

## War God 361

Chapter 361 - Beating Yang Jun

No matter what Long Chen did, the crowd did not jeer anymore. Since he had suggested that they fight, all the crowd needed to do was sit back and watch Long Chen lose to Yang Jun.

Yang Jun never thought Long Chen would come at the very last moment. He had thought Long Chen was afraid of him and considered the possibility that he would never show up at all. *Long Chen must be faking his panting.*

“It’s alright to be cowardly. There’s no need to hide it ...” Yang Jun chuckled and stretched out his arm. Everyone saw Yang Jun cover himself in Qi, making his massive body look like a powerful bomb waiting to explode.

Long Chen smiled.

“Dragon Soul Transformation.”

Long Chen’s body was quickly covered in red scales, and he turned into a crimson killing machine. He was supposed to look gnarly, but everyone thought he looked like a divine beast instead.

“Your transformed look is ugly. I can’t believe you would show it in public.” Yang Jun smiled and his face turned fierce. He hollered like a barbarian before he dug his feet into the ground and launched himself towards Long Chen like a missile.

The entire arena shook when Yang Jun did that. It was clear that he was very strong.

He must’ve cultivated an advanced Earth-tier Body Tempering technique! His body must be stronger than mine. I need to use my speed to deal with him!

Long Chen strategized.

His Qi was almost equal to Yang Jun after he attained the Sixth River Stage and transformed. The difference was in brute strength.

The Azure Dragon Halberd appeared in his hand once more. Even though it was not very effective anymore, it was Long Chen’s only weapon. He held it firmly and ran towards Yang Jun.

The sight of them running towards each other was visually shocking. One was young, while the other was more wizened. One rampaging, and one calm.

“Die! Seven Killings Demon Finger!” Yang Jun used the advanced Earth-tier technique the moment he got close to Long Chen. The strong wind and murderous Qi shot towards Long Chen!

Long Chen had seen the technique twice already, so knew what to do. He chose to fight it head-on as he had absolute confidence in himself.

“Azure Dragon Combat Technique, Dragon King’s Burial!”

The Azure Dragon Halberd transformed into a blood-red line and shot itself towards the Seven Killings Demon Finger. Yang Jun’s technique covered a wide area, while Long Chen’s technique

was focused. Disregarding their cultivation levels, Dragon King Burial was a suitable technique to break through the Seven Killings Demon Finger.

“It's suicidal to use a lower tier technique to fight against a higher tier technique when one doesn't have the Qi to supplement it. Long Chen didn't learn Traceless Demon Shadow, and he even used his strongest technique. He must be scraping the bottom of the barrel now, hahaha!” The Third Demon Elder was cackling.

He was very happy to see his disciple beating the disciple of the Palace Lord.

But what happened next made his jaw drop.

Long Chen suddenly increased his strength, and the power behind Dragon King Burial pushed the Seven Killings Demon Finger back. The Azure Combat Halberd even pushed Yang Jun back!

Long Chen had used his strength at the Sixth River Stage and an intermediate Earth-tier technique to push back an advanced Earth-tier technique! Not only that, he had even pushed back Yang Jun! Yang Jun lost the first clash.

“Impossible!” Yang Jun shouted. His eyes were bloodshot, and he ran towards Long Chen with an even fiercer technique.

*Looks like my tendency to go berserk and my craving for blood has lessened after I trained in silence in the Heavenly Demon Palace.* Long Chen was happy, but Yang Jun had lost his rationality. He could not accept losing to Long Chen, so he panicked a little.

“Long Chen! I will skin you alive! Since you could neutralize the Seven Killings Demon Finger, I will show you this instead! Seventy-Two Path True Fists!”

It was a simple fist technique, but it contained the strength of a whirlwind, and each punch was stronger than the last. As long as Long Chen could endure all seventy-two punches, he would survive, but that is if his body was strong enough to withstand all of it!

“First path!”

Yang Jun's stance was oppressive, to the point that the entire arena shook. The crowd was worried too.

A massive demonic shadow appeared behind Yang Jun. It was channeling strength into him. With it, he had enough strength to use all seventy-two fists!

“Long Chen is dead this time.” The Third Demon Elder was stunned at what Long Chen had done to the Seven Killings Demon Finger, but he was sure Long Chen would not survive this time.

“Seventy-Two Path True Fists?” Long Chen wasn't worried.

*It's time to use Traceless Demon Shadow.* Long Chen chose not to move for now. He waited until Yang Jun was closer.

“What's happening?” Everyone was confused. Even if Long Chen couldn't fight back, there was no reason to just stand there and wait to die.

“Father-in-law?” Dongfang Xuanxiao was worried. He was about to stand up when Zhao Qingyun sat him back down. The Palace Master was grinning.

*Did he?* Zhao Qingyun was not worried, and Dongfang Xuanxiao was not an idiot. He had a feeling that Long Chen was going to surprise everyone.

While everyone was looking at Long Chen in confusion, Yang Jun’s first fist closed in on him. If it hit, Long Chen would lose half of his strength, but he didn’t move at all. Everyone closed their eyes because they couldn’t bear to see the bloody scene.

“Are you really looking to die?” Yang Jun was confused, but he would not let go of this chance. There was no repercussions for killing Long Chen, which made him even more excited. He increased the speed of his punch even more.

At the last moment, Long Chen smiled.

The first punch of the Seventy-Two Path True Fists missed. Yang Jun looked at the empty space in front of him and raised his head. He saw several black illusions flickering in front of him!

“Traceless Demon Shadow!” The crowd exploded with shock. The Third Demon Elder and the other elders looked at the Long Chen in shock. They stared at him and stood up subconsciously.

Yang Jun looked at the flickering shadows in front of him and couldn’t differentiate which was Long Chen.

Even though no one could believe it, the First Demon Elder spat out in shock, “This is the level of someone who is close to completing the technique! Long Chen has not only learned Traceless Demon Shadow, his mastery over it is even higher than Danfeng and Xiaoyu!”

Yang Danfeng and Murong Yu were shocked when they heard what the First Demon Elder said. They looked at Long Chen, but their expressions were different. Murong Yu was surprised as she never thought Long Chen would progress so fast with just a simple tip from her.

Yang Danfeng, on the other hand, was looking at Long Chen viciously. He had always been regarded as the strongest youth in the Heavenly Demon Palace, and now he felt uncomfortable that the First Demon Elder would say that Long Chen was above him. How could he like someone that Yang Jun hated? Jealousy gripped his heart when he looked at Long Chen.

The whole crowd was shocked, much less Yang Jun, who was fighting Long Chen. Traceless Demon Shadow was an infamous technique of the Heavenly Demon Palace, so he recognized it instantly.

*Impossible! He must’ve only cultivated it halfway. I should be able to tell where he is if I’m careful enough. I can’t get intimidated by him!* Yang Jun reassured himself and knew he had to stop his technique and escape from Long Chen’s encirclement first.

But Long Chen would not let him out.

When Yang Jun’s first punch missed, Long Chen had used the Traceless Demon Shadow and appeared behind him. He then swung the Azure Dragon Halberd directly towards Yang Jun’s back.

Smack!

Yang Jun almost fell to the ground, and a red line of blood appeared on his back.

“Shit! Why are you so tough?” Long Chen blurted out subconsciously. He had used all his strength to lash out with his halberd but only managed to leave a scratch!

But to Yang Jun, this was a humiliating result. He turned around and was about to attack Long Chen when the halberd smashed into his face.

Smack!

Yang Jun shouted and spat out blood. Some of his teeth were even knocked out from the impact!

Yang Jun despaired. He realized he couldn't see Long Chen at all. He looked around him and saw nothing but shadows everywhere. Which one was he supposed to attack?

Smack!

Yang Jun was launched forward as his butt got smacked by the halberd.

Chapter 362 - Hold Onto You

“I might not be able to kill you in one hit, but I don't believe you can survive ten thousand hits!” Long Chen's demonic laugh echoed across the arena, and everyone heard the sound of Yang Jun being hit by the halberd again and again.

Yang Jun was being beaten black and blue. His clothes were in tatters and his body was covered in blood.

Everyone watched, unable to hide their shock. They never would've thought something like this would happen.

Not only had Long Chen cultivated Traceless Demon Shadow, he was even capable of using it to this degree. His talent was unheard of.

“I yield! I give up!” Yang Jun almost cried out when he said that, and Long Chen finally stopped attacking.

He stood in front of Yang Jun and chuckled. “Yang Jun, I'm so sorry that I had to become your father today to give you a beating. If you don't listen to me next time, I will beat you again until you shout for mercy.”

“Long Chen!” Yang Jun's body was burning from pain, and he had lost quite a few teeth. He was wheezing from the ordeal, and his reputation was in tatters.

It was all thanks to the strength of the Heaven-tier Traceless Demon Shadow.

Heaven-tier Body Combat Techniques are indeed strong. Yang Jun couldn't even touch me when I used it.

Yang Jun glared at Long Chen one last time. He knew he had been humiliated in the arena. His body was in pain and his mind was blank. He still couldn't come to terms with what had happened.

He ran down the arena, leaving Long Chen alone.

Long Chen suddenly felt like he enjoyed the feeling of having everyone looking at him like this.

The Three Demon Elders looked at each other for a long time before the First Demon Elder sighed. "I have to admit, he is indeed a genius. Looks like the rumors of him killing the six commanders and destroying the dwarves were true. He is an incredible disciple. The Palace Master has found the correct disciple."

"What should we do?" The Second Demon Elder was worried.

"What can we do? Luckily, Long Chen is only at the Sixth River Stage, and we are just about to start the tournament to see who can get the Demon Emperor Sword. As long as he doesn't get it, everything will be fine."

The Second Demon Elder nodded. She looked at the dazzling youth and had a feeling that Long Chen was somehow looking down on everyone here. Even though she was numerous times stronger than him, she had a feeling that Long Chen was above her, and she could only stare at him like an ant.

"I must be going blind ..." The Second Demon Elder sighed and looked towards the Third Demon Elder. He was grim and blood almost flowed out of his mouth.

"What are you thinking?" the Second Demon Elder asked.

The Third Demon Elder thought about it before whispering, "I'm trying to think of how to kill him without any repercussions."

The First Demon Elder overheard him and quickly warned him, "No. Now is not the time. You are no longer a youth, so you should not be rash."

"Hmph! Goodbye!" The Third Demon Elder stood up. He had been humiliated too, so he walked out of the crowd.

Zhao Qingyun looked at them and then at Long Chen. The more he looked at Long Chen, the more satisfied he was. Zhao Qingyun had been very anxious when Long Chen didn't show up on time, but he finally sighed in relief now that everything was over. He stood up and smiled. "Everyone! The promised battle has now ended. Not only did Long Chen cultivate Traceless Demon Shadow successfully, he has also defeated the third strongest youth, Yang Jun! Everyone, please give him a round of applause!"

Zhao Qingyun was their leader, so there was no reason for the crowd not to cheer. They cheered and clapped, to the point that the entire arena was shaking. Everyone had thought Long Chen was a sham and was just boasting, but it was clear he was strong. Everyone was impressed. Those who said Long Chen was nothing prior to this felt their faces burning with embarrassment.

Wang Xing was shouting the loudest.

Thanks to this, Long Chen could finally walk proudly in the Heavenly Demon Palace. There was no longer any reason to keep a low profile.

However, there was something even more important than this battle.

“Master, I heard that there will be a training exercise involving the Pyro Passageways. When will it start?”

“The training at the Pyro Passageways? It will start in five days.” Zhao Qingyun knew what Long Chen wanted to do. It was as if Long Chen had planned this from the start.

“Am I qualified to join?” Long Chen smiled sheepishly.

“Of course. You’ve defeated Yang Jun, so you are now the third strongest youth. You are more than qualified to enter the Pyro Passageway. We decided on the ten who would enter beforehand, but since you have met the requirement, we will have eleven participants!” Zhao Qingyun announced.

That way, the tenth person wouldn’t resent Long Chen for disqualifying them.

“Thank you, Master!” Long Chen was happy. The Pyro Passageways training exercise was not only the competition for the Demon Seed Planting Technique, the treasures in there would help Xiaolang grow. Long Chen knew that it would be heaven for Xiaolang. Since he was only at the Category Five Earth-tier, entering the passageways would increase his strength drastically.

“Master, can I bring my demonic beast in there? It’s been with me throughout my travels, and I’m afraid that it would harm others without my supervision.”

“Of course.” Zhao Qingyun was so happy that he would agree to any request Long Chen made.

“How about this? The exercise will start soon, and you still don’t know anything about the rules. Xiao Yu, if you have the time, please fill Long Chen in.”

Long Chen would be all alone during the training exercise as the other ten youths were all disciples of the Three Demon Elders. Zhao Qingyun was worried that Long Chen would be surrounded on all sides, but then he remembered Murong Yu. She was one of the friendlier disciples, and she didn’t have strong feelings for anyone. She was also quite powerful. If Long Chen could forge a good relationship with Murong Yu, she could help him inside the Pyro Passageways.

Murong Yu never thought Zhao Qingyun would call on her, so she was stunned. She had just been warned by her master, so she looked at her. But even the Second Demon Elder didn’t dare to defy the Palace Master, so Murong Yu nodded. “Palace Master, I will do my best.”

Zhao Qingyun nodded with satisfaction before he looked around. “Everything has been settled today, so everyone can go back now. Those who are joining the training exercise, please prepare yourselves in the next five days. When I open the passageways, it will be up to you to obtain the Demon Seed Planting Technique.”

“Yes, Palace Master!”

Due to Long Chen, Zhao Qingyun’s reputation had improved. Everyone had always thought that the Palace Master didn’t have a good eye for picking out disciples, but now their thinking had changed.

The crowd soon scattered. Except for Murong Yu, everyone from the Three Demon Elders' factions left.

Long Chen failed to notice that Yang Danfeng's eyes were grim when he left. Yang Danfeng had been looking for someone in the crowd before finally finding the skinny youth. He slowly tailed the youth as everyone dispersed.

Long Chen was oblivious to that.

"Long Chen, Xiao Yu is at the Eighth River Stage, and she's kind too. You can talk to her casually, and she should be able to help you in the Pyro Passageways," Zhao Qingyun reminded Long Chen before leaving with Dongfang Xuanxiao.

Only Long Chen and the veiled Murong Yu were left at the scene.

"Looks like my master is hoping that you will protect me during the training session. I guess I'll have to hold onto you tightly, then." Long Chen smiled ... bitterly.

"Hold?" Murong Yu was a bit angry. She knew Long Chen didn't mean that, but she still felt that it was an odd statement. She also remembered what the Three Demon Elders had warned her about.

"Long Chen, I will only talk to you about the rules. I will leave afterwards, so listen carefully."

"Alright." Long Chen nodded.

"The Pyro Passageways are a large cave system with flowing lava. There are two things hidden within the lava: Fire Essences and demonic beasts called Ember Beasts. They are usually Category Six Earth-tiers, and you can find them guarding the Fire Essences. Usually, you defeat them and then collect the Fire Essences they're guarding. The rules are as follows: those who obtain the most Fire Essences wins. This time I will be fighting against Yang Danfeng, while you will be competing with the others. If you come out with the highest number of Fire Essences, your reward will be the first stage of the Demon Seed Planting Technique."

"Is it that simple?"

"How else do you think it would be?"

"What if I obtain more Fire Essences than you and Yang Danfeng?"

"I don't know. You should ask the Palace Master about that. But don't think too much about it. Both me and Yang Danfeng have been there twice, so we know the place inside and out. It's impossible for you to surpass us."

Chapter 363 - Childhood Friend

Murong Yu walked off after explaining the rules. Even though the Second Demon Elder was gone, Murong Yu knew that her master was still somehow observing her, and she would get scolded if she stuck around for too long.

But then she stopped and turned back. "Oh, one more thing."

"What is it?" He noticed that she looked very anxious, completely different from how she acted earlier. He had a feeling that the Demon Elders were pressuring her to not help him. The three Demon Elders were opposing the Palace Master, and since Long Chen was in a different faction than Murong Yu, it was normal for them to do that.

"The Fire Essence is a common item in the Pyro Passageways. But there are rare occasions when a Fire Essence gets refined by the lava for hundreds of years and becomes a Divine Essence Crystal. It would be amazing if you could find one. Each Divine Essence Crystal is worth a hundred Fire Essences. If you obtain one, the Demon Seed Planting Technique is as good as yours."

"Divine Essence Crystal? I will remember that." He had another goal now.

"Also, since the Divine Essence Crystal is stronger than a Fire Essence, it will be guarded by a more powerful beast, called the Divine Ember Beast. It looks similar to the Ember Beasts, but it's much larger and stronger. A Divine Ember Beast is usually at the Category Seven Earth-tier, and there's quite a number of them in the passageways, so you need to be careful."

Even though Murong Yu had to maintain some distance from Long Chen, she had explained everything about the Pyro Passageways. It was clear that she was still looking out for him.

"Thank you." Long Chen nodded. It was rare to find someone who treated him well.

"You also need to be careful of others. I don't know what they will do to you, and I know you understand who I mean. Goodbye." She left after saying that.

Long Chen stood alone in the large arena. Xiaolang approached and jumped onto the platform before congratulating him excitedly. Long Chen's strength had been improving for the past few days, but Xiaolang has been stagnating. Thankfully, resources to help Xiaolang grow stronger were coming.

But what Xiaolang didn't understand was that Long Chen still had two days before the fight. Why had two days passed after he woke up?

The issue in the Heavenly Demon Palace was now settled, so Long Chen turned all of his attention to the mysterious stone talisman.

"What a remarkable object. Too bad I don't know what to do with it. I think I should just let it be for now. If I get stronger in the future, I might be able to unlock some of its secrets."



Long Chen then brought Xiaolang towards the Azure Cloud Residence. There were only five days left, and Long Chen needed to seize the remaining time to cultivate. He needed to fight in a real battle to improve his Traceless Demon Shadow.

While walking back, the way everyone looked at Long Chen had changed for the better. In the past, those that saw him laughed behind his back. But now Long Chen had cultivated a Heaven-tier martial technique and broken the record of the Heavenly Demon Palace. No one dared to laugh at such a monster.

All of them treated Long Chen with respect.

“I need to spend the next five days improving my master over Traceless Demon Shadow. I need to get both the Demon Seed Planting Technique and the Demon Emperor Sword Technique so that I can become stronger. After that, I can make my way back to the Biyang Imperial Capital. Xiao Xi, just you wait, I will be able to get the Nine Heavens Immortal Fruit for you!”

Ling Xi nodded when she saw Long Chen’s passionate eyes. Behind her excited gaze was a hint of sadness. There was one thing she hadn’t told him yet. If Long Chen really got her the Nine Heavens Immortal Fruit, they could end up separated forever.

This was what Ling Xi feared the most.

If their relationship had been platonic, she would’ve just given him some kind of reward after he restored her physical body, then she would leave.

But now she couldn’t do that anymore. She had grown attached to Long Chen, and if they were separated, she would be like a stringless kite. It would be no less than torture for her.

She would rather stay with Long Chen like this forever, but she knew he was a stubborn man. Once he made a decision, he would never look back. This was why she knew that Long Chen would never give up before obtaining the Nine Heavens Immortal Fruit.

Both Ling Xi and Long Chen returned to the Azure Cloud Residence while thinking about their own plans. Long Chen had been at the Heavenly Demon Palace for close to two months, but he had barely spent any time in the Azure Cloud Residence. There was one more month left. The previous two months have been peaceful, but Long Chen knew the next month would be the most chaotic one yet.

Just then, he saw a shoe on the ground. It was laying there on its own, which attracted his attention.

*This is the shoe of the disciples that do menial tasks. The only one in the Azure Cloud Residence should be Wang Xing. Why is his shoe here?* Long Chen was confused, and he picked it up before noticing the words carved at the bottom of the shoe.

Under the large locust tree in the mountains at the back. Come alone.

There was indeed a massive locust tree in the mountains towards the back of the Heavenly Demon Palace. It was situated on the path towards the tip of Demon Emperor Mountain. Long Chen remembered seeing Wang Xing near the tree once.

“Someone actually kidnapped Wang Xing. But who is it? Yang Jun is injured, so it shouldn’t be him. Is it Yang Danfeng?”

This was just a guess.

Long Chen asked Xiaolang to stay put while he ran towards the mountains at the back. After spending so much time in the area, he was very familiar with the place, so he soon found the place indicated on the shoe. When he saw the massive locust tree, Long Chen noticed two individuals underneath it. One of them was the trembling Wang Xing, while the other was Yang Danfeng.

“Wang Xing, here’s your shoe.” Long Chen sighed in relief when he saw that Wang Xing was not injured. He threw the shoe to Wang Xing before he confronted Yang Danfeng.

“Brother Chen!” Wang Xing was so happy to see him that he cried. Yang Danfeng had told him just now if Long Chen did not show up, he would kill him. Thankfully, Long Chen had come.

“It’s fine now. Go back and tell no one about this,” Long Chen said.

“Okay!” Wang Xing knew he would just be a hindrance if he stayed here. He also looked up to Long Chen and had a feeling that Wang Danfeng wouldn’t do anything excessive to him.

Once Wang Xing left, Yang Danfeng smiled coldly. “Looks like you treat them well.”

“Fate has brought us together. It’s even more so if I can befriend them. To me, strength and status are not important in a friendship. There’s no reason to hate him. You, on the other hand, didn’t have to do any of this. You could have just come to me directly if you wanted to meet me alone.”

Yang Danfeng chuckled. “I called him over to see whether you cared for his life or not. I’m a core disciple, and have the authority to kill errand boys without being punished. I can execute him in public whenever I want. Do you understand?”

“Just tell me what you want.” Long Chen looked at Yang Danfeng with hostility. It was clear that Yang Danfeng despised him. Yang Danfeng was an Eighth River Stage cultivator who had learned Traceless Demon Shadow and the Demon Seed Planting Technique, so Long Chen was sure that he would not be able to win against him right now.

“There are two things I want you to do. One: you cannot take first place in the category of those beneath the Seventh River Stage during the training exercise. Two: do not talk to Xiao Yu anymore, and it’s even better if you never interact with her again.”

Long Chen almost laughed at how preposterous the conditions were. Yang Danfeng was so full of himself. Even Zhao Qingyun did not have the right to restrict him like this, much less Yang Danfeng.

“What makes you think I will follow your requests?” Long Chen smiled defiantly.

“I knew you would say that.” Yang Danfeng had expected that. “It would be useless if I were to threaten you by saying I would kill you. You are proud and you think you can beat me, but what if I have your weakness?”

Yang Danfeng’s attitude pissed Long Chen off. Killing intent swirled in Long Chen’s heart.

“It’s really quite simple. I know that you treat others very well. The lives of errand boys are nothing to me, but they are important to you. I have a lot of people to do my bidding here, so I assure you that I have a hundred ways to kill Wang Xing. So if you break one of the two rules, prepare to bury his corpse yourself.” Yang Danfeng was certain that he had Long Chen in his grasp.

Long Chen said nothing.

He didn’t want Wang Xing to lose his life because of him, but he could not tolerate being bullied either. Long Chen looked up and his gaze turned cold. “In that case, I will also warn you that if anything happens to Wang Xing, I will kill you. I killed Song Zhongcheng, so I can definitely take your life. Goodbye.”

Having said that, Long Chen left without saying anything else.

There was no reason to say more since the grudge had been made.

“Xiao Yu and I are childhood friends. We’ve been together for twenty years. If you mess this up, I will kill you even if it costs me my life, Long Chen!” Yang Danfeng shouted.

Chapter 364 - Pyro Passageways

The training exercise officially began five days later.

Xiaolang had been excited about it. Long Chen sensed that Xiaolang had somehow become quite naive after he entered the body of the Sun Devouring Wolf, as if he had become a child. It was only when problems came looking for them that Xiaolang became serious.

He had been following Long Chen all morning. When they left their residence, Zhao Qingyun was waiting for Long Chen outside.

“Did you talk to Murong Yu?” Zhao Qingyun asked while they were heading towards the passageways.

“Don’t worry. I won’t lose to them even if I’m all alone.” Long Chen was confident in his strength.

Zhao Qingyun nodded. “I was more worried that Yang Danfeng would team up with Murong Yu to avenge Yang Jun. It would be hard for you to deal with both of them.”

“No, that won’t happen.” Long Chen was certain of himself. Yang Danfeng had pledged himself to Murong Yu, but the latter didn’t even want to be associated with him.

“Then that’s fine. Remember, the more Fire Essences you get, the better. The Demon Seed Planting Technique is an incredible technique,” Zhao Qingyun reminded him again.

Long Chen nodded.

“Wait, what if I obtain more Fire Essences than the both of them? Can I get both stages of the Demon Seed Planting Technique?” Long Chen asked inquisitively.

The first stage allowed the user to double their Qi and the second stage quadrupled it. Long Chen’s Dragon Soul Transformation allowed him to increase the quality of his Qi by ten times. *Does this mean that I can increase the quality by forty times?!*

Increasing his Qi by forty times was a horrifying concept. That meant that Long Chen would be even stronger than a Seventh River Stage cultivator once he used the Demon Seed Planting Technique.

It was indeed a good technique.

However, no technique would surpass their own innate quality. For example, Divine Fire Clone was an advanced Earth-tier technique. The strongest each clone could become was around the Eighth River Stage. If Long Chen became much more powerful, the clones would still remain at the Eighth River Stage.

This was the same for the Demon Seed Planting Technique. Long Chen could use it as long as he was weaker than Zhao Qingyun. Any stronger than that and it would be useless.

Long Chen’s question stunned Zhao Qingyun for a moment.

“Something like that has never happened before, but do you want both stages of the Demon Seed Planting Technique?”

Long Chen nodded. “Who doesn’t want to become stronger through secret techniques?”

“Then you will have to put on an act after the exercise ends. You need to taunt the Three Demon Elders. If I were to agree to it, they would most certainly object. You need to make them agree, and I will naturally do the same. But, Long Chen, I know how strong Yang Danfeng and Xiao Yu are. It will not be easy to surpass them. You should know that they are only slightly weaker than Lin Zichen.

Long Chen was a smart guy, so he knew what Zhao Qingyun was saying.

“I will do my best.”

Traceless Demon Shadow, the Demon Seed Planting Technique, and the Demon Emperor Sword Technique were all his.

He followed Zhao Qingyun and soon arrived in the mountains. The entrance to the Pyro Passageways was situated at the back of the mountain. Long Chen had to go around the entire mountain and walk past the deep pool he had cultivated at before. He then found himself at the entrance of a cave. This was the entrance to the passageways.

The three Demon Elders and the ten disciples were already waiting for them there. There were two factions in the Heavenly Demon Palace, the Palace Master and the three Demon Elders. The old versus the new. Long Chen was distraught because while Zhao Qingyun could take on all three Demon Elders without a problem, Long Chen could not do the same.

The tension in the air rose when the two factions met. Long Chen and Yang Jun were glaring at each other, and the other disciples under the three Demon Elders were glaring at Long Chen too. They didn't dare to disobey the Palace Master, so all of them focused their animosity on Long Chen.

Long Chen was only at the Sixth River Stage, and everyone here was above the Seventh River Stage. There was even someone at the Eighth River Stage. Every single one of them except for Murong Yu was glaring at Long Chen. They expected Long Chen to be unnerved by them, but he didn't even react to their animosity. He was calm, just like Zhao Qingyun.

*His mental strength is tough. He really is hard to deal with.* The three Demon Elders were wary of Long Chen. If he hadn't shown up out of nowhere, Traceless Demon Shadow and the Demon Seed Planting Technique would've been taken by Yang Jun. Once Yang Jun entered the Eighth River Stage, he would be at the same level as Yang Danfeng and would've raised the fame of the Three Demon Elders.

But Long Chen had appeared. Not only had he snatched Traceless Demon Shadow, he had even beaten Yang Jun in the arena. Yang Jun was so depressed that he had missed the window to advance into the Eighth River Stage. It would be quite some time before he could attempt it again.

They pinned all the blame on Long Chen, and Yang Jun was the one who hated him the most.

"Now that everyone is here, we should start the training exercise without delay." The atmosphere was not right, and Zhao Qingyun naturally sensed it, but he decided to ignore it. In the previous training sessions, Zhao Qingyun didn't have a disciple to take part in it. At that time, the Three Demon Elders were so arrogant. Now he finally had Long Chen to try and shake things up while bringing him fame. Zhao Qingyun did not reveal it, but he was secretly very happy.

In the tense atmosphere, everyone approached the entrance of the cave. Long Chen felt the heat without even entering. Xiaolang popped out from Long Chen's shirt, and his eyes lit up when he felt the heat coming from the cave.

The reason why Xiaolang was sleepy all the time was most likely because he had burned his life fire.

Zhao Qingyun turned around and looked at them. "We are here. The training exercise will last five days. Whoever comes out with the most Fire Essences will be the winner. Are you ready?"

"We are ready!"

He looked around and asked another question on purpose. "If none of you have any questions, I will open up the entrance now."

"Wait, I have a question." Long Chen knew Zhao Qingyun was creating a chance for him. "Master, I want to know what would happen if I obtained more Fire Essences than the two of them? Can I obtain both stages of the Demon Seed Planting Technique?"

Long Chen was brave. He ignored everyone and cast a taunting look at Yang Danfeng.

Everyone was shocked by his question.

A mere Sixth River Stage cultivator wanted to collect more Fire Essences than two Eighth River Stage cultivators? The two Eighth River Stage Cultivators were also the two strongest youths next to Lin Zichen that had learned two Heaven-tier martial techniques!

"Are you joking? What can you do with the two stages at your cultivation level?" Yang Danfeng scoffed. He was confident in himself and thought Long Chen's greed was hilarious.

The Three Demon Elders looked at each other.

Long Chen looked around and stated clearly, "The objective of the training exercise is to obtain more Fire Essences than the others. Those who obtain more are stronger than the rest. If I can get more than those two, doesn't that mean I'm stronger than them? If they can compete for the second stage, why can't I?"

"Idiot." The others shook their heads.

"Stop messing around!" The First Demon Elder shook his head and looked at Zhao Qingyun. "Palace Master, what do you think we should do?"

"I will go with whatever you think is fair."

Zhao Qingyun tossed the question back to the First Demon Elder. The First Demon Elder knew that the Palace Master was pressuring him. If he didn't allow it, that meant the three Demon Elders were not confident in their disciples. But he was worried that Long Chen would create another miracle if he did.

"Looks like the three Demon Elders are not confident in their disciples. That's fine, then. I'm sure everyone would think it unfair if I obtained the two stages at once." Long Chen taunted all of them.

"Stop blabbering. Since the Palace Master told me to decide, we will agree to what you have proposed. My disciples welcome the challenge." The First Demon Elder had no choice but to agree. If he declined, he would be laughed at by the others.

Zhao Qingyun had basically forced them to accept by giving the choice to the three Demon Elders rather than making the decision himself.

Long Chen was happy with the result.

“What are you getting happy about? You can’t even surpass Yang Jun, much less us,” Yang Danfeng said through gritted teeth.

Zhao Qingyun led them into the cave. It was a crimson cave that had a surprisingly high temperature even though there was no fire. The cave was filled with red rocks.

As they made their way deeper, Long Chen soon saw the end of the cave. There was a set of heavy iron doors blocking their way. They were rusty, as if they had been there since the start of time.

“Past these doors are the Pyro Passageways. There are ten corridors leading to ten different locations down there. I suggest that if you don’t want to search for Fire Essences on your own, you should quickly move around and team up with someone,” Zhao Qingyun explained to the disciples, but he was secretly advising Long Chen. Now that Long Chen had made everyone his enemies, it was possible that they would all band together to take him down.

Long Chen understood what he meant.

Zhao Qingyun gripped the iron doors and used all of his strength to pull them open. The sound of screeching metal filled the cave.

#### Chapter 365 - Ten Passageways

When Zhao Qingyun opened the metal gates, a gust of hot air blew over everyone. It was already hot in the cavern, but now it was even hotter.

Xiaolang got very excited when the thick scent of fire hit his nose. His eyes were wide with excitement as he looked into the cave. He looked like an excited dog, and Murong Yu was captivated by how cute he looked.

“All of you, enter now. There are ten passageways, so each of you will choose one. Murong Yu, since you are familiar with the place, enter one of the passageways with Long Chen. You can decide if you want to separate away from him once you are inside,” Zhao Qingyun ordered.

He had used the same tactic and placed Long Chen together with Murong Yu.

The Second Demon Elder was angry, but the First pulled her back. She might’ve actually gone ahead and argued with Zhao Qingyun if he hadn’t. Murong Yu was the Second Demon Elder’s disciple, and Zhao Qingyun giving that order was basically a jab at her authority.

“I understand.” Murong Yu nodded. She didn’t mind it since she would separate from Long Chen once she was inside anyway.

While she didn’t mind, Yang Danfeng was thinking otherwise. He didn’t dare go against Zhao Qingyun, but instead focused all of his anger on Long Chen. He now hated Long Chen even more.

Yang Danfeng had actually wanted to ask Zhao Qingyun and the three Demon Elders to let Murong Yu follow him into the ten passageways, but Zhao Qingyun had arranged for her to go with Long Chen before he could do so.

Under Zhao Qingyun's instruction, each of the disciples entered the passageways one by one. The metal doors behind them slowly closed only when Long Chen and Murong Yu walked into one of the passageways.

Once they were in, the surroundings slowly brightened up. The rocks of the passageway were bright red, radiating heat energy. The passageway was much hotter than the outside.

The passageway slanted downwards, and Long Chen noticed that they were going deeper and deeper. This was within his calculations as lava could only be found deep underground.

Murong Yu said nothing as she led the way. In the dim, red glow, her attractive figure was easy to notice as she was wearing a tight, black shirt.

Zhao Qingyun had actually done something extra by assigning Long Chen to Murong Yu. Long Chen didn't need anyone's help.

"Awoo ..."

Xiaolang whimpered. If it wasn't for Long Chen, he would've sprinted downwards already.

Murong Yu looked back when she heard the sound. She was still wearing the veil, so Long Chen couldn't see her face. She stopped and waited until Long Chen was beside her, then she looked at the small wolf in Long Chen's shirt. "What a cute wolf. Long Chen, what is the name of the beast?"

"It's a Fire Beast. It loves fire," Long Chen replied.

"Fire Beast?" Murong Yu tried to remember everything she knew about beasts, but she didn't recognize the name. Moreover, the name was too crude.

"Are you toying with me?" Murong Yu was irritated.

"You can ask it if you don't believe me." Long Chen rolled his eyes.

He knew that Murong Yu wasn't trying to strike a conversation with him, it was just that Xiaolang was too cute.

"Ask it?" Murong Yu didn't know if it would work, but she did so anyway, "Xiaolang, are you a Fire Beast?"

Xiaolang burped, and a small ember escaped from his mouth.

"Can I hug it?" Murong Yu said in anticipation.

"No!" Ling Xi shouted from within the sword, but Murong Yu couldn't hear her.

"Xiaolang, if you let her hug you, I won't be your sister anymore!"

Xiaolang retreated back into Long Chen's shirt along with his tail.

"See, he doesn't want it. I can't help you with that." Long Chen waved her off.

"Why?" She was unsatisfied.

"Maybe because you're too ugly."



“You rascal!” Murong Yu glared at him and quickened her pace, leaving him in the dust. All Long Chen had done was say something stupid, and now she refused to talk to him.

The passageway was deep. Long Chen felt like he had walked for over a kilometer, but he still hadn't reached the end. The corridor was slanted downwards, so he assumed the path was shaped like a corkscrew that extended from the metal gates above all the way down to the base of Demon Emperor Mountain.

Long Chen enjoyed the peace after Murong Yu stopped talking to him. Ling Xi, however, stared at Murong Yu whenever she got close. Long Chen didn't want his ear to hurt, so he liked it better when Murong Yu didn't talk.

But when they were at the exit, she stopped and asked him, “Wait, Long Chen, you've been in the Heavenly Demon Palace for a long time. Why haven't you brought the girl over?”

Murong Yu seemed to have some regard for Ling Xi.

“I can't meet her for now. I will let you meet her once I become stronger. Why do you ask?” Long Chen would naturally never tell her that Ling Xi was hiding in his ear stud.

“It's just that I saw you protecting her so ferociously and even took a few punches because of her. I assumed you liked her a lot, so I just asked out of curiosity,” Murong Yu said plainly. Long Chen couldn't discern what she was thinking about.

But he had a feeling that the reason why Murong Yu had helped him was because she was touched by how Long Chen had protected a girl so ferociously. Maybe she had been moved by Long Chen's intensity.

But Murong Yu knew she would never experience this kind of love.

“Did you feel the sudden rise in the temperature? We are almost at the Pyro Passageways.”

Long Chen had indeed felt it.

She hesitated before saying, “Once inside, I have my own things to do, so we will part ways. But, Long Chen, I need to remind you to gather as many Fire Essences as possible.”

“Why?” Long Chen felt that she had more to say.

“I heard that everyone except for Yang Danfeng will give their Fire Essences to Yang Jun. This means that you are competing with eight other people. So you know that you'll need a ton of Fire Essences, right?”

“They can do that?” Long Chen was speechless. He would've underestimated the number of Fire Essences Yang Jun would collect if it wasn't for her warning. He was glad she had told him.

“It’s not against the rules. The only thing we care about is the number of Fire Essences each person gathers. You can even steal their Fire Essences before the time limit is up. Of course, you can’t take an older Fire Essence and mix it with the Fire Essences that you’ve collected today. The temperature of a Fire Essence that was just taken out of the lava and one that has been placed outside for an entire year is extremely different. One can immediately differentiate which is an older Fire Essence. So I hope you didn’t bring any to try and cheat.”

Murong Yu had forgotten to tell him this last time, so she was worried Long Chen would do something like that.

“No, I don’t have any ...” Long Chen could not use this method in the first place because Xiaolang would’ve eaten any Fire Essences that he had.

Long Chen suddenly saw the space in front of him widening. They soon found the exit, and Long Chen approached it. He looked down and saw nothing but lava!

There was nothing else. The exit was located just above the river of lava.

The lava bubbled and flowed as the intense heat surged towards Long Chen. Bubbles sometimes appeared at the top of the lava. It was as if he was standing at the edge of a crimson pool filled with heat.

“This is lava?” It was his first time seeing it.

“Yes. The Ember Beasts and the Fire Essences are all hidden beneath it. We need to dive into the lava to collect them. You can only enter the lava once you are at the Fifth River Stage. Will your little wolf be fine?” She was more worried about Xiaolang.

“Don’t worry. He was born in flames.” Long Chen smiled mysteriously.

“Alright, then. The others probably ran in the passageways and are already in the lava. I can’t delay this anymore. Goodbye!”

Long Chen nodded.

Murong Yu dove down without hesitation. She wrapped her Qi around her body to withstand the heat from the lava before she plunged into it.

Xiaolang looked down in excitement.

“Let’s go. This is heaven for you, Xiaolang. The Pyro Passageways and Ember Beasts? They can’t hide from my Soul Swallowing Gaze. It will be easy to find Fire Essences as long as we locate where the beasts are. We don’t need to worry about having fewer Fire Essences than them! Let’s go!”

Long Chen was going to use the most efficient way to collect Fire Essences.

After he made sure that Xiaolang was ready, he wrapped his body with Qi just like Murong Yu and then jumped into the lava. To Xiaolang, the lava was like bathwater!

“It’s hot!” Long Chen saw nothing but red when he plunged into the lava. It was pushing him around like a river current would.

He had to expand the Qi surrounding his body into a sphere before he could finally see his surroundings. Xiaolang appeared in front of him, and Long Chen saw that the lava was somehow flowing into Xiaolang’s body automatically to be refined.

“Come, let’s go find some beasts!”

Chapter 366 - Ember Beast

Demonic beast attacks were not the only dangers Long Chen would have to face in the Pyro Passageways; he would also have to be on the lookout for the other disciples. He believed that other than Murong Yu, the rest of the disciples would attack him on sight. At the very least, they would rob him of his Fire Essences.

In truth, Long Chen was not afraid of anyone other than Yang Danfeng, as he had cultivated Traceless Demon Shadow. However, he didn’t want to come across anyone before he had found sufficient Fire Essences. After all, Long Chen only had two objectives for this training exercise. One was for Xiaolang to level up, the other was to get the Demon Seed Planting Technique.

The Soul Swallowing Gaze was very useful in the huge river of lava. As soon as he entered, bright, boiling, red lava was the only thing surrounding him in all directions. If he relied on pure luck to search, it would take forever to find Fire Essences. However, everything was different with the Soul Swallowing Gaze.

When he activated the Soul Swallowing Gaze, all the lava around him disappeared and he could see souls within a five-hundred-meter radius. He spotted two souls—one was Murong Yu, who was heading westwards. Long Chen did not follow her, but instead headed towards another soul.

It was an Ember Beast.

Indeed, there was an Ember Beast within five hundred meters of him. Long Chen called for Xiaolang, then they headed towards it.

Ember Beasts live within lava and feed on it for sustenance. It’s similar to the Eight Clawed Fire Chi we saw on Goldfish Island. However, Ember Beasts are much more powerful. Fire Essence is the essence contained within molten lava; since Ember Beasts cannot swallow lava directly, they usually stay next to Fire Essence to absorb the flame essence inside. That is why places with Ember Beasts usually also have Fire Essence.

This was the information Long Chen had gathered over the past few days.

When he spotted the Ember Beast using the Soul Swallowing Gaze, it meant that he had found a Fire Essence. He believed that he would be faster than other people if he worked at this speed.

Usually, Ember Beasts and Fire Essences were found at the lowest layer of the lava. This was the case for this Ember Beast. In terms of horizontal distance, it was actually not far away from Long Chen, but unfortunately, it was hundreds of meters deeper than him. Long Chen dove down in a straight line. If he moved too much, it would cause a large disturbance in the lava, so he had to travel slowly and cautiously.

I’ll arrive soon.

Long Chen could sense an Ember Beast not far away from himself. He held his breath. Initially, he wanted Xiaolang to show off his skills, but Xiaolang was still Category Five Earth-tier, so he decided that it would be faster if he did it instead.

Long Chen quietly activated his Dragon Soul Transformation and took out the Azure Dragon Halberd. He was strong enough to defeat a Seventh River Stage cultivator, so a Category Six Earth-tier Ember Beast was not a difficult opponent.

When he approached, he could roughly see its appearance. It was half the size of the Sun Devouring Wolf, and it looked a little like a lion with a thick mane and a regal aura. However, its body was covered in thick, fire-red scales and it had extremely sharp teeth and claws. The strangest thing was that it had a tail exactly like a scorpion's, which glinted coldly.

So, this is an Ember Beast. It doesn't look bad at all.

This demonic beast, perhaps due to it living in lava, radiated a thick fierceness. A normal Seventh River Stage cultivator would find it difficult to win against it in this environment.

They were at the bottom of the lava. Long Chen looked around and spotted a Fire Essence not far from the Ember Beast's foot. There were flames burning on the Fire Essence, and the surrounding high temperature was likely caused by it.

*Attack!* Long Chen arrived as close to the Ember Beast as possible and unleashed Dragon King's Burial instantly. His Qi, which was equivalent to that of a Seventh River Stage cultivator, exploded, paired with the quick attack. The Azure Dragon Halberd was instantly lodged in the resting Ember Beast's head!

Long Chen pushed harder. By the time the Ember Beast's eyes sprang open in pain, the halberd was deep inside its head. It cried in agony, and countless red flames poured out of its mouth. Then it died.

"There was no way you could've survived an ambush like that!" Long Chen chuckled and retrieved a fist-sized demonic core from its head and tossed it to Xiaolang. Excited, Xiaolang took it in his mouth without a word. Then he swallowed it with a huge gulp.

"What do you think?" Long Chen asked expectantly.

Xiaolang's eyes widened and looked at him a little innocently. He had indeed already swallowed the Ember Beast's demonic core, but his stomach wasn't full yet.

"Damn, you foodie!" Long Chen laughed and scooped up the Fire Essence on the ground and put it into his bag. As for the Ember Beast's carcass, Category Six Earth-tier beast blood was no longer useful to him, so he didn't bother to take it ...

"Let's go get our next target. We've got one Fire Essence now. I wonder how fast the other people are." Long Chen guessed that it would be easier for him to find Fire Essences because he had the Soul Swallowing Gaze, but they had more people and were more familiar with the Pyro Passageways, so victory was still uncertain.

Now that he had experience slaying an Ember Beast, it would be much easier. Ember Beasts were common in this area, and most of the time, there was a Fire Essence near them unless he was unlucky. However, he still had not come across a Divine Ember Beast or a Divine Essence Crystal.

Long Chen spent most of his time collecting Fire Essences with the help of the Soul Swallowing Gaze, achieving easy wins in almost all his battles against Ember Beasts. The exception was when he met two Ember Beasts at once, which required more time.

He estimated that since the other disciples couldn't spot Ember Beasts as well as he could, he still stood a chance to win first place, or even surpass the two Eighth River Stage disciples.

"Three?" This time, Long Chen saw three Ember Beasts in one place. When he approached, he killed one of them with a surprise attack, though this caused the other two to discover him. Since Ember Beasts were violent in nature, they would never flee. The moment he appeared, they engaged in a furious battle!

"Blood Devouring Domain!"

When he used this technique, the two Ember Beasts were practically incapacitated. Long Chen slashed them to death with his halberd instantly. After he took the five Fire Essences on the ground, he tossed the three demonic cores to Xiaolang. With that, Xiaolang finally broke through to attain the Category Six Earth-tier. Both his demonic power and physical strength experienced a boost.

Long Chen had tallied up the total—Xiaolang had consumed more than thirty Ember Beast demonic cores. This meant that he had already killed more than thirty of them. He had already gathered forty Fire Essences too. The Fire Essences were even more helpful to Xiaolang, but he needed them to win the Demon Seed Planting Technique, so he could only give them to Xiaolang after they exited.

"It's been half a day. If I maintain this speed, I should be able to gather about three hundred Fire Essences in five days. But that is also not certain. I have almost killed all the Ember Beasts in this area, so it's time to move to another spot where there are more Ember Beasts."

Now that Xiaolang had attained Category Six Earth-tier, paired with his Divine Fire Clone and Nine Devils Ancestral Fire, the Ember Beasts were no match for him. It would speed up Long Chen's search for Fire Essences.

"Let's go to another area."

Another day passed. They did not collect as many Fire Essences as the first day, though now he had reached eighty Fire Essences. Admittedly, Long Chen had spotted Yang Jun once during this time, and he was surrounded by eight other Seventh River Stage cultivators. When Long Chen spotted them with the Soul Swallowing Gaze, he steered clear of them.

Unless absolutely needed, he did not want to fight eight Seventh River Stage cultivators.

"Murong Yu was right. It looks like they will give all the Fire Essences they find to Yang Jun. But why are they grouped together?"

If they separated, they would be able to find more Fire Essences. It was inefficient to search as a group.

Despite his confusion, Long Chen ignored them and forged ahead. He continued using the Soul Swallowing Gaze to search for signs of Ember Beasts.

After a total of two days, he sensed that he had arrived in a more secluded area. The lava was now mixed with faint currents of black fire, and the surrounding temperatures were much higher, as if he was surrounded by countless Fire Essences.

“There are no Ember Beasts here, but there’s an even more powerful aura. If my guess is right, there should be an even more powerful beast hiding up ahead. It must be a Category Seven Earth-tier Divine Ember Beast.”

Long Chen made this guess based on his sharp instincts.

Indeed, after sneaking forward for a while, he finally spotted a beast smaller than the Ember Beasts. Since the Soul Swallowing Gaze could only sense the presence of a soul, he could not tell what it looked like.

“Awoo ...” Xiaolang called softly. Looking at the curious and excited look in his eyes, Long Chen understood what he meant. Xiaolang wanted to fight it himself.

Chapter 367 - Divine Ember Beast

When he was closer, Long Chen finally saw what the Divine Ember Beast looked like. Just like how Murong Yu had described it, it looked similar to the Ember Beasts with thick scales and a scorpion-like tail. The only difference was that it was black all over, while the Ember Beast’s scales and mane were fire-red. It was also smaller than the Ember Beasts.

“Xiaolang, you asked for this. The Divine Ember Beast is a Category Seven Earth-tier demonic beast, and it is even stronger in lava. Do you dare fight it, even as a Category Six Earth-tier?” Long Chen said in a low voice, challenging him with a smirk.

Xiaolang nodded. Although there was a gap in their tiers, the Sun Devouring Wolf had a higher affinity with fire than the Divine Ember Beast. Plus, he had many tricks up his sleeves, so he did not believe that he would lose to a Divine Ember Beast.

“Be careful.” Since Xiaolang had made his decision, all Long Chen could do was offer a reminder at the very last moment.

Xiaolang nodded, then he slowly morphed to his combat state in front of Long Chen. The Sun Devouring Wolf’s combat state was magnificent and evoked fear; it was much more terrifying than the Divine Ember Beast. The strange, black flames that flowed on his body, as well as the golden sun mark on his forehead, showed just how unique he was.

Both the Sun Devouring Wolf and the Divine Ember Beast were black all over. Long Chen stayed in the same spot, watching the surroundings carefully while Xiaolang charged at the Divine Ember Beast. That way, Long Chen could assist if anything happened. The Pyro Passageways were dangerous after all.

At this point, the Divine Ember Beast noticed the Sun Devouring Wolf’s presence.

There were two types of beasts in the Pyro Passageways: Ember Beasts and Divine Ember Beasts. The Ember Beasts cowered before the Divine Ember Beasts, so the Divine Ember Beasts didn’t

have to fight often. The only times they fought was when the males had to compete for a mate during mating season. Therefore, the Divine Ember Beast was angry when it saw a beast it had never seen before challenge it.

When it sensed Xiaolang's tier, it grew arrogant and let out a roar that was mismatched with its body size. Flames shot out of its mouth, attacking the Sun Devouring Wolf fervently!

“Roar!”

The two beasts collided, fighting each other with sharp teeth and claws. Animals did not fight like what humans imagined; even animals had fighting techniques practiced and mastered across generations. Long Chen felt like his vision was blurring as he watched the fight.

Teeth and claws collided again and again, and shrill cries rang between them.

Although the Divine Ember Beast was smaller, it was stronger than Xiaolang. After about seven minutes of forceful combat, the Divine Ember Beast left a wound on Xiaolang's front limb!

This angered Xiaolang. He had been a human for more than ten years after all, and he had not spent a long time as a beast. He was still unfamiliar with fighting in this body, or he never would have been injured.

After it successfully injured Xiaolang, the Divine Ember Beast became arrogant, and roaring flames rose from its body. It roared mockingly, then it charged at Xiaolang with its small stature like a sharp arrow!

“Roar!”

When the Divine Ember Beast thought it was going to win, fierce flames suddenly rose from Xiaolang's body. As the flames curled, black wolf silhouettes broke free from the fire. They looked similar to Xiaolang, though they were black and made out of flames.

The arrogant Divine Ember Beast was instantly surrounded by Xiaolang's divine fire clones. The sudden peculiar twist had almost scared it into peeing. Suddenly, it halted and turned around in terror. It was preparing to flee!

Naturally, Xiaolang would not let it run. A hundred of his clones swarmed to surround the Divine Ember Beast. Once surrounded, at least fifty of them started to unleash manic attacks!

The Divine Ember Beast let out cries of pain and agony!

Although the Divine Ember Beast was a fire-type beast and the clones' attacks did not do huge damage to it, it could not hold off so many of them. Every clone had the combat ability of a Category Five Earth-tier beast after all. It was clear how much Xiaolang had improved!

“Roar!”

The Divine Ember Beast desperately fought to break free. One after another, the clones left wounds on its body, but even more of them hit it with their attacks!

Flesh and blood mixed on the Divine Ember Beast's scaled body. The most severe injury it sustained was the broken limb that Xiaolang had inflicted. Its movements gradually slowed down and soon, it would likely be killed by Xiaolang.

“Xiaolang, wait, let it escape!” said Long Chen, who approached quickly.

Xiaolang froze, then he retracted his clones immediately. The large swath of black wolf shadows all disappeared in the lava. The Divine Ember Beast looked around in surprise, then timidly at Xiaolang. Without another word, it fled while dragging its broken leg!

Xiaolang was confused!

“Follow it!” After the Divine Ember Beast ran for a while, Long Chen gave chase. He then explained to Xiaolang, “There are no Fire Essences in this Divine Ember Beast’s surroundings, but they are the kings of the Pyro Passageways, so how could it not possess any? I’m guessing that this isn’t its base. If we follow it, we can find out where it lives. Then we’ll get Fire Essences along with its demonic core.”

That was Long Chen’s objective.

Xiaolang suddenly understood. He looked at Long Chen in admiration, privately musing that the older gingers were the spiciest...

After deciding on the plan, Long Chen followed the Divine Ember Beast from afar. Since it was bleeding, Long Chen grew excited when he smelled its blood. No matter how far it went, he felt like he would have no trouble tracking it.

In the deepest part of the Pyro Passageways, Long Chen followed the Divine Ember Beast over a huge distance and realized he had entered a tunnel filled with lava. This was a shock to him because the bottom of the Pyro Passageways was a riverbed, and if there was a hole in the riverbed, what did that mean?

Would that mean it was the nest of the Divine Ember Beast?

When this thought popped into his mind, he activated the Soul Swallowing Gaze and saw that the deepest part of the tunnel was densely packed with Divine Ember Beasts!

They were all congregated in a large cave, gathering in duos and trios. Long Chen didn’t think his guess would be right!

He now faced a dilemma. On the one hand, these were Category Seven Earth-tier beasts. There were at least fifty here, and even if Long Chen and Xiaolang fought together, it would be difficult to fight so many. It was dangerous, but there was an opportunity that came with this risk. If so many Divine Ember Beasts were happy to stay here, then there was sure to be many precious Fire Essences too, perhaps even Divine Essence Crystals.

Long Chen described everything he saw to Xiaolang. Xiaolang frowned, also hesitating. The benefits to be gained were gigantic, but it was dangerous enough to kill either one of them.

“Let’s do it this way. Since both of us can use Divine Fire Clone, I reckon we can fight twenty Divine Ember Beasts together at most. We can stay here and wait for the Divine Ember Beasts to come out. We will kill them as they emerge, and we can even bait them out. Since we have three days, I’m sure we can slowly kill them all,” Long Chen said solemnly after some thought.



His mind was clear.

When the injured Divine Ember Beast returned to the large cave, the rest of the Divine Ember Beasts started to erupt in indignation. When they saw that their friend had been hurt, all the adult Divine Ember Beasts were extremely furious. Very soon, two Divine Ember Beasts traveled towards the mouth of the tunnel in Long Chen's direction.

"We just talked about them, and now two are coming already. Xiaolang, let's fight them together. We will wait at the mouth of the tunnel, and once they exit, I will use the Blood Devouring Domain and we will kill them!" Long Chen made the arrangements, and they quickly arrived at the mouth of the cave, waiting for the Divine Ember Beasts.

When the furious beasts' heads emerged from the tunnel, Long Chen activated the Blood Devouring Domain, which pressed down on them. Since the beasts did not have their guards up, their movements were instantly restricted greatly. Long Chen and Xiaolang ambushed them at lightning speed, immediately engaging in a fervent battle with one of them.

Xiaolang used the lazy method, which was to use the Nine Devils Ancestral Fire to burn a hole in the Divine Ember Beast's abdomen. Thanks to the Blood Devouring Domain's influence, the Divine Ember Beast's movements were restricted, and since it had been caught off guard, it died easily.

Long Chen used the same ambush method. He swung the Azure Dragon Halberd hard, using Dragon King's Burial to unleash an efficient but fatal attack to quickly kill off the other beast.

A total of two Category Seven Earth-tier demonic cores ended up in Xiaolang's belly. However, ascending to the next tier was not going to be easy. At this point, two demonic cores were only enough to partially fill his stomach.

After two easy kills, it proved that Long Chen's method was correct. He needed to kill all of the Divine Ember Beasts to retrieve the things inside, so he did not want to waste more time and started working on a baiting strategy.

Chapter 368 - Great Harvest

Long Chen quickly figured out that there were sixty-eight Divine Ember Beasts inside the cave, and he and Xiaolang had already killed two. He did not have enough time to wait for all of them to come out, so he had to lure them out. However, he could not lure too many out at one time. If he wanted to enter the cave, he would be safe as long as he did not cause a huge commotion and attract the other Divine Ember Beasts.

"Xiaolang, watch me!" Long Chen laughed and snuck into the tunnel. He was more suited to be the bait than Xiaolang.

Relying on the Soul Swallowing Gaze, he could easily track the Divine Ember Beasts' movements. Holding his breath, he slowly trekked inside the tunnel, quickly arriving in front of the huge cave where the Divine Ember Beasts were gathered. Due to the lava, he could not see what precious treasures lay below, but he was sure that there would be a lot because this place was a hundred times hotter than outside. This meant that there were many Fire Essences here, and perhaps even Divine Essence Crystals!

Long Chen was sure that he had found the place with the most Fire Essences in the entire Pyro Passageways. He had gotten lucky, but he would have to put in some work in order to maximize his gains.

He took a few pebbles from the ground. Bracing himself, he tossed them at a few beasts close by. Although the pebbles were too small to cause any harm, they startled the Divine Ember Beasts. So when Long Chen made a soft sound outside the cave, all five of them walked out suspiciously.

Long Chen ran instantly!

When the Divine Ember Beasts saw him, they gave chase immediately. This time, there were five beasts in total, but Long Chen knew that he could handle them.

Very soon, he dashed out of the mouth of the tunnel, and all five beasts followed suit. He activated the Blood Devouring Domain instantly. Xiaolang, who had long been hiding, released his clones and surrounded the Divine Ember Beasts instantly. Then he used the Nine Devils Ancestral Fire. The surrounded Divine Ember Beasts obviously could not withstand the fire, so they were killed one by one.

All five Divine Ember Beasts died in less than an hour. Long Chen only managed to kill one. Xiaolang took down the other four. His Nine Devils Ancestral Fire was much more destructive than Long Chen's attacks. Long Chen was feeling a bit frustrated because while he possessed the Heaven-tier Traceless Demon Shadow as a body combat technique and the formidable Divine Fire Clone as a divine technique, everything else he had was terrible. In terms of offense, the Azure Dragon Halberd had long become inadequate in the face of his increasingly stronger enemies.

In contrast, Xiaolang's incredible talent was starting to show.

Next, Long Chen replicated this method, every time luring five to six Divine Ember Beasts out of the cave. The situation got out of hand one time because ten Divine Ember Beasts were lured out. However, when they utilized all the clones at their disposal, plus the Blood Devouring Domain and the Nine Devils Ancestral Fire, even ten Divine Ember Beasts died in their hands.

After Xiaolang had consumed almost fifty Category Seven Earth-tier Divine Ember Beasts' demonic cores, he underwent metamorphosis once more. This time, the process lasted half a day. After his successful metamorphosis, Xiaolang surpassed Long Chen to attain the Category Seven Earth-tier.

Long Chen had long known that the Pyro Passageways would be Xiaolang's heaven, and he had been proved right. Xiaolang had successfully leveled up by two tiers. He shrank as a result, but his body was more condensed and solid. His life force leveled up as well, and he could control an even larger portion of the Nine Devils Ancestral Fire.

After he leveled up, the ten-plus Divine Ember Beasts in the cave were no longer a problem to them.

"Wow, Xiaolang. From today onwards, I will need you to protect me! Lead the way! Let's go get our war spoils!"

The teenager and the wolf ran excitedly into the lava-filled cave. This time, he was no longer afraid of causing a commotion. Facing Xiaolang's powerful attacks, the ten-plus Divine Ember Beasts were killed by his clones and the Nine Devils Ancestral Fire. Although Xiaolang was at the same

tier as them, he had received the legendary ancestral fire. It was only a fraction of the actual fire, and Xiaolang could only control a small portion of it, but that was more than enough.

The Divine Ember Beasts were entirely killed off by Long Chen and Xiaolang.

After removing the threats, Long Chen started to inspect the large quantity of war spoils. The cave was huge, big enough to fit about a hundred Divine Ember Beasts. There was a gigantic number of Fire Essences inside, and he picked one up off the ground every few steps. They shone with a blinding light and radiated high heat.

Long Chen and Xiaolang separated to collect the Fire Essence, working quickly because they were worried that something unexpected could happen.

Suddenly, Long Chen sensed a huge wave of heat. The heat waves coming from the Fire Essences were strong, but they did not affect Long Chen. This new gust of heat, however, was hot enough to make Long Chen uncomfortable. He could only offset it a little by using Qi to protect his body.

He took a few steps forward and spotted the source of the heat. It was a black crystal floating quietly in the lava. If his guess was correct, this was a Divine Essence Crystal, which was worth a hundred Fire Essences!

“I didn’t have to look very hard to find you ...” Long Chen quickly put the Divine Essence Crystal away, then he continued collecting Fire Essences. Since he did not want anything to go to waste, the duo scoured the entire cave to collect all the Fire Essences, plus even more Divine Essence Crystals.

After Long Chen counted them all, he was stunned. In addition to the hundred-plus Fire Essences he had from slaying Ember Beasts outside, he had collected a total of almost two thousand Fire Essences in the cave, plus thirteen Divine Essence Crystals. Thirteen Divine Essence Crystals were equivalent to thirteen hundred Fire Essences.

He was jealous when he saw nine Fire Essences on the Ninth Prince’s sword. He never would’ve guessed that he would find so many Fire Essences here today.

“It looks like Fire Essences aren’t worth anything. The nine Fire Essences stuck on that advanced Earth-tier divine sword were likely only for boosting its existing properties. This means the other materials were very important too. Nine Fire Essences aren’t enough to forge an advanced-Earth-tier divine sword at all!”

In the beginning, one Fire Essence was enough for Xiaolang to grow by one tier. Now, however, it was not the same. Fire Essences were now almost as effective as Ember Beast demonic cores, despite containing several times more fire energy than the cores.

Long Chen had only found so many Fire Essences because he had come across a Divine Ember Beast nest. This was the largest Divine Ember Beast herd in the Pyro Passageways. They had collected countless Fire Essences and Divine Essence Crystals over countless years and tossed them in the nest. Over time, the essences and crystals had turned into regular rocks, then new ones were collected to replace them.

That was the cycle, and also why Long Chen could enjoy such a large harvest.

Of course, it was also due to his abilities. Long Chen knew that Yan Danfeng and Murong Yu, who did not have the Soul Swallowing Gaze, would not dare fight a herd of Category Seven Earth-tier Divine Ember Beasts.

Although the Fire Essences did not have a large effect on Xiaolang anymore, two thousand of them would surely have a noticeable effect. Now that the collection process was over, Long Chen left and chose a quiet spot to rest. He had accumulated a lot of treasures, so leaving the crime scene was the smartest choice.

“The harvest has far exceeded my expectations! Xiaolang, a large portion of it was thanks to your efforts! I doubt they’ll get as many Fire Essences and Divine Essence Crystals as me even though they have a hundred people. That is why I’ll reserve a thousand Fire Essences and ten Divine Essence Crystals. You can have the rest as a snack!” Long Chen said with a laugh.

He was very happy with this harvest. Not only was he confident that he would get the Demon Seed Planting Technique, but Xiaolang’s strength was also increasing at a terrifying speed. Category Seven Earth-tier was far from his limit.

The Burning Heaven Emperor had said that as long as Xiaolang had enough resources, he could grow to become the strongest beast ever. Now was the time for him to flex his formidable strength. There was no limit to how many fire treasures he could consume. As long as he had enough fire-type treasures, he could grow to a level that was completely unattainable to Long Chen.

At least, that would be beyond the four foundational realms.

Long Chen now knew that it was absolutely the right choice to enter the Pyro Passageways and give Xiaolang a chance to increase his strength. With so many Fire Essences and Divine Essence Crystals in his pouch, Long Chen was excited. Would Xiaolang become as powerful as the three Demon Elders after he consumed everything he had on hand? Maybe even surpass them?

He was impressed by Xiaolang’s ability to grow. He had been completely focused on cultivation for the past two months, but the growth he had achieved was nothing compared to what Xiaolang had just experienced.

After gathering the “snacks” that Long Chen had given him in one place, which was about a thousand Fire Essences, Xiaolang started consuming them all happily.

Then Long Chen took out another unexpected treasure he had found in the cave. It was a sword, blue all over and shining with faint starlight.

Chapter 369 - Shadow Sword Technique

“This sword is an advanced Earth-tier weapon,” Ling Xi said, tapping her lips after studying the sword.

“But there are good and bad advanced Earth-tier swords. That Hell King Blade you previously owned was not bad at all, though unfortunately, it was destroyed by Lin Zichen’s Imperial Sword. This sword is similar to the Hell King Blade; the Heavenly Demon Palace probably owns less than ten divine weapons on this level.”

“If this sword is on a level similar to the Hell King Blade, then it must be decent. Since it is shimmering with faint starlight, I’ll call it Star Sword.” Long Chen nodded, touching the blade with his hand. Although it had been buried for a long time, he could tell that the Star Sword was still sharp. It had not deteriorated over time.

“Why would this sword be in Divine Ember Beast territory?” Ling Xi asked, confused.

“I’m guessing a Heavenly Demon Palace disciple found the Divine Ember Beast nest at some point in time. However, he did not have a technique like the Soul Swallowing Gaze, so he could not pinpoint their numbers and locations. Therefore, he could not strategize and kill them off slowly. Instead, he was surrounded and killed, leaving this behind. This sword probably never thought it would see the light of day again ...”

Long Chen sighed.

Then he looked at the tiny Ling Xi in front of him and smiled. “Xiao Xi, you’re the most familiar with my current condition. I am now doing my best to get the Demon Emperor Sword and the Demon Emperor Sword Technique. The Azure Dragon Halberd and the Azure Dragon Combat Technique are my only means of offense, and they are pretty weak. Since I have the Star Sword now, do you have any suitable sword techniques that you can teach me?”

Ling Xi said bitterly, “Based on what I can remember, even the lowest tier sword technique I can teach you requires you to be at the Heavenly Passage Realm for you to master it. The Sword Devil Finger was only a trick I learned as a kid for fun. Let me think harder ...”

Ling Xi’s words made Long Chen speechless. The Sword Devil Finger was once Long Chen’s most powerful attack, yet it was just a technique Ling Xi had learned for fun when she was a kid. What she could provide him needed to wait until he was at least at the Heavenly Passage Realm ...

*How powerful is Xiao Xi’s background ...* Long Chen felt weak in the knees when he thought about this.

Xiaolang started to consume the Fire Essences. This time, there was a large number of Fire Essences and Divine Ember Beasts, so it would take him some time. During this period, Ling Xi thought bitterly about sword techniques while Long Chen was happy to be free for a while.

Finally, Ling Xi blurted excitedly, “I thought of a small sword technique! It’s an advanced Earth-tier technique, but I’ve forgotten most of its theory verses. Give me two hours. I’ll try to figure it out.”

After that, she continued to immerse herself in a focused meditation. It was rare to see her so focused, and she looked very attractive while doing it.

“Figure it out?” Long Chen was speechless. Ling Xi was basically creating a sword technique for him at this point. How much foundational knowledge and family background did it take to do such a thing? All Long Chen knew was that at this moment, he would not be able to create a sword technique.

“This sword technique is called the Shadow Sword Technique. It’s something I cultivated when I was a child to play with. At the time, I felt like it was very pretty

because of the shadow on the sword, which was why I learned it on my own and played with it every day. After that, as I grew up, I lost interest in it ...”

Ling Xi cocked her head, thinking out loud while simultaneously triggering Long Chen’s nerves.

*What a psycho*, Long Chen yelled in his heart. He had never asked how powerful Ling Xi’s family was because he was afraid that if he knew, the pressure would prevent him from improving.

It did not take two hours. Less than an hour later, Ling Xi leaped with excitement and cried, “Ah! It’s finally done! I don’t remember the original verse, so I altered it a little. However, I can confirm that the Shadow Sword Technique is the most powerful technique below the Heaven-tier. You can use this until you get the Demon Emperor Sword!”

“Huh?” Long Chen didn’t know what to say.

“Hey, I worked very hard. Aren’t you going to praise me?” Ling Xi’s face darkened. She had done so much and squeezed her brain dry for this so that Long Chen would praise her, but he remained stunned.

“Xiao Xi, you’re so amazing! You’re so good to me! You’re basically my parents reincarnated!” Long Chen cried out dramatically once he woke up from his shock.

“Tsk, *you* are my parents reincarnated! Not me! I’m not that old! Alright, I’m not talking to you anymore. There’s not much time left, so take your time to study this. Tell me if you don’t understand something.” Ling Xi rolled her eyes and left him the theory of the Shadow Sword Technique, then she returned to the Ling Xi Sword.

“That girl ...” Long Chen smiled in exasperation. But Ling Xi was right. There was indeed not much time left. Now was a critical moment for Xiaolang to raise his cultivation level, so Long Chen quietened his mind and started to study the Shadow Sword Technique with Ling Xi’s modifications.

After cultivating the Heaven-tier Traceless Demon Shadow, cultivating an advanced Earth-tier combat technique felt much simpler. Also, due to Ling Xi’s modifications, many subtler parts had become much easier to understand. That was why it did not take him much time to master it.

Long Chen had enough Fire Essences on hand, so he did not need to search for more. After Xiaolang consumed the Fire Essences and Divine Essence Crystals, he took time to rest his body and stabilize his cultivation. After accumulating the effects of so many Fire Essences and Divine Essence Crystals, he had successfully leveled up from Category Seven to Category Eight.

The inconspicuous Xiaolang had become the largest winner of the Pyro Passageways training exercise. The Category Eight Earth-tier Sun Devouring Wolf was now strong enough to fight cultivators like the Eighth River Stage Yang Danfeng, and maybe even surpass them. Xiaolang was Long Chen’s brother for life, so essentially, his strength was also Long Chen’s strength.

Therefore, it meant that Long Chen had become stronger once more.

While Xiaolang rested, Long Chen successfully finished cultivating the Shadow Sword Technique. Of course, Ling Xi helped him greatly.

“Brother Chen, I can give you an even stronger sword technique after you’ve reached the Heavenly Passage Realm. It’s even stronger than the Demon Emperor Sword Technique. Are you excited?” Ling Xi said sneakily in his ear after he mastered the Shadow Sword Technique.

“Really?” Long Chen was pleasantly surprised.

“Xiao Xi, I love you so much! I swear I will marry you in this lifetime! If I don’t, won’t I just be taking advantage of you?” Long Chen chuckled.

“Do you mean you’re only with me for my sword techniques?” Ling Xi asked resentfully, blinking with her large eyes.

“Who said that?! There’s no way I would do that, haha …” Long Chen laughed.

The Heavenly Passage Realm was far away, but Long Chen was filled with anticipation. The first sword technique Ling Xi gave him would surely be no ordinary technique. Even if she said it was nothing, it could end up changing Long Chen’s life.

Only one day was left when they wrapped up their activities. Long Chen was prepared to leave. He had no need to search for more Fire Essences; all he needed to do was search for the tunnel where he entered from and prepare to return tomorrow. He refused to believe that he would lose to anyone, not with effectively two thousand Fire Essences.

Not everyone was lucky enough to find a Divine Ember Beast nest after all. And no one else had the ability to clear a Divine Ember Beast nest.

He had enjoyed a great harvest in this training exercise. Long Chen was steadily making progress towards his goals.

When he finally left the lava river with black flames, after some traveling, he encountered Yang Jun and the eight other cultivators. Last time, Long Chen ignored and passed them. This time, all he had was time.

Long Chen noticed them with the Soul Swallowing Gaze from a distance. Of course, they had not noticed him. They were conversing while traveling in Long Chen’s direction.

He stepped aside and hid. He wanted to see how many Fire Essences eight people could accumulate.

“This is awful! We’ve been searching for two days! Why haven’t we found the place marked on the map?! Yang Jun, this map can’t be fake, can it?!” one of the disciples complained.

“Fake?! My master personally gave this map to me! He said there are only three maps in total. Senior Yang Danfeng and Senior Murong have probably found the Frost Soul Essence already! You idiots have been walking in circles! It’s been two days, and we’ve found nothing!” Yang Jun yelled, clearly angry.

Yang Jun was the Third Demon Elder's number one disciple, so he outranked everyone there. When he raged, despite their dissatisfaction, they did not dare to show it.

They were called idiots, yet the idiot was Yang Jun himself. He had been the one looking at the map for two days, and giving them instructions. He was the main reason why they could not find their destination.

"I've had enough of scolding you all! There's one day left! We still stand a chance to find the Frost Soul Essence, so get to work!" Yang Jun yelled furiously.

After walking for a while, one of the disciples said worriedly, "Senior Brother, we have only found a bit over two hundred Fire Essences during these two days. What will we do if Long Chen gets three hundred Fire Essences?"

"How is that possible?" Yang Jun gave a contemptuous chuckle. "This is Long Chen's first time coming to the Pyro Passageways, so he will be unfamiliar with the place. Each of you can find fifteen Fire Essences in a day, while even finding ten would be impressive for him. And if he found twenty a day, that would only add up to one hundred across five days. Don't worry about that trash. We must focus on the Frost Soul Essence! Master said it's something that can help boost one's cultivation in a stable manner!"

"Yes, Senior!"

Chapter 370 - Frost Soul Essence

"Frost Soul Essence?" This piqued Long Chen's interest.

If the three Demon Elders had kept this a secret from Zhao Qingyun and instructed each of their top disciples to search for this thing, it was certain to be an extraordinary treasure.

"The Frost Soul Essence can be found in lava, and it's the product of an extreme counter-effect. The extreme heat of the lava ends up producing an extremely cold essence, just like Xiaolang's Nine Devils Ancestral Fire. Due to the extreme heat, it feels extremely cold," Ling Xi explained.

"What are the uses of the Frost Soul Essence?" Long Chen asked excitedly.

"The Frost Soul Essence is a spiritual treasure formed due to the extreme condensation of Yin cold earthly Qi. It has pure, extreme cold energy. As for how useful it'll be, it depends on its size. Usually, it slowly grows from accumulation over time. Usually, after more than a millennium, it's only the size of a thumb. If you cultivate a thumb-sized Frost Soul Essence, you will go from the Sixth right up to the peak of the Seventh River Stage, almost breaking through to the Eighth," Ling Xi explained meticulously.

"And if it is cultivated by a person at the Eighth River Stage? What will happen?" Long Chen's brows were furrowed. He had a feeling that the three Demon Elders had been



planning this particular Pyro Passageways training exercise for a long time. It looked like the most important thing to them was not the Fire Essence, but the Frost Soul Essence.

“If they’re lucky, they should be able to reach the Ninth River Stage, so they would be on par with Lin Zichen,” Ling Xi answered.

Long Chen had guessed correctly. The three Demon Elders had probably long known that there was a Frost Soul Essence down here. It was probably too small before, but the opportunity had finally ripened. That was why they had sent their disciples to collect it. Of course, this was all being done behind Zhao Qingyun’s back.

The higher one ascended in cultivation, the more difficult the journey would be. Breaking through from the Eighth River Stage to the Ninth was especially challenging. If Long Chen wanted to take that leap with Blood Transmutation, he would have to consume a Heaven-tier demonic beast. This was the most efficient method to level up, and it was beyond difficult. But everyone else had it worse.

The Frost Soul Essence was equivalent to a Heaven-tier beast’s carcass to Long Chen.

This was something the three Demon Elders had kept secret for a long time, and indeed, it was a very tempting treasure. Long Chen couldn’t resist. The Frost Soul Essence was not the same as Blood Transmutation, which was a type of robbery, a bloody and unreasonable technique. In contrast, the Frost Soul Essence was a product of nature. Refining it would still be adhering to the laws of the heavens and earth. It was also considered leveling up in a stable manner.

Xiaolang had already attained the Category Eight Earth-tier, and Long Chen could not fall behind.

*Dear three Demon Elders, the items you prepared for your disciples will end up in my hands. I really want to see the looks on your faces when that happens. Frost Soul Essence. What a nice name.* Long Chen smirked.

“Brother Chen, what are you going to do?” asked Ling Xi.

“Snatch the map, of course!” Long Chen did not hesitate. After he spoke, he dashed at an extremely high speed, then appeared in front of Yang Jun and the rest with an amused look on his face.

His appearance startled everyone.

“Who is that?!”

Yang Jun hurriedly tried to put the map in his hand away, then he looked at Long Chen with some panic. When he got a good look at Long Chen’s face, he calmed down, as did everyone else.

“Long Chen? You didn’t have to do it, but you delivered yourself to our doorstep!” Yang Jun gestured to his brothers, and a total of eight people instantly surrounded Long Chen. Yang Jun took the lead, gazing arrogantly at him. “You brat, you came here to give us something, right? Let’s do it this way. Give us all the Fire Essences you’ve collected, and I will show you mercy. What do you think?”

“Dream on! You’ve lost to me already, so you have no right to speak in front of me. Aren’t you afraid I’m going to spank your bottom again?” Long Chen said with a grin.

“Shut your mouth!” That was the most humiliating event of Yang Jun’s life, and the fact that Long Chen brought it up again made his cheeks burn. Long Chen’s look of contempt made him increasingly furious. As the number one disciples of the Third Demon Elder, no one had ever dared insult him like that.

“Everyone! Beat Long Chen up! You’re merely at the Sixth River Stage; you only defeated me because you were lucky! How dare you showboat yourself in front of your seniors! My brothers, attack!” cried Yang Jun, sounding a little desperate.

Everyone knew that Long Chen had mastered the Heaven-tier Traceless Demon Shadow, meaning he would be difficult to beat despite being one level lower than them.

“Attack!” All eight disciples charged. Before Long Chen arrived, these people were ranked third to tenth in the Heavenly Demon Palace. They were the best of the disciples. Qi exploded from them as they charged at Long Chen. They were almost the same as eight Yang Juns, so Long Chen could feel an unquestionable pressure.

“Well, I’ll just give you all a taste of my newly acquired skill.”

*Clang!* Long Chen took out the Star Sword. It radiated faint starlight and was extremely sharp, enough to startle the onlooker. It was clearly a good weapon!

*The Palace Lord is clearly being unfair. This brat has only just entered the Heavenly Demon Palace, yet the Palace Lord has already given him such a good sword!* Everyone felt uncomfortable by this. All of them had once eyed Traceless Demon Shadow, yet this newcomer who had come out of nowhere had robbed them of it. Everyone was furious.

“Take this! Seventy-Two Path True Fists!”

“Divine Wind Kick!”

Wave after wave of attacks came after Long Chen, including many advanced Earth-tier techniques. Since they were all at the Seventh River Stage, cultivating advanced Earth-tier combat techniques was a minimum requirement for them. However, even the skills in this tier could be categorized as good or bad. The best advanced Earth-tier technique was at least ten times stronger than the worst advanced Earth-tier technique. After Ling Xi’s modifications of Long Chen’s Shadow Sword Technique, it was undeniably one of the best of its tier!

“Shadow Sword Technique!”

Blurry shadows suddenly shot through the crowd, traveling so fast they were almost invisible.

Long Chen’s shadows appeared next to everyone, and they attacked the shadows fervently. However, they realized that they were not fast enough to catch up to Long Chen’s body combat technique. Every shadow was Long Chen, but also not Long Chen!

*How can Traceless Demon Shadow be this insane?!* Fear rose in their hearts. That was when one of them let out a cry of pain. They all looked over and saw a sword pierced through his thigh. Long Chen was standing behind this disciple, and before anyone could react, he and his sword disappeared again, leaving the stabbed disciple crying!

“Everyone, be careful!” Everyone’s smugness turned into panic and terror when they witnessed this. They never imagined that Long Chen would be this powerful. He had already mastered Traceless Demon Shadow to its late stage, so despite being only at the Sixth River Stage, even Yang Jun could not track his movements, let alone the others.

Long Chen was an invisible killer to them. They were sitting ducks with no power to fight back at all!

“Ahh!” Another disciple screamed. Everyone turned in terror and found that his thigh had been punctured too! Blood flowed into the lava. It looked like his artery had been stabbed, and the disciple was trying to stop the blood in a panic. However, the wound left him incapacitated.

Everyone lost their minds in panic.

“Long Chen, if you are a man, don’t use Traceless Demon Shadow! Fight me directly, you coward!” Yang Jun roared as he grimaced furiously. He was secretly also feeling terrified when he watched his men get knocked down one by one.

“Do you take me for an idiot?” Long Chen’s laughter rang across every person’s minds.

“Ah!” Another disciple’s thigh was stabbed!

This was the trigger to the bomb. Everyone was terrified and knew that if they stayed, they would only be stabbed by Long Chen. When one person fled, the rest started to flee too.

Even the injured ones tried to run. Long Chen had merely stabbed their thighs, but who knew if he would stab their hearts next?

“Where are you all going? Get back here!” Yang Jun barked in terror. Unfortunately, his yelling was useless. Long Chen’s violent actions had shaken them to the core.

When everyone left, Yang Jun was finally afraid. He quickly turned and also fled. However, what made him lose his composure was that Long Chen gave chase!

“Long Chen, I’m begging you! Let me go! I’m not going to fight you anymore! I’m giving you all my Fire Essences! Let me go!” he begged bitterly as he fled. If a two-meter tall man could beg like this, it was clear how terrifying Long Chen was.

An invisible attack was the most terrifying one. No one wanted to be in a situation where they could not even fight back, where they could die at any time.

“Since you’re the one who’s offering, will you agree to whatever terms I demand?”  
Long Chen’s voice rang creepily next to his ear.

Yang Jun gritted his teeth and said, “As long as it does not cross my limits, anything will do! As long as you let me go!”