

## War God 171

Chapter 171 - 400,000 Divine Jades!

Of the eight remaining people, six of them stepped forward.

Everyone was nervous. Even though not all of them had arrived, the results were going to be announced now.

Sitting in the middle, Dongfang Xuanxiao opened his eyes. He scanned the youths and saw the amount of bangles on each of their arms.

“Three, three, three. Each of them has three!”

Even the Grand Elders were surprised when they looked at Jin Sheng'en's team of four.

Jin Sheng'en and Chu Yunxi had three jade bangles each, and the other two youths from the Gold family also had three jade bangles on their wrists.

Which meant that they had twelve bangles in total. They had taken almost all of the jade bangles of the teams that had entered Heaven's Path.

“Twelve?”

Jin Luan and Chu Tianxiong were surprised. According to their calculations, they should have more.

“Unless ...” Both of them looked at Long Chen and Yin Mengyao. They were surprised by what they saw.

“Three! Both of them have three bangles on their arms too. Adding on the other fourteen, all twenty bangles are here ... That means ...”

Everyone else was also shocked to learn that Yin Mengyao and Long Chen had three bangles each. They knew Yin Mengyao was ranked in the top five in terms of strength, but they had all assumed she wouldn't get far with Long Chen dragging her down. Someone did indeed get weighed down, but that person was Long Chen, not Yin Mengyao.

Long Chen also had three bangles, which meant that the remaining two people from the Silver family had zero bangles.

It was now clear which four teams would advance to the next stage.

Gu Batian was happy to see that Gu Cheng and Liu Gui had not only defended their bangles, but also managed to qualify for the second stage!

When Gu Cheng came back, he had told Gu Batian about how Long Chen had saved them, so he wasn't surprised by Long Chen's results.

Both Liu Lan and Liu Yuan, however, were stunned when they saw the three bangles on Long Chen's arm.

“Three ... Three ...”

That meant that Long Chen had defeated two teams. This was considered an excellent result for the first stage.

“Long Chen is not as simple as he seems.” Liu Yuan snapped back to reality and stroked his beard. He was feeling proud of Long Chen.

“Maybe it’s because Yin Mengyao was too strong?”

Liu Lan could not accept it. Long Chen’s enemies were an entire group of geniuses. He had just advanced into the Earthly Core Realm, so how could he have ended up such excellent results?

She was in disbelief when she saw Long Chen smiling.

*The Mortal Caves are where one can show their true strength. I hope he will perform well there.* Liu Lan secretly cheered Long Chen on.

Dongfang Xuanxiao took one more look at the contestants and then announced the results. “The first stage, Heaven’s Path, has concluded. Four teams will advance. It is clear who will advance, so I will not announce it. I will now explain the second stage and which team each of you will be assigned to.”

Dongfang Xuanxiao wasted no time. While everyone was still thinking about Long Chen’s achievement, he quickly started briefing them on the second stage. Long Chen and everyone else paid close attention to what he was saying.

“Everyone will split up and group together accordingly: Jin Sheng’en, Liu Qiong, Liu Gui, and Yin Mengyao will be one team. The rest will be in the other team.”

Yin Mengyao had been placed into the first team, which meant that Long Chen would have to fight Gu Cheng, the other youth from the Gold family, and Chu Yunxi!

After the teams had been decided, Chu Yunxi and Long Chen stared each other down. Chu Yunxi’s eyes were excited, while Long Chen was smiling.

This was what they had hoped for. Long Chen wanted to fight Chu Yunxi to repay his previous attack on him.

“Let’s do our best to enter the inner family.” Yin Mengyao smiled at him confidently.

“Of course.” Long Chen needed to win.

Dongfang Xuanxiao continued, “Now that the teams have been decided, you can rest. We will start the battle in the Mortal Caves at noon.”

“Understood!” Everyone knelt down and obeyed him. Even the Grand Elders dared not defy him.

“Wait.” The Grand Elder of the Silver family suddenly interrupted them and looked at Yin Mengyao. “Yao’er, where are Li Feng and Wang Dan?”

Long Chen knew that they would ask this. He had killed them, so he would naturally admit it, but Yin Mengyao suddenly went forward first. “I killed them.”

Her calm tone made everyone speechless. The Grand Elder of the Silver family frowned.

The genius youths of the Silver family had been eradicated, and only Yin Mengyao was left.

The Grand Elder of the Silver family knew about the grudge between Yin Mengyao and the other two, but she had never thought they would kill each other on Heaven's Path.

"Fine." The Grand Elder sighed. Her disappointed face made her look as if she had aged a lot.

Long Chen sighed in relief after seeing that the Grand Elder would not pursue the matter. She might not have forgiven him if he had said that he killed Li Feng, so he was thankful to Yin Mengyao for shouldering the blame.

It was just a short interruption, and soon everyone walked away under Dongfang Xuanxiao's instructions. When Chu Yunxi walked away, he actually taunted Long Chen by showing a finger slitting his throat.

"Idiot." Long Chen rolled his eyes.

The nine Grand Elders led their family members to their respective resting places. Dongfang Xuanxiao had also left. Long Chen looked at his back and whispered to Yin Mengyao, "Is Lord Xuanxiao strong? Even the Grand Elders are afraid of him."

Yin Mengyao's face had a look of admiration. "There are four exceptionally strong cultivators working under the patriarch of the Eastern Azure Dragon family with the codenames: wind, rain, cloud, and mist.[1] Lord Xuanxiao is the strongest of them and was even dubbed as the strongest fighter beneath the Heavenly River Realm. Do you think he would be weak?"

"Beneath the Heavenly River Realm?" Long Chen knew a little bit about the next realm. Above the Divine Core Realm was the legendary Heavenly River Realm.

The term "Heavenly River" referred to the eighteen starry rivers of the heavens. Those within that realm had the ability to utilize the power of the stars and were monstrous beings. Since Xuanxiao was called the strongest fighter below the Heavenly River Realm, that meant he was a monster amongst the others.

"Long Chen, I will be going now. Let's see each other again at noon."

Yin Mengyao then followed the Grand Elder of the Silver family. It was likely that she would have to further explain herself regarding Li Feng and Wang Dan. Also, she had been poisoned, so she had to try and recover her strength in the remaining four hours.

As for the Turquoise family, the Chu family had already left. Only Liu Lan and Liu Yuan remained there. Gu Batian came over and patted Long Chen's shoulder. "Not bad! I am impressed by your results!"

Liu Yuan and Liu Lan were confused.

"What do you mean?" Liu Yuan asked.

"Long Chen saved Gu Cheng and Liu Gui when they were surrounded by Abyssal Scorpions! He even killed all of the scorpions."

Gu Batian was very grateful to Long Chen for saving his grandson's life.

Abyssal Scorpions were Category Four Black-tier Poisonous Beasts. If Long Chen had managed to save them from the scorpions, that meant his strength was at least on par with Gu Cheng's.

"Senior Gu, you told me before that we should look out for each other. I was merely following your advice. I'm sure they would've helped me if I was in danger too."

Long Chen said it from his heart.

It was true that Gu Cheng and Liu Gui were good guys too, and they indeed would've helped Long Chen.

After Heaven's Path, Long Chen and the others needed time to rest. Gu Batian bothered them no more and led them to where they would be resting. Each of them had a house for themselves.

Now that they were at the peak of the mountain, the temperature was very cold. It was only thanks to the sturdy houses built by the Lingwu family that they could obtain some warmth.

Let's see what kind of stuff they had.

Long Chen revealed his true character and took out the Universe Pouches he had taken from Li Feng and Wang Dan. He was excited to see what they had.

"So many Divine Jades ..." Long Chen was excited to see so much money.

After taking some time sorting them, Long Chen finally counted how many they had.

"Four hundred thousand divine jades ... Those bastards were rich ..."

I wonder how rich I would get if I kept doing this. Killing evil bastards and taking their stuff ...

"How many spiritual herbs can you buy with that?" Ling Xi did some mental calculations while staring at the divine jades.

"Let's see if there's anything else." There were many of their personal belongings too. There was even underwear in Wang Dan's Universe Pouch. But Long Chen dared not even glance in their direction with Ling Xi here.

"Elementary Black-tier techniques, intermediate Black-tier techniques, a bunch of spiritual herbs, and even an intermediate Black-tier weapon."

Amongst their belongings, they had numerous Elementary Black-tier spiritual herbs, some intermediate Black-tier spiritual herbs, and more importantly, an intermediate Black-tier halberd!

The halberd was completely black, but its blade was sharp.

Long Chen examined it and saw that there was a dragon engraved upon it. It depicted a dragon breathing fire, and it looked amazing.

"Is this the Azure Dragon Halberd?" Ling Xi was surprised.

"Dream on." Long Chen examined it again. "It's probably a forgery, but the weapon quality is indeed good. I like it."

“Since Mo Xiaolang has the Heavenly Wolf Dagger, you should aim for the Azure Dragon Halberd,” Ling Xi suggested.

Chapter 172 - Mortal Caves

“Azure Dragon Halberd?”

Long Chen had some hope that he would obtain it, but he was nowhere near qualified enough to do so yet. He needed more time.

But the fake halberd he had was a good quality weapon too. Long Chen liked it a lot, but he had no use for it now, so he put it away.

He then took a rest, and noon soon came.

When it was almost time, Long Chen followed the others to the courtyard.

The weather was still gloomy. The skies were dark even though it was noon, and the sound of thunder didn't stop. The entire place was eerie.

“Let us depart to the Mortal Caves.”

Following Dongfang Xuanxiao's lead, they made their way towards the Mortal Caves.

Long Chen was traveling with Gu Batian's group. He would rather consider himself a member of the Violet family.

Liu Yuan was the Turquoise family's Sect Elder, but somehow he had been abandoned by Chu Tianxiong. He was unsure what to do, and his next step depended on Long Chen's results. If Long Chen lost, Liu Yuan's fate would be bad too.

Liu Lan was aware of this as well. She was feeling guilty for being the reason her father had a falling out with the Chu family.

She was still perplexed by Long Chen's nonchalant attitude, as if he wasn't worried at all.

*How strong is he?* Liu Lan really didn't know.

With everyone walking towards the Mortal Caves, Long Chen could easily see who was with whom. Chu Yunxi and Jin Sheng'en were whispering to each other, while Yin Mengyao walked beside Long Chen.

Only the Turquoise, Violet, Gold, and Silver families would be participating; the rest of the Grand Elders were just here to spectate.

Long Chen felt some strong gazes directed at him. He knew it was Chu Yunxi and Jin Sheng'en without even needing to look at them.

Both of them had been tricked by Long Chen on Heaven's Path, but they were going to settle everything in the Mortal Caves.

“Chu Yunxi, are you confident in winning?” Jin Sheng'en asked.

“I fought him once when he was at the Human Core Realm. He was far beneath me at the time, but he is much stronger now that he’s at the Earthly Core Realm. But I still have an advanced Black-tier technique, so I’m sure I’ll win.”

Jin Sheng’en nodded. “You will have to fight twice, and Gu Cheng is strong, but you should be able to defeat him easily since he has been poisoned!”

Chu Yunxi nodded. “And you only have to deal with Yin Mengyao. It seems that you will be able to enter the inner family.”

Jin Sheng’en nodded. “Yin Mengyao’s advanced Black-tier martial technique, Churning Sea Seal, might be strong, but I can beat her. She won’t win unless she has an advanced Black-tier Body Tempering technique. Chu Yunxi, go all out. We will both be able to learn under Lord Xuanxiao at this rate!”

“Lord Xuanxiao is the strongest person below the Heavenly River Realm.” Chu Yunxi’s eyes were filled with admiration.

Soon, they arrived in a valley at the peak of the mountain. The eerie feeling was even more intense here. There were almost no plants at the peak, and the earth was barren.

“The valley is really big.” Gu Cheng raised his head and frowned.

There was a stench of rot hanging in the air.

“The Mortal Caves are found at the sides of the valleys. This is a natural battlefield that allows others to spectate,” Gu Batian explained.

Long Chen soon saw the numerous holes on the face of the valley.

“There are different kinds of Poison Beasts living in the caves, including Abyssal Scorpions and Yin Snake Demons. Lord Xuanxiao probably won’t choose a perilous cave for you to fight in.”

Soon, Dongfang Xuanxian stopped and turned around. “Let’s do this here. I will assign the first battle: Jin Sheng’en and Liu Gui. The location will be the Mortal Cave of Swamps.

Liu Gui was shocked to find he would be the first to fight against Jin Sheng’en.

Gu Batian patted Liu Gui’s shoulder and smiled. “Don’t worry. You can just surrender if you can’t win against him. I’m here, so he wouldn’t dare to go overboard.”

“And the swamp is not a bad environment. You will be fine as long as you take care of the Poison Crocodiles underneath it.”

Gu Batian gave Liu Gui some information before the fighters followed Xuanxiao into the first Mortal Caves.

The cave was ten meters wide and ten meters tall. They had walked for no more than twenty meters when the cave opened up into a hemispherical clearing.

Long Chen noticed that the bottom of the clearing was a mud pool. The mud pool’s stench was putrid, and bubbles constantly appeared on the surface.

We have to fight on the swamp while controlling our Qi to not sink down. This is somewhat difficult. One wrong move and we will sink down into the bottom. There are even Poison Beasts residing underneath it.

Long Chen carefully analyzed the battlefield.

Everyone stood in a line at the edge of the swamp with Dongfang Xuanxian at the front. “The first battle of the first team will now start. There are two ways to win, either by making the opponent surrender or rendering them unconscious.”

Dongfang Xuanxiao’s voice had a mysterious tone that made everyone unable to defy him.

“Jin Sheng’en, Liu Gui. Enter the arena.”

Jin Sheng’en laughed and leaped into the swamp. He gently stepped on the mud without sinking down, earning everyone’s attention and cheers.

“Fucking showoff,” Long Chen muttered.

Jin Sheng’en looked at Liu Gui. “Come on.”

Even though he was inviting Liu Gui, he was actually taunting Long Chen.

Liu Gui was not scared. The qualifier was very important, so he would never surrender without even trying. He immediately jumped down and glared at Jin Sheng’en.

“Start.”

Even though he was against the strongest prodigy of the outer family, Liu Gui was not afraid. He himself was a genius at the Earthly Core Realm, similar to Jin Sheng’en.

Molten Gold Combat Body?

Long Chen saw the faint, glimmering waves of gold covering Jin Sheng’en.

I wonder if the Blazing Thunder Combat Body is stronger than his Molten Gold Combat Body? Both of them are advanced Black-tier Body Combat techniques.

The battle soon started.

Liu Gui was an excellent fighter who deserved the title of genius, but Jin Sheng’en was stronger. He rarely used martial techniques, but he quickly beat Liu Gui into the mud.

When Liu Gui crawled out from the swamp, Jin Sheng’en grasped his neck. One wrong move and he would snap it in half.

“I surrender.”

Liu Gui sighed after seeing he was no match for Jin Sheng’en.

“Good boy.” Jin Sheng’en laughed and looked at Long Chen with glee before returning to the Gold family’s group.

“The Molten Gold Combat Body is too strong ...”

Yin Mengyao was worried. Both she and Jin Sheng’en had an advanced Black-tier martial technique, but she didn’t have an advanced Black-tier Body Combat technique.

Her chances of winning were slim.

Long Chen now had an idea of how strong the Molten Gold Combat Body was, and he wasn't sure if he could easily win against Jin Sheng'en or not.

“Round one, Jin Sheng'en's victory. Round two, Yin Mengyao, Liu Qiong.”

Liu Qiong was the youth who was slapped by Long Chen for underestimating him. His face still had a handprint on it, and it made everyone laugh.

“What are you laughing at?” The Grand Elder of the Gold family was furious.

He had been enjoying the event so far, with three of the youths from his family entering the second stage. With Jin Sheng'en around, it was almost guaranteed they would be able to send someone from their family into the inner family.

Yin Mengyao and Liu Qiong's fight soon started. It was the same as the previous match, where there was no hope for one party to win. Soon, Yin Mengyao easily defeated her opponent with the Churning Sea Seal.

“Looks like you and Jin Sheng'en will have to fight for a spot in the inner family.” Long Chen chuckled.

“I'm not Jin Sheng'en's match. Long Chen, I might have to rely on you for Mo Xiaolang's rescue,” Yin Mengyao said suddenly.

Long Chen said nothing.

Now that the final match of the first team had been decided, they proceeded with the second team.

Dongfang Xuanxiao had complete control over the matchups. Even Long Chen didn't know who he would be fighting against.

But the results would not change. Long Chen was sure to fight Chu Yunxi in the end.

“Second team first battle, Jiang Liu and Gu Cheng!”

Long Chen was shocked. That meant he would face off against Chu Yunxi in the second round!

Both of them looked at each other, with Chu Yunxi's gaze becoming more and more crazy.

*Long Chen, you are dead,* Chu Yunxi mouthed silently.

As long as he struck fast, Long Chen would not be able to surrender and he would be able to kill him! Dongfang Xuanxiao had never said they could not kill the opponent during battle.

Long Chen ignored him and turned around. He noticed that Liu Lan was looking at him with worry in her eyes.

He moved closer and whispered to her, “Hey, if I win, let me touch your breasts.”

Chapter 173 - Fighting Against Chu Yunxi!

Five youths had been allowed to join the qualifiers directly during the approval process. All of them were at the mid Earthly Core Realm and much stronger than the others. Yin Mengyao, Chu Yunxi, Gu Cheng, and Jin Sheng'en were in that group.



Yin Mengyao and Jin Sheng'en had easily taken down their opponents, so it was clear they deserved it.

Gu Cheng was the same, but because of the injury from the Abyssal Scorpions, he had to waste a lot of energy to defeat the other youth from the Gold family.

One of the most anticipated fights was going to take place now that Gu Cheng had advanced. It was between Long Chen and Chu Yunxi.

Everyone was well aware of the grudge between Chu Yunxi and Long Chen.

They were all excited to see them fight after learning of it.

"Next, Chu Yunxi and Long Chen. Enter the arena."

Within the dark environment, Dongfang Xuanxiao's gaze was like a bright light that shone on Long Chen and Chu Yunxi.

Long Chen's face was calm when he walked on the surface of the mud. It was finally his turn.

Chu Yunxi also jumped down into the swamp. They were standing fifteen meters apart from each other.

There was no need for words. Their grudge was too deep.

Chu Yunxi, however, still had something to say. "Let's make a bet."

"Say what you need to. I will agree to it depending on how much bullshit you spout."

Long Chen's face remained calm.

Everyone, except for a few ladies, laughed when they heard him. It was too funny.

This was not the first time Long Chen had been this cheeky. Chu Yunxi was angry, but he suppressed it knowing that he could soon deal with Long Chen.

"If either of us surrenders, the loser must kowtow to the winner and call them 'grandfather' three times. What do you think?"

"Oh?" Long Chen was interested. "You want me to accept you as my grandchild? But I don't really like you."

"Shut up and answer. Man up."

"Of course." Long Chen would never surrender.

"Then let's start."

Chu Yunxi felt relaxed after fooling Long Chen.

He knew that Long Chen was brash, and he was confident he would win.

Long Chen needed to transform to fight against Chu Yunxi.

The various techniques and power boosts he obtained from the transformation far exceeded what a regular Beast Soul Transformation could provide.

“Is that your Beast Soul Transformation?”

Seeing Long Chen’s beautiful, red scales and bone spikes, even Chu Yunxi was surprised by how strong he looked.

But Liu Yuan was confused. “Lan’er, why did Long Chen not use the Violet Demonic Lizard Primary Beast Soul?”

Liu Lan knew that Long Chen had sold the Beast Soul off. How could he transform into one when he never absorbed the Beast Soul?

But she had agreed that she would keep it a secret, so she lied. “Maybe he intends to use it as a trump card?”

She never thought that she would lie to her father just because of a child.

Liu Yuan couldn’t come up with another explanation, so he decided to stay quiet so he wouldn’t affect Long Chen.

Long Chen and Chu Yunxi’s fight was officially starting!

The wind around Chu Yunxi swirled faster, and soon he shot himself towards Long Chen like the wind. Even the mud underneath him was pressed downwards!

“Billowing Cloud Finger!”

Overwhelming power was concentrated on his finger.

“Billowing Cloud Finger?” Long Chen was calm. Blazing Thunder Power circulated within his body, and soon, everyone saw him engulfed in fire and lightning.

“What is that?” Even the Grand Elders weren’t sure what was happening.

Jin Luan looked at Long Chen before he exclaimed to Chu Tianxiong, “It looks like the Blazing Thunder Combat Body! I’ve seen it before, and it doesn’t have this much strength. That means that it’s the Level Two Blazing Thunder Combat Body!”

“Level Two? Doesn’t that mean it’s on par with an advanced Black-tier Body Combat technique?” Even Chu Tianxiong was surprised.

Everyone else heard their conversation.

Dongfang Xuanxiao nodded approvingly at Long Chen.

“Fourth Uncle, is the Level Two Blazing Thunder Combat Body strong?” Dongfang Tianyu glared at Long Chen with hate.

“It’s a strong technique. It’s similar to the one you are currently cultivating,” Dongfang Xuanxiao explained calmly.

“It’s similar to mine?” Dongfang Tianyu was shocked. “What kind of luck did Long Chen run into to be able to cultivate the Level Two Blazing Thunder Combat Body?”

Dongfang Xuanxiao turned around and looked at him. “And how lucky are you to have been born into the Eastern Azure Dragon family?”

Dongfang Xuanxiao’s voice was unfriendly, causing Dongfang Tianyu to lower his head in fear.

He knew how temperamental his Fourth Uncle was. Even his father would not be able to hold him back if Dongfang Tianyu accidentally angered him.

Because of their discussion about the Level Two Blazing Thunder Combat Body, a lot of them missed the front half of Long Chen’s fight with Chu Yunxi.

Long Chen’s heart was beating rapidly.

This was the first time he could go all-out after reaching the Earthly Core Realm, so he was excited!

“Burning Devil Sun Fist, Blazing Flames!”

The flaming fist seal and the Billowing Cloud Finger clashed with each other, causing an explosion that ripped off a large portion of the swamp. The invisible force spread rapidly, filling the arena with fire and wind.

He became stronger!

Long Chen had used the Blazing Flames to stop Chu Yunxi’s Billowing Cloud Finger. Chu Yunxi was shocked by how much more powerful Long Chen had gotten.

I need to kill him now to stop him from becoming a threat to me in the future!

Chu Yunxi circulated his Qi rapidly. The collision between their techniques had almost caused both of them to fall into the swamp!

Even though Chu Yunxi steadied himself, his body was covered in mud. This made him angry. “How dare you dirty my clothes! You will die today!”

He ran at Long Chen once more.

Long Chen’s eyes were filled with passion.

Chu Yunxi, I finally have the strength to win against you! I will show you that you are beneath me!

The geniuses clashed again.

Chu Yunxi used another finger technique, one that was stronger than the Billowing Cloud Finger!

Liu Lan, watch carefully as I kill Long Chen.

Chu Yunxi was still angry and confused as to why she would choose Long Chen over him.

Qi swirled around him and his finger, causing afterimages to appear as if his fingers had multiplied!

Long Chen’s body was still engulfed in flames. The blood-red flames were the embodiment of destruction!

It’s so inconvenient to fight in a swamp.

Long Chen was aware of the situation regarding the swamp, but he did not fall back. When Chu Yunxi used a stronger technique, he did the same too.

“Burning Devil Sun Fist, Devil Sun Collision!”

A massive, black sun appeared and crashed towards Chu Yunxi.

“Useless tricks! Die, Long Chen!”

Chu Yunxi chuckled and ran towards Long Chen with his fingers stretched.

“Heavenly Illusory Fingers!”

Both of them crashed into each other once more.

The swamp exploded and mud started to rain down. The putrid stench spread everywhere, but everyone was still concentrated on the two people fighting in the middle of the arena.

“What?!” Chu Yunxi was shocked by Long Chen’s strength.

The Devil Sun Collision had not only broken his Heavenly Illusory Fingers, it also sent him flying backwards. Chu Yunxi’s blood was still boiling from the clash.

How could this be? The Heavenly Illusory Fingers is one the strongest intermediate Black-tier martial techniques. How did he come out on top?

Chu Yunxi crashed into the swamp while in disbelief. His image was completely thrown away when his body was completely covered in dirty mud.

“No!”

Chu Yunxi roared and exploded out of the mud, but several beasts emerged from the mud to attack him!

“Die, you Poison Crocodiles!”

Chu Yunxi was already angry when the crocodiles appeared. He killed all five of them in an instant with the Billowing Cloud Finger.

“Long Chen!”

Chu Yunxi saw that Long Chen was still fine and glared at him with hatred in his eyes.

“You chose to die by my strongest attack! I shall show you the strongest advanced Black-tier technique of the Turquoise family!”

Chapter 174 - Cataclysmic Wind Finger!

Long Chen was not even a little surprised that Chu Yunxi would use an advanced Black-tier combat technique! “Have we arrived at the victory-defining strike?” Long Chen smirked coldly and his movements suddenly quickened significantly.

After such a long fight, the audience learned one thing: Long Chen had reached Chu Yunxi’s level!

Complex emotions filled their gazes as they watched Long Chen.

He was on par with Chu Yunxi’s younger sister, Chu Yunyao, when they met just a month ago. Although no victor had been determined, they knew that Long Chen and Chu Yunyao were equivalent in strength. However, one month later, Long Chen was on par with her elder brother, who was known as the Turquoise family’s number one prodigy and the one she admired!

She did not dare believe that this was reality.

“This is impossible, impossible! I must be hallucinating.” Chu Yunyao shook her head and then glanced at Dongfang Tianyu anxiously. He was watching the duel with a cold glare.

After a while, his breathing quickened and he said, “The winner is about to be revealed.”

“Will he win?” Liu Lan was also torn.

After Long Chen shocked her by selling the Violet Demonic Lizard’s Beast Soul, she was sure that he would lose badly in the qualifiers. But how could she explain what was happening before her eyes?

Long Chen had created one miracle after another, shining brightly on the stage that was the inner family qualifiers. Liu Lan was completely floored by his strength by now.

She stared at the energetic Long Chen in a daze, fully attracted by the teenager’s muscular back profile. She suddenly remembered the promise she made to him in a moment of rage, and a sickeningly beautiful blush appeared on her usually cold features.

“Long Chen, you really are a man full of miracles ...”

At the current moment, the man full of miracles was in a stalemate with Chu Yunxi!

“Your strength may have far exceeded my expectations, but an advanced Body Tempering Technique cannot be used as an advanced Black-tier martial technique! Die!”

This time, Chu Yunxi unleashed the most powerful martial technique he had. The immense scale of this attack was on par with Yin Mengyao’s Churning Sea Seal, even exceeding it.

Clouds flew and the wind started howling. The wind screamed continuously, intensifying as it twisted around Chu Yunxi. The powerful attack placed immense pressure on Long Chen.

“Do you think you’re the only one allowed to have an advanced Black-tier combat technique?” Long Chen sneered coldly. His heart was calm, but the Qi in his body started vibrating violently!

*This time, I will unleash the Sword Devil Finger in its entirety for the first time, while I am in my most powerful form!*

He had already used his new martial technique twice. The first time was during his fight with the teenager from the Red family. However, he had not used the Dragon Soul Transformation, so the attack was only released on a normal scale. He had also used it on Liu Qiong of the Gold family while breaking out of their ring, but not to its fullest potential.

This time, the full strength of the *Sword Devil Finger* was unleashed!

“Chu Yunxi is using an advanced Black-tier combat technique,” commented the surrounding elders with some awe. “Long Chen of the Turquoise family probably won’t fare well this time.”

Liu Lan was extremely anxious after hearing these comments, clenching both fists tightly. “You guys! Look at Long Chen’s finger!” exclaimed someone in the crowd. They all looked towards Long Chen.

Long Chen’s right index finger looked as if it had turned into glass that shone with starlight, resembling a sparkling jewel. The aura of sharpness it radiated made them nervous.

“If he’s using this attack against Xi’er, it must be an advanced Black-tier technique,” remarked Chu Tianxiong with knitted brows.

“What?” Chu Fengqing and Chu Yunyao gasped.

Chu Yunyao asked anxiously, “Then, will Brother be able to defeat him?”

“Watch him!” Chu Tianxiong’s eyes were cold. He turned his head to glance at Dongfang Xuanxiao, and he saw that he was also fixated on the duel.

Chu Tianxiong was actually preparing to save Chu Yunxi in the event that his grandson was unable to withstand his opponent’s attack. However, he was also concerned because Dongfang Xuanxiao was standing right there.

Under the anxious gazes of the crowd, the duel between Long Chen and Chu Yunxi reached its climax.

The tornado spinning around Chu Yunxi had reached its peak form, and a moment later, the violent tornado was suddenly compressed until it was the size of his arm, twisting above his finger!

The explosive energy it contained made Long Chen apprehensive.

That was when Chu Yunxi let out a guffaw and unleashed his most powerful attack!

Rumble, rumble!

He pointed his finger, causing the color of the sky to change! “Cataclysmic Wind Finger!”

It lived up to its classification as an advanced Black-tier martial technique, exceeding the Churning Sea Seal’s strength as it arrived right in front of Long Chen. The tornado had left behind a huge, deep groove in the mud where it traveled!

“Another finger technique?”

Long Chen’s expression did not change even in the face of an attack of this scale. Immediately after Chu Yunxi’s attack, he pointed hard in front of him! “*Sword Devil Finger!*”

Instantly, a shining ray of sword light exploded from his finger, momentarily lighting up the whole Mortal Cave. Everyone who saw the sudden light ray jumped in surprise!

“Such a powerful sword Qi!” Dongfang Yunxiao and the nine Grand Elders of the outer families were very impressed.

The sword Qi of the *Sword Devil Finger* soon collided with the Cataclysmic Wind Finger!

Whoosh!

Like the collision between a sword and a shield, they first heard piercing shrieks, then finally, there was a loud boom. Under the audience's gazes of disbelief, the Cataclysmic Wind Finger, or the "shield," was punctured by the *Sword Devil Finger*, or the "sword," and it shattered in an explosion!

"Impossible!"

Chu Yunxi's face was pale. His attack had ended up damaging himself instead, due to the strong vibration in his Qi from the collision. But the ray of light traveled further at a speed that he couldn't compete with and shot right into his body!

"No!!" Chu Yunxi roared. At the very last moment, the only thing he could do was shield his whole body using his Qi, but the sharp, formidable ray of light still ended up shattering his Qi. The sharp sword Qi suddenly pierced through, turning into countless tiny blades that wreaked havoc on Chu Yunxi's body.

"Pfft!"

Blood sprayed out of Chu Yunxi's mouth, and he crashed into the mud beneath. He was instantly swallowed by the mud pool, though his blood dyed the surrounding mud red!

"Xi'er!"

"Brother!"

Panicked shouts sounded from the Turquoise family. Chu Tianxiong shot towards the mud pool with a cold glare, at a speed more than a hundred times faster than Long Chen!

*Long Chen! If anything happens to Xi'er, I will chop your body into pieces!* roared Chu Tianxiong in his heart as his eyes slowly turned bloodshot.

"What are you doing, Chu Tianxiong?" Someone appeared in front of Chu Tianxiong, blocking his way. It was Dongfang Xuanxiao, his expression mild.

Chu Tianxiong awoke from his rage when he was stopped by Dongfang Xuanxiao.

"Yunxi is injured, hasn't he lost already?" he asked with his cold eyes fixed on Long Chen.

"First, he has not admitted defeat. Second, he hasn't been severely injured and has not lost consciousness. So, I command you to return to where you were standing." Dongfang looked at him. Although his tone was mild, there was an unshakable regalness in his gaze.

Although Chu Tianxiong was not satisfied, Dongfang Xuanxiao's increasingly cold glare left him with no choice but to swallow his anger, glare maliciously at Long Chen, and then return to his previous spot.

Everyone's gazes were fixed on Long Chen.

Chu Yunyao and the others found this difficult to believe. Their eyes were filled with shock, but also hatred.

“Brother Tianyu, I want Long Chen dead,” sobbed Chu Yunyao as she leaned on Dongfang Tianyu’s shoulder with tears flowing from her eyes.

Dongfang Tianyu was heartbroken to see the beautiful girl look so pitiful and sad. His expression turned cold, glaring at Long Chen, and he said in a low voice, “Yao’er, don’t worry. Long Chen will not be alive in ten days. This is my promise to you.”

“Really?” Chu Yunyao was overjoyed to hear that.

Dongfang Tianyu was a true inner family member. Being the son of Dongfang Xuanyun, who was one of the Eastern Azure Dragon family’s four great cultivators, his status was higher than the average person’s. With his assistance, Long Chen would be dead for sure.

Even if Long Chen was fortunate enough to enter the inner family in the end, he would have to live his days oppressed by Dongfang Tianyu. And Dongfang Tianyu would only need to find a random chance to kill him off.

“He defeated Chu Yunxi?” Shock was written all over Jin Sheng’en’s and Jin Luan’s faces. They looked at each other, then they reluctantly accepted reality.

“Long Chen’s talent is nonhuman. I didn’t understand why Lord Xuanxiao allowed him to participate in the qualifiers, but after today, I must admit that he has good judgment! Thank goodness Long Chen is not your opponent, or you would have to fight very hard!”

Jin Sheng’en had an advanced Black-tier Body Tempering Technique and combat technique, but Long Chen also had his own, and they were also excellent. This meant that both were on a level above the rest of the participants.

“Sheng’en, Long Chen’s strength is on par with yours.” Even Jin Luan was impressed by Long Chen.

“How is that possible?” Jin Sheng’en asked sourly. He and Long Chen bore deep enmity, and now the latter was threatening his place as the number one prodigy of the outer families. He was looking for death!

Jin Sheng’en’s eyes were filled with killing intent as he watched his good friend get defeated by Long Chen. *Long Chen, I wish you were fighting me instead. That way, you would find out who the most talented prodigy of the outer family is!*

As for Liu Yuan, he was left in a daze when he saw that Long Chen had defeated his opponent, unable to react.

The gorgeous Liu Lan shuddered next to him, her small mouth slightly agape and her eyes a little unfocused.

Chu Yunxi, covered all over in mud, finally crawled out of the mud pool, struggling hard.

*It’s time for him to call me ‘grandfather,’* thought Long Chen. [1]

Chapter 175 – Call Me “Grandfather” Three Times



Long Chen had defeated Chu Yunxi, and Chu Tianxiong had been forced back by Dongfang Xuanxiao. Everyone watched in a daze as this unbelievable scene unfolded.

“The match is not over yet,” said Dongfang Yunxiao. The audience was puzzled. Chu Yunxi was currently struggling to breathe and was no match for Long Chen. Did Dongfang Yunxiao really want to wait until he admitted defeat himself to consider the match ended?

They suddenly recalled the bet between Chu Yunxi and Long Chen. They had wagered that whoever admitted defeat would become the “grandson” of his opponent. And since Chu Yunxi wasn’t unconscious, it was true that he wasn’t considered defeated yet.

A thought flashed through Long Chen’s mind. He seemed to know what Dongfang Xuanxiao wanted him to do.

Since the beginning, although Dongfang Xuanxiao never said it out loud, he had been silently protecting Long Chen by taking his side. Long Chen wasn’t an idiot, so he was well aware of this.

*Goodness, with this deity looking over me, nothing can stop me now.* Long Chen was overjoyed. He couldn’t care less about the expression on Chu Tianxiong’s face. With Dongfang Xuanxiao protecting him, he could do whatever he wanted.

The other Grand Elders also noticed the tiny difference.

Is Lord Xuanxiao favoring Long Chen?

This thought surfaced in many people’s minds, especially Jin Luan’s and Chu Tianxiong’s, who strongly felt that Dongfang Xuanxiao didn’t seem to like Jin Sheng’en and Chu Yunxi very much. Instead, Long Chen had been secretly protected several times.

Chu Tianxiong’s and Jin Luan’s eyes locked. They had a bad feeling in their hearts.

On the other hand, Gu Batian had always been happy for Long Chen. At this point, he acted with even less reservations. He let out a guffaw and said, “Hey, brat, do you still remember the bet between you guys? Admit defeat now and give your grandfather a new brother!”

Chu Tianxiong’s expression changed the moment Gu Batian spoke. He glared coldly and asked, “Gu Batian, what did you say?”

Gu Batian pursed his lips, too lazy to reply. He watched Long Chen expectantly, who was now standing next to Chu Yunxi.

Chu Yunxi had just crawled out of the mud and was covered in it from head to toe, carrying a rotting stench that he couldn’t clean off. Blood and muddy water covered his face, making him lose his impression of a dignified gentleman and making him look very ugly.

“Grandson, admit defeat. It’s too smelly here, and I, your grandfather, would like to leave,” said Long Chen with a grin, patting Chu Yunxi’s shoulder a few times.

At this moment, Chu Yunxi only had enough energy left to prevent himself from sinking into the mud. So how could he have the strength to fight back?

He was in a pitiful state, and his elders and friends were watching! Chu Yunxi almost wanted to kill himself!

Looking up at Long Chen's devious smile, which made him look like a smug weasel, Chu Yunxi was initially filled with fear, though the feeling soon turned into terror.

Long Chen's smile was the substance of his nightmares.

"Let me go, Long Chen. Show mercy ..." begged Chu Yunxi hoarsely, his voice shaking.

"Solving problems at the root and killing off my enemies is more your grandfather's style. Don't you know this already?" Long Chen did not intend to back down.

"What the hell do you want?"

Long Chen smiled and gestured. "What do you mean? It's time for you to fulfill your end of the bet. Kneel, admit defeat, then call me 'grandfather' three times. Isn't that simple?"

The moment he spoke, Chu Tianxiong and the others from the Turquoise family were on the brink of rage. Long Chen was humiliating Chu Yunxi and also the entire Chu family by extension. If news of this spread, the reputation of the Chu family would be tarnished completely.

"Long Chen, do not overstep the line for a moment of indulgence. Let Yunxi go today, and I will let you live in the future." Although Chu Tianxiong couldn't save Chu Yunxi, he could threaten Long Chen verbally.

He was a master of the late Heavenly Core Realm and he ruled an outer family with many masters under his command. Dongfang Xuanxiao was the only one present who wouldn't give him face.

But Long Chen wouldn't either.

"Grand Elder, are you threatening me? But that isn't enough to scare me. I'm just following the rules of the competition and the bet; I don't think I'm being unreasonable. If I lost, I would also admit defeat, kowtow, and call him 'grandfather' three times. How could a man not keep his word? Or is that a habit of the Chu family?"

Long Chen did not back down, not taking Chu Tianxiong seriously at all. Everyone was torn.

On the one hand, they were shocked at Long Chen's boldness. On the other hand, they were also worried that he wouldn't escape the sly, old fox after today.

"Lord Xuanxiao! I hope that you could give me face, and give the Turquoise family face too!"

A green vein bulged from Chu Tianxiong's forehead. He no longer spoke to Long Chen, and pressured Dongfang Xuanxiao instead.

The Turquoise family was one of the nine outer families, and they had contributed greatly to the Lingwu family. Therefore, Chu Tianxiong hoped that Dongfang Xuanxiao would give him face.

Any inner family member would have given Chu Tianxiong face in this situation.

Under Chu Yunyao's persuasion, Dongfang Tianyu summoned his courage and said, "Fourth Uncle, let's end this. It's meaningless to continue arguing and waste more time."

"That's enough." Dongfang Xuanxiao's expression didn't change, though his eyes fell on Chu Tianxiong. He enunciated every word slowly as he said, "Are you pressuring me right now?"

"I wouldn't dare!" exclaimed Chu Tianxiong.

"Let me tell you this: I, Xuanxiao, am in charge of the inner family qualifiers today. I do what I want. And since we have set the rules, we should act accordingly. If you speak again, I will ask you to leave."

Dongfang Xuanxiao's command cut off all possibility of Chu Tianxiong arguing. "You!"

Chu Tianxiong was about to rage, but when he thought about the man's powerful background and strength, he forced himself to stay put and remained silent.

Dongfang Yunxiao was now obviously favoring Long Chen. Everyone was privately wondering what Long Chen had done to make Dongfang Xuanxiao favor him so much.

Lord Xuanxiao's personality has always been hard to place. He's always been different from the other inner family members, so we've never been able to guess his thoughts ...

With Xuanxiao protecting him, Long Chen was emboldened.

Why is he favoring me so much?

Long Chen wasn't an idiot. Even he noticed that Dongfang Xuanxiao was willing to anger a Grand Elder of an outer family for his sake.

He turned to look at this terrifyingly dignified man, but he couldn't figure him out.

This is my chance. I'm in dire need of a powerful backer. Xuanxiao? Mhm, you'll do.

With that thought, Long Chen relaxed.

He reached out to grab Chu Yunxi's collar and lifted him up, faking a friendly smile.

"Little grandson, are you going to admit defeat?"

Chu Yunxi was trembling all over. He wanted to escape from Long Chen's devilish claws, but his ego told him not to admit defeat.

"Long Chen, I was wrong ... I am no match for you, so please, just let me go ..."

This was Chu Yunxi's limit.

"Yeah, I'm waiting to let you go. Quick, call me 'grandfather' and admit defeat. Then everything will be over," mused Long Chen playfully. All eyes were on him now.

"No!" Chu Yunxi shook his head determinedly, then he turned to look at Chu Tianxiong, begging with his eyes. But Long Chen forced his head back. "Don't look at your grandfather, he's too old and useless. It's better for you to take me as your

grandfather. From today on, I'll protect you, and I'll punch anyone who dares touch you. What do you think?

The Chu family was exploding in rage when they saw his emboldened behavior, but they couldn't do anything because Dongfang Yunxiao was in the way and was favoring Long Chen.

Chu Yunxi remained silent. Long Chen snickered and said, "Looks like you're quite stubborn. Let's do it this way: I'll start taking your clothes off now, one piece at a time. There's no way you'll refuse to admit defeat before you're completely naked, right?"

"You bastard!" Chu Yunyao was sobbing with anger. Long Chen wanted to strip Chu Yunxi in front of so many people?! If he really was stripped naked, how would he live out the rest of his life?

"This brat is vicious!" commented Gu Batian approvingly.

As for the women, the ones on Long Chen's side like Yin Mengyao and Liu Lan, they were privately calling him a lecher, though they were also worried about his safety. He was currently humiliating the Turquoise Grand Elder's family after all.

"Long Chen ..." Chu Tianxiong clenched his fists. If it wasn't for Dongfang Xuanxiao holding him back, he would have attacked already.

Then Long Chen tugged on Chu Yunxi's clothes and grinned. "You should hurry up. I don't want everyone to think I'm gay. But you're so fair and tender, I'm sure you'll look fine naked, right?"

Although he was smiling, the evilness in his tone made Chu Yunxi tremble.

When he pictured himself completely naked in front of so many people, his final layer of psychological defense crumbled. If even Chu Tianxiong couldn't save him, then he had no choice but to save himself. Although it was embarrassing, it was better than being stripped naked.

"Long Chen, Long Chen! I yield, I yield!" cried Chu Yunxi fearfully, then he started to kneel in the mud.

"It's inconvenient for you to kneel, so you don't need to do that. My good grandson, will you call me 'grandfather' three times?"

"Grandfather! Grandfather! Grandfather!"

Holding back his anger, Chu Yunxi quickly uttered the dreaded word three times. His face and ears were deep red, and he was almost going to cry from embarrassment because he could feel the disappointment in Chu Tianxiong's gaze.

"Good boy."

Before everyone realized what had just happened, Long Chen suddenly replied and tossed him in Chu Tianxiong's direction.

Chu Yunxi had suffered enough today.

Chu Tianxiong caught him, but he was severely injured and needed time to heal.

The Turquoise Grand Elder had lost all face today and was too humiliated to stay. Every member of their family glared daggers at Long Chen, then they turned to leave the Mortal Caves without even turning back.

Dongfang Xuanxiao ignored them. He looked at Long Chen for a while, then he gestured for him to return and said, "Long Chen versus Chu Yunxi; Long Chen wins. There are four participants left, namely Jin Sheng'en, Yin Mengyao, Gu Cheng, and Long Chen. We shall switch locations for round two."

The two winners would be decided from the four of them.

According to the rules, Yin Mengyao would fight Jin Sheng'en, while Long Chen would fight Gu Cheng.

#### Chapter 176 - Gu Cheng Vs Yin Mengyao

Long Chen had overshadowed the rest of the participants to become the brightest presence there.

The other outer family members occasionally shot him a glance, especially Liu Yuan, Gu Batian, and the others next to him.

Long Chen's performance had fully convinced them.

Gu Batian and the others were congratulatory towards him entering the second round. After all, the pressure he had faced previously was the largest, at least larger than Gu Cheng and Yin Mengyao. Now that he had beaten Chu Yunxi, he was a dark horse.

Liu Lan was walking in front of him, but he did not dare tease her again even as he looked at her beautiful figure.

Ling Xi, the little pixie in his ear, was right there. She was usually taking a nap, but she would appear and administer immediate punishment the moment he teased another girl.

Long Chen had considered pursuing Liu Lan before. While he initially felt like it was not right, he still flirted with her anyway. However, he never went any further than that.

Long Chen, Gu Cheng, and Yin Mengyao gathered together. The three of them were friendly, leaving Jin Sheng'en standing alone on the other side.

Gu Cheng smiled bitterly. "Long Chen, I'm unlucky to be fighting a madman like you. But I am satisfied to lose to you."

"We haven't even fought; why are you so worried?" Long Chen smiled, then he looked at Yin Mengyao and asked, "How are you feeling? Stressed?"

"Very," sulked Yin Mengyao. She'd watched the fight between Long Chen and Chu Yunxi and could roughly guess that her fight against Jin Sheng'en would also be like that.

Long Chen thought for a moment, then he said, "I'll help you figure something out."

"Do you have any ideas?" Yin Mengyao was surprised. "Long Chen, I'll be satisfied if just one of us enters the inner family."

“Keep this to yourself for now,” Long Chen said mysteriously.

Dongfang Xuanxiao led them to a new Mortal Cave. Here, Long Chen smelled a familiar scent.

“Abyssal Scorpions?” The crowd gasped. They walked to the edge of a huge crater and looked down. There was a group of Abyssal Scorpions resting on the muddy ground below.

There were at least twenty of them, and their sizes varied. The smaller ones were adolescent, some only one meter long, while the larger ones were more than two meters long.

The twenty-plus scorpions could cover the whole cave if they scattered.

Gu Cheng and Yin Mengyao were startled when they saw the scorpions, turning as white as a sheet.

“This cave is terrifying.” Gu Cheng was previously injured by an Abyssal Scorpion, so the trauma was fresh in his mind.

Even Long Chen felt like this round would be difficult.

Not only would the participants have to deal with the Abyssal Scorpions, they would also have to fight their opponents. How could a regular person succeed?

This fight would not be easy.

Dongfang Xuanxiao wasted no time. He said straightforwardly, “Round two shall be held in the nest of the Abyssal Scorpions, and it shall start now! First up, Yin Mengyao, Jin Sheng’en. The winner between the two shall be awarded the right to join the inner family!”

The final fight was here. Most of them were excited, but also very curious. Who would be the two lucky ones this time?

Jin Sheng’en and Yin Mengyao jumped when they heard their names called. Their last battle was truly about to begin.

Yin Mengyao was standing next to Long Chen. When Jin Sheng’en looked over, he was more focused on Long Chen.

He didn’t see Yin Mengyao as his equal at all; Long Chen was his true nemesis.

This was related to his reputation as the number one prodigy of the outer families.

Long Chen posed enough of a threat to him. If he didn’t fight Long Chen today to prove himself, there would always be a boulder sitting on his chest. He also wanted to avenge Chu Yunxi, so he had multiple reasons to kill Long Chen.

But he couldn’t do anything, because they were in different groups. With Dongfang Xuanxiao watching, he had to hold himself back even though he wanted to attack Long Chen.

*Once I get into the inner family, it doesn’t matter if you do too—I just have to fight you once. That is the only way to resolve the hatred in me!* Jin Sheng’en calculated in his mind.

It was time for his match against Yin Mengyao.

Under the watchful gazes of the crowd, Yin Mengyao and Jin Sheng’en each took a deep breath, preparing to enter the Abyssal Scorpion’s nest.

“Wait.” Long Chen’s voice startled everyone.

He was very bold to interrupt such an important moment.

As all eyes fell on him, Long Chen looked at Dongfang Xuanxiao and said, without a hint of submission, “Lord Xuanxiao, I request to switch opponents. I want to fight Jin Sheng’en!”

The crowd was speechless.

Jin Sheng’en was much stronger than Gu Cheng. If he changed his opponent to Jin Sheng’en, wasn’t he looking for death?

If he could beat Chu Yunxi, he stood a chance against Gu Cheng. However, this request meant he was wasting his chance to enter the inner family for nothing.

Liu Lan and Liu Yuan knew that there were problems between Jin Sheng’en and Long Chen, but they still didn’t understand his request.

“Long Chen, the road ahead is long ... Do not be rash ...” said Liu Yuan in a low voice.

But he held no influence over Long Chen, who looked at Dongfang Xuanxiao as he said, “Jin Sheng’en is known as the number one prodigy of the outer families. I want to challenge this legend today, and I think he will agree to this arrangement too. Gu Cheng and Yin Mengyao will also agree.”

Indeed, Jin Sheng’en did want to meet Long Chen in battle. If Long Chen voluntarily came looking for death, he would obviously oblige. Therefore, he said hurriedly, “Lord Xuanxiao, I also want to change my opponent to Long Chen!”

As for Yin Mengyao, she might stand a chance against Gu Cheng, while Gu Cheng also felt like he had a chance against Yin Mengyao. All four people agreed with this change.

Right now, the crowd saw Jin Sheng’en as the strongest. Since Long Chen had beaten Chu Yunxi, he was ranked below Jin Sheng’en, while Gu Cheng and Yin Mengyao were equal. However, Yin Mengyao wasn’t injured, so she stood a better chance.

From Xuanxiao’s perspective, he naturally should pick the two strongest people, who were Jin Sheng’en and Long Chen. That was why the Grand Elders thought that despite the youths’ insistence, the strange-tempered Dongfang Xuanxiao would not agree.

But for some reason, Dongfang Xuanxiao did not even hesitate to say, “Request accepted.”

This meant that he would abandon either Long Chen or Jin Sheng’en.

The Grand Elders looked at each other, unable to figure him out. If he really favored Long Chen, the best solution would have been to let him fight Gu Cheng, the weakest opponent.

They could not understand the number one master beneath the Heavenly River Realm.

So who would fight first?

Dongfang Xuanxiao’s gaze swept across the group and he said flatly, “Since you all have switched opponents, then the first pair to fight shall be Yin Mengyao and Gu Cheng. This battle shall produce one winner, who shall join the inner family.”

Yin Mengyao and Gu Cheng both heaved sighs of relief. Both of them saw their new opponent as easier than Long Chen and Jin Sheng'en.

They were also considered acquaintances due to knowing Long Chen, so they were on good terms.

Under everyone's expectant gazes, Yin Mengyao and Gu Cheng landed gracefully in the Abyssal Scorpion nest.

When the scorpions saw them, their red-brown eyes widened and they hissed, waving their claws about, and slashed the venomous stingers on their tails at them!

"We'll kill the scorpions first, then we can focus on the battle after. What do you think?" suggested Gu Cheng.

"I was thinking the same." Yin Mengyao grinned.

That was the good thing about having two people on good terms in the Mortal Caves.

If this were Long Chen and Jin Sheng'en, even if they promised to kill the Abyssal Scorpions first, no one could guarantee the other wouldn't ambush their opponent while they were killing the scorpions.

And killing off the scorpions first wasn't a violation of the rules at all.

The Abyssal Scorpions were Category Four Black-tier demonic beasts. Gu Cheng was previously poisoned only because he was not careful. This time, both of them were cautious, sticking together and covering for each other to massacre the Abyssal Scorpions.

Due to differing maturity levels, not all the scorpions had the strength of a Category Four Black-tier beast. The two mid Earthly Core Realm cultivators moved carefully, and the number of scorpions slowly decreased.

After about an hour, the cave was cleaned of scorpions. The two of them were a little tired by now.

Both of them decided to sit directly on the ground, recovering their strength. After a while, they finally agreed to truly engage in battle.

That was the benefit of fighting an acquaintance.

Yin Mengyao and Gu Cheng were both open and straightforward people, which was why Long Chen had good relationships with them.

"Let's fight with all we have; our futures are in our own hands," said Gu Cheng mildly.

Yin Mengyao nodded. Although Gu Cheng had previously been poisoned, she had also been poisoned. Both sides stood equal chances in this battle. However, the most interesting battle was still going to be Long Chen vs Jin Sheng'en, also the most anticipated battle of the qualifiers!

Very soon, without any external threats, they embarked on an exciting battle. The battle lasted considerably long and both of them fought hard to defeat their opponent.

*Both of them are as strong as Chu Yunxi,* Long Chen thought to himself.

After a while, Yin Mengyao finally won by a slight margin. This meant that she would join the inner family.



Long Chen was genuinely happy for her. Now she would have the right to enter the Star Devil Prison and find out more about Mo Xiaolang.

The battle required great exertion from Yin Mengyao, so her face looked pale. However, one could imagine the excitement in her heart now that she had a chance to fulfill her dreams.

“Thank you, Long Chen.” If Long Chen hadn’t switched opponents, she wouldn’t have had this chance.

“We’re friends, haha! No need to thank me! Just cheer me on!”

Then Dongfang Xuanxiao announced the start of the next battle.

## Chapter 177 - Fighting Jin Sheng’en

The final battle of the inner family qualifiers finally arrived.

Before the qualifiers, Jin Sheng’en had been recognized as the number one prodigy of the outer families. However, Long Chen turned out to be the dark horse of the qualifiers, and his strength was recognized after he beat Chu Yunxi.

With the Level Two Blazing Thunder Combat Body and an advanced Black-tier martial technique, he was adequately equipped to fight Jin Sheng’en.

The only flaw was that he was at the initial Earthly Core Realm, so there was a gap when comparing their cultivation levels.

Yin Mengyao and Gu Cheng’s battle was held in the nest of the Abyssal Scorpions, but the scorpions had been killed off already, so Dongfang Xuanxiao changed to another cave.

“Yin Snake Demons?” Long Chen was speechless. This Mortal Cave was clearly another Myriad Snake Cave. The only difference was that the Yin Snake Demons were the only type of beast here, and there were no other types of snakes

There were more than ten Yin Snake Demons present, hissing and slithering at the bottom of the deep crater.

This cave was much larger than the one before, and much deeper too. It would be very difficult for the snakes to rush up the walls due to the height, which was why the audience could watch with peace of mind.

The blood flowing in Long Chen’s veins had strong immunity against the venom, so he actually had an advantage in this battle. This was something only Yin Mengyao knew.

The other Grand Elders were speechless when they saw that Dongfang Xuanxiao chose a Yin Snake Demon nest as the battle location. Even Jin Luan’s expression changed. The Yin Snake Demons were Category Five Black-tier demonic beasts, and even Jin Sheng’en might not be able to fight these beasts directly, let alone while dealing with Long Chen!

But if it was difficult for Jin Sheng’en, then it was worse for Long Chen. Therefore, Jin Luan didn’t dare say anything.

“The final battle: Jin Sheng’en versus ... Long Chen!”

When he said this, Dongfang Xuanxiao turned to look at Long Chen, and to his surprise, Long Chen saw the corner of his lips curl upwards.

This was the first time he'd seen this handsome, mature man smile.

The two people whose names were called looked at each other.

“Sheng'en, be careful of Long Chen, and be even more careful of the Yin Snake Demons. Being careful will win you this battle. You have an advantage over Long Chen, so you mustn't be careless,” reminded Jin Luan, his brows knitted.

Seeing how solemn Jin Luan was, Jin Sheng'en didn't dare let him down and said hurriedly, “Father, I know the importance of this battle. I will fight with all I have!”

“That's right.” Jin Luan nodded.

On Long Chen's side, Liu Yuan and Liu Lan didn't have much to say.

Long Chen looked at Liu Lan, eying her curvy figure greedily for a while and whispered, “There's only one battle left! Prepare well for tonight. Hehe ...”

“We'll talk when you've won. Be careful.” Liu Lan wasn't angry at all despite being teased again. She was only worried for his safety.

“Alright.”

With Dongfang Xuanxiao's instruction, Long Chen looked down at the deep crater. There was a long path at the bottom—that would be his battlefield. The path was only ten meters wide with more than ten Yin Snake Demons preparing to pounce. Having smelled the scent of humans, they all looked up at the people above with their bright, red eyes, hissing and flicking out their long, red tongues.

When they saw two people jump down from above, the snakes were bubbling with excitement.

They were naturally Long Chen and Jin Sheng'en.

When Long Chen landed, he activated his Dragon Soul Transformation. He flexed his muscles slightly, and the Level Two Blazing Thunder Combat Body manifested. A layer of fiery and electrical energy covered his body. At the same time, the Blazing Thunder Power boosted his Qi with the destructive force of lightning and fire.

The Blazing Thunder Crystals hadn't just provided him with the Blazing Thunder Combat Body, there was also the Blazing Thunder Power.

Jin Sheng'en landed nearby with golden light flowing on his body, signaling that he had activated the Molten Gold Combat Body. Occasionally, bright, golden light shot out of it, making him look very intimidating.

He finally had the chance to experience Jin Sheng'en's legendary Molten Gold Combat Body. Passion surged through Long Chen's heart and his excitement rose!

“The number one prodigy of the outer family?” Long Chen grinned.

“What? Do you also want the nickname?” Jin Sheng'en smirked darkly.

“I don’t; I want to join the inner family! But you, Jin Sheng’en, you should just continue being the number one prodigy of the outer family!”

“You’re looking for death!”

Jin Sheng’en roared and then stepped hard off the stone wall!

Boom!

The wall exploded, and he shot out like an arrow directly at Long Chen. The momentum and power he brought with him were as powerful as an asteroid falling from outer space!

“How can your subpar combat body technique compare with mine?!”

Jin Sheng’en smirked, then he punched Long Chen!

“Flaming Gold Fist!”

Although Jin Sheng’en was not muscular, his cultivation specialty was in power-type attacks, so even a simple, direct attack was peerless in terms of strength!

“Are you underestimating me?”

Long Chen’s eyes darkened and he also leapt off the wall, twisting his body as he did so. The air whistled as he turned into a red dragon image, charging at Jin Sheng’en!

“Primordial Dragon Seal!”

Long Chen wielded two seals, one on each hand!

Boom! Boom!!

This was their first contact, which caused the ground and the mountain to shake. Dust and soil were shaken off the walls, falling on the Yin Snake Demons who hissed and quickly dodged!

“Not bad, you brat!” Jin Sheng’en was filled with hatred for such a powerful opponent. Even though he was forced back by the impact, he only took a moment to recover and pounced on Long Chen once more!

I heard that Jin Sheng’en is as strong as someone at the late Earthly Core Realm, and now I see that the rumors were true. That punch just now was very powerful!

Long Chen was feeling much more passionate about this battle than the one against Chu Yunxi. At the time, Chu Yunxi had been suppressed from the beginning, but he and his current opponent were on the same level!

After one exchange in midair, they both landed. This time, the Yin Snake Demons could no longer hold back. Half of them chomped at Long Chen, while the other half swarmed Jin Sheng’en!

“Get away!”

Long Chen charged forward once more the moment his foot touched the ground. A Yin Snake Demon blocking in front of him was met with a fist to its head, and its huge skull crashed into the ground!

He then stepped on another snake's head, lifted a fist, and the flaming fist formed a bright arc as he swung it through the air!

“Burning Devil Sun Fist, Blazing Flame!”

Boom! Boom!

The fiery fist seal was launched at Jin Sheng'en, who had also just killed two Yin Snake Demons. His eyes darkened and he charged at Long Chen too!

“Destructive Mountain Kick!”

Unexpectedly, Jin Sheng'en had also mastered a kick technique. The winds howled as he launched his Destructive Mountain Kick, pushing Long Chen's Blazing Flame back!

“Devil Sun Collision!”

The black Devil Sun fist seal finally pushed Jin Sheng'en back too. It was currently a draw, no one taking the upper hand for the moment. However, the battle spirit between them intensified.

The snakes took the opportunity to attack once more. This time, there were about seven or eight of them surrounding Long Chen. It wasn't going to be easy to break free!

“Damn animals!”

Long Chen released several consecutive Burning Devil Sun Fists. The searing flames and power of lightning were extremely terrifying to the snakes, who were Yin-type demons. Two Yin Snake Demons were immediately killed!

However, the other Yin Snake Demons were not afraid. Instead, they grew fiercer!

“Long Chen, die!” Jin Sheng'en had long finished the snakes surrounding him, so he raised his fist and punched Long Chen while the latter was still dealing with snakes!

“Iron Wheel Fist!”

This was also an extremely destructive attack. Long Chen had just killed the snakes off and couldn't protect himself in time, so he could only use his Nine Heavens Dragon Step to dodge it.

“Do you think you can dodge my Iron Wheel Fist with an elementary Black-tier body technique?” Jin Sheng'en laughed, attacking him using his Iron Wheel Fist and simultaneously speeding up his footwork. He was now using an intermediate Black-tier body technique!

This boosted Jin Sheng'en's attack!

“Your body technique is nothing.” Long Chen remained calm. There were two more snakes trying to bite him, but he did not panic at this critical moment. One snake was already right in front of his face!

“Here are two presents for you!”

Long Chen punched twice, one for each snake. The two snakes were thrown back towards Jin Sheng'en, colliding with his Iron Wheel Fist!

"Bastard!" Jin Sheng'en had been fully confident in his attack, but all it ended up accomplishing was causing two snakes to explode in bits of blood and flesh. Dissatisfied with this outcome, he charged at Long Chen once more!

"You brat, I'll give you a taste of the finger technique you used against Chu Yunxi!"

After a few exchanges, Jin Sheng'en had confirmed that Long Chen was almost on his level, and that the Level Two Blazing Thunder Combat Body was almost on par with his Molten Gold Combat Body.

"Is that all you got?"

The two of them engaged in close combat once more. The snakes were terrifying to others, but they were only minor inconveniences to the powerful Jin Sheng'en and Long Chen. As long as they were a little careful, they wouldn't be bitten!

This brat Jin Sheng'en is the same level as me when he uses his advanced Black-tier martial technique.

Long Chen had no choice but to admit this.

That was why he had to think of a way to beat Jin Sheng'en.

*The only way is to use that technique,* Long Chen thought to himself.

Chapter 178 - Shocking Everyone

Surrounded by Yin Snake Demons, the battle between Long Chen and Jin Sheng'en had turned white-hot.

Before this, Long Chen had already been pushed back several steps by Jin Sheng'en's Iron Wheel Fist and could only use the snakes to protect himself in the end.

The people watching above had seen this move.

The fact that Long Chen could last so long against Jin Sheng'en had already proven his strength.

"But judging from that move just now, Jin Sheng'en's attacks seem more vicious, and he seems a little more powerful," said Gu Batian, frowning.

Liu Yuan and Liu Lan were anxious after listening to the Violet Grand Elder's analysis.

They didn't have any hope for Long Chen to join the inner family initially, but his performance had been outstanding so far, and he had even instigated deep enmity between himself and the Chu family. If Long Chen didn't join the inner family, there would be trouble ahead, and he might not even live.

This meant that this was a critical battle for his livelihood!

*You must win.* Liu Lan had forgotten about the strange promise between herself and Long Chen as she watched him worriedly, hoping the teenager would create another miracle and win the fight.

Yin Mengyao, who was next to her, was also praying.

Right now, she was an inner family member, but this position had been given to her by Long Chen. Would she have gotten this spot if he hadn't shielded her from Jin Sheng'en?

Let's get into the inner family together.

They were all cheering Long Chen on, the most anxious female audience member being Ling Xi. Being in the sword on his ear, she felt like she was fighting the intense battle herself. It was very exciting.

She had already assisted him once on Heaven's Path to block Jin Sheng'en, which had exhausted a large portion of her soul power. That was why Long Chen had banned her from assisting him anymore. Despite being anxious, she had no choice.

However, without letting Long Chen know, she had been sneakily sending out tiny blades of sword Qi towards vulnerable parts of Jin Sheng'en's body, inconveniencing him several times.

Although the main characters of the fierce battle were Long Chen and Jin Sheng'en, the Yin Snake Demons faced the highest death count. Both of them had powerful Body Tempering techniques, so no one had been poisoned thus far!

"Are you still delaying your inevitable death?" Jin Sheng'en smirked, using his Destructive Mountain Kick, whose sheer force felt like multiple mountains crashing down on Long Chen!

"You're the one delaying your inevitable death!"

Long Chen blasted Jin Sheng'en back once more with the Devil Sun Collision.

"This is meaningless. Let me show you my advanced Black-tier technique, then ..." As he spoke, Jin Sheng'en's aura grew much more powerful, and blades of Qi orbited around his body. More specifically, they were orbiting around his fist.

His entire fist turned completely gold and rays of golden light shot out. A terrifying force exploded from his fist and then, amidst Jin Sheng'en's mad laughter, he punched!

Rumble!

The gigantic, golden fist seal flew at Long Chen! It brought with it immense power, even stronger than the advanced Black-tier technique Chu Yunxi had used!

"Warring Glass Fist!"

An explosion shook the earth!

This move was equivalent to an attack from someone at the late Earthly Core Realm. The audience were privately stunned by Jin Sheng'en's strength.

The most anxious one was Liu Lan, because she was at the late Earthly Core Realm, yet even she wasn't sure if she could withstand this attack!

Let alone Long Chen!

"Long Chen, what now?" Ling Xi asked in a panic.

“Haven’t I said this before? I’ll kill him with that move!” Long Chen cried, quickly using the Sword Devil Finger!

The Sword Devil Finger was actually a sword technique. Although its destructive potential was reduced after modifying it to be a finger technique, the process of using it was much quicker!

In the blink of an eye, Long Chen flung out a bright ray of sword light that flew at Jin Sheng’en’s Warring Glass Fist. The two shining attacks collided immediately!

Boom!

Echoing booms sounded across the deep rift in the ground!

“Is that the best your advanced Black-tier technique can do?” Jin Sheng’en let out a hysterical laugh in the middle of their intense clash.

In reality, while Long Chen couldn’t do anything to him, he couldn’t do anything to Long Chen either. If he said that the Sword Devil Finger was nothing, then the Warring Glass Fist was nothing too.

“The timing is just right.” Long Chen ignored him, and at this critical moment, while everyone was most focused on the battle, he did the same thing he had done to Feng Wutian!

This was Long Chen’s most formidable attack!

“Blood Devouring Domain!”

Long Chen had long thought of using the Blood Devouring Domain to boost the Sword Devil Finger.

Shadows of blood-colored blades suddenly appeared around the both of them, and a red mist materialized out of thin air. The mist covered the entire arena they were fighting in!

“What is that?” The audience above suddenly saw the red mist forming a domain and were left puzzled.

“Lord Xuanxiao?” Everyone turned to Dongfang Xuanxiao, who had the highest cultivation level there. The inner family had extremely deep pockets, so he was sure to be more experienced and knowledgeable than them.

Yet the calm Dongfang Xuanxiao’s eyes only widened as he watched Long Chen’s Blood Devouring Domain in shock. Even he didn’t understand what it was.

It seems to be a battle technique to seal off the surrounding space, forming a fixed domain ...

Dongfang Xuanxiao speculated privately, but he didn’t speak.

Seeing as he didn’t answer them, the others turned to watch the battle below anxiously. There were many sounds of combat below, but it was difficult to see what was happening!

Once he used the Blood Devouring Domain, Long Chen quickly gained the upper hand.

“What the hell is this?” Jin Sheng’en was shaken. He felt like he was suddenly in a blood-colored space. More importantly, what the hell was this terrifying gravity weighing down his body?

Under the influence of the increased gravity, he found that his blood had started to boil. He was losing control of it, as if it was gaining sentience and attempting to break free from his body.

He had no choice but to circulate his Qi in an effort to keep the blood and Qi from exiting his body. But this then decreased the Qi he could use externally to face Long Chen’s trump card. The two of them had been equal in terms of strength thus far, but this huge distraction caused the Sword Devil Finger to pierce through his Warring Glass Fist. The sharp sword Qi instantly hit his body!

The blade of sword Qi exploded into countless tiny sword Qi blades when it hit Jin Sheng’en, merging into his body. The pitiful Jin Sheng’en was busy suppressing his blood and Qi, so Long Chen’s Sword Devil Finger dealt significant damage, ultimately causing him to end up almost like Chu Yunxi!

“Enjoy the taste of death with my Blood Devouring Domain and Sword Devil Finger!” Long Chen dissolved the Blood Devouring Domain and raised his right arm. A simple Meteor Fist landed squarely on Jin Sheng’en’s jaw!

Bam!

Jin Sheng’en shrieked in pain. He was already barely conscious from the severe injuries, wishing he was dead. The impact from the punch instantly rendered the shocked Jin Sheng’en unconscious!

The Meteor Fist sent Jin Sheng’en flying up and out of the deep rift, leaving a trail of blood in the air as he flew in a perfect arc!

“What is that?” Jin Sheng’en’s body was flying so fast that the crowd couldn’t see what it was. The Blood Devouring Domain had just disappeared, so they only just had the opportunity to see what was happening below!

“It’s Jin Sheng’en! What is he doing up there? Has he won already?” Even Gu Batian was puzzled. He was still wondering why Jin Sheng’en had come out when the observant Yin Mengyao noticed Jin Sheng’en’s condition.

“He has vomited blood and fainted!” Yin Mengyao exclaimed with joy.

That was when everyone else noticed Jin Sheng’en’s condition too.

Vomiting blood and unconsciousness were two symptoms that proved that Jin Sheng’en had lost. It was a tragic loss indeed, for he did not even have the chance to yield.

In the next moment, they watched a nonchalant Long Chen leaping off the walls to travel upwards.

The twist of events left everyone in a daze, their minds blank.

When Jin Luan caught Jin Sheng’en and Long Chen arrived in front of them, everyone finally forced themselves to accept reality when they compared the conditions of the two prodigies!



Long Chen had beaten the number one prodigy of the outer families, Jin Sheng'en, and won the final slot to enter the inner family! From today onwards, he would be an inner family member!

Liu Yuan, Yin Mengyao, Gu Batian, and the rest were undeniably excited for him. Even Gu Cheng, who had lost to Yin Mengyao, was happy for him. However, this was a huge hit to the egos of Jin Luan and some others!

Jin Luan was the one who couldn't stop smiling when three Gold family members successfully entered the second round of the qualifiers. However, he didn't expect all of them to be disqualified. Even Jin Sheng'en, who had the highest chance, had been disqualified because of Long Chen, the dark horse!

Even though Jin Luan was an old fox, he could not calm himself while looking at Long Chen.

If Long Chen was a normal person, Jin Luan would never have allowed him to leave unscathed after hurting Jin Sheng'en. However, the problem was that he was now an inner family member and a disciple of Dongfang Xuanxiao. He clearly understood that the outer families were only mercenaries to the inner families, and he should never instigate conflict against the inner families!

"The two participants who have won the right to enter the inner family are Yin Mengyao and ..." Dongfang Xuanxiao gave a smile of satisfaction and looked at Long Chen, "Long Chen!"

#### Chapter 179 - Entering The Inner Family

As most people were congratulating the winner, one person was staring at Long Chen from the corner, dazed and with a strange expression. She was the beautiful Liu Lan.

On this day, her makeup was intricate and she was clad in a red dress that half-covered the skin below her pale neck. Her dress was cinched at her waist, but there was a long slit that revealed half of her long, silky leg.

Her outfit may have been stunning, but it was nothing compared to her features. Her huge eyes were half-smiling and half-seductive like a misty pool tempting whoever looked at her. The corners of her small lips were slightly curved upwards, inviting the onlooker for a kiss.

*What do I do?* Her thoughts scrambled the longer she looked at Long Chen.

She had promised Long Chen that she would give her body to him if he entered the inner family. That was just something she had said in a moment of rage; she hadn't expected him to actually enter the inner family.

Long Chen had shocked her many times, from his grinning, lackadaisical attitude to his viciousness, repeatedly shaking her to her core. Frankly speaking, when he miraculously defeated Jin Sheng'en to be the true number one prodigy of the outer family, her heart was swayed.

The arrogant Liu Lan found it a little embarrassing to be attracted to someone who was ten years younger than herself. She just treated it as a momentary bout of confusion.

*But it was a promise I made! How can I not keep my promises?* Liu Lan was panicking hard. On the one hand, she had made the promise. On the other hand, she was not mentally prepared to give herself to Long Chen. Plus, now that Long Chen had entered the inner family, what would become of her?

Finally, reason defeated her promise. Liu Lan took a deep breath, which attracted Long Chen's attention.

"What do you think? Was I cool?" he smirked.

"You were." Liu Lan was a little exasperated. His performance had been terrifying, but his words were childish. But that was exactly why Liu Lan had the urge to pull him into her arms and care for him.

*What the heck am I thinking now? It's like I'm maturing backwards.* Liu Lan scolded herself as she blushed lightly.

All eyes in the Mortal Caves were on Long Chen and Yin Mengyao, though Long Chen shone brighter.

The Chu family had left, so the only people who had conflict with Long Chen were the Gold family members. Jin Luan was still treating Jin Sheng'en's injuries, but everyone else surrounded Long Chen and Yin Mengyao, with Dongfang Xuanxiao standing in front of them.

Dongfang Tianyu walked up to Jin Luan.

"Elder Jin, how is he?" Due to his conflict with Long Chen, Dongfang Tianyu was also upset that Jin Sheng'en had lost.

"His internal organs are severely injured. If I don't give him a good spiritual herb, it'll take him a full month or two to recover." An ice-cold mist filled Jin Luan's eyes when he saw Jin Sheng'en's pitiful state.

"I have an advanced Black-tier Cloud Fruit. Let him have it once we get out of the Mortal Caves. With it, Brother Jin Sheng'en will recover by tonight."

"Really?" Jin Luan was pleasantly surprised to find that Dongfang Tianyu cared about Jin Sheng'en this much.

On the other side, Dongfang Xuanxiao was eyeing Long Chen and Yin Mengyao from head to toe, then he asked softly, "How old are you two?"

Long Chen was sixteen, while Yin Mengyao was nineteen. Since she was three years older, he started calling her "Sister Mengyao."

One Dongfang Xuanxiao knew their ages, he nodded and said mildly, "You still need one more ceremony before truly entering the inner family, though it will be conducted only when we return to the Lingwu family. The inner family qualifiers have ended, so you two may follow me back to the inner family. Everyone else, you may return."

That was Dongfang Xuanxiao's style. Everything he did was direct and efficient.

When he finished, he led them to the outside of the cave.

*We're going back to the Lingwu family now?* Liu Lan was happy to hear this. If they were heading back, Long Chen would directly go to the inner family and wouldn't have time to visit her.

The Mortal Cave containing Yin Snake Demons was considered quite long, so when they finally made their way out, they suddenly heard many bouts of thunder and the sound of heavy rain.

“It’s raining in the Nine Devil Mountains?”

Everyone’s mood was soured.

Rain in the Nine Devil Mountains usually fell in the form of extremely heavy storms. Those below the Divine Core Realm wouldn’t even be able to stand in the rain.

The terrain here was treacherous, and lightning struck close at random times. Traveling during the rain would be extremely inconvenient.

Indeed, when they were about to walk out, everyone saw that the outside world was nothing but a blur of mist, and the gushing sound of rain pouring rang continuously.

The Nine Devil Mountains were completely enveloped in dark clouds that swallowed the mountains from the middle to the peak. The rain was terrifyingly heavy.

The whole world seemed to be covered in rain. The curtain of rain obscured their vision and the flashing lightning danced before their eyes.

Thunder was frequent in the Nine Devil Mountains, so they hadn’t paid it much attention when they were in the Mortal Caves. They didn’t expect the storm to have intensified to this level until they stepped out.

If one was unlucky, they could get struck by lightning while traveling down the Nine Devil Mountains!

The power of nature was infinite; even if a figure like a Grand Elder was struck by lightning, he would either die or be crippled.

“It’s raining? Fourth Uncle, it’s already late. Let’s stay a night in the Nine Devils Mountain Village, then continue tomorrow. What do you think?” suggested Dongfang Tianyu.

“Alright.” Dongfang Xuanxiao nodded.

They started to descend the mountain in the heavy storm.

Heaven’s Path was one trail on the mountain, but there was a more convenient path they could take. They traveled along this path and quickly arrived back at the village.

Descending the mountain was much easier than trekking upwards. It took them considerably less time to descend.

If it wasn’t for their Qi protecting them, they would’ve been soaked through. However, the rain was heavy and the lightning was terrifying, enough to make them nervous.

Dongfang Xuanxiao was a man of few words. Despite Long Chen and Yin Mengyao having entered the inner family, he still hadn’t talked to them. He had merely told everyone to not worry, then he left.

Everyone was arranged to have their own quarters, and they were complete with all the necessities. The Nine Devils Mountain Village was an excellent location and was built with solid architecture, so they weren't worried about floods or lightning strikes.

Now that the qualifiers had ended and Long Chen and Yin Mengyao had proved that they were favored by Lady Luck, the Silver family members were happy, along with Liu Yuan and Gu Batian. The rest quickly retreated to their rooms, seeing as there was nothing else to do. It had been a fruitless event for them, and the storm was keeping them here, so their moods were terrible.

Long Chen looked at Liu Lan next to him.

Although she wasn't wet from the rain, the humidity in the air made her skin and hair look as if they had been soaked in water. Her soft, silk clothing clung tightly to her body, revealing her perfect curves.

"Wait for me tonight in your room?" Long Chen licked his lips, then he laughed and left. But after a few steps, his face contorted and his ear started twitching in pain.

"Ah! Xiao Xi, be gentle," begged Long Chen.

"Tell me, why are you going to her room?" She had been hearing Long Chen say strange things to Liu Lan lately, so Ling Xi had her own suspicions. She started to question him furiously, glaring at him with her bright eyes.

Long Chen tried to explain as he rushed to his room.

Liu Lan's mind went blank as she watched him leave. When he mentioned their promise just now, her body had gone weak, which scared her.

*It's all my fault! Why did I ever agree to this? He is now part of the inner family! What am I going to do?* Liu Lan bit her lip, which made her beautiful face even more attractive.

It's all the rain's fault, or I would be back at the Lingwu family already. If he comes tonight ...

She recalled the time she entered Long Chen's room to tease him. She couldn't believe the tables had turned, and this time, Long Chen was coming for the real thing. She was going to give her body to him.

Karma had played itself perfectly.

Suddenly, her eyes brightened. *Right! Although it's a little inconvenient, I can leave early. If I go back to the Lingwu family, he won't be able to find me. So what will he do then?*

With a solution at hand, she finally heaved a sigh of relief.

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"Are you really only teasing her for revenge?" Within the room, Ling Xi was standing with her fair arms akimbo[1], like an auntie scolding him. She looked adorable.

"I swear over my dead father's body. If I am lying, let his grave be robbed!" Long Chen said righteously.

*I'm so sorry, Father. Your future daughter-in-law is just too scary ...* Long Chen said in his heart.

Ling Xi finally let him go, though she was still in a bad mood.

“You are banned from leaving this room until tomorrow!” ordered the little princess.

“Yes, Ma’am!” Long Chen said, trying to win her over.

*This is it! I can't believe my plan is gone just like that.* Long Chen was indeed tempted whenever he thought about Liu Lan. He'd met many beautiful girls in Baiyang Town, but he'd never seen one who radiated beauty from her core like Liu Lan.

But ever since his father died and he found a romantic interest, he never walked the streets again and his life had been on the bright path so far.

As for Liu Lan, he was annoyed because she had teased him in the beginning. However, he started to tease her after that because he was furious that she had used him as a shield.

However, without her, Long Chen wouldn't have been put under so much pressure to improve. All of the danger had led him to where he was today. He would soon join the inner family, which would enable him to protect Lingqing and at the same time receive more information about Mo Xiaolang. That was why his hatred towards her had lessened, though he would not live well without teasing her and teaching her a good lesson.

That was why he kept scaring her throughout the qualifiers.

Even tonight, he planned to only teach her a few lessons when he went to her room. He wouldn't go as far as hooking up with her.

*I'm a gentleman now.* Long Chen was extremely pleased with his current form.

Time passed quickly and it was now late at night. Long Chen was focused on his cultivation, occasionally joking around with Ling Xi, having a carefree moment.

Then came a knock on the door ...

Chapter 180 - Dilapidated Temple

Long Chen was startled when he heard the knocking. Liu Lan had done the same last time, appearing before him as a seductress, teasing him at his quarters.

“Get your mind out of the gutter, it's just that old geezer,” huffed Ling Xi, getting back into the Ling Xi Sword.

When Long Chen heard her, he instantly knew who it was. He opened the door and indeed, it was Liu Yuan. Long Chen wanted to joke around with him, but he saw that Liu Yuan looked very worried.

“Long Chen, have you seen Lan'er? I realized that she's not in her room.”

“I haven't seen her. Maybe she's taking a walk?” He couldn't let Liu Yuan know about the matter between him and Liu Lan, so he merely gave him a nonchalant response.

Liu Lan isn't in her room?

Long Chen thought to himself, *Did she get too afraid of me and run away? That woman pretended to be some experienced lover, I see now that she's just a shy virgin.*

Seeing as Long Chen hadn't seen Liu Lan either, Liu Yuan left. Nothing much could happen in the Nine Devils Mountain Village, though as a father, he was just worried about her.

"Where would she go?" Ling Xi was curious.

"I don't know. Maybe she went back to the Lingwu family." This was just a minor interruption to Long Chen. He took out the halberd he had gotten from Li Feng and practiced waving it around. He realized that it suited him well, and it was much better than any other sword, knife, or lance.

"I think it'll be fun to get a halberd technique." Long Chen couldn't help but feel attracted to the Azure Dragon Halberd.

The Azure Dragon Halberd was a legendary Earth-tier Divine Weapon whose qualities exceeded its tier. It was probably the most formidable weapon in Yuanling County, and it came with a legendary Earth-tier martial technique.

If Long Chen could get a divine weapon like that, he would be a formidable presence. He could do whatever he wanted in Yuanling County and within the Lingwu family, rather than be a small pawn used by the Lingwu family.

Ling Xi is right. Mo Xiaolang has the extremely cool Heavenly Wolf Dagger; if I don't get an extraordinary weapon, then I'll look a little sad. But how will I ever get my hands on the Dongfang family's Azure Dragon Halberd?

Long Chen was mulling over this question when Ling Xi exclaimed, "Someone is coming!"

"Who is it!"

The door was suddenly flung open and a black figure was seen running away. Long Chen was about to give chase when a paper note flew towards him. He reached out to catch it but was blasted a few steps back.

"That was strong. Who was that?"

When he caught the paper, the black-clothed figure was already gone. That person had an average stature, so it was difficult to identify them. However, Long Chen knew that the only people who could move so freely in the Nine Devils Mountain Village were Lingwu family members.

"Ling Xi, do you know who that was?"

"I don't know. They ran too fast, so I couldn't tell." Ling Xi was frustrated. She looked at the paper in his hand and said, "There are words on it. What does it say?"

Long Chen looked closer and realized that it read: *If you want Liu Lan alive, come alone to the dilapidated temple twelve and a half kilometers*

[1] *west of the Nine Devils Mountain Village! If we find anyone with you, we will kill Liu Lan immediately!*

"What is this?" Long Chen's face changed.

“Did that woman get kidnapped? Who would kidnap her?” Although Ling Xi resented her, she was too kind-hearted not to worry when she thought about how a fellow sister was in danger.

“Although they caught Liu Lan, it’s obvious that their target is me.” Long Chen’s eyes were filled with killing intent.

He knew that Liu Lan had decided to leave because of himself, and she had unfortunately been targeted by someone else.

“Long Chen, what do we do?” Ling Xi was panicking a little. She was too used to being carefree, so she was at a loss when faced with a problem like this.

“What else can we do? We’ll go check it out.” Long Chen was already out the door.

“Looks like there’s another huge battle coming.” In truth, he had strong suspicions of the culprit. There were only a few people in the village, so who else could it be?

However, he still had to make sure, so he went to the quarters of the Turquoise and Gold families. He snuck around the area nearby when a sudden, cold voice called out, “Long Chen, what are you doing here?”

Long Chen turned around. It was Chu Tianxiong with Jin Luan by his side. Chu Fengqing and the others were behind him.

They were obviously in the middle of a late-night chat. However, Long Chen noticed that Jin Sheng’en and Chu Yunxi were missing.

Jin Luan and the others were high-level cultivators, so it was easy for them to notice Long Chen sneaking around suspiciously. That was why they had come out to question him. Long Chen’s objective was just to find out where they were.

It looks like Chu Tianxiong and Jin Luan aren’t brave enough to touch me now that I’m a member of the inner family. Only the younger ones would do something this rash ...

Having obtained the information he needed, Long Chen left without a word. Chu Tianxiong and Jin Luan looked at each other after he left.

Chu Tianxiong sighed. “If we don’t kill this brat today, he’ll definitely be a major problem for us in the future.” Although he hadn’t personally seen him defeating Jin Sheng’en, he had gotten the information from the others.

At the time, the Chu family had left early after being humiliated by Long Chen, so they were not present during the announcement of the final results. It was still raining hard then, so they had stayed back at the Nine Devils Mountain Village and had not returned to the Lingwu family.

“But he’s an inner family member now, and Lord Xuanxiao knows of the conflict between him and us. If anything happens to him, he’ll definitely blame it on us. So what can we do?”

Jin Luan looked helpless.

“Thank goodness Young Master Tianyu gave Sheng’en a Cloud Fruit. His injuries have almost completely healed. It would’ve been bad if it turned into a chronic condition.”

“What? He also gave Xi’er a Cloud Fruit ...”

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*Aren’t they injured? Where do they get the strength to do this nonsense?* Long Chen relaxed a little after confirming that this wasn’t planned by Chu Tianxiong and Jin Luan.

“Let’s go to the dilapidated temple they mentioned.” Long Chen headed towards the west side of the Nine Devil Mountain Village.

“Long Chen, you seem to care a lot about her.” Ling Xi pursed her lips, a little unhappy.

“Silly girl, she’s only a friend. And when my friends are in trouble, I save them. But Ling Xi, you’re different. You’re basically my other half! If you die, I die,” said Long Chen romantically.

“Tsk, no one’s buying that, you idiot!” Although she looked like she didn’t care, her heart was filled with sweetness after hearing the sly fox’s words.

The storm was fearsomely intense; even the black-armored guards that were guarding the Nine Devil Mountain Village on his arrival were nowhere to be found.

Long Chen walked out and was greeted with pouring rain hitting his body. If it wasn’t for the invisible shield of Qi around him, he would have been soaked.

A black-clothed person was standing quietly in a dark corner. When Long Chen left the compound, this person sneered.

“He actually went to confirm if the Grand Elders were behind this. The brat’s quite smart, but Chu Yunxi and Jin Sheng’en are a little different from what you expect, different enough to be a threat to your life ...”

Rumble, rumble!

The pouring rain drowned out his voice.

Long Chen’s eyes were fixed on the rain as he traveled westward.

Rumble!

Thunder boomed frequently across the skies, its piercing rumbling sounded again and again in his ears. Frightening lightning turned the dark night into day every time it flashed.

“Long Chen, I feel like something is wrong. They lost to you earlier today and know that they are no match for you, so why are they still doing this?” Ling Xi asked anxiously.



“Also, most importantly, that bitch is at the late Earthly Core Realm, so even though they’re both strong, they’re not strong enough to capture her without getting hurt themselves, right?”

Long Chen had thought about this too.

“This means that there are other people helping them. Who was that black-clothed person?” The events of tonight had gotten convoluted.

However, despite these worries, he couldn’t abandon Liu Lan. If he didn’t go, who knew what tragedies would befall her?

Long Chen knew that Chu Yunxi previously drooled over Liu Lan’s beauty. Long Chen himself hadn’t even touched her, so how could he let Chu Yunxi get her instead? How would his pride take this?

He sped up, sprinting through the Nine Devil Mountains, heading towards the dilapidated temple.

Twelve and a half kilometers wasn’t far to him, so he soon found a dilapidated temple in the dark of the night, shakily standing in the rain as if it would collapse anytime.

“This is it.” Long Chen held his breath when he arrived.

“Hey, if something serious happens, I’ll be using my power,” said Ling Xi.

“How much power do you have from the Soul Grass?”

“Uh ... After the last time, there’s two-thirds left,” said Ling Xi, sticking her tongue out cutely.

“Usually, I wouldn’t need your help. But if there is an emergency, for example, if I’m about to die, you can help me. Though you must promise me to never let your soul power diminish to below one-third. Or I’ll never forgive you, even if I live!”

Long Chen’s expression was solemn when he spoke.

“Alright, alright. You look like an old man when you furrow your brows, hehe.”

Long Chen laughed with Ling Xi, but when he looked at the temple, his mood was somber.

I see that you plan to kill me. We’ll see who gets killed in the end! This time, it’s either me or you!

Long Chen sped up and rushed towards the temple.

There were holes in all four walls of the temple, but the ceiling was complete, so it blocked out most of the wind and rain.

As soon as he entered, he spotted Jin Sheng’en, who was chuckling while Chu Yunxi was tearing at Liu Lan’s clothes like a wild animal. A huge patch of fair skin was revealed while a very pale Liu Lan lay there in despair, her delicate body trembling as tears welled in her eyes