

Divine King 111

Chapter 111 Battle Against Qin Tian

"This is the Xu Nian you spoke of, seems quite hated by the look of it!" Chen Yao looked at the people shouting red-faced around her and teased Chen Wudi beside her.

"Indeed, our brother-in-law is a supreme genius, naturally inciting a lot of envy," Chen Wudi hurriedly responded.

"Shameless!" Chen Yao shook her head helplessly, yet her curiosity about this Xu Nian grew even more.

At the same time, Zhao Yan and Ji Yun had gathered together, also discussing the topic of Xu Nian.

"Brother Ji Yun, it seems your academy is lucky, facing this Xu Nian. This time, Qin Tian is a hundred percent certain to advance," Zhao Yan said to Ji Yun.

"You probably don't know the relationship between this Qin Tian and Xu Nian, do you? They are half-brothers with the same father," Ji Yun said with a smile.

"Huh? What a coincidence! Qin Tian wouldn't go easy on him, would he? I was hoping he would teach the guy a lesson for me," Zhao Yan said in surprise.

"Don't worry, he won't. Although they are brothers, their relationship has been discordant since childhood, and Qin Tian has even been quite unsatisfied with Xu Nian. Just wait and watch the drama unfold," Ji Yun said with a laughing smile.

"Haha, then I can rest assured. Interesting, fratricide is more exciting than any competition," Zhao Yan laughed heartily, his eyes filled with mockery.

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The shouting from the crowd was relentless, and on the competitors' area, Xu Nian's face also showed a bitter smile as he stepped forward and slowly walked toward the battle platform.

"Despicable!"

"Shameless!"

As Xu Nian emerged, the audience completely boiled over, cursing at Xu Nian.

If they had eggs at hand, they probably wouldn't hesitate to throw them at Xu Nian.

Meanwhile, Chen Yao, who had been standing in a corner, suddenly stiffened, her captivating eyes widening in shock at the sight of Xu Nian, followed by a surge of unprecedented anger.

"It's him!" Chen Yao bit her lip and thought furiously.

Originally, when she was searching for Chen Wudi and going by the name Chen Yao, she passed through the Demon Beast Forest. While bathing by a waterfall, she unexpectedly encountered a pervert who stole her clothes.

She struck back to teach the pervert a lesson but ended up being fully seen and even touched by him. In a later encounter, she lost to him and nearly succumbed to his advances.

She thought they would never meet again, but now, unexpectedly, they had.

"Sister, see? That's the brother-in-law I told you about. Handsome, isn't he? Aren't you thinking about marrying him right away?" Chen Wudi, oblivious to the change in Chen Yao's expression, excitedly said to her.

"Handsome indeed. Maybe later you could introduce me to him?" Chen Yao suppressed the rage in her heart and squeezed out a smile.

"Of course! I didn't expect you to really fall for him! I knew my judgment in picking a brother-in-law couldn't be wrong," Chen Wudi said with a proud face.

However, he failed to notice that his sister's gaze had turned to one of extreme ferocity.

If looks could kill, both Chen Wudi and Xu Nian would have died a thousand times over.

Xu Nian was unaware that he had already become a target of interest and was already standing on the battle platform, facing Qin Tian.

"I really didn't expect you to be able to participate in the academy's grand tournament," Qin Tian said to Xu Nian with a cold voice.

He had been at Tianhen Academy for a while, so he had no idea about what was happening with the Qin Family and only knew that Xu Nian had been driven out of the family.

"Hmph, there's a lot that you won't expect. But I have to tell you something, Qin Hen is dead," Xu Nian spoke indifferently, looking at the man who was nominally his older brother.

"What?" Qin Tian was clearly startled, then glared at Xu Nian, "Did you kill him?"

Xu Nian gave a faint smile and bared his teeth, "Although I didn't kill him personally, it was still because of me that he died, and truth be told, I did want to slaughter him by my own hands."

Though Qin Hen hadn't killed his mother, he had once whipped her, and just for that, Qin Hen had to die.

"You're courting death!" Qin Tian instantly became furious, his gaze filled with killing intent as he looked at Xu Nian.

Qin Hen was his younger brother, and naturally, his feelings for Qin Hen were a hundred, even a thousand times stronger than for Xu Nian. Thus, the moment he heard about Qin Hen's death from Xu Nian, he had already harbored killing intent towards him.

"If you want to avenge Qin Hen, feel free to make your move," Xu Nian said with a sneer.

Qin Hen had committed numerous evils, and Qin Tian, unreasonably biased, was reason enough for Xu Nian to no longer waste words.

"Fine, since you're seeking death, I'll fulfill your wish!" Qin Tian roared, and spiritual energy suddenly radiated from his body. In one stride, he launched a punch directly at Xu Nian.

The punch roared like a tiger in the mountains, the terrifying spiritual energy bringing a powerful gust, heavily bearing down on Xu Nian.

However, Xu Nian's figure was as immovable as a mountain; he countered with a direct punch of his own.

"Boom!"

Their fists collided, and Qin Tian was sent staggering back ten steps, while Xu Nian only retreated three.

As Xu Nian adapted to the heavy hammer behind him, his strength had recovered quite a bit, so Qin Tian's punch couldn't harm him at all.

The audience was visibly shocked, as they thought Xu Nian lacked real strength, believing that his previous advancement was entirely due to luck and despicable means.

Now, he had firmly withstood a punch from Qin Tian and seemed to have the upper hand, something they could hardly believe.

Qin Tian also showed a look of surprise, not expecting his punch to be repelled.

Although he only used seventy percent of his strength, that was enough to defeat an average Ninth Level Heaven Warrior.

"Draw your weapon now, or else you won't have another chance to strike," Xu Nian said arrogantly to Qin Tian.

Despite Qin Tian's strength, he was still far from sufficient to be his opponent.

"Vajra Fist!"

Qin Tian was instantly enraged, as Xu Nian dared to look down on him.

He charged again, swinging his fists to bombard Xu Nian.

This time he used a Combat Skill, and the grade seemed quite strong.

His hands shone with a brilliant golden light, as if they were coated in a layer of gold.

"Vajra Fist, that's a Xuan-level top-grade Battle Technique from Tianhen Academy. Qin Tian actually needed to push himself to this point," students from Tianhen Academy outside the arena stated in surprise.

However, as Xu Nian watched Qin Tian's punching attack, he shook his head.

"Too slow!"

Xu Nian spat out two words as his right leg kicked out in an instant, landing a blow directly on Qin Tian's abdomen.

Qin Tian's offensive was immediately unraveled, and the whole person was sent flying backward, sliding nearly twenty meters before stopping, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth, while Xu Nian stood proudly in place.

The onlookers were all dumbstruck; now they finally understood that Xu Nian was not some pushover, but a contender with formidable strength.

To be able to resolve Qin Tian's Vajra Fist with a single kick was by no means something an ordinary Nine-star Warrior could accomplish.

Chapter 112 Shocking the Entire Audience

Qin Tian lay at the edge of the Battle Platform, his eyes filled with shock as he looked at Xu Nian—yet what was stronger was the intense unwillingness.

He never dreamed that Xu Nian would become so powerful.

In the preparation area, both Ji Yun and Zhao Yan furrowed their brows.

Neither of them spoke, but their eyes were filled with hostility.

"Don't rush, the real power of Qin Tian lies in his swordsmanship. Maybe this Xu Nian is just good at hand-to-hand combat," Ji Yun spoke up.

Zhao Yan nodded, agreeing that even if Xu Nian was strong, he couldn't be that formidable.

"I told you to draw your weapon or you won't stand a chance. I held back with that kick just now; from here on, I won't be holding back," Xu Nian said indifferently.

Qin Tian was seething with anger. Xu Nian's words were a blatant insult to him.

"Fine, since you want to witness my swordsmanship, I shall oblige." With a cold snort, Qin Tian's hand materialized an extremely sharp Xuan Iron Sword.

As the sword was drawn, Qin Tian's entire demeanor became extremely sharp in an instant.

"Draw your weapon as well," Qin Tian said to Xu Nian.

"No rush, let's see first whether you are worthy for me to draw my weapon," Xu Nian said with a smile.

The Qin Tian of the past was someone he looked up to, but the Qin Tian of today was nothing in front of him.

Upon these words, the entire audience erupted in an uproar.

To question if someone is worthy for him to draw his weapon? Such arrogance, perhaps even Ji Yun wouldn't dare to say such things.

However, both Chen Xifeng and Dugu Jingcheng exchanged glances with a wry smile on their lips.

Twenty days ago, Xu Nian already had the strength to easily defeat Qin Tian, and now, twenty days later, how powerful Xu Nian had become was something they could not gauge.

"Arrogant!" Anger surged within Qin Tian as he brandished his Xuan Iron Sword and lunged at Xu Nian.

The sword light was cold and sharp; his thrust was so fast that the spectators could only see a blur.

Indeed, speed was Qin Tian's forte!

Even Ji Yun had to admit, his sword was truly fast!

A hint of surprise flashed in Xu Nian's eyes, and a sharp look came over him in an instant. With a tap of his foot, a gust of wind burst forth from beneath.

At the same time, a blood-red Scale Armor formed over his hand.

Xu Nian used his fingers as a sword and directly countered Qin Tian's Xuan Iron Sword.

"Clang, clang!"

Two crisp, tremulous sounds rang out as Qin Tian's thrusts were parried by Xu Nian's fingertips.

But Qin Tian was no pushover; with a flick of his wrist, the Xuan Iron Sword in his hand instantly swept across, aiming swiftly at Xu Nian's neck.

Xu Nian's eyes sharpened, and with a swift movement, he drifted backward, barely avoiding the strike.

Yet a strand of hair was still severed by Qin Yun's sharp Sword Radiance.

The crowd gasped in astonishment. If Xu Nian had been any slower, it wouldn't have been just hair that was cut, but his entire head.

"Humph, is that all you've got? If so, then you are doomed to lose today," Qin Tian cold-snorted.

After sliding back ten meters and regaining his stance, Xu Nian's intention shifted, and a Xuan Iron Sword appeared in his hand.

"Huh, he's using a sword, too? I thought his weapon was a bone."

"Yeah, he used a bone in the preliminaries; I thought that bone was his weapon. I wonder how fast his sword is."

The audience suddenly grew curious, having not expected Xu Nian to wield a sword.

"Humph, I didn't expect you to use a sword as well. Then you are destined to lose today," Qin Tian said coldly upon seeing Xu Nian summon a long sword.

In the realm of swordsmanship, he believed that besides Dugu Jingcheng and Feng Rain, who had the Innate Sword Spirit Body, no one else present could be his rival—not even the previously skilful Chen Xifeng could be more than his equal.

Seeing Xu Nian draw his long sword now, he naturally did not consider him a threat.

"Really? And now?" Xu Nian said, a slight smile playing on his lips as he suddenly took a step forward.

A powerful gale then rose from Xu Nian's body, an overbearing and unparalleled Sword Intent spreading out like a storm, sweeping across the entire venue.

Sword Intent!

It was actually Sword Intent!

Could he have also reached the realm of Man and Sword as One?

My God, Qinglin Academy had suddenly produced two geniuses of Man and Sword as One.

The audience on the field were completely agitated, their eyes widening as they watched Xu Nian, who was exuding strong Sword Intent, their expressions filled with utter shock.

Not only them, but Ji Yun and Zhao Yan in the ready area also showed signs of surprise, disbelief written all over their faces.

"Interesting, Dean Leng, this time your Academy truly harbors hidden dragons and crouching tigers. Suddenly, there are two geniuses who have achieved Man and Sword as One, particularly this Xu Nian, who has hidden his capabilities deeply," the Prefectural Governor said with a smile, looking towards Leng Yanran.

"Lord Governor flatters us. However, Xu Nian is indeed the most outstanding talent I have ever seen, and he is also recognized as the top in our Academy," Leng Yanran replied with a slight smile.

"Oh? The top? So, are you saying he's even more formidable than Dugu Jingcheng?" The Prefectural Governor's face showed a hint of surprise.

"Lord Governor will see for himself. I'm sure he won't be disappointed," Leng Yanran answered with a smile, feeling pleased with Xu Nian's performance.

"Haha, good, I am eager to see how Xu Nian won't disappoint me," Lord Governor laughed heartily.

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"It's impossible, how could this be? Even I haven't grasped Man and Sword as One, how could he have?" Qin Tian mumbled to himself, his face a picture of disbelief.

Yet, the Sword Intent emanating from Xu Nian chilled him to the bone.

"Hmph, Man and Sword as One, so what? I don't believe you can defeat my Earth-level Middle Grade Swordsmanship," Qin Tian huffed coldly as a powerful surge of Spiritual Energy burst from his body.

"Golden Element Slash, that's Qin Tian's signature Combat Skill. Is he going to use that move?" the disciples from Tianhen Academy murmured in surprise upon hearing Earth-level Middle Grade Battle Technique.

The sword light shone brightly, a powerful Gold Attribute energy pulsated from Qin Tian's long sword, its sharpness causing hearts to palpitate.

"Meet your end, Golden Element Slash!" Qin Tian roared, his long sword slashing down instantly.

"Buzz!"

A golden Sword Radiance unexpectedly shot out from the blade, forming a golden arc that fiercely came down upon Xu Nian.

As soon as the golden arc appeared, the surrounding air seemed to be slashed apart, emitting a piercing howl. The horrific vibrations from the arc were terrifying.

However, as the golden arc approached, the corners of Xu Nian's mouth curled into a faint smile.

"Ling Feng Thirteen Swords, Seventh Sword, Wind Trace!"

At that thought, the Sword Radiance flashed by.

The terrifying golden arc was sliced in two in a split second, immediately shattering in the air.

"What?"

The entire arena gasped, their eyes wide with horror. A full-powered strike from an Earth-level Middle Grade Battle Technique was broken just like that?

Qin Tian also showed a look of disbelief, unable to accept what he was seeing.

"Take another of my swords! Ling Feng Thirteen Swords, The Thirteenth Sword, Wind Shaking Heaven!"

Xu Nian shouted, his long sword slashing out in an instant.

In a flash, a violent wind billowed forth, a terrifying azure Sword Radiance came slashing at Qin Tian carried by the raging wind.

Qin Tian's face changed dramatically, and he immediately swung his sword to block.

"Clang!"

The moment Qin Tian's long sword touched the azure Sword Radiance, it was knocked flying, and Qin Tian himself was sent hurtling back in a straight line, crashing into the wall of the spectator stands behind him.

The entire wall was shattered, Qin Tian coughed up blood violently, and fell to the ground, severely injured.

The whole arena was silent, the spectators stunned.

Chapter 113 Only Practicing Fist and Foot, No Sword Drawn

Qin Tian was defeated!

And his defeat was thorough; everyone could see that he had no power to parry Xu Nian's sword.

The audience on the field was shocked. At this moment, they fully understood that the young man in the purple robe had been playing dumb and baiting the tiger all along.

His strength, not to mention being in the top three, was surely enough to make it into the top five.

It was laughable that they had thought Xu Nian had only made it to the rematch because of a sneak attack and luck.

"Xu Nian, I love you!"

Somewhere amongst the crowd, a woman shouted, which was followed by a chorus of cheers.

And so, Xu Nian gained his first group of fans.

In the preparation area, Zhao Yan and Ji Yun both had ashen faces. It felt as if they had been slapped hard, their cheeks burning with pain.

"We absolutely cannot let Xu Nian off, he even deceived us. If we meet him in the competition, I must burn him to ashes," Zhao Yan said with clenched fists and a fierce look.

Ji Yun didn't speak, but a chill flashed in the depths of his eyes.

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"Haha, Dean Leng, you were right. Xu Nian really did surprise me. It seems that Xu Nian has the strength to make the top three," the Prefectural Governor laughed as he turned to Leng Yanran.

Others might not know Leng Yanran's identity, but as the Prefectural Governor, how could he not know, so he was much more courteous when speaking with her.

"Lord Governor, in my opinion, you've only seen the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Xu Nian's strength. I am confident that he can take first place," Leng Yanran said with a smile.

When it came to Xu Nian, one really couldn't judge by common sense because he was improving every moment.

"Oh? First place, that's interesting! Now I'm looking forward to it even more," the Prefectural Governor replied with a laugh.

"Hmph, first place? Dean Leng, aren't you being a little too presumptuous? Do you really think our Tianhen Academy is a pushover?" the Dean of Tianhen Academy retorted angrily.

Their academy had only managed to get one student into the top eight, whereas Qinglin Academy had three, which meant that their status as the number one academy in East Field County might not hold for much longer.

Leng Yanran just smiled faintly upon hearing the Dean of Tianhen Academy and did not argue because she believed that facts would eventually slap certain people in the face.

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The eight group matches had concluded, and the quarterfinalists were determined.

Up next was the duel for the eight who were eliminated. Xu Nian wasn't particularly interested in this, so after saying goodbye to Dugu Jingcheng and Chen Xifeng, he left Giant Sword Square and headed to his own courtyard.

He wanted to take this opportunity to better grasp the Three-Forging Hammer Technique, Collapse Thunder. Although it might not be necessary, mastery ahead of time was always better than not.

However, as Xu Nian was about to reach his courtyard, he suddenly stopped in his tracks because two unexpected people appeared before him.

Chen Wudi and Chen Yao.

Xu Nian and Chen Yao locked eyes - one with surprise, the other filled with killing intent.

Although Chen Wudi felt the atmosphere was a bit awkward, he still boldly said, "Sis, let me introduce him, he is..."

"Buzz!"

However, before Chen Wudi could finish speaking, a sharp sword appeared in Chen Yao's hand. The Two-star Silver Moon Battle Sect's strength burst forth as she swung her sword at Xu Nian.

While striking with her sword, she also screamed, "You scoundrel, die!"

Xu Nian, sensing the ferocity of this sword, became serious.

This sword, both in speed and power, was much greater than the final blow from Qin Tian, especially since Chen Yao was from the Two-star Silver Moon Battle Sect.

"Didn't I say last time, I really didn't mean it, and besides, it's not like I didn't do anything for you afterward," Xu Nian hurriedly explained.

Of course, while explaining, Qin Tian didn't forget to use the Gale Dragon Step to dodge Chen Yao's attacks, or else he wouldn't even have the chance to speak.

But Chen Yao wouldn't listen, her sword striking one after another.

Each thrust contained extremely powerful Sword Qi, which left three-foot-long sword marks on the walls and floor wherever it struck.

Xu Nian's scalp tingled, but no matter how he tried to explain, the woman wouldn't listen.

"What's going on?" Chen Wudi was now completely baffled.

On the way over, his sister had been full of admiration and shyness, seemingly eager to meet Xu Nian, asking him various questions about him. So why did they start fighting without saying a word the moment they met?

There must be an affair!

Definitely an affair!

Chen Wudi was sure of it in his mind. He now understood that his sister had known Xu Nian from the start and the only reason she acted so curious and interested earlier was to trick him into bringing her to Xu Nian.

"Pfft!"

Just then, Xu Nian's robes were torn to shreds by Chen Yao's sword, and Xu Nian himself tumbled embarrassingly onto the ground.

After all, Xu Nian was carrying nearly five thousand jin weight of the iron hammer at the moment, so dodging the attacks of a Two-star War Sect under these circumstances was no easy feat.

However, the woman wasn't about to let it go and prepared to continue her sword strikes.

Xu Nian also grew angry, starting to muster his Thunder Fire Power, ready to unleash the Thunder and Fire Tyrant Fist.

"Stop fighting!"

However, before either of them could attack, they were stopped by Chen Wudi who rushed over.

Only then did they cease the fight, but the looks they exchanged were full of animosity.

"Sis, we agreed to acknowledge our brother-in-law upon arrival. What are you doing, trying to murder your own husband?" Chen Wudi said to Chen Yao.

"Chen Wudi, if you spout nonsense again, I'll tear your mouth apart!" Chen Yao glared at Chen Wudi, her stunning face gaining an additional allure from her anger.

"Sister? Chen Wudi, what's this about?" Xu Nian was also stunned, not expecting that Chen Wudi would actually call the woman before him sister.

Upon hearing Xu Nian's question, Chen Wudi turned and said with a smile, "Xu Nian, I forgot to tell you, my real identity is the son of Chen Tiansheng, the East Field County Governor, and she is my own older sister, Chen Yao. I was just thinking of introducing her to you as a wife."

Xu Nian rolled his eyes at that, but his heart was also very surprised.

He had not expected Chen Wudi to be the son of the East Field County Governor, let alone that the woman before him was actually Chen Wudi's sister.

It was a mess! A complete mess!

Thinking back to his actions in the Demon Beast Forest, Xu Nian felt a massive headache coming on.

Chen Yao, with her proud neck tilted, glared at Xu Nian as if to say you're as good as dead.

"Xu Nian, what exactly is the misunderstanding between you and my sister?" Chen Wudi asked, looking at Xu Nian.

Chen Yao immediately glared at Xu Nian, as if threatening him not to say anything.

Xu Nian scratched his head awkwardly and finally came up with a plausible explanation, "Well, there's not much to it. I saw your sister practicing in the water and kindly went up to spar with her for a while. Maybe your sister sees my martial arts skills are good, so every time we meet, she wants to spar with me again."

Upon hearing this, Chen Wudi's eyes widened, and he asked, "You didn't draw swords, did you?"

"No, just sparring, who would dare draw swords? That would lead to bloodshed," Xu Nian replied.

Upon hearing this, Chen Wudi breathed a sigh of relief.

Meanwhile, Chen Yao stood aside, looking utterly baffled, but she quickly caught on.

"You both can go to hell!"

Chen Yao's pretty face flushed red, and her gaze towards Xu Nian and Chen Wudi suddenly turned ferocious and menacing.

Chapter 114 The Endless Night

Chen Wudi blocked the way, so Chen Yao ultimately couldn't do anything to Xu Nian.

But in the end, she still threw out a harsh statement, "Wait until you enter the Battle Mansion, then I'll settle the score with you."

Xu Nian could only respond with a helpless wry smile, who asked him to try stealing from others in the first place.

Xu Nian didn't dwell on it any longer; upon returning to his courtyard, he closed the door and began practicing his Three-Forging Hammer Technique.

As he continuously swung the hammer, his control over the Gang Qi had reached a very proficient level.

"Boom!"

With a swing of his hammer, Xu Nian struck the air, but the vibrations created by the impact against the air were so powerful that they caused the floor to tremble violently; upon closer inspection, one could even see a dense network of fine cracks on the surface of the stone slab floor.

It should be noted that these were hard stone slabs, which even a Nine-star Warrior of the Star Realm might not be able to shatter with one punch.

One could imagine just how formidable Xu Nian's hammer blow was.

"I can already unleash ten percent of its power; I wonder how terrifying a full-power strike would be," Xu Nian mused with delight as he watched the scene unfold.

"Eh!"

However, just as he was about to rest and put the hammer down, the Divine Demon Gang Qi within his body started to surge tumultuously.

Without a second thought, Xu Nian immediately sat down cross-legged and began to circulate the Divine Demon Dominating Body Technique.

Spiritual Energy entered his body, eventually transforming into Divine Demon Gang Qi and seeping into his flesh.

As the Divine Demon Gang Qi continued to generate, Xu Nian felt the strength within his body reach a pinnacle.

He gritted his teeth and, with one burst of effort, frantically absorbed the Heaven and Earth Spiritual Energy.

"Boom!"

It was as if a dam had broken; the Divine Demon Gang Qi surged once more, eventually spreading through his entire body.

At this moment, Xu Nian felt his strength surge to another level, and the Divine Demon Gang Qi became even more tyrannical and fierce.

That's right; Xu Nian had made a breakthrough in his Body Cultivation, from an Eight-star Body Cultivator to a Nine-star Body Cultivator.

"Whew!"

Xu Nian exhaled a deep breath of turbid air, his face alight with wild joy.

"I didn't expect to break through so soon; I wonder how much my strength has increased?" Xu Nian mused inwardly.

He then picked up the iron hammer by his side but was surprised to find that the hammer he could only swing with both hands in the past could now be swung with one hand—and it wasn't even that strenuous.

"Truly worthy of the Divine Demon Refining Body; if it were an ordinary Body Cultivator, even a Two-star Body Sect might not possess strength as great as mine," Xu Nian reflected to himself.

The tyranny of the Divine Demon Refining Body lay in the fact that the amplification of his physical body was stronger than that of an ordinary Body Cultivator.

Now that he had just broken through to the Nine-star Body Cultivator realm, his physical strength was already comparable to that of an ordinary Two-star Body Sect, and his Gang Qi capacity was no less than that of a Two-star Body Sect.

That is to say, aside from not being able to freely release Gang Qi from his body, he wasn't inferior to a Two-star Body Sect in other aspects.

The same was true for his Spiritual Energy; the reserve of Spiritual Energy from his cultivation of the "Dan Sea Species Green Lotus" was on par with a Two-star Battle Sect.

Therefore, with all of Xu Nian's techniques combined, he dared to fight a Three-star Warrior, and could even, with the advantage of superior Combat Skills, defeat a Three-star Battle Sect or a Three-star Body Sect.

"Who's there?"

Suddenly, Xu Nian's face changed, and he hurriedly looked toward the window.

"Whoosh!"

The window shook open, and a white figure swept past, followed by the appearance of a graceful body in front of Xu Nian.

Upon seeing this seductive figure, Xu Nian immediately furrowed his brows.

Because the visitor was none other than Lin Ruolan from the Tianlan Academy, whom he had encountered at the entrance of the small courtyard.

"Tsk, I didn't expect you to be so well-built; even I am getting a bit excited," Lin Ruolan, with her eyes fixated on Xu Nian, said teasingly. Even though her face was veiled, the mocking tone in her eyes was unmistakable.

Xu Nian looked down and realized that he was completely bare-chested, his strong muscular lines visible and impressive.

"May I ask what brings Senior Sister Lin to my room so late?" Xu Nian asked warily.

"What brings me here? Of course, it's to enjoy the moonlight with Junior Brother Xu, have a chat, and talk about life!" Lin Ruolan said in a seductive voice, and with that, she twisted her slender waist as she slowly walked toward Xu Nian.

Xu Nian unconsciously took a step back, his brows furrowing even more.

From the very first time he saw Lin Ruolan, he felt something odd about her. She seemed to have the ethereal quality of an otherworldly woman, yet her eyes exuded a thick seductive charm.

It was impossible for these two completely different auras to belong to the same person.

"Senior Sister Lin, it's really quite late now. If you wish to talk, we can do so tomorrow," Xu Nian hastily suggested.

When someone behaves abnormally, they likely have ulterior motives, and this Lin Ruolan was all too peculiar; her visit surely meant no good.

"Junior Brother Xu, must you be so cold-hearted? These long nights are so tedious alone; how about letting your senior sister keep you company? Honestly, just looking at your body is enough to make my heart race," Lin Ruolan said provocatively.

By now, she had approached Xu Nian, on the verge of pressing her soft body against him, her fragrance emitting a strange allure.

Xu Nian tried to push Lin Ruolan away, but to his astonishment, found that he couldn't move his body at all, and Lin Ruolan's fingers began to trace along his skin.

"Junior Brother Xu, you are really quite handsome. How about spending the night with your senior sister?" Lin Ruolan whispered seductively into Xu Nian's ear.

Xu Nian strained to refuse, but found his eyelids suddenly growing heavy, and even his consciousness started to slow down.

Seeing this, a hint of intent shone in Lin Ruolan's eyes, and she began to undress Xu Nian.

However, just at that moment, Xu Nian's eyes suddenly cleared up, and he threw a hard punch directly at Lin Ruolan.

Lin Ruolan's expression changed. She hadn't expected Xu Nian to snap out of it so suddenly and quickly retreated.

"Bang!"

Xu Nian's punch was exceptionally fast. Lin Ruolan couldn't avoid it in time, and was hit in the stomach and blasted out of the window.

By the time Xu Nian chased her down, Lin Ruolan had disappeared without a trace.

Standing in front of the window, Xu Nian was filled with confusion, unsure of why Lin Ruolan had suddenly approached him. Could she really want to engage in Dual Cultivation with him?

"Kid, are you feeling a bit regretful?" The figure of the Yetian God Emperor appeared in the room.

"Not at all. I just find it strange. I don't understand why my body couldn't move just now and what Lin Ruolan really wanted," Xu Nian asked, puzzled.

"What else could she want? Of course, she wanted to share a room with you," the Yetian God Emperor replied.

"Eh? Really?" Xu Nian said with a look of surprise.

The Yetian God Emperor scoffed and continued, "However, her kind of Dual Cultivation is not ordinary. Once you cultivate with her, the Blood Qi and Spiritual Sense in your body would be completely devoured by her because this Lin Ruolan is no longer the real Lin Ruolan. The real Lin Ruolan has already died, and now in her body lives a hundred-year-old demoness."

"A demoness?" Xu Nian shuddered, the word 'Body Seizing' popping into his mind.

Chapter 115 The Ruthless Ji Yun

Xu Nian had heard long ago that some incredibly powerful people were able to leave their bodies after death, seize others' bodies, and continue living. This method was known as "Body Seizing."

Xu Nian had always thought such things were far removed from him, but he never expected to encounter it himself.

"No wonder I thought Lin Ruolan had a Spiritual Sense. It turns out the person in her body now isn't her anymore," Xu Nian suddenly said aloud, a chill of fear running through him as he realized he had just battled with an old monster.

"There's no need for concern. The person occupying Lin Ruolan's body might have been strong before, but now, due to the restrictions of Lin Ruolan's physical body, her strength is at most that of the One-star Battle Sect Level. Unless she disregards everything and is willing to destroy the body, and since Lin

Ruolan's body is not her own, she must absorb Yang Energy and Spiritual Sense to delay aging and strengthen her own soul, which is why she came after you," the Emperor Ye Tian explained.

Xu Nian nodded his head.

He almost fell into Lin Ruolan's trap a moment ago. Although Lin Ruolan's body was alluring and tempting, Xu Nian was not prepared to pay with his life for a fleeting pleasure.

"What was that fragrance she emitted earlier? Why couldn't I move or keep myself awake after inhaling it?" Xu Nian asked again.

"That was a low-level enchantment Combat Skill. It involves infusing the essence of the Spring Orchid into one's own Spiritual Energy to create an alluring fragrance. Earlier, Lin Ruolan purposely got close to you to confuse you with this type of Spiritual Energy. After you inhaled it, you naturally lost control over your body," Emperor Ye Tian explained.

Astonishment filled Xu Nian's heart.

He had heard of the Spring Orchid before, a flower with potent charm effects. By blending its aroma into one's Spiritual Energy, an unprepared opponent would surely be affected during combat.

"It seems that if I encounter Lin Ruolan again, I mustn't let her get close," Xu Nian thought to himself.

His sudden awakening had naturally been Emperor Ye Tian's doing. It wasn't possible to always rely on Emperor Ye Tian to help.

...

Soon, dawn broke, and Lin Ruolan did not reappear, clearly injured by Xu Nian's punch.

Xu Nian followed Chen Xifeng to the Giant Sword Square again for the quarterfinals.

The quarterfinals consisted of four pairings.

However, this time, the contestants were not determined by drawing lots but were assigned by the Prefectural Governor.

No one felt this arrangement was unjust since they trusted there were reasons behind the Prefectural Governor's assignments.

"Next, I will announce the pairs for the four matches. First group: Ji Yun versus Chen Xifeng; second group: Feng Rain versus Dugu Jingcheng; third group: Zhao Yan versus Xu Nian; fourth group: Lin Ruolan versus Wang Dong," Elder Song Heng declared loudly.

Upon hearing this, Xu Nian's face showed a look of surprise, not expecting Zhao Yan to be his opponent.

However, he was quite pleased with this arrangement, as he had long wanted to give Zhao Yan a good thrashing.

Zhao Yan was equally excited, having taken quite a dislike to Xu Nian.

On the other hand, Chen Xifeng, standing beside Xu Nian, showed a bitter smile; he was the first to fight, and his opponent was Ji Yun.

It was well known that Ji Yun was strong, especially his Spear Technique, which was incredibly fierce and dominant.

"Just do your best; at least your goal was to be in the top eight, right?" Xu Nian patted Chen Xifeng on the shoulder and comforted him.

Chen Xifeng nodded, his initial goal had been to reach the top eight, and he had indeed achieved it.

"The first group of contestants, please enter the platform!" Elder Song Heng announced.

The crowd immediately cheered, shouting Ji Yun's name, while the voices cheering for Chen Xifeng were scarce.

"Boom!"

Ji Yun's body landed on the Battle Platform like a Meteorite, making a domineering and heavy noise that drew gasps from the spectators.

Encouraged by Xu Nian's reassurance, Chen Xifeng also leaped onto the Battle Platform.

"Use your most powerful moves; I don't want to waste time," Ji Yun said coldly to Chen Xifeng.

He motioned for Chen Xifeng to draw his sword, yet he showed no intention of drawing his Long Spear.

Contempt!

Unconcealed contempt.

Chen Xifeng felt a surge of pride swell within him. With a flick of his arm, the soft sword appeared in his hand.

"Please enlighten me, Brother Ji Yun." Chen Xifeng didn't waste words. Another flick of his arm and he swung the soft sword in his hand toward Ji Yun.

Ji Yun stood proudly and immovable, facing Chen Xifeng's advancing sword with a punch.

"Boom!"

Ji Yun's punch was incredibly fast and powerful, the force covering his fist directly scattered Chen Xifeng's soft sword.

At the same time, Ji Yun's second punch followed swiftly.

It landed squarely on Chen Xifeng's chest.

"Puh!"

Chen Xifeng's form was sent flying, skidding to the edge of the battle platform, with a trickle of blood spilling from the corner of his mouth.

The audience was in shock, Ji Yun's fist was simply tyrannical and fierce, breaking through Chen Xifeng's swordsmanship with a mere punch.

Xu Nian could not help but feel impressed. Ji Yun's strength was truly no small feat, especially considering he hadn't even used his long spear yet.

"You might as well admit defeat. You're no match for me," Ji Yun declared dominantly.

A slight smile appeared at the corner of Chen Xifeng's mouth, his eyes shining with an unmistakable spirit of defiance.

"Again!" Chen Xifeng wiped the blood from his mouth and once again swung his sword at Ji Yun.

This time he used the move he'd practiced before, the Spiritual Snake Swordsmanship, and the soft sword contained an explosive power.

"Courting death!"

However, a hint of contempt flashed in Ji Yun's eyes. Before absolute power, all techniques were mere illusion.

One could see Ji Yun's fist move rapidly, a massive lion emerging from his body, with the fist wind surging like the roar of a great lion, striking directly on the tip of Chen Xifeng's sword.

"Boom!"

Chen Xifeng's soft sword was knocked from his grasp, and his body, hit by the terrifying force of the punch, was sent flying, ultimately crashing heavily into the spectator wall at a distance and tumbling out of the arena.

Total defeat!

Chen Xifeng's swordsmanship was of no effect in front of Ji Yun—the gap was simply too wide.

"Tianhen Academy, Ji Yun wins!" Elder Song Heng declared.

Xu Nian then approached Chen Xifeng, who was quite seriously injured at this point, with multiple fractures and some dislocation of internal organs.

"Such a ruthless, overbearing punch, even using an Earth-grade Combat Technique," Xu Nian said with a frown.

Ji Yun could have neutralized Chen Xifeng's attack in other ways, but he chose the most direct and brutal method, which was why Chen Xifeng was so severely injured.

It couldn't be said that Ji Yun's action was mistaken, but from this one could see that this person was definitely ruthless and merciless.

Xu Nian gave a cold glance at Ji Yun on the platform; their eyes met and Ji Yun's carried a provocative edge.

Xu Nian felt a surge of anger but quickly suppressed it, disregarding Ji Yun's gaze, and carried the grievously injured Chen Xifeng toward the preparation area.

However, he had already made up his mind—if he encountered Ji Yun in the upcoming matches, he would surely let him have a taste of serious injury.

...

Chapter 116 Your Opponent is Xu Nian

As Xu Nian carried Chen Xifeng back to the preparation area for medical treatment, the second group's battle had already started.

Dugu Jingcheng and Feng Rain stood opposite each other, both with eyes sharp as swords.

The audience clenched their fists in anticipation.

"Who do you think will win this match?"

"I think it's Dugu Jingcheng, especially since we've already seen his swordsmanship. It's really amazing."

"Well, that's not necessarily true. Feng Rain possesses the Innate Sword Spirit Body and is quite strong in swordsmanship too. It is said she has also mastered 'Man and Sword as One.'"

The audience buzzed with discussions, debating endlessly over who would win the duel.

Xu Nian also watched the scene quietly, curious about the special characteristics of the Innate Sword Spirit Body.

"Dugu Jingcheng, I've wanted to fight you for a long time, and now I finally have the chance. Next, I'll show you that your 'Little Sword Saint' title is nothing but an empty reputation," Feng Rain said coldly, producing an exquisitely crafted silver-white long sword in her hand.

Dugu Jingcheng didn't retort. With a flip of his palm, a Xuan Iron Sword appeared in his hand.

Ever since Xu Nian shattered his sword last time, he had replaced it with this Xuan Iron Sword.

"Come on, unleash the Sword Rain!"

With a light shout from Feng Rain, her sharp sword directly slashed towards Dugu Jingcheng.

The sword glowed menacingly, and the Sword Qi fell like rain, flying towards Dugu Jingcheng.

"That was a fast sword. A Nine-star Warrior can so easily stimulate Sword Qi; Feng Rain's strength is really impressive."

"Yes, being able to instantly release such an amount of Sword Qi, both her swordsmanship and cultivation are extraordinary. This battle won't be decided until the very last moment!"

The audience was deeply moved. With her first move, Feng Rain had showcased her extraordinary skills.

Dugu Jingcheng's eyes, however, did not fluctuate much; he casually swung his sword.

A streak of Sword Radiance swept out, instantly disintegrating the Sword Rain executed by Feng Rain.

"Buzz!"

But Feng Rain's second sword followed closely, striking with extraordinary fierceness and speed like lightning, aiming directly at Dugu Jingcheng's heart.

Dugu Jingcheng twisted his wrist, and his Xuan Iron Sword transformed into a blur, piercing directly with a thrust.

The tips of the swords collided, and the Sword Qi surged!

"Clang!"

The two Sword Qis clashed and eventually dispersed, forming a storm that swept around.

Both Dugu Jingcheng and Feng Rain took several steps back, finally neutralizing the force impacting their bodies.

The audience was full of amazement; such exquisite swordsmanship was indeed rare.

Xu Nian could not help but admire; the two were truly skilled in their swordsmanship.

"Let's decide the winner with one sword; I don't want to waste time," Dugu Jingcheng said coldly, his lone Sword Intent bursting forth.

"Okay!" Feng Rain wasn't wasteful with words either, as a spirit-like Sword Intent surged from her body.

The two Sword Intents collided, creating a powerful gust of wind that swept around.

The audience showed shocked expressions, as if they were seeing complete Sword Dao shadows fighting fiercely in the air, sending chills down their spines.

"Ha ha, our East Field County is truly brimming with talents this time. Including Feng Rain, that's the third person to achieve 'Human and Artifact as One,'" the Lord Governor laughed heartily.

The Deans from various academies were full of admiration. Previously, having one person achieve 'Human and Artifact as One' during the academy competition was impressive; having three this time was truly astounding.

"Lord Governor, our Academy's Feng Rain is more than just 'Man and Sword as One,'" the dean of Chengfeng Academy said to the governor with a smile.

"Oh? I've heard that this Feng Rain has an Innate Sword Spirit Body. Does she have some special abilities?" the governor asked in surprise.

"Your Honor will see it soon enough," teased the dean of Chengfeng Academy.

The governor smiled slightly without asking further; instead, he continued watching.

"This sword technique is derived from my Sword Spirit Body. If you can withstand it, I will willingly concede," Feng Rain declared.

As soon as she finished speaking, the sword in her hand flew out, hovering in front of her. Moreover, the originally silver-white sword split into three.

"Eh? Spiritual Sense?" Xu Nian was startled but quickly dismissed his own thought.

The reason Feng Rain could make the sword hover wasn't that she had developed Spiritual Sense to control the sword remotely but rather that she was utilizing her Innate Sword Spirit Body, innately connecting with the sword.

Her sword had long been nurtured by her Spiritual Energy and was in complete harmony with her will, thus capable of this feat.

After all, swords that kill from miles away, Flying Swords that decapitate from great distances, are maneuvers of Saints, requiring the awakening of Spiritual Sense.

Even now, Xu Nian could at most control a Flying Sword within a ten-meter radius; killing with a Flying Sword was still far beyond his reach.

However, although Feng Rain could control the sword remotely, the power of her Flying Sword was still far from that of a Saint. But just this much was already astonishing.

Even the governor showed a look of surprise—this was something he couldn't achieve.

A look of seriousness flashed through Dugu Jingcheng's eyes, but there was no sign of fear; a strong white wave burst from his Xuan Iron Sword, radiantly shining with immense brightness.

Indeed, Dugu Jingcheng was using the Light Element Slash he had used against Xu Nian before, but this time, the move was even more potent, its power doubled.

"It seems that these days, Dugu Jingcheng has been enhancing his technique," Xu Nian muttered to himself.

"Go!" Feng Rain shouted delicately, waving her sleeve, and the three sharp swords hovering in front of her sped out, stabbing towards Dugu Jingcheng.

At this moment, the sword light in Dugu Jingcheng's hand had reached its peak, his strike resembling a reverse-hanging galaxy.

"Pff!"

The Sword Radiance collided with the Flying Swords controlled by Feng Rain.

"Boom!"

A loud noise thundered, and suddenly the whole sky turned into a tempest.

Feng Rain's sharp swords were blown away, embedding themselves in the wall of the platform, and Feng Rain herself spat out a mouthful of fresh blood.

Dugu Jingcheng stood in the storm, his posture wavering, his clothes fluttering, utterly unaffected by the force.

Feng Rain looked at her Flying Swords that had been blown away, a complex glint flashing in her eyes.

She had lost!

Defeated by Dugu Jingcheng—his final sword strike had indeed been beyond her expectations.

"I concede!" Feng Rain declared loudly.

The crowd was instantly abuzz, thoroughly shocked.

Dugu Jingcheng decisively defeated Feng Rain and advanced to the top four.

Dugu Jingcheng placed his sword back into his Storage Bag, readying to return to the preparation area.

However, Feng Rain watched Dugu Jingcheng's retreating figure and said, "Dugu Jingcheng, one day, I will defeat you and become the number one Sword Dao genius of East Field County."

Dugu Jingcheng paused his steps, turned his head, and responded, "If you aim to be the number one Sword Dao genius of East Field County, your opponent shouldn't be me, but Xu Nian!"

The audience was stunned, even doubting if they had misheard.

What did Dugu Jingcheng mean by that?

Was he admitting that his swordsmanship was inferior to Xu Nian's?

Feng Rain also stood frozen, her heart tumultuous like a stormy sea.

Chapter 117 The Salted Fish Turns Over or Remains a Salted Fish

Xu Nian had not expected that he'd manage to put on such a big show without even taking the stage.

A single sentence from Dugu Jingcheng proved to be more useful than defeating ten Qin Tians.

"Whoosh!"

Before Elder Song Heng could make an announcement, Zhao Yan had already leapt onto the Battle Platform.

Then he roared at Qinglin Academy's ready area, "Xu Nian, get the hell out here; I've been irritated by you for a long time."

Zhao Yan's voice was especially loud, enough to shake the entire venue.

The audience became excited; Dugu Jingcheng had just mentioned that Xu Nian was the number one Sword Dao talent of East Field County, and now Zhao Yan was directly challenging him—how could they not be thrilled?

"Hey, do you guys think Xu Nian really is that amazing at swordsmanship?"

"Whether he is or not, we'll find out soon enough, but I don't think he's necessarily a match for Zhao Yan."

"I think so too. Zhao Yan's control over fire is really impressive, and I heard he's also an Artifact Master!"

"Really? The status of an Artifact Master is high. Even a Little Artifact Refiner is treated as an honored guest in a family, and if one becomes a Great Artifact Master, that's truly remarkable. Even the Lord Governor would treat them with great respect upon meeting them. Zhao Yan has a limitless future ahead!"

...

The audience continued to buzz, all of them admiring Zhao Yan's status as an Artifact Master.

Prefectural Governor Chen Tiansheng also had a high opinion of Zhao Yan; in fact, even if Zhao Yan didn't make it into the top eight, simply based on his status as an Artifact Master, he would have absorbed him into the Battle Mansion.

This showed just how revered the status of an Artifact Master was, and it was for this reason that Zhao Yan had developed his arrogant demeanor.

Xu Nian let out a cold laugh and slowly made his way to the Battle Platform.

To others, the status of an Artifact Master might be prestigious, but to Xu Nian it meant nothing because he himself was an Artifact Master.

Xu Nian walked leisurely onto the Battle Platform and finally stood ten meters away from Zhao Yan, looking at him with disdain.

"Kid, draw your sword. Isn't your swordsmanship supposed to be very impressive? Let's see how many of my moves you can withstand," Zhao Yan said arrogantly, flipping his palm and conjuring a ball of flame in his hand.

Controlling fire is a basic ability for an Artifact Master, whether it's through using Spiritual Sense or practicing unique Spiritual Formulas, a strong mastery over flames is required.

"If you want me to draw my sword, let's see if you're worthy," Xu Nian said with a smile, his eyes filled with a playful glint.

The audience thought Xu Nian was being arrogant, daring to speak to Zhao Yan like that.

"You're asking for death!" Zhao Yan yelled in anger, waving his hand and turning the flames into a fireball that hurtled towards Xu Nian.

The fireball was scorching hot, with an extremely high temperature; being hit by it would surely result in serious injuries.

Yet Xu Nian stood still, indifferent, allowing the fireball to come at him.

"What is he doing, why isn't he defending? Is he seeking death?" The audience was confused and puzzled, not understanding why Xu Nian didn't draw his sword.

Dean Leng Yanran also frowned from the high platform, unsure of Xu Nian's intentions.

Zhao Yan, however, sneered, thinking that Xu Nian had been scared by his offensive.

Just when everyone thought the fireball would hit Xu Nian, the fireball bizarrely stopped right in front of him.

"How... how is that possible?" The entire audience showed shocked expressions, not understanding why the fireball had suddenly stopped.

Zhao Yan was stunned as well; he was astonished to find that he had lost control over the fireball.

"What's going on?" Zhao Yan wondered to himself.

"I forgot to tell you all, but actually, besides being a Sword Cultivator, I'm also an Artifact Master," Xu Nian said with a slight smile, extending a finger. Following his gesture, the fireball transformed into a fire snake that began to coil around his fingertip.

"Artifact Master? Am I hearing things right?"

"You didn't mishear, because I heard it too. I truly didn't expect this Xu Nian to also be an Artifact Master."

"It's over, Zhao Yan is really finished now. With Xu Nian also being an Artifact Master, how can the duel continue?"

...

The audience on the field was in an uproar, shocked by Xu Nian's identity as an Artifact Master and at the same time, they felt sympathy for Zhao Yan.

At the same time, on the high platform, Chen Tiansheng turned to Leng Yanran with a smile and asked, "Dean Leng, you've really kept this hidden well. You didn't even reveal that Xu Nian had an identity as an Artifact Master."

Leng Yanran gave an awkward smile without speaking, feeling speechless inside.

She had only just found out about Xu Nian's status as an Artifact Master. She could never have imagined that Xu Nian was also an Artifact Master.

At this moment, Zhao Yan's face turned ashen, as if someone had slapped him hard across the face.

Being an Artifact Master was his pride, but now he had been blatantly humiliated by Xu Nian. How could he not be furious?

"I want you dead!" Zhao Yan roared, motioning with both hands. Two fireballs were hurled towards Xu Nian.

Xu Nian waved his sleeve, and the fireballs were all absorbed by him. With a thought, the fireballs transformed into a giant flaming sword.

"Here, have it back!"

With a cold snort from Xu Nian, the giant flaming sword flew towards Zhao Yan.

The scorching heat forced Zhao Yan to retreat several steps back. Finally, clenching his teeth, he punched towards the giant flaming sword.

"Boom!"

Fire splashed in all directions, and Zhao Yan was sent flying backward, crashing down ten meters away.

His fist was charred black, and the pain was intense. His hair and eyebrows were also singed off a good amount, making him look like a disheveled beggar.

Everyone was stunned. Zhao Yan was always the one controlling the flames, making others look wretched, but who had ever seen him so miserably affected by his own fire?

For a moment, everyone's view of Xu Nian turned to one of admiration. In all three appearances, Xu Nian had brought them surprises.

"This can't be, this can't be..." Zhao Yan couldn't believe he was losing, his eyes filled with intense unwillingness.

"Admit defeat, you're no match for me," Xu Nian said with a smile.

Others might fear flame attacks, but as an Artifact Master, he naturally had no fear. Thus Zhao Yan's tactics were ineffective against him.

"No, I absolutely won't lose!" Zhao Yan was extremely unwilling, his eyes instantly turning bloodshot. The next moment, his aura became incredibly violent and the surrounding spiritual energy began to converge on him.

"Is he going to... break through?" the audience exclaimed in shock.

Zhao Yan actually chose to break through to the Silver Moon Battle Sect at this moment. A breakthrough during a battle was a big taboo!

Zhao Yan's decision to break through now was definitely because he was pushed to the brink.

"Xu Nian, today, no matter what, I will make you lose!" Behind Zhao Yan, his hair flew wildly as spiritual energy continued to gather into his body, and his cultivation surged to the realm of the Silver Moon Battle Sect, making his aura become incredibly formidable.

Xu Nian saw this and just smiled nonchalantly, looking at Zhao Yan and saying, "Go ahead and break through, a salted fish that turns over is still a salted fish!"

"Pfft!" Overcome with rage, Zhao Yan spat out a mouthful of blood.

Chapter 118 The Sword that Shocked the Entire Audience

Zhao Yan's lungs were almost bursting with rage, as Xu Nian had actually called him a "salted fish," which was undeniably the greatest insult he had ever received in his life.

"I want to see just how arrogant you can be," Zhao Yan snorted coldly, as the spiritual energy inside his body suddenly erupted, breaking through the bottleneck of the Silver Moon Martial Sect and officially advancing to the Battle Sect Level of One-star Silver Moon.

Spiritual energy danced wildly and fierce winds stirred, enveloping the entire Giant Sword Square in a hurricane, their robes rustling loudly in the storm of spiritual energy.

"He really broke through; I didn't expect Zhao Yan to choose this moment during the academy tournament to break through."

"Yes, there have always been students who choose to break through during the academy tournaments, but those usually occur before or after the competitions. It's rare to see someone choose to break through right on the battlefield."

"This Xu Nian is really arrogant, letting Zhao Yan break through just like that. Doesn't he realize that when talents like this break through, their strength increases significantly?"

...

The crowd on the field was abuzz with discussions, all surprised by Zhao Yan's breakthrough.

The breakthroughs of talents like Zhao Yan vastly differed from those of ordinary Star Warriors. Zhao Yan and his kind had already reached the Peak of Star Realm and had been suppressing their advancements, making their foundations far stronger than those of average peak powerhouses.

Furthermore, as talents, their skills would also enhance along with their cultivation, so Zhao Yan's breakthrough wasn't just quantitative, but qualitative.

"Haha, Xu Nian, you were ultimately too arrogant, letting me break through until the moment I did, only then did I realize how vast the gap between the Silver Moon Realm and the Star Realm is, so this time, you are definitely losing," Zhao Yan laughed heartily, his black hair flying wildly, his spirit soaring.

"Oh? How big is this gap?" Xu Nian asked with a dismissive smile.

"Hmph, it seems you won't shed tears until you see the coffin. Then let me show you," Zhao Yan coldly huffed, and with a single gesture, a terrifying flame erupted from his body.

The flames soared high into the sky, this time not just a fireball but a three-meter-long Fire Dragon, and most importantly, the color of the fire was no longer red but blue, its temperature triple that of the previous flames.

"Blue flames?" Xu Nian's eyes flickered with surprise.

The audience on the field gasped in amazement, watching Zhao Yan enshrouded by the blue Fire Dragon, all immensely impressed.

"Haha, this is the special aspect of the 'Divine Flame Demon Technique' I practice. Every time I ascend a major realm, the quality of my flame surges explosively. I want to see how you try to block my demonic flame attack now," Zhao Yan laughed heartily.

Having said that, he immediately propelled the blue Fire Dragon towards Xu Nian, the terrifying dragon unbearably hot.

Xu Nian found that his spiritual sense could not control this blue flame, which somewhat surprised him.

"It seems Zhao Yan does have some skills." Xu Nian gave a slight smile as the Xuan Iron Sword appeared in his hand, and his Sword Intent was released in an instant.

"Haha, finally decided to use your sword, but it's useless. Before my blue flame dragon, your swordsmanship has no effect whatsoever," Zhao Yan laughed heartily, controlling the Fire Dragon to attack Xu Nian.

Xu Nian's eyes sharpened, and he immediately executed the Ling Feng Thirteen Swords.

The Ninth Sword of Ling Feng Thirteen Swords, Wind Fury!

The Sword Radiance was fierce, and a violent wind surged up, slashing fiercely at the blue Fire Dragon.

"Buzz!"

The Fire Dragon was instantly severed, the flames scattering and falling to the floor, melting the floor along with it.

"Hmph!" Zhao Yan snorted coldly and then made another move, summoning terrifying blue flames around his body again. This time, a long whip appeared in his hand, covered in blue flames, making the whip utterly terrifying.

The whip lashed out, striking ferociously towards Xu Nian.

Xu Nian immediately used Sword Slash to defend himself, but the flames on the long whip were truly fierce and overbearing. Xu Nian, along with his sword, was actually knocked back.

"Ha ha, you said your swordsmanship was powerful, but I see it's nothing special. If this is all the power your swordsmanship has, then you are definitely going to lose today," Zhao Yan laughed heartily, feeling extremely proud as he saw Xu Nian knocked back by his whip.

The audience at the scene also felt pity for Xu Nian. They thought he could have won this battle, but they had not expected him to figuratively capsize in the gutter at the last moment.

However, at this moment, Xu Nian started to smile and said to Zhao Yan, "I thought of playing with you a little longer, but since you are looking to die so soon, well, I will grant your wish."

After speaking, the aura emanating from Xu Nian changed, and an incredibly sharp aura emerged from his hands.

A powerful gust of wind suddenly arose, sweeping across the entire venue. The terrifying wind felt like countless blades slicing across people's skin, causing great pain.

Looking at Xu Nian now, around his body, it seemed as though numerous invisible blades had appeared from thin air. These blades were exceptionally sharp, swirling around him like stars surrounding the moon.

The audience all widened their eyes at such a strange sight. It was their first time seeing something like this, and even though Xu Nian hadn't yet made his move, they could already feel the terrifying power of his sword.

"What strong Sword Intent! This Sword Intent even incorporates the understanding of wind, something many Battle Generals can't achieve. This young man is truly a Sword Dao genius," the Prefectural Governor also couldn't help but show a surprised expression from the high platform.

This contestant was the only one who had truly surprised him in the competition thus far, because he knew how difficult it was to achieve this.

In the Chengfeng Academy's preparation area, Feng Rain was dazedly watching Xu Nian on stage.

Initially, she was somewhat skeptical of Dugu Jingcheng's words, but now she realized that this young man's comprehension of the Sword Dao had indeed reached a level far beyond her reach.

At this moment, Dugu Jingcheng also had a profound look in his eyes, visibly surprised by Xu Nian's understanding of the sword, which had clearly surpassed his own.

Of course, the most surprised person at this moment was Zhao Yan, who could clearly feel the terrifying Sword Radiance swirling around Xu Nian.

"Stop playing tricks, break it for me, Fiery Flame Slaying God Whip!" Zhao Yan's eyes flashed with intense unwillingness, and with a roar, he swung the long whip in his hand viciously towards Xu Nian.

The blue-flamed whip, like a swinging fire dragon, roared as it lunged to swallow Xu Nian.

At this moment, Xu Nian also made his move. He lifted his arm, a movement that seemed slow yet was extremely fast.

As his arm was lifted, the Sword Radiance swirling around him gathered onto his Xuan Iron Sword.

As the Sword Radiance merged into the sword, the aura of the Xuan Iron Sword became more terrifying with each moment, eventually reaching an indescribably powerful state.

"Gale Sword Technique, the most perfect sword slash!"

Xu Nian gave a low shout, and the sword light chopped out.

A cyan Sword Radiance shot forth, directly slashing towards the fire dragon whip.

The fire dragon whip was instantly cut, and its blue flames were dissipated in a flash.

Yet the cyan Sword Radiance did not stop and flew directly towards Zhao Yan, tearing through the floor of the battle platform as it went.

Zhao Yan was also sent flying by this slash, blood spraying wildly.

If it weren't for Song Heng's timely intervention, Zhao Yan would likely have been cut in half by this slash.

Even so, the battle platform was left with a long trench, twenty-some meters in length and three inches deep.

The audience was petrified on the spot, looking at the long trench, too shocked to speak.

Chapter 119 The Final Showdown

When Xu Nian stepped down from the battle platform, the entire venue finally reacted completely.

Then, there was a wave of frantic exclamations, and even though Xu Nian had already returned to the preparatory area, the shouting in the arena continued to surge wave after wave.

The Tianhen Empire worshipped the strong, and Xu Nian's strength had undoubtedly conquered the entire venue, with some female students from the Tianhen Academy secretly cheering for Xu Nian.

With a single battle, Xu Nian had become a household name, his fame skyrocketing to the same level as Ji Yun's.

Xu Nian was indifferent to this since after achieving Man and Sword as One, his Gale Sword Technique had already reached the Realm of Divine Transformation, naturally allowing him to display the most perfect sword strike, and the power of this sword had also been within his expectations.

After the battle ended, he returned to his cabin.

As for the fourth fight, Xu Nian didn't need to watch it to know that ultimately Lin Ruolan would be victorious.

Indeed, the news Chen Xifeng and Dugu Jingcheng brought back later was exactly as Xu Nian had predicted.

Xu Nian didn't think too much of it and continued to shut himself in his room, desperately practicing Hammer Technique.

As he continued to practice, he had now mastered thirty percent of Collapse Thunder. The power of this move was even more terrifying than any of his other attack moves.

Only thirty percent mastery had already surpassed all his other attack moves; he couldn't imagine how terrifying it would be to reach one hundred percent.

Soon, the next morning arrived, and today would be the final day of the tournament.

The top three would be decided from the four individuals who advanced yesterday.

However, when Xu Nian and the others arrived at the Giant Sword Square, they received unexpected news.

Zhao Yan was dead!

Lin Ruolan had disappeared!

Zhao Yan died a gruesome death, with only skin and bones left, all the Blood Qi in his body drained completely.

Hearing this, Xu Nian knew how Zhao Yan had died. Zhao Yan must have coveted Lin Ruolan's beauty and ended up being drained of his Yang energy by the old demoness inside Lin Ruolan.

As for why Zhao Yan was chosen, it might be because he was an Artifact Master, who regularly practiced fire-related exceptional arts, and therefore had a substantial amount of Yang energy in his body.

With Zhao Yan's death and Lin Ruolan's disappearance, many people easily linked the two events. So, the Dean of Beihai Academy and the Dean of Tianlan Academy immediately issued a wanted order for Lin Ruolan. However, she was nowhere to be found despite searching the entire Tianfeng City.

With Lin Ruolan gone, the competition had to continue.

With one less contender in the top four, Ji Yun, Dugu Jingcheng, and Xu Nian moved directly into the top three without further competition, but who would take first and second place would still need to be contested among the three of them.

Eventually, the Prefectural Governor and the Deans decided to have Xu Nian and the others draw lots, with one person getting a bye while the other two would compete first. Then, the winner would face the third person.

They would compete in pairs until the rankings of the three were determined.

What Xu Nian hadn't expected was that he would be the one with the bye.

In the first match, Dugu Jingcheng faced Ji Yun.

Their battle was incredibly exciting, with Ji Yun being forced by Dugu Jingcheng to use the Long Spear he had not used before, ultimately defeating Dugu Jingcheng with a single thrust.

With Dugu Jingcheng's defeat, he was naturally out of contention for first place. Next, it would be the showdown between Xu Nian and Ji Yun.

If Ji Yun defeated Xu Nian, then Ji Yun would be first, and Xu Nian would compete with Dugu Jingcheng for second place.

If Xu Nian defeated Ji Yun, then Xu Nian would take first, with Ji Yun in second place, and Dugu Jingcheng third.

A match had concluded, Ji Yun had two hours of rest time.

Yet, what took everyone by surprise was that right at this moment, a vortex of Spiritual Energy appeared in the preparation area of Tianhen Academy.

"Good heavens, a Spiritual Energy vortex, Ji Yun is planning to make a breakthrough right now!"

"Yes, it looks like he's really set on taking first place, and he's already so strong. If he now breaks through to a One-star Body Sect, wouldn't he become even stronger?"

"I used to think Xu Nian could have a good fight with Ji Yun, but I didn't expect Ji Yun to choose to break through. With that said, Xu Nian really has no chance of winning."

...

Suddenly, the venue was buzzing with discussions, everyone was shocked by Ji Yun's breakthrough.

"That's totally shameless, to break through at a time like this. Even if he wins, doesn't he feel embarrassed?" Chen Wudi couldn't help but curse from the stands.

"Hmph, the ability to break through is his merit. If you're capable, why don't you let Xu Nian have a try at breaking through?" Chen Yao retorted, though there was not a hint of pride deep in her eyes.

"Xu Nian hasn't been practicing for that many months, so it's not easy for him to break through. But even with Ji Yun's breakthrough, I don't think he can beat Xu Nian. It just adds a little more difficulty to the game," Chen Wudi said disdainfully.

Chen Yao pursed her lips, unconvinced.

Xu Nian's performance earlier had truly moved and shocked her, especially that last sword, which was truly in the Realm of Divine Transformation—she might not even be able to withstand that sword herself.

At the same time, in the preparation area of Qinglin Academy.

Chen Xifeng looked at Xu Nian and asked, "Why don't you break through to the Silver Moon Realm directly?"

Xu Nian gave a bitter smile. Although his Spirit Cultivation had already reached the Nine-star Peak, breaking through right now was definitely not the wise move; he didn't want to damage his foundation for the sake of a match.

As for Body Cultivation, he had only recently broken through to a Nine-star Body Cultivator and hadn't even reached the peak yet, so how could he break through?

"No need, I can handle it even without breaking through," Xu Nian replied with a smile.

Chen Xifeng nodded and said nothing more. However, Dugu Jingcheng unexpectedly reminded him, "Be careful later. Ji Yun's Gang Qi is extremely domineering and fierce. If I'm not mistaken, the Body Technique he cultivates is at least Middle Earth Level, possibly even Top Grade. His spear technique is very fast, and his understanding of spear combat is not inferior to my swordsmanship. Moreover, I feel that he didn't use his full strength when he fought with me."

Xu Nian was slightly stunned. He hadn't expected Dugu Jingcheng to say such words.

He knew Dugu Jingcheng was a very proud person, so for him to say something like this showed how formidable Ji Yun's strength truly was.

"Okay, I'll be careful," Xu Nian nodded in agreement.

Dugu Jingcheng said no more and stood silently to the side.

"Boom!"

Not long after, a muffled sound of thunder came from the preparation area of Tianhen Academy, and then the audience saw Ji Yun slowly walk out.

The audience burst into an uproar upon seeing this.

They all knew that Ji Yun had broken through to the realm of a One-star Body Sect.

The Prefectural Governor on the high platform nodded in approval, clearly very satisfied with Ji Yun's strength, while the Dean of Tianhen Academy was all smiles, filled with pride, even giving Leng Yanran a provocative look.

Leng Yanran ignored this, silently watching the preparation area of Qinglin Academy.

At this moment, Ji Yun had already jumped onto the Battle Platform, inserted his Long Spear into the platform, and roared toward Xu Nian's area, "Xu Nian, come out and fight!"

The roar was thunderous, like an explosion that resounded throughout the venue.

The audience roared continuously, their blood boiling with excitement.

Chapter 120 Try Now

As Xu Nian ascended the battle platform, the entire arena had completely erupted into excitement.

The peak battle, where the victor would be the first-place winner of this academy competition and would also become the top talent of East Field County, renowned throughout history.

How could such an important battle not be thrilling?

"Brother Yun, defeat him, you're number one!"

"Brother Yun, you're the strongest, I want to have your babies!"

...

The female students of Tianhen Academy continuously shouted, cheering for Ji Yun with great vigor.

There were also some who supported Xu Nian, but their voices were completely drowned out by those in support of Ji Yun.

On the battle platform, Ji Yun looked at Xu Nian and said indifferently, "Draw your sword, relying only on fists and feet, you can't possibly be my opponent."

"Is that so? Why don't we try?" Xu Nian retorted with a cold laugh.

"Hmph, it seems you won't shed tears until you see the coffin. Well then, let me show you the power of a One-star Body Sect." Ji Yun scoffed coldly, then his figure shot out like thunder, shattering the ground underneath his feet.

Fist wind like a tiger, Gang Qi swirling furiously, his aura supremely domineering.

The crowd on the field was all amazed; such a casual punch from Ji Yun had such formidable force, even stronger than when he previously used Gang Skill as a Nine-star Body Cultivator.

Yet, Xu Nian's expression remained unchanged, his fist instantly clenched, meeting Ji Yun's punch head-on.

"Boom!"

A loud explosion.

Xu Nian was forced back eight steps, while Ji Yun was also pushed back six steps by the powerful force.

"How is this possible?" the audience exclaimed in surprise.

If it were said that before Ji Yun's breakthrough, Xu Nian might still have forced Ji Yun back with a punch, but now Ji Yun had advanced to the Silver Moon Body Sect realm, and Xu Nian was still able to stand his ground, which was indeed shocking.

On the high platform, Prefectural Governor Chen Tiansheng also displayed a surprised expression, clearly puzzled.

Of course, the most shocked was Ji Yun; he had used seventy percent of his strength in that punch. Not to mention a Nine-star Warrior, even a Nine-star Body Cultivator wouldn't dare to face it.

Xu Nian looked at the stunned Chen Tiansheng and smiled slightly, "I forgot to tell you, apart from being a Nine-star Warrior, I am also a Nine-star Body Cultivator."

Having said that, an incredibly powerful Gang Qi burst forth from Xu Nian's body, surging within him like a roaring dragon.

From the beginning until now, he had only been using Spiritual Energy in battle, and had not employed Gang Qi, thus no one on the field knew except for a few like Leng Yanran that Xu Nian was also a Body Cultivator.

With this declaration from Xu Nian, the entire venue went completely still.

Spirit Body Dual Cultivation, both at the Ninth-star of Star Realm, an Artifact Master, and also his swordsmanship had reached the realm of Man and Sword as One.

What kind of talent was this?

The entire venue fell silent, no one spoke.

Even Prefectural Governor Chen Tiansheng on the high platform was momentarily dumbfounded, his heart tremendously shaken.

Spirit Body Dual Cultivation, Man and Sword as One, Artifact Master – Any one of these features concentrated on a young person would be an immensely dazzling halo, but now all were combined in one person, how terrifying and defiant of the heavens was that?

Ji Yun, too stunned to speak, stared at Xu Nian with a face full of disbelief.

Suddenly, he seemed to think of something and asked a question that everyone in the venue was curious about, "How old are you?"

Indeed, the entire audience was curious about Xu Nian's age.

The academy competition rule stated that anyone below twenty-four years old could participate in the competition, and Ji Yun was exactly twenty-four this year, while Xu Nian appeared somewhat younger; Ji Yun guessed he might be around twenty years old.

"Not young anymore, I'm already sixteen, but I'll be seventeen in three months!" Xu Nian answered truthfully.

"Pfft!"

Ji Yun almost spat out a mouthful of blood; he felt as if a sword had fiercely pierced his heart.

The entire audience felt their hearts sink abruptly, staring at Xu Nian as if he were some kind of freak.

Because Xu Nian practiced Body Refinement, his figure was much taller than his peers, leading them to always assume he was already in his twenties. However, they were shocked to learn he was only sixteen this year.

Sixteen years old, engaged in Spirit Body Dual Cultivation, at the Ninth-Star of the Star Realm, comprehending Man and Sword as One, and also an apprentice Artifact Master—had he started cultivating right from the womb?

The shock of the crowd was unintended; they were utterly overwhelmed by Xu Nian's talent.

Today's battle, regardless of Xu Nian's victory or defeat, would mark him as the undisputed top prodigy of East Field County.

What they did not know was that just a few months ago, Xu Nian was still a plain Four-star Warrior. If they knew that, who knew what their expressions would be.

"Goodness! What a genius!" Chen Tiansheng couldn't help but exclaim in admiration, his gaze towards Xu Nian turning extremely fervent.

In the stands, Chen Yao also appeared completely stunned.

This year she turned twenty and had reached the rank of a Two-star War Sect. She was quite pleased with herself, yet she never imagined Xu Nian would far surpass her.

Chen Xifeng and Dugu Jingcheng shared a smile at each other; growing up with such a monster could sometimes be very exhausting.

At this moment, Ji Yun's expression had completely darkened. Xu Nian's talent instilled fear in him, and a hint of killing intent ignited deep within his heart.

"Roar!"

A rumble of Gang Qi erupted, and Ji Yun burst forth from behind, reaching Xu Nian in the blink of an eye.

His incredibly fierce and dominant Gang Qi smashed ruthlessly toward Xu Nian's chest.

"So fast!"

Xu Nian was startled, hastily using his arms to block.

Despite that, he was still blasted nearly twenty meters away by Ji Yun's punch before he could stop, his entire arm tingling intensely.

Ji Yun's Gang Qi was exceptionally tyrannical. Had it not been for Xu Nian's cultivation of Divine Demon Gang Qi and the protection of Dragon Energy, that punch would have knocked him out of the arena.

"It seems Junior Brother Xu's strength isn't as terrifying as imagined. His speed in body movements is probably his weakness," remarked Ji Yun with a teasing tone, his gaze playful.

That punch had revealed it to him. Although Xu Nian's strength and swordsmanship were strong, his speed in body movements was far too slow, unable to keep up with his pace.

In this case, even if Xu Nian used his swordsmanship, he could easily defeat him without even using his Long Spear.

The audience frowned, wondering if Xu Nian was just going to lose like this?

Although Xu Nian had yet to utilize his swordsmanship, speed in body movements wasn't something that swordsmanship could compensate for.

Everyone on the platform felt pity for Xu Nian, believing that the outcome of this duel was already decided.

Just then, Xu Nian suddenly spoke with a smile, "You're right, my speed in body movements is indeed lacking, but that was just then."

With that, Xu Nian slowly removed the beast skin suit he was wearing, along with the iron hammer inside it, and tossed them onto the ground.

"Thud!"

Xu Nian's beast skin suit hit the floor of the battle platform, making a sound dull as a great bell; the floor of the platform was directly smashed into fragments.

What's going on?

The entire audience was startled, not understanding what had just happened.

"Now, try my speed in body movements again!" As everyone was puzzled, Xu Nian's figure had already burst forth, moving like a gust of strong wind and instantly appearing before Ji Yun, his speed several times faster than before.

Ji Yun's pupils constricted, his eyes filled with astonishment.

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