu asked in a low voice.

"Hmm... I may have a method," Wu Hei replied as his eyes glanced towards Wu Teng for a second before continuing, "but yes, I should be able to."

"Can you speed up the rounds then? Maybe it is better to wrap this up early instead?" Lin Mu questioned after thinking for a bit.

"Give me a few minutes..." Wu Hei said before standing up and going towards his mother, who was talking to a few guests on the other side.

Wu Teng looked at his brother who had abruptly left the table and was about to ask him but then realized that it was probably something related to organizing.

'Better to not ask something that may end up with me needed to work...' Wu Teng thought and returned his attention to the food in front of him.

Lin Mu also started eating and finished his first serving of food pretty quickly. This food was also made using some low grade spirit beast meat along with spirit herbs. This not only helped the cultivators with their cultivation, but was also quite delicious.

After the servants brought him his fifth serving, Lin Mu's gaze accidentally went towards Qing Yuan Tiu, who was sitting at a table with Dumu Ao and his companions. They were talking animatedly while Qing Yuan Tiu would add to the conversation from time to time.

Her behavior seemed to be a different from what it was during the match. Lin Mu then looked at the second core condensation realm cultivator that was there, Enlai Lan. This man was also talking with a few other sect personnel along with a few aristocrats that had accompanied him.

Lin Mu looked at him for a minute before an idea popped into his mind. His spirit sense extended and stayed at a short distance from Enlai Lan. He then started chanting the severing heart sutra and targeted Enlai Lan. Thankfully Lin Mu had chosen the right moment and Enlai Lan was not speaking right now, or the others would have found it strange if he suddenly stopped talking in the middle of the conversation.

As soon as Lin Mu saw that he was dazed, he probed Enlai Lan with his spirit sense tendril. It went through his body and observed the cultivation base of Enlai Lan and the items that he had on him. Lin Mu took less than three seconds before quickly pulling his spirit sense back.

Enlai Lan snapped out of his daze and suddenly stood up.

"Is there a problem, Lord Enlai Lan?" One of the people sitting at the table questioned.

Enlai Lan did not answer him right away, but instead looked around for a couple of seconds.

~Phew~

A breath was released by the man as he finally looked at the man who had asked him a question.

"No, nothing... I was just mistaken and thought someone called me." Enlai Lan spoke before sitting back down and returning to the conversation.

On the other side, Lin Mu was intrigued by Enlai Lan's reaction and also about the things that he had found out.

'Hmm... seems like he's only at the early stage of the core condensation realm, though he does have a couple of spirit tools. A low grade spatial storage ring, a communication jade, a protective talisman hanging on his neck, and finally a pair of daggers hidden on his waist. Thought they are just normal daggers and not spirit weapons.' Lin Mu thought to himself.

About ten minutes had passed since Wu Hei had gone off, and now that Lin Mu looked for him, he was nowhere to be found. Even Zhen Sui had disappeared to somewhere. But just as he was wondering, he found them coming towards him from the side of the Manor.

"Honored guests, I know you all are enjoying your time here, but I'm afraid it must be paused. We will be resuming the tournament right away." Zhen Sui announced.

Barely half an hour had passed since the break began and another half an hour was left. While some people seemed a bit upset as they were having conversations, others seemed to actually be happy.

"This is no problem, madam Zhen Sui. I would actually prefer to watch the tournament more." One of the guests spoke.

"Yes, yes, while I was enjoying my time here, the tournament is definitely more exciting." Fa Shiu, the senior brother spoke.

"Alright, if everyone is in agreement then please move back to the fighting ring." Zhen Sui said and everyone started to return to the seating area.

Chapter 386 - Cheated?

"The first match up of the fourth round is... Mu Lin versus Nie Li!" The referee announced.

After the people had gathered back everything had proceeded swiftly. Lin Mu didn't ask Wu Hei about how he managed to convince his mother and thought that it was alright. Looking from the faint scowl on his face, it was apparent that he probably had to make some concessions.

Another thing that had happened was that Cai Wen had actually resigned from the tournament. His claim was that he was not recovered yet, and neither was he in the right mind to fight. Though the people realized that the true reason was probably that he knew he was outmatched against everyone.

This way the people in the fourth round had been reduced to four and now the matches could progress normally. The very first match was Lin Mu and thus he walked down from the seat and Nie Li along with him.

"Lord Mu Lin please guide me." Nie Li said while cupping his hands.

Lin Mu returned the greeting and looked at the Referee to start the match.

"FIGHT!" The referee ordered while waving his hand.

"Let's end this quickly..." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

He didn't want to be caught in the middle of the tournament if anything was happening with the Gu legion or with the blood pool. Thus he used all his power from the get go.

As soon as the referee's words were heard, Lin Mu amplified his legs with spirit qi and pounced at Nie Li. The man was clearly not expecting such a strong reaction from Lin Mu. He had seen his previous fight and how fast he was but did not expect this kind of an attack.

Before he could even react, Lin Mu was already at his neck.

"Sorry to make it end like this..." Lin Mu said before grasping his neck and throwing him out of the ring like a rag doll.

~Thud~

Nie Li landed on the floor outside the ring and could not move for a minute. He was pale with the fear that had filled him when that hand clasped his neck. He felt as if he was being watched by a deadly beast and could not bring himself to resist.

"STOP! The winner is Mu Lin!" The referee declared.

Lin Mu nodded and went back to the seats much to the shock of the people. Since Nie Li had not stood up yet, the healers went to check up on it but found him to have no injuries, except for some bruises and scratches from falling on the ground.

"That was quick, Good." Wu Hei spoke.

"Better to end this quick. I did not expect it to be... easy like this..." Lin Mu replied.

The corner of Wu Hei's lips twitched as he heard Lin Mu calling the best of the aristocrats weak. Sure there were people at the nascent soul realm or even the Dao shell realm among the aristocrats but they were old elders that wouldn't interfere in matters such as this.

This was the fight amongst the younger generation and thus it was expected.

'It was not that the fights are easy, but you who are a difficult opponent...' Wu Hei thought to himself.

The referee saw the silence in the crowd and just decided to call out the next match up. He had already been instructed to speed up the process. He didn't know why they would do this, but he had to follow the orders and that was what he did.

He didn't even have to shake the wooden cylinder to pick the contestants as only two of them were left and they were a fitting match too.

"The next match is Qing Yuan Tiu and Enlai Lan!" The referee announced.

"WOO!!" The audience shouted after hearing it.

"Finally, this is what we've been waiting for!" Other spoke.

Lin Mu looked around and saw that even Wu Teng and the disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect were excited about this. It was quite obvious that even they did not get to see the battles between core condensation realm experts as much and thus were expectant.

Lin Mu shook his head and apologized to the people for what he was going to do. He watched as Enlai Lan and Qing Yuan Tie walked up to the ring.

"Sister Qing Yuan Tiu perhaps we can have some conversation after the competition is over," Enlai Lan suggested with a smile.

"Perhaps..." Qing Yuan Tiu curtly said before cupping her hands.

"FIGHT!" The referee ordered.

Instantly Lin Mu's lips moved, and he chanted the severing heart sutra.

Qing Yuan Tiu looked towards her opponent, the only one here that she was actually wary about. The rest she had not even put in her eyes... well except for one. She knew that she was at a disadvantage here and if she did not react quickly she may have a chance of getting defeated.

But just as Qing Yuan Tiu was about to get ready to defend, she saw that Enlai Lan was standing there dumbly. She was surprised but pushed the thoughts of curiosity to the side.

~Shing~

The six rods pierced the floor and her palms glowed with a green light.

Gale River Palm!

~Shua~

The greenish wind pillar hit Enlai Lan who had just become conscious at the very last moment. One moment he was looking at his opponent and in the next, he was in the air. He was incredibly confused but could not do much.

~Thud~

His body landed on the ground outside the ring much to the astonishment of the speechless audience.

Even if the past two fights had been knock outs, this was too much for them. Especially for a popular contestant like Enlai Lan.

The referee was barely able to hold back his jaw from dropping but then remembered his professionalism.

"The winner is Qing Yuan Tiu!" He declared.

"What the..."

"This is unfair! Lord Enlai Lan didn't even get to react, She must have cheated!"

Chapter 387 - Accusation And Final Round

The words of the persons who had just spoken spread in the audience. But the very next moment another sound was heard.

~Slap~

"How dare you say that! Watch your tongue or I'll cut it off myself!" Spoke an old man who was actually accompanying the accuser.

"Bu-but Elder! That..." before the person could continue though, another slap was given and he flew from his seat, falling to the ground.

~Thud~

"Not! One! Word! More!" The elder stressed.

The person could not hold on more and directly fainted due to the impact. Some teeth could also be seen fallen to the side of him and blood was leaking out of his mouth. But the elder paid no attention to his junior and simply looked at Qing Yuan Tiu with a wry expression.

"Please forgive my junior, senior Qing Yuan Tiu. He is naïve and does not know the way of the world." The old man apologized.

"It is fine..." Qing Yuan Tiu said while shaking her head.

None of the others dared to speak after seeing that exchange and knew better to talk. Qing Yuan Tiu stood right there on the stage as it was obvious she was the finalist along with Lin Mu. It wouldn't make sense for her to leave it.

But while the audience was confused about the whole fight and how Enlai Lan had acted, Qing Yuan Tiu was even more confused about it. She wondered if Enlai Lan had given up the fight on his own or something. By now, the healers had come to check up on Enlai Lan and found him to be normal.

Though he was still not speaking and seemed to be reeling in from the shock.

"Lord Enlai Lan! Can you hear us?" The healers tried asking.

"...Yes, I can..." Enlai Lan spoke after a delay.

His face was rather fallen and he was wondering what had gone wrong. He had a big plan that he was supposed to be doing after he won the competition, but now that he had lost in such a manner there was no way he would be able to do it.

Another thing that scared him was that he seemed to have lost memories of those two seconds between the start of the fight and the moment he was sent flying. He thought for a bit and come to a few conclusions.

One, either he was mistaken and lost the memories due to the shock, or something had caused this. Which could be a poison or some kind of technique. But from all the techniques that Enlai Lan knew of that could cause something like this, they needed to make direct contact with him, or that he needed to see them execute the technique to take effect.

Such techniques could be executed through two modes, either visually or through sound. But Enlai Lan was sure that neither had he heard anything nor seen someone use a technique like that. At first, he doubted Qing Yuan Tiu but then passed over that thought as it was quite unlikely.

A technique like that was not easy to learn, and one would have to specialize in them to become good enough to affect a core condensation realm cultivator like him. This only left him with one choice,

"Poison... I've been drugged..." Enlai Lan muttered to himself.

As soon as he came to this conclusion, his eyes darted around. Suspicion rose in his mind, and the first part he thought of was the Wu Family. He had come here to demonstrate his ability and represent his clan's power. He knew that there were some dealings in the secret between the clans, and him winning against Wu Hei would benefit them.

So the first person he thought of was Wu Hei. But after a minute he realized that he wouldn't do something like that in a high profile event like this. It would be too problematic and the political mess it would open up would be counterproductive to Wu Hei instead.

From what Enlai Lan knew, Wu Hei was a rather reclusive person and did not like to get involved in external matters such as this. The man wasn't even at the core condensation realm and was more interested in his research and scholarly work rather than increasing his cultivation and gaining power.

'I need to be careful with this... throwing words wouldn't necessarily benefit me and would instead cause problems.' Enlai Lan thought to himself.

He simply stood up and went along with the healers to get checked properly. Enlai Lan wanted to see if he truly was drugged or not.

With Enlai Lana's departure, the referee decided to begin the next round.

"The final round will be starting now. Will the two fighters please take their places on the stage!" The referee ordered.

"Good luck brother Mu Lin." Wu Hei said in a calm tone.

Wu Hei wasn't really worried about Lin Mu not winning, rather he was worried about him doing something overwhelming which would cause more problems. Wu Hei had realized by this point that bringing Lin Mu was perhaps a bit too much.

"HA HA! Finally, it is brother Mu Lin's turn! Go and show them who's a true man!" Wu Teng said in his loud voice.

He would have patted or rather slapped Lin Mu on his back had it not been for the distance between them and his mother giving him a glare.

"We look forward to Lord Mu Lin's performance." The disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect said.

"I thank everyone for their blessings..." Lin Mu said before heading down.

He walked up to the stage and cupped his hands in ceremony.

"Senior Qing Yuan Tiu, please give me guidance." Lin Mu said in a respectful tone.

"I ask the same of Lord Mu Lin." Qing Yuan Tiu replied with a calm expression.

Lin Mu nodded and look towards the referee to announce the start when he saw someone that shocked him.

"Peak Master Yi Deng has arrived!"

"Junior Elder Fa Shiu has arrived!"

Chapter 388 - The Peak Master And Junior Elder's Arrival!

Lin Mu's was fine upon hearing the first name but the second name made his face tense up. He didn't dare turn around and simply looked through the side of his hair. It had grown long enough that it reached the base of his neck and covered the side of his face.

Looking from this angle, it hid his face, but he was still able to see through the gaps in his hair locks. He gazed at the person accompanying Peak master Yi Deng and indeed found him to be Junior Elder Fa Shiu who he had missed out on killing.

Wu Hei had looked for the man everywhere in the city as well as the outskirts but the man had disappeared in a strange manner. There were still people looking for him but were unsuccessful. Lin Mu was still a bit worried about him in these past few days but since the man had not shown up his concern had lessened.

But now it had been turned up to the very max and made him anxious. He looked towards Wu Hei and saw him glancing at him too. There was a warning in his sight that told him not to act right now. Lin Mu could tell that even Wu Hei was taken aback and was quickly thinking of something.

"Alright fighters take their place, and... Fight!" The referee ordered.

The Peak master and Fa Shiu were walking towards the seating area and had barely seen towards the fighting ring. Even the disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect seemed to be a bit surprised but also delighted at the same time. Fa Lao was elated at the sight of his elder brother as well.

Lin Mu's attention was still a bit distracted due to this, and thus he slowed his response when Qing Yuan Tiu attacked him first.

~Whoosh~

Unlike before, Qing Yuan Tiu was using a different technique and had not extended the metal rods. Instead of using the Gale River Palm, she was using a different qi skill. This skill had created a few swirling orbs of greenish winds that floated around Qing Yuan Tiu.

She had shot out one of these very orbs at Lin Mu. Qing Yuan Tiu knew that she had to change her strategy against Lin Mu as the boy was much faster than her. While she had confidence that she could defeat him in a fight of pure strength, he had the upper hand here due to his speed.

If she were to use her spirit sword to fly, she would be much faster than him, but her technique's requirements were completely different and required her to be immobile. If she locked herself into a place using the metal rods, she had no doubt that Lin Mu would be able to cover the distance quickly.

While his attacks may not hurt her, Lin Mu didn't have to particularly hurt her. With his raw strength, all he had to do was throw her out of the ring to defeat her. Another thing was her metal rods prevented her from being pushed back, but not from being pulled upwards, which was what Lin Mu could attempt to do.

Thus she used a different technique that she had in her arsenal. This one was much weaker than the Gale river palm but could be used without her needing to be immobile. Plus, her control with this technique was also much better.

Qing Yuan Tiu had not expected that there would be a repeat of the result of the last round. But somehow Lin Mu was also distracted, like Enlai Lan. And did not react in time. She wondered if her luck had been increased somehow.

But when the greenish wind orb struck Lin Mu, Qing Yuan Tiu did not see the effect that she wanted. A brownish yellow barrier appeared on Lin Mu's body and easily blocked the orb before cracking and disappearing.

The Earthen Qi pill's barrier had protected Lin Mu from the attack of Qing Yuan Tiu.

"Dammit!" Lin Mu cursed under his breath.

He had made a rather large mistake and had lost his secondary means of protection, which was to be the earthen qi pill's barrier. Now not only did he have to fight Qing Yuan Tiu but also hide his face from the Junior elder Fa Shiu.

Lin Mu quickly started thinking of ideas as his thoughts ran like lightning.

Qing Yuan Tiu got rid of her surprise quickly and sent another orb flying towards Lin Mu.

~woosh~

This time Lin Mu was able to dodge it by an inch. He could not use Blink and nor could he use Flicker to dodge these attacks. His legs were already strengthened with spirit qi, and their power was amplified. Using his quick movements and agility, Lin Mu started dodging the orbs that were thrown towards him.

By now, peak Master Yi Deng and Junior elder Fa Shiu had reached the seating area and were going towards the seats that were reserved for them. It was along with the rest of the disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect.

Once they reached the top and talked with others, Lin Mu knew that it would become close to immortal for him to hide his identity.

While Lin Mu was thinking his speed has slowed by the slightest and Qing Yuan Tiu noticed this.

'So he can't keep up this speed continuously... it must be quite taxing on him.' She thought.

Qing Yuan Tiu then flourished her hands and spread them wide. Ten more greenish wind orbs formed and surrounded her.

"GO!" she uttered and flicked her hands towards Lin Mu.

The orbs mirrored her actions and flew towards Lin Mu, some going in a straight line while the others curving around to surround him from all sides.

Lin Mu saw them coming and gritted his teeth.

"I'll have to try it at least..." He muttered to himself before his eyes lit up with a fierce flint.

Qing Yuan Tiu saw it for a moment and was surprised, before feeling a tinge of fear in her heart.

'Boulder Collapsing Fist: First form- Impact!'

~BOOM~

A big cloud of dust was kicked up, shrouding the ring.

Chapter 389 - A Swift Murder

The people in the audience couldn't help but cover up their ears as the loud noise assaulted their ears and made them shudder in their seats. They were also shocked at what had happened. One moment Lin Mu was dodging the greenish wind orbs from Qing Yuan Tiu and in the next, he suddenly punched the floor.

The power of that punch was completely on a different level, such that the floor was shattered and thick stone dust blew up in the air, clouding their vision. The ring was made of a black stone that was common and could be easily carved.

It was sturdy enough to handle a majority of attacks of the cultivators below Core condensation realm and most Qi refining realm cultivators would not be able to even crack it with their strength unless they had some unique qi skills.

Qing Yuan Tiu herself was knocked back and fell to the ground as the floor beneath her broke. She was in a daze from the force of the shock wave that punch had caused. It took her a moment to realize what had just happened when the terror got to her.

'He's hiding in the dust!' Qing Yuan Tiu thought.

She extended her spirit sense and scanned the area, trying to find Lin Mu. Qing Yuan Tiu couldn't say that she was that talented in refining spirit sense as her's was barely at the minimum level that the core condensation realm cultivators had. But even then, its range was large enough to check the entire area.

"Huh? Where did he go?" Qing Yuan Tiu said, feeling surprised.

'Did he leave the ring by any chance? But that would mean he lost the fight.' Qing Yuan Tiu thought and extended her spirit sense beyond the ring. But when she couldn't see him even there, she was utterly confused.

"NO! He must have a technique to mask his presence!" Qing Yuan Tiu realized and braced herself to defend.

But unlike what she was thinking, Lin Mu really wasn't on the ring. Rather, he had used the Fourth skill Fade and entered the parallel space. Just before he punched the floor with the Boulder collapsing fist, Lin Mu had shot out his spirit sense and made a guide towards the location of the junior elder Fa Shiu.

In the parallel space, Lin Mu rushed along with his spirit sense as a guide. His eyes were bloodshot as he pushed his body to the next level. Spirit qi was thrumming in his meridians as his muscles filled with power.

"It's now or never," Lin Mu muttered to himself before deactivating the fourth skill fade and appearing in the real world.

His short sword was already in his hand and packed with spirit qi. This was the most he had amplified it with till now, and he had used liquid spirit qi this time. As soon as he appeared there, he was just behind the Junior Elder Fa Shiu.

~Slick~

The short sword effortlessly pierced the base of Fa Shi's head, and Lin Mu touched the back of the man like lightning before storing it in the ring. His spirit sense shot back to the ring, and he faded away into the parallel space.

The audience was fully focused on the commotion happening on the ring and thus did not see the murder that had append just beside them. Even the Peak master Yi Deng was looking towards the ring, not paying attention to his surroundings.

Who would have thought that a nascent soul realm cultivators' lack of alertness would lead them to miss out on such an act. By now Lin Mu was already in the parallel space, moving towards the ring. In less than 2 seconds, he reached the ring and deactivated the skill.

But as soon as he did, he was hit with an orb that knocked him back and destroyed the robes that he was wearing.

Qing Yuan Tiu had suddenly sensed that Lin Mu had appeared to her right side and immediately acted. The time period for which Lin Mu had disappeared was less than seven seconds, and thus she had not dispelled that dust cloud right away.

But now that the greenish wind sphere struck Lin Mu, it also blew away all the dust that was there.

"Look! He's still there." Someone from the audience shouted.

Lin Mu was currently at the very edge of the ring and had stooped his fall by stabbing his hands through the stone ring. Although it had already been shattered into large pieces, it was still in its place. Lin Mu took a look at his shoulder that had been hit with the orb and saw that it was bruised.

But even then there was no external bleeding, and neither was there anything broken for him. The force of the orb had mostly been focused on knocking him back.

The audience didn't know what had happened and that Lin Mu had been hit with one of Qing Yuan Tiu's attacks. But the woman herself did and was shocked for the third time during the battle.

'How did he defend against it again? The first time was the barrier... but now?' Qing Yuan Tiu wondered.

Lin Mu gritted his teeth and knew that he had to be quick and end the fight. He didn't know whether the disappearance of junior elder Fa Shiu had been detected or not, but he wanted to be free from this fight before anything happened.

His lips lightly moved as chants started to come out of them. Qing Yuan Tiu who was looking at Lin Mu suddenly felt her mind getting dull, then in the next second, Lin Mu was right in front of her. She wanted to react, but it was as if her mind had been stuck in a bog, unable to move.

"Time to end it!" Lin Mu uttered as he grasped the hand of Qing Yuan Tiu like a clamp and threw her out of the ring.

Chapter 390 - Winner And Miss

Due to him being amped up, he had used a bit too much of his strength and hurled her too far. By the time Qing Yuan Tiu gained back her control, she found herself five meters in the air and about ten meters away from the ring.

A wry smile appeared on her face as she accepted her defeat. But she didn't fall, no. She reacted rather quickly and a spirit sword appeared in front of her, catching her in the air. She then lightly floated down to the ground and took a breath of relief.

Only now did she realize how hard her heart was beating and how anxious she was during the entire fight. Not to mention that she had just been defeated by a person who was an entire cultivation realm below her.

"He... he... won..." One of the audience members muttered.

"HAHAHA! THAT'S A TRUE MAN! BROTHER MU LIN IS AMAZING!" The boisterous voice of Wu Teng was heard as he stood up and started clapping.

~clap~

~clap~

~clap~

~clap~

The people snapped out of their shock and came to terms with the fact that Lin Mu had just defeated someone above his realm.

"MU LIN IS THE WINNER OF THE TOURNAMENT!" The referee declared.

"WOOHOO!" The people cheered in excitement.

Their hopes for a good fight had finally happened, and they got more than they were expecting. This result was something that had completely blown them away.

~Sigh~

A sigh escaped Wu Hei's lips as he dreaded what was about to come. While the fight had ended and Lin Mu had won, the trouble had just started. The junior elder Fa Shiu was here, and there was no chance that he had not informed peak master Yi Deng of what must have happened back then.

All it would take is for him to point at Lin Mu, and peak master would not even have to lift a finger before Lin Mu would be restrained. For a nascent soul realm cultivator killing a qi refining, realm cultivator was as easy as squashing an ant.

Wu Hei turned his head towards Peak master Yi Deng and saw him staring at the ring.

"Huh? Where's the junior elder?" Wu Hei muttered to himself.

He looked around, but there was no sign of Fa Shiu anywhere. He then looked at the other disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect and saw that even they were unaware of this fact and were looking at the ring with excitement on their faces.

A big question mark was on Wu Hei's face as he couldn't comprehend what exactly could have happened. Perhaps he had mistaken the existence of Fa Shiu and he was never here? Or that he had gone away during that incident in the ring.

"Lord Mu Lin is impressive, I didn't think someone from a small kingdom like the Fenlong kingdom would have such skills." Quan Hong spoke.

"Indeed, perhaps we should look into him a more and see if he wants to join our sect. He will be a great addition to us, I'm sure," Fa Lao said. "What do you think elder brother?" He asked as he turned around to see his elder brother, who had finally appeared after being missing for weeks.

While he had been a bit anxious, he wasn't exactly worried as he didn't think there were many things that could threaten his brother. And if he had disappeared, then something must have happened that required him to be hidden like that.

"Elder brother? Huh? Where's elder brother?" Fa Lao questioned seeing his elder brother missing.

Peak master Yi Deng who was looking at Lin Mu with interest was finally brought out of his thoughts by Fa Lao's words.

"What do you mean, he's right he..." Yi Teng trailed off.

He looked around and saw his former chief disciple missing. Yi Deng's eyes went wide as he became alert. A Strong wave of aura radiated off Yi Deng's body as his spirit sense spread around. Each and every person in the area shuddered as they felt the spirit sense scan and pass over them.

Even Lin Mu felt it and trembled.

"This... a nascent soul realm cultivator is much more stronger than I thought." Lin Mu muttered to himself.

While he had felt the spirit sense of Old Man Jing before who was in the Dao Treading realm, the spirit sense of Yi Deng was more bold. Jing Wei's spirit sense was conserved and precise, while Yi Deng's was like a large net that spread.

"FA SHIU!" peak master Yi Deng shouted in anger.

It had taken him such a long time to find his former chief disciple and when he learned what had happened, he was even more enraged. But there was still the problem that the murderer who had killed his disciples had an unknown identity.

Fa Shiu had just turned up at the stronghold and had told him all that had happened. How people had been following and tracking him. This all felt like a huge conspiracy to Yi Deng, and he knew there were hidden powers at play here.

"WHERE IS FA SHIU!?" Yi Deng shouted again.

The people were now all staring at Yi Deng, who was shouting like a mad dog. The other disciples of the Tri cauldron peony sect were also anxious now and knew that something bad had happened.

Wu Hei narrowed his brows and knew that he needed to control the situation before it got out of hand.

"Peak master, please calm down and tell me what exactly happened?" Wu Hei questioned in a calm tone.

"What do you mean, what happened? One of my disciples just disappeared!" Yi Deng answered.

"Don't worry, we'll find him, he'll be fine. After all, junior elder Fa Shiu is no child and should be able to take care of himself." Wu Hei assured.

But this seemed to have only fanned the flames of anger in Yi Deng's eyes as he hooted again.

"No one will leave this place till I allow them to!"