

Divine King 161

Chapter 161 Fierce Blade Dance

Indeed, what Xu Nian was demonstrating was the Heavenly Rank Body Technique he had acquired at the Academy's Grand Competition.

During these days at the Governor Mansion, whenever Xu Nian had free time, he would practice this Heavenly Rank Body Technique.

Under Xu Nian's cultivation, the Illusion Fascinate Trace Step had finally reached a masterful level.

Now, Xu Nian's speed had doubled compared to before.

Although Ding Hao was from the Seven-star Martial Sect, with his eyes covered now, it was nearly impossible to catch Xu Nian's movements.

"Heavenly Rank Technique, Illusion Fascinate Trace, huh? I cultivated for a year to reach proficiency, and this guy has reached it in just over a month, what incredible comprehension skills?" Zhao Yanyun thought in shock.

In fact, he didn't know that Xu Nian had actually spent only five days on this body technique.

Chen Yao was also stunned. She had just seen Xu Nian start cultivating this Heavenly Rank Body Technique a few days ago, and now he had already reached proficiency.

Although Heavenly Rank Techniques are powerful, they are indeed extremely difficult to cultivate.

Without a long period of hard work, it is impossible to achieve any success.

Xu Nian, however, had matched the efforts of others after nearly a year in just a few days.

This made her recall the night a few days ago, when he had comprehended the Man and Sword as One Third Level Realms,

Xu Nian's almost freakish comprehension skills, truly drove people to despair.

Lin Rock and Sun Zhan were also surprised, not expecting Xu Nian's speed to be so fast, which gave them a very ominous feeling.

Ding Hao also frowned tightly, Xu Nian's speed was far beyond his expectations.

"Hmph, I refuse to believe I can't hit you, Gale Burst Palm!" Ding Hao said defiantly, as the aura of a Seven-star Martial Sect fully burst forth.

A gust almost as sharp as a blade's edge converged in his palm, even cutting through the surrounding air.

"This is a Heavenly Rank Low Grade Battle Technique, it seems Ding Hao is truly enraged," the surrounding crowd was astonished.

At this moment, the technique Ding Hao was displaying was a Heavenly Rank Low Grade Palm Technique, ferociously powerful.

If Xu Nian was hit by this palm, he would either die or be severely injured.

Xu Nian, seeing the fierce palm strike coming towards him, curled up the corners of his mouth into a light smile.

"Senior Brother Ding, since you are unconvinced, let me show you what true speed is," Xu Nian chuckled lightly.

His figure flashed and he vanished from the spot.

Ding Hao's palm passed through where Xu Nian had been, striking a stone pillar beside him and leaving several scratches on the hard pillar.

"What? He's gone?" Ding Hao exclaimed in surprise, not expecting his attack to miss completely.

"Watch your back!" someone from the audience suddenly shouted.

Ding Hao spun around only to feel a terrifying gust of air hit him in the face.

Everyone around also opened their mouths in shock.

Xu Nian threw a punch, hitting Ding Hao hard on the bridge of his nose.

"Bang!"

Ding Hao was sent reeling back several steps, crashing into a stone pillar.

His nose collapsed, its bones completely shattered, blood streaming down.

The severe pain caused Ding Hao to emit agonizing screams.

The force of Xu Nian's punch was not light, having completely shattered Ding Hao's nose, which would probably take a month or two to heal.

"Good hit!" Chen Wudi shouted from the side.

Everyone around twitched their mouths, the nose being a vulnerable spot, Xu Nian's strike was unusually ruthless.

"Sorry, Senior Brother Ding, I couldn't see and didn't know where I hit you, are you alright?" Xu Nian said in a tone that seemed apologetic.

Ding Hao's face was full of rage, one hand covering his nose, the other clenched tightly into a fist.

Can't see?

Stop fooling around, if you couldn't see how could you easily dodge my attack and accurately appear behind me?

Now he finally realized he had fallen into Chen Wudi's trap.

Even if Xu Nian were blindfolded, his perceptive abilities definitely wouldn't be any less than usual.

Thinking that he had been tricked by Chen Wudi, he felt an urge to grind his teeth in anger.

"Xu Nian, you forced my hand, today, I must kill you," Ding Hao said angrily in his heart, a strong intent to kill rising within him, followed by the appearance of a three-foot sword in his hand.

Xu Nian sneered inwardly, seeing that Ding Hao was almost driven to desperation, even resorting to using a weapon.

"Since you want to play, I will naturally accompany you to the end," Xu Nian responded with a cold sneer, a Xuan Iron Sword appearing in his hand.

"Junior Brother Xu Nian, be careful, my sword is quite fast, don't blame me if you end up killed by me," Ding Hao said with a cold laugh.

He was very confident in his swordsmanship; he had already mastered the First Level Realm of Man and Sword as One. Among his peers, very few could surpass him, so he didn't believe Xu Nian's speed could be fast enough to dodge his sword.

"Senior Brother Ding Hao, you should also be careful, mine is not only exceptionally fast but also very fierce," Xu Nian replied coldly.

After mastering the Third Level Realms of Man and Sword as One, which Chen Tiansheng had taught him, his swordsmanship had become much more powerful than before, enough to confront a Seven-star Martial Sect directly, possibly without defeat.

"Alright, then take this, Gale One Qi Cut!" Ding Hao shouted, his sword immediately sweeping across in an attack.

The Sword Radiance transformed into a Wind Blade, chopping towards Xu Nian at waist level.

Xu Nian dared not slack off, Spiritual Energy surged, his sword slashing out with force in response.

"Buzz!"

Xu Nian's sword collided with Ding Hao's Sword Radiance, emitting a thunderous noise.

The force transmitted through the sword forced Xu Nian back three steps.

It had to be said, the Seven-star Martial Sect was still the Seven-star Martial Sect, the gap in their levels was somewhat large compared to Xu Nian's.

However, Xu Nian's swordsmanship realm compensated for the gap in his Cultivation.

"Die! Heavenly Rank Sword Technique, Seven Killings Absolute Wind Slash!"

Just then, Ding Hao attacked again.

His sword slashed through the air, the Sword Qi surged tremendously, incredibly fast.

The Sword Radiance surging on the blade was terrifyingly formidable.

"What a powerful, fast sword!" everyone around exclaimed.

Ding Hao was really being ruthless, directly using the Heavenly Rank Sword Technique.

He was out to kill Xu Nian!

If Xu Nian couldn't block it, he might very well lose his life today.

In the crowd, Lin Rock and Sun Zhan exchanged a smile.

It seemed to say, this was Ding Hao's true character; those who provoked him were undeniably doomed.

At this moment, Zhao Yanyun was frowning deeply, her Spiritual Energy starting to surge, ready to intervene and save Xu Nian at any moment.

Chen Yao also looked anxious, worried for Xu Nian.

However, just when everyone thought that Xu Nian couldn't withstand the sword.

A slight smile curled up on Xu Nian's lips.

"Thinking you can kill me... you're too naive. Taste my newly mastered move," Ultimate Kill, Fierce Blade Dance!"

With a low shout, Xu Nian's sword seemed to transform illusionarily, instantly striking eighteen times.

Suddenly, the Sword Qi danced wildly, rushing towards the approaching Ding Hao.

"Ah!"

Ding Hao's Sword Radiance was instantly broken, and his body suddenly had numerous cuts, each deep enough to see bone.

The strong impact threw him back several meters, his body bloodied all over.

Meanwhile, Xu Nian stood with his sword at the original spot, his robe fluttering, standing unshaken amidst the howling wind.

Everyone around was dumbstruck, looking at Ding Hao who had fallen on the ground, then at Xu Nian holding the sword, utterly shocked.

Ding Hao had actually truly been defeated.

A Seven-star Martial Sect member had lost to a One-star Martial Sect member.

Chapter 162 Unreasonable

The arena was dead silent.

Everyone had originally thought that Ding Hao was guaranteed to win this battle, but they didn't expect the final result to be a complete defeat at the hands of Xu Nian.

"Ding Hao, you lost," Xu Nian said with a smile as he took off his eyepatch.

That last sword had been his creation after he had comprehended the Third Level Realms of 'Man and Sword as One.'

Its power absolutely rivaled a Mid Grade Heavenly Rank Battle Technique, while Ding Hao was using a Heavenly Rank Low Grade Sword Technique.

Since it was only mastered to the level of proficiency, it naturally stood no chance against the swordsmanship Xu Nian had created.

Ding Hao too removed his eyepatch, his eyes filled with intense unwillingness.

He had actually lost, beaten by a One-star Battle Sect.

The whispering voices of the crowd around him made him wish he could find a hole to crawl into.

"Haha, Senior Ding, you must accept the bet and concede defeat. I told you that you were no match for Xu Nian, but you didn't believe me. Now you know," Chen Wudi stood up and laughed mockingly.

Upon hearing this, Ding Hao's face turned the color of a pig's liver, realizing that he had been setup by Xu Nian and Chen Wudi.

Xu Nian looked at Ding Hao's pitiful state and turned away disdainfully.

That last sword strike had been restrained.

If he had aimed the Sword Radiance at Ding Hao's neck, perhaps Ding Hao would be headless by now.

Ding Hao's current plight was only due to his own Killing Intent, determined to bring Xu Nian to his demise.

Xu Nian not killing him was already giving him face.

"No... no, it's impossible for me to lose. Go to hell!"

But the more Ding Hao thought about it, the less reconciled he felt. He suddenly raised his head to look at Xu Nian, his eyes blood-red with rage, grabbed his sharp sword, and stabbed at Xu Nian.

Immense Spiritual Energy was released in an instant, covering his body as if it had ignited a layer of Spiritual Energy flames.

The sharp sword was covered with powerful Spiritual Energy, its fierce aura capable of killing any Seven-star Martial Sect.

"This is a Secret Technique Battle Skill, Xu Nian, be careful!"

Zhao Yanyun, who was nearby, saw what was happening and immediately shouted a warning, then reached out to stop it.

However, she was ultimately too far from Xu Nian, and coupled with Ding Hao's swift speed, it was too late for her to intervene.

Chen Yao also widened her eyes, covering her mouth in shock.

In the blink of an eye, Ding Hao's sword had reached Xu Nian's face, and in the next second, it would pierce through his back.

Xu Nian spun around quickly, a shock going through his heart.

Although he had been cautious of Ding Hao, the suddenness and speed of his strike were too great.

Without any hesitation, Xu Nian immediately controlled the Gravity Ring to activate the Triple Gravity Domain.

At the same time, the Blood Dragon Qi quickly condensed into Dragon Scale Boxing Gloves, and his left hand instantly grasped Ding Hao's sharp sword.

The sword's edge scraped across the Scale Armor on Xu Nian's hand, sparking brilliantly.

Xu Nian staggered back three steps before finally blocking Ding Hao's sword strike.

At that moment, the sword's tip was just an inch away from Xu Nian's heart – it was a very close call.

The onlookers were all stunned, Xu Nian had actually managed to block that sword strike with his hand.

Ding Hao was also shocked; his sneak attack had failed to kill Xu Nian.

"You're courting death!" Xu Nian's eyes suddenly lit up, and he activated 'Gray Dragon Eye.'

Ding Hao felt his vision blur and a wave of drowsiness wash over him.

And at that moment, Xu Nian had already sprung into action, delivering a kick to Ding Hao's jaw.

Ding Hao's body was sent flying, blood spattering everywhere.

Xu Nian didn't stop there; with one hand, he summoned a Meteorite Iron Hammer and swung it viciously towards Ding Hao's chest.

'Collapse Thunder Formation,' at eighty percent of its power.

One hammer strike, and Ding Hao would be dead beyond doubt.

"Stop!"

Yet, just as Xu Nian's hammer was about to crash into Ding Hao's chest.

A towering figure appeared in front of Ding Hao, directly slapping against Xu Nian's hammer with a fist.

"Boom!"

Xu Nian's iron hammer collided with the fist of the towering figure, creating a thunderous noise.

The tall figure took a step back, eyes flashing with a hint of surprise.

Xu Nian, on the other hand, clutched his hammer, glaring fiercely at the newcomer.

The person who had intervened was none other than the captain of the Mo Lang Team, Lin Rock—the Nine-star Body Sect powerhouse.

Everyone nearby witnessed this scene and their mouths fell open in shock.

Xu Nian's hammer strike had actually forced Lin Rock to retreat a step—so how powerful was that blow?

Xu Nian was equally astonished; his hammer strike was the move Collapse Thunder Formation at eighty percent of its power, amounting to tens of thousands of pounds of force.

But now it had been blocked by Lin Rock with just one hand, and he had only retreated a single step, a clear sign of Lin Rock's formidable strength.

"Kid, wasn't that a bit too ruthless? Are you trying to kill Ding Hao?" Lin Rock glared at Xu Nian and said coldly.

A mocking sneer appeared on Xu Nian's face.

He was too ruthless?

Then what about Ding Hao's sneak attack on him just a moment ago?

"Despicable! It was Ding Hao who sneak-attacked from behind, and now you turn it around?" Chen Wudi couldn't stand to watch and shouted.

Upon hearing Chen Wudi's words, the surrounding people engaged in heated discussions, clearly agreeing with his view.

Chen Yao's delicately knitted eyebrows furrowed tightly, evidently dissatisfied with Ding Hao's sneak attack on Xu Nian.

"Brother, don't waste words with them, just kill this Xu Nian," Ding Hao, having already managed to stand up, clutched his chest and called out.

Hearing this, a flicker of killing intent passed through Lin Rock's eyes.

"Such a young age, yet so cruel in your moves. I cannot let you go today!" Lin Rock bellowed and then charged toward Xu Nian to strike.

His fist was engulfed in terrifying Gang Qi, making it impossible for Xu Nian to resist with his strength.

Everyone felt that Lin Rock's action was completely unreasonable, yet no one dared to intervene.

With the influence of the Ding Family and the backing of the Mo Lang Team, stepping forward now was tantamount to courting death; all they could do was silently mourn for Xu Nian.

Chen Yao turned pale with fear and ended up closing her eyes.

Xu Nian's gaze, however, was ice-cold; he tried to figure out how to block the incoming blow.

But no matter how he calculated, the outcome seemed futile.

The punch was simply too strong and far beyond what he could contend with.

"Stop!"

However, just when everyone thought Xu Nian was about to be crushed by Lin Rock's fist, a cold voice rang out.

Then they saw a graceful figure stepping in front of Xu Nian.

With a slap, the figure blocked Lin Rock's punch.

A gale burst forth, sweeping across the surroundings.

Lin Rock was pushed back three steps.

Zhao Yanyun, however, was sent flying, with fresh blood trickling from the corner of her mouth.

"Sister Zhao."

Xu Nian hurried to support Zhao Yanyun, his expression filled with concern.

"I'm fine!" Zhao Yanyun waved her hand at Xu Nian.

Xu Nian nodded, but his gaze toward Lin Rock turned incredibly furious.

"Yanyun?"

Lin Rock was also taken aback, not expecting Zhao Yanyun to suddenly take action.

Zhao Yanyun then looked at Lin Rock and said coldly, "Lin Rock, if you want to kill Xu Nian today, you'll have to step over my dead body first. Otherwise, don't even think about hurting a single hair on him."

Upon hearing this, the entire crowd was dumbstruck.

What was happening?

Sister Zhao had not only taken on Lin Rock's formidable punch to protect Xu Nian but now seemed to be defying Lin Rock to the death for him?

What was so special about this Xu Nian?

Chen Yao was also stupefied, never expecting her cousin, who was always cold to men, to say such words.

Yet for some reason, she felt uncomfortable inside, as if she had lost something in that instant.

Chen Wudi, standing amidst the crowd, was shaking his head helplessly, inwardly sighing, "Xu Nian, oh, Xu Nian. I thought you had already brought disaster upon one sister of mine, but I never imagined that you'd actually afflict two of them! You're really doing a fine job as a brother!"

Chapter 163 Laying Hidden Dangers

Lin Rock gazed at the resolute Zhao Yanyun, his brows tightly furrowed.

From the first moment he saw Zhao Yanyun three years ago, he had fallen for her.

Throughout these three years, he had relentlessly pursued Zhao Yanyun, but her attitude toward him had always been lukewarm.

He had originally thought that it was just Zhao Yanyun's nature, but he hadn't expected that she would go to the extent of having an irreconcilable dispute with him over another man.

"Yanyun, do you really want to have an irreconcilable dispute with me over him? What is so worthy about him that makes you do this? Have you fallen for him?" Lin Rock asked coldly, his voice tinged with suppressed anger.

The crowd around them all looked toward Zhao Yanyun, curious about the answer to this question as well.

"Lin Rock, Xu Nian is a person specially looked after by Lord Governor. As a low-level manager in the Battle Mansion, I can't just let you kill him in front of me. Moreover, whether I like him or not, what business is it of yours? Please do not call me Yanyun anymore," Zhao Yanyun retorted coldly.

With this statement, the crowd sighed in relief.

It turned out to be just a command from the Lord Governor.

If Zhao Yanyun had truly fallen for Xu Nian and was thus desperately protecting him, then Xu Nian must really be defying the heavens.

After all, Zhao Yanyun was also a desired pursuit among the members of the Battle Mansion.

Hearing this, Lin Rock's expression eased a bit, but his gaze toward Xu Nian remained filled with killing intent.

"Fine, Yanyun, today I will let him go for your sake. But next time, if he appears before me again, I will kill him," Lin Rock said, flinging his sleeve before turning and leading the Battle Mansion members away.

Though Ding Hao was unwilling, he could do nothing, especially now that Xu Nian had Zhao Yanyun's protection.

What frustrated him the most was that Chen Yao's look toward him had turned extremely unfriendly.

He knew that staying further would only worsen the impression he made on Chen Yao.

"Remember to settle the bill before you leave!" Chen Wudi shouted at Ding Hao, who was walking down the stairs.

Hearing this, Ding Hao, overwhelmed with anger, spit out a mouthful of blood.

He had lost all his money to Xu Nian, leaving him with nothing to pay the bill.

Eventually, he had no choice but to borrow several hundred thousand Gold Coins from Sun Zhan to settle the account before dejectedly leaving.

Watching the Mo Lang Team leave, the young disciples also dispersed.

Suddenly, only Xu Nian, Chen Wudi, Zhao Yanyun, and Chen Yao remained in the field.

"Sister Zhao, are you all right?" Xu Nian asked, looking at Zhao Yanyun.

"I'm fine, just a minor injury. Lin Rock is one of the standout members among the Four-star members. You should still be cautious around him in the future," Zhao Yanyun replied, turning to Xu Nian.

Xu Nian nodded, his heart filled with gratitude.

If it weren't for Zhao Yanyun's intervention today, he truly didn't know how he would have countered Lin Rock's move.

"Xu Nian, I'm sorry," Chen Yao also stepped forward and said.

Xu Nian, however, smiled and shook his head: "You don't need to apologize to me; you don't owe me anything. Besides, if anything is to blame, it's only your mischievous brother. He specifically targeted Ding Hao, allowing you to see Ding Hao's true colors. I was merely used by him as a tool."

Chen Yao quickly glared at Chen Wudi upon hearing his words.

Chen Wudi, wearing an unapologetic expression, chuckled and said, "Sis, that's just the way it is. Ding Hao is a despicable person, and I had to use this method for you to see his true face. His pursuit of you is purely out of greed for our family's power. If you were really deceived by him, your entire life would be ruined. Besides, I genuinely hope you could end up with Xu Nian."

Chen Yao glared fiercely at Chen Wudi, then turned to Xu Nian with gratitude and said, "Thank you!"

Xu Nian smiled slightly and said, "Wudi is right. Ding Hao is indeed a hypocritical villain. You should be cautious of him in the future."

Chen Yao nodded. Through tonight's events, she had also seen through Ding Hao's true nature.

"Alright, now that things have been settled, I should head back. Xu Nian, here are your ten million Gold Coins." Zhao Yanyun threw two Qiankun Bags to Xu Nian and then prepared to leave.

Xu Nian took the Qiankun Bags but his face showed a hint of hesitation. Eventually, he asked, "Sister Zhao, does the Battle Mansion have Pills that can enhance one's realm?"

Zhao Yanyun was taken aback for a moment, then turned to Xu Nian with a furrowed brow and said, "Yes, but what do you need those Pills for? Xu Nian, with your talent, advancing your realm is only a matter of time. Why rush? You should know that such Pills for forcefully enhancing one's realm come with significant side effects."

"Yes, Xu Nian, you are only sixteen and have already reached One-star Battle Sect. Why the rush to advance your realm?" Chen Yao also couldn't help but advise.

Xu Nian shook his head.

He hadn't been in a hurry, but tonight's events had taught him a lesson.

If he continued to cultivate at this pace, he wouldn't be able to achieve the realm he had promised Leng Yanran in two years.

Then he wouldn't have the strength to face the upcoming crisis in the Imperial Capital, and what could he use to rescue his mother?

"Don't worry, I have my own judgment, and I won't jeopardize my future." Seeing Zhao Yanyun and Chen Yao so anxious, Xu Nian said with a smile.

Zhao Yanyun and Chen Yao both nodded, trusting that Xu Nian was not someone impulsive.

"If you want Pills to enhance your realm, come find me at the Battle Hall tomorrow." After leaving these words, Zhao Yanyun walked away.

Xu Nian and Chen Yao, along with Chen Wudi, also returned to the Governor Mansion.

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Meanwhile, inside the Ding Mansion in the western city, four people were gathered.

These weren't just any people; they were the Mo Lang Team members who had left the Tianhua Restaurant earlier.

"Senior Brother Lin, we must avenge this insult; otherwise, I can't swallow this grievance," Ding Hao angrily said, his body moving, wincing from the intense pain.

Xu Nian had embarrassed him in front of so many people and made Chen Yao think so poorly of him. How could he rest until Xu Nian was dead?

"Yes, Xu Nian must die. I also find him displeasing. Daring to offend our Mo Lang Team is simply seeking death. But with Zhao Yanyun protecting him, killing him is going to be difficult," Sun Zhan said, adopting a defiant tone.

Hearing Sun Zhan's words, Lin Rock's expression immediately grew colder.

"Now Xu Nian is living in the Governor Mansion, and killing him there would be difficult; it seems we must wait until his next mission and ambush him outside the city," Lin Rock suggested.

"Hmph, next time I'll definitely flay him. Losing to him was solely because he was deceitful. If it had been a fair fight, he could never have been my match," Ding Hao said angrily.

A cold smirk appeared on Sun Zhan's lips, and his eyes flickered with killing intent.

Lv Cheng, who had been silent, also revealed a trace of killing intent in his eyes.

Xu Nian's performance today had sparked intense jealousy in him—thus Xu Nian must die.

Chapter 164 Unscrupulously Inhumane

The next morning dawned.

Xu Nian arrived at the Battle Hall early in the morning.

After his battle with Lin Rock last night, he had made up his mind that he needed to accelerate the advancement of his cultivation.

The only way to quickly enhance one's cultivation was through pills, which could have strong side effects for others, but not for him.

His Dan Sea Species Green Lotus Battle Technique had the peculiar effect of absorbing energy without limit and without any consequences.

Therefore, as long as he had enough pills, Xu Nian could consume them like candy without any problems.

"You're here, are you really going to take pills?" Zhao Yanyun asked with a serious expression as Xu Nian approached the Battle Hall.

Xu Nian smiled and explained, knowing that Zhao Yanyun was worried about him, "Don't worry, Sister Yanyun, I won't be reckless. My constitution is a bit special; pills won't have any side effects on me."

Hearing this, Zhao Yanyun nodded and took out a small booklet.

"This is the Battle Hall's pill manual. All the pills that you, as a Two-Star Member, are eligible to purchase are listed here," Zhao Yanyun said before handing the pill manual to Xu Nian.

Xu Nian did not waste any words and began to look through the manual right away.

The manual listed many pills, with no fewer than a thousand types.

They were categorized as healing, auxiliary, Spirit Cultivator Type, and Body Cultivation.

Xu Nian skipped the first two categories and started browsing through the Spirit Cultivator pills.

There were no precise levels for pills, but for the convenience of Battle Mansion members, the Battle Hall had roughly divided them into one to nine stars, corresponding to Nine-star Members.

With his current status as a Two-Star Member, Xu Nian was only browsing through pills of two stars or below.

However, Xu Nian frowned after going through the list.

The effects of these Two-star pills were too weak and could not meet his requirements.

For example, the Qi Storage Pill, where one pill was equivalent to a month of cultivation, but for Xu Nian's demand for Spiritual Energy, he would need at least a hundred such pills to advance from a One-star Battle Sect to a Two-star Battle Sect.

Moreover, this pill was not cheap, costing three thousand gold coins each. Although he could afford it, it was far from cost-effective.

The Body Cultivation pills were also the same; for his Divine Demon Refining Body, the effects were still too weak.

After all, Xu Nian's Spirit Cultivation and Body Cultivation both far exceeded that of ordinary cultivators, so these Two-star pills simply could not fulfill his needs.

"What's wrong? Can't find any pills that satisfy you?" Seeing Xu Nian's furrowed brow, Zhao Yanyun asked in surprise.

These Two-star pills were far more than enough for cultivators at the Battle Sect Level.

After all, pills could only play an auxiliary role, and the more one consumed, the greater the side-effects. So, Two-star pills, let alone for Two-Star Members, were sufficient even for Three-star Members.

"Sister Zhao, do you have another list? The effects of these pills are too weak," Xu Nian couldn't help but say.

Zhao Yanyun's brows furrowed slightly. She said to Xu Nian, "Xu Nian, you must understand, with your current cultivation, Two-star pills are the best choice. If you take pills with particularly strong effects, they can cause significant harm to your body. Some pills are so potent that you can't possibly assimilate their power with your own strength."

Xu Nian smiled and remained silent.

Zhao Yanyun shook her head helplessly and took out another manual, saying to Xu Nian, "This is the Four-star Pill Manual. If you see something you like, I can make the purchase using my Four-star Member status for you. However, I still have to remind you, don't rush your cultivation."

"Thank you, Sister Yanyun!" Xu Nian took the pill manual from Zhao Yanyun's hands with a smile on his face.

Technically, the Battle Mansion wouldn't allow this, so Zhao Yanyun was bending the rules for him.

Zhao Yanyun felt a twinge of helplessness, not knowing whether what she was doing would help or harm Xu Nian.

Xu Nian took the four-star pill handbook and began to carefully browse through it.

At last, a satisfied smile appeared on Xu Nian's face, as the efficacy of the four-star pills met his expectations.

Take the Demon Spirit Pill, for example, a single pill could enable an ordinary one-star Battle Sect member to break through to the two-star Battle Sect Realm. According to Xu Nian's needs, about ten pills should be enough to raise his level by one star.

However, the Demon Spirit Pill wasn't cheap either, costing thirty thousand gold coins each.

Later, Xu Nian also took an interest in two other types of pills, the Spiritual Rhinoceros Pill and the Battle Energy Pill, both of which had effects similar to that of the Demon Spirit Pill.

"Ah, the Dragon King Pill!"

Xu Nian's eyes suddenly fixed on the last pill name on the Body Refining Pill list, his face showing excitement.

The description read: Dragon King Pill, crafted using the blood of the Dark Blood Jiao Dragon King, domineering and fierce. The user could extract the qi and blood of the Dark Blood Jiao Dragon King contained within the pill, greatly enhancing the body. One percent of lucky users may receive Taigu Blood Dragon Essence Blood and obtain Ancestor Dragon Qi, valued at one hundred thousand gold coins.

Taigu Blood Dragon Essence Blood, Xu Nian had once extracted a strand before.

His Dragon Scale Fist was transformed from the Taigu Blood Dragon Essence Blood. It provided him with great help; on several occasions, had it not been for the Dragon Scales transformed from the Taigu Blood Dragon Essence Blood blocking the attacks, he would no longer be alive.

So, given the possibility that the Dragon King Pill might contain Taigu Blood Dragon Essence Blood, how could Xu Nian willingly give up, even if it was just a one percent chance?

"Have you chosen?" Zhao Yanyun asked.

"Yes, Sister Yanyun, I can pick whatever I want, right?" Xu Nian asked a bit awkwardly.

"Of course, as long as you have enough gold coins, you can choose whatever you want. Moreover, as a four-star member, I can enjoy a forty percent discount. But don't choose too many different types, it will be more convenient for me to purchase," Zhao Yanyun nodded and said.

"Not too many, just four kinds," Xu Nian smiled.

Zhao Yanyun nodded, took out a pen, ready to record.

Xu Nian smiled and said, "A hundred pills each of Demon Spirit Pill, Spiritual Rhinoceros Pill, and Battle Energy Pill! For the Dragon King Pill, just ten will suffice."

Zhao Yanyun's eyes widened on the spot, her pen stopped in hand, and she looked at Xu Nian with a stunned face.

In the hall, there happened to be two three-star Battle Mansion members selecting missions, and upon hearing Xu Nian's words, they also stared at Xu Nian as if he were a freak.

Demon Spirit Pill, Spiritual Rhinoceros Pill, Battle Energy Pill - these were pills ordinary Battle Sect members needed a long time to digest even after consuming just one.

You, on the other hand, a hundred pills?

Brother, do you think you're eating candy?

And then there's the Dragon King Pill, a type of energy-violent pill that ordinary Body Sects dared not take casually, and it was extremely rare and precious.

You say just ten pills will be enough, as if pills grow on trees!

"Did I order too much? If it's not enough, I can take less," Xu Nian was also a bit embarrassed, knowing that his words had shocked Zhao Yanyun.

"Are you serious? You should know that items from the Battle Mansion are not allowed to be sold privately," Zhao Yanyun looked at Xu Nian for a long while before asking.

"No, it's all for my consumption!" Xu Nian hurriedly explained.

Zhao Yanyun glanced at Xu Nian, took a deep breath and said, "The first three types of pills are available, but there are only three Dragon King Pills left. If you need them, I can get them all for you, with a total value of five million five hundred and eighty thousand gold coins."

"Here's six million gold coins, thank you for the trouble, Sister Yanyun," Xu Nian said with a simple smile.

Zhao Yanyun, holding the six million gold coins in her hand, felt somewhat mixed emotions.

Spending so many gold coins on so many pills might well be a first in the history of the Battle Mansion.

Meanwhile, the two three-star members beside her looked at Xu Nian as if he were a monster, curious to know whether this guy could still be alive after consuming so many pills.

Chapter 165 Great Increase in Strength

Afterwards, Xu Nian purchased some healing pills and, under the astonished gazes of everyone around, he left the Battle Hall.

Upon exiting the Battle Hall, Xu Nian originally intended to deliver the pills to Dugu Jingcheng.

However, he discovered that he was being followed, so he returned directly to the Governor Mansion and had Chen Wudi send the pills to Dugu Jingcheng on his behalf.

He did this because he knew that the followers were from the Mo Lang Team.

If he went to see Dugu Jingcheng at that time, it would easily implicate him.

The last message the guard brought back was that Dugu Jingcheng was recovering well, and his left-hand sword technique was nearly back to its original level, which put Xu Nian's mind at much ease.

After returning to his residence, Xu Nian locked himself in and began preparing for a breakthrough.

Since the Mo Lang Team was tracking him, it indicated that they hadn't given up, so he had to improve his cultivation as quickly as possible.

Xu Nian took out ten Demon Spirit Pills and stuffed them all into his mouth at once.

If Zhao Yanyun were to witness this scene, she would surely be stupefied.

Even she would wait three months after taking one Demon Spirit Pill before daring to take another, but Xu Nian just crammed ten pills into his mouth at one time, which was practically equivalent to committing suicide!

Yet, Xu Nian had a calm expression. He deployed his triple Gravity Domain to cover every corner of the room, just in case someone attempted a sneak attack while he was cultivating.

Even though it was nearly impossible here in the Governor Mansion, he still needed to be prepared just in case.

After swallowing the ten pills, Xu Nian's body exploded like a boiling pot, with spiritual energy gushing out wildly.

His belly swelled up like a balloon, and had Xu Nian not been a Divine Demon Body Refiner with much more resilient meridians than an ordinary person, the bursting spiritual energy from the pills would have been enough to shatter all the meridians in his body.

Body Cultivation Gang Qi existed within the flesh and blood, while Spiritual Energy gathered in the Dantian to form the Dan Sea.

At this moment, Xu Nian's Dantian had completely turned into a giant vortex, frantically absorbing the spiritual energy released from his abdomen.

Although the surging spiritual energy caused him some pain, Xu Nian gritted his teeth and endured it.

"Boom!"

A Talent Phenomenon emerged behind Xu Nian.

A vast land under a suspended Silver Moon, with the Immortal King overwatching from the skies.

As the Talent Phenomenon unfolded, Xu Nian's absorption speed became even more terrifying.

After 15 minutes, Xu Nian opened his eyes, having absorbed all the potency of the ten Demon Spirit Pills, but instead of breaking through, he had only reached the middle stage of a One-star Battle Sect.

"How can this be? Why have I absorbed so much energy from the Demon Spirit Pills, yet my realm has improved so little?" Xu Nian muttered to himself, puzzled.

"Haha, boy, you're really too stupid. You've been at the Battle Sect for so long and only now do you realize?" The ethereal figure of the Yetian God Emperor appeared in front of Xu Nian.

The Yetian God Emperor had been sleeping lately, so Xu Nian had not disturbed her.

Now, the figure of the Yetian God Emperor seemed to have become more solid, suggesting that she must have recovered a lot of strength.

"Your Majesty, what is going on here?" Xu Nian asked, baffled.

"Boy, you have managed to fight across so many levels, can't you figure out the reason yourself? Naturally, it's because the spiritual energy reserves in your Dan Sea are far beyond others, and thus, you need much more spiritual energy to increase your realm," the Yetian God Emperor answered.

"I understand that, but my spiritual energy reserves are ten times that of others. Shouldn't the energy I just absorbed be enough? Why have I only reached the middle stage of a One-star Battle Sect?" Xu Nian persisted, still confused.

The Yetian God Emperor smiled faintly, looking at Xu Nian, "Look again at your Talent Phenomenon, see if there are any changes."

At her words, Xu Nian immediately turned his head to look at his own Talent Phenomenon.

"Seems to have become clearer?" Xu Nian stated uncertainly.

"Correct. While others have fixed Talent Phenomena, yours is constantly evolving, and this evolution comes at the cost of absorbing vast amounts of energy. Hence, the spiritual energy you now need to advance to the next level is not as simple as ten times more than others," the Yetian God Emperor said lightly, laughing.

Xu Nian was taken aback.

So most of his Spiritual Energy had been absorbed by the Talent Phenomenon.

This gave Xu Nian a speechless feeling, thinking how difficult it already was for him to break through to the Two-star Battle Sect. Wouldn't it be even more difficult to break through to the three-star and four-star levels in the future?

The Dan Sea Species Green Lotus Battle Technique was just too difficult to cultivate, wasn't it?

However, the only thing that consoled Xu Nian was that the Dan Sea Species Green Lotus could absorb all kinds of energies without limit. Otherwise, if he had to cultivate at a normal speed, it would take far too many years.

"Since you like to absorb Spiritual Energy, I really want to see how big your appetite is." Xu Nian glanced at the Talent Phenomenon behind him, made up his mind, and took out another twenty Demon Spirit Pills, pouring them all into his mouth like beans.

Boom!

Xu Nian's belly suddenly became even more bloated than before, while his Dan Sea was desperately absorbing this powerful Spiritual Energy.

The Talent Phenomenon then kept drawing energy from the Dan Sea, and as it absorbed the energy, the Talent Phenomenon behind Xu Nian became even clearer.

Of course, there was still a long way to go before the Immortal King Laurel Map could reach the Great Success Realm. It probably wouldn't be completed until Xu Nian broke through to the Battle General Realm.

However, as the Talent Phenomenon grew, its enhancement of Xu Nian's combat power became increasingly strong.

After Xu Nian swallowed all the Demon Spirit Pills, the Spiritual Rhinoceros Pill, and the Battle Spirit Pill, he finally reached the Three-star Battle Sect realm.

And the enhancement of his combat power by the Talent Phenomenon had also reached nearly three times as strong.

Now, Xu Nian, facing Ding Hao again, could easily defeat him without even using his Talent Phenomenon.

This filled Xu Nian with a sense of astonishment and excitement.

Next, Xu Nian took out those three Dragon King Pills again.

Since the energy contained in the Dragon King Pill was too violent, Xu Nian could only consume them one at a time.

When Xu Nian swallowed a Dragon King Pill, he could clearly feel a violent energy surging wildly throughout his body.

Xu Nian hurriedly operated the Divine Demon Refining Body Technique, allowing his flesh and blood to absorb this energy, transforming it into Gang Qi, and integrating it into his flesh.

Unfortunately, this Dragon King Pill only contained Jiao Dragon Qi and not Blood Dragon Qi. The Jiao Dragon Qi merged into Xu Nian's Blood Dragon Essence Blood and did not provide any significant amplification.

With no other choice, Xu Nian took out the second pill.

The result was the same as the first, containing Jiao Dragon Qi instead of Blood Dragon Qi.

However, after Xu Nian swallowed the third Dragon King Pill, a dragon's roar emanated from within the pill, and a streak of blood-red vital energy transformed into a small dragon, roaming about within Xu Nian's body.

Xu Nian was overjoyed and hurriedly used the Nine Dragons Supreme Body to absorb this Blood Dragon Qi.

The streak of Dragon Energy that was absorbed thickened from the size of a hair to that of a radish whisker.

Not only that, Xu Nian's Cultivation also broke through from a Nine-star Body Cultivator to the One-star Body Sect realm.

"Hum!"

At the thought from Xu Nian, his entire right arm was covered in a layer of dark blood-colored Dragon Scale Battle Armor.

On that scale armor, black patterns were outlined, as if they were Divine Patterns, shining brilliantly.

Xu Nian was even more ecstatic, feeling an endless power filling his right arm at that moment.

"Boom!"

A punch smashed into the ground, directly creating a huge pit in the flagstone pavement.

The stone slabs cracked like a spider web.

The power of one punch was comparable to a Seven-star Body Sect!

Chapter 166 Earth God Devouring Sky

Xu Nian looked at his dragon-transformed right arm, then glanced at the deep pit on the ground, his eyes full of excitement.

"Damn, was there an earthquake?" Chen Wudi rushed in from outside the courtyard, asking with a dumbfounded face.

As Xu Nian thought about it, his dragon-transformed arm returned to normal.

"It's nothing, I was just practicing and accidentally used too much force," Xu Nian explained with a smile.

"Used too much force? Did you have a breakthrough?" Chen Wudi asked in surprise.

He had just come to look for Xu Nian, but as soon as he reached the entrance of the courtyard, he felt the ground tremble violently, which scared him into thinking there had been an earthquake. It turned out that Xu Nian was practicing.

"Yes, I had a small breakthrough," Xu Nian nodded and said.

"Haha, let me test how much your strength has changed after the breakthrough," Chen Wudi laughed heartily.

After he finished speaking, his figure burst forth with a powerful Star Spiritual Energy, charging at Xu Nian with a terrifying force.

Xu Nian smiled slightly and casually threw a punch.

"Boom!"

Chen Wudi was sent flying like a sandbag, crashing into the wall behind him and creating a big pit.

"What the hell?" Chen Wudi climbed out from the pit, his face confused, unable to believe that he had been sent flying by Xu Nian with a single punch.

He had been roughed up by Xu Nian before, but he had never been sent flying so easily with one punch like today.

"Tell me honestly, how much did you really breakthrough?" Chen Wudi asked sternly.

Xu Nian laughed and said, "I broke through to the realm of the One-star Body Sect in Body Cultivation, and the punch I just hit you with was with my Body Cultivation."

Chen Wudi nodded. Xu Nian's Body Cultivation had already reached the pinnacle of a Nine-star Body Cultivator, so a breakthrough was only a matter of time, and he wasn't surprised.

However, Xu Nian's next words petrified Chen Wudi on the spot.

"I also made some breakthroughs in Spirit Cultivation, reaching the realm of a three-star Battle Sect," Xu Nian continued.

Chen Wudi was stunned for a while, then cursed out loud, "Are you trying to show off? Three-star Battle Sect, and you call that a small breakthrough? Damn your idea of a small breakthrough."

Xu Nian smiled helplessly, a breakthrough in two levels at once indeed could be a bit demoralizing.

Chen Wudi had a wounded expression, looking like an insulted girl next door, which made Xu Nian unable to help but smirk.

"Alright, let's get down to business, what did you come here for?" Xu Nian changed the subject and asked.

Chen Wudi's expression became serious upon hearing Xu Nian's question, and he said, "According to the guards' report, members of the Mo Lang Team are often spotted at the entrance of the Governor Mansion. It seems like they are surveilling you, and if I'm not wrong, they are probably waiting for you to go on your next mission and then ambush you."

Xu Nian frowned upon hearing this.

He hadn't expected the Mo Lang Team to be so bold as to surveil the Governor Mansion.

Now that his strength had increased, he could easily kill Ding Hao and Lv Cheng, and even compete with Sun Zhan, but Lin Rock was still too strong for him at the moment.

"These bastards, do you want me to send someone to chop them all up? Daring to target my brother is literally seeking death," Chen Wudi said arrogantly, his face showing some anger.

Xu Nian laughed and shook his head.

Although Chen Wudi was the son of the Prefectural Governor, he didn't actually have skilled experts at his beck and call. He could mobilize powerful individuals, but only with the Governor's permission.

Xu Nian did not want to alert the Governor over such a trivial matter, especially since it involved the Ding Family. Even Lord Governor would find it difficult to intervene openly.

"What should we do then? You'll soon be on your second mission, and that bunch of scoundrels will definitely ambush you outside the city. Wouldn't that be very dangerous for you?" Chen Wudi asked.

Xu Nian, however, smiled and said nonchalantly, "Don't worry, they won't find me."

With the Disguise Technique at his disposal, even if he walked out of the city gates in front of Lin Rock and the others, they would absolutely not recognize him.

Chen Wudi nodded, exchanged a few more words with Xu Nian, and then took his leave.

Xu Nian went back to his room and summoned Emperor Ye Tian.

Although he could ensure his safety when leaving the city gates, to be cautious, he decided to prepare for the worst.

"Your Majesty, is there a way for me to kill a Nine-star Body Cultivator?" Xu Nian asked.

Emperor Ye Tian sat on a chair inside the room and chuckled lightly, "With your current strength, killing a Seven-star Body Cultivator is no problem, and you might manage an Eight-star with full effort and some luck. But killing a Nine-star Body Cultivator is almost impossible."

Xu Nian nodded.

The last time he killed Ouyang Tian was purely because Ouyang Tian was a Spirit Cultivator with a frail body, which made it a lucky success.

However, Body Cultivators were different; their physical resilience was formidable, and they could even transform into Gang Qi Armor, making them extremely difficult to kill.

The tactics used against Ouyang Tian were utterly ineffective. Even utilizing the Gray Dragon Eye to confuse and deal with them had a slim chance of success.

"Isn't there any other way?" Xu Nian asked.

"It's simple, you could just act as bait to lure Lin Rock out of the city, then have your subordinate, Yan Wu, kill him," Emperor Ye Tian suggested.

Xu Nian shook his head; he had considered this approach.

But he didn't want to involve Yan Wu, especially since Ding Hao from Mo Lang Team had the backing of the strong Ding Family.

After killing Ding Hao, the Ding Family would certainly not sit idly by.

If the Lord Governor protected him, all would be well, but if not, he would definitely have to leave the city, and then Yan Wu and her father would face disaster.

Emperor Ye Tian shook her head helplessly, understanding Xu Nian's concerns.

"Well, since that's the case, I will teach you a secret technique that can greatly enhance your strength in a short time. If you master this secret technique, dealing with that Nine-star Body Cultivator will not be a problem," Emperor Ye Tian said.

"Really?" Xu Nian's eyes lit up.

Emperor Ye Tian spoke seriously, "But you should think it over, as the pain you will endure while learning this secret technique is unimaginable. Moreover, each time you use this technique, your body will enter an extremely weakened state, where even a three-year-old child could kill you, so you must be cautious."

"I'll learn it! No matter how painful, I will learn!" Xu Nian quickly agreed.

This secret technique was even more precious than a Heaven Rank Technique, able to unleash immense combat power in a short time.

And with this technique, he would have an additional skill to save his life.

Seeing Xu Nian's agreement, Emperor Ye Tian nodded, "The secret technique I will teach you, Earth God Devouring Sky, is a true growth technique. Even when your Cultivation is very high in the future, this technique will still be of great help to you."

"Earth God Devouring Sky? What a domineering name!" Xu Nian couldn't help but exclaim, as the name alone exuded an overwhelming aura of dominance.

Chapter 167 Kill Him Thousands of Miles Away

In the following seven days, Xu Nian had kept to himself behind closed doors.

However, the guards passing by Xu Nian's courtyard often heard his agonizing screams.

These painful screams made them shiver uncontrollably, and they were very curious about what Xu Nian was doing inside the courtyard.

Seven days later, Xu Nian emerged from the courtyard, and after bidding farewell to Chen Wudi, he headed straight to the Battle Hall.

Indeed, he was going to carry out his second task.

At this moment, there weren't many people in the Battle Hall, but as soon as Xu Nian appeared, everyone's gaze fell on him.

During this time, Xu Nian's fame had gradually spread, and basically all the lower-ranking members of the Battle Mansion now recognized him.

Xu Nian didn't pay any attention to the gazes of the people, but instead walked toward the task platform.

This time, Zhao Yanyun wasn't there, instead, a middle-aged man around thirty years old was on duty.

This man was also strong, likely a Nine-star War Sect member, too.

"What task do you want to undertake?" the middle-aged man asked after glancing at Xu Nian.

"Three-star," Xu Nian said decisively.

At these words, the surrounding people all looked at Xu Nian in surprise.

Xu Nian had only joined the Battle Mansion two months ago, and now he was taking on a three-star task, which surely seemed too soon.

The middle-aged man also gave Xu Nian a look and frowned, "Are you sure?"

Xu Nian nodded.

The middle-aged man did not say much else, and handed over the three-star task manual at his side to Xu Nian.

After receiving the three-star task manual, Xu Nian quickly skimmed through it and pointed at one of the tasks, "Let's go with this one!"

The middle-aged man glanced at the task Xu Nian had pointed to, his eyebrows furrowing again, and he took another look at Xu Nian.

"Are you sure you want to choose this task? Do you know what the consequences of failing the task are?" the middle-aged man questioned a second time.

"Certain, if I fail the task, I automatically leave the Battle Mansion," Xu Nian stated clearly.

Hearing this, the middle-aged man did not say anything further, marked a check after that task, and then handed over a document to Xu Nian.

"Thank you!" Xu Nian took the document and promptly left the Battle Hall.

The middle-aged man kept watching Xu Nian leave until he disappeared, and finally, he shook his head helplessly.

"Brother Zhang, what task did Xu Nian exactly choose?"

As soon as Xu Nian left, the remaining members of the Battle Mansion gathered around, their faces filled with curiosity.

Zhang Miao smiled slightly and tossed over the task manual in his hand, "See for yourself!"

The other members immediately took the manual, and were shocked upon seeing it.

"Good heavens, he actually took on this task? Is he looking for death?"

"My God, has Xu Nian gone mad to even dare to take on this task?"

Those who saw the marked task in the task manual were all surprised with their mouths agape.

It read on the task: Slay the Nine-star Silver Moon Realm Demon Beast, the Six-winged Ice Crystal Viper at Ice Dust Lake, task level three-star, difficulty super, reward one million Gold Coins.

"Nine-star Silver Moon Realm Demon Beast, that is an existence comparable to the Battle Sect Peak Level; even a One-star Battle General can't guarantee the completion of this task.

Xu Nian actually dared to take on this task; he's literally seeking death!

Moreover, this Six-winged Ice Crystal Viper has been wreaking havoc for a long time, consuming many Cultivators, including some from the High-level War Sect.

Hidden at the bottom of Ice Dust Lake, even Battle General Level warriors can't contend with it, thus the task specifically notes the difficulty level: 'super'.

"I think he will definitely fail the task, he took on an impossible task and just ran away," someone in the crowd speculated.

"It's possible, he offended the Mo Lang Team, and during this time the Mo Lang Team has been searching for him. I just saw Ding Hao's informant leave the Battle Hall; the Mo Lang Team is probably waiting for him at the city gate right now," another person chimed in.

"Who asked him to be ignorant of his own limits, offending the Mo Lang Team? Although the Mo Lang Team ranks lower among the twenty-four teams, they are still a team. If he thinks he can contend alone, isn't that seeking death?" someone said disdainfully, clearly thinking Xu Nian's offense against the Mo Lang Team was equivalent to seeking death.

"Then what are we waiting for? Let's go to the city gate to watch the show; it's too late if we delay any longer," someone immediately proposed.

"Let's go!" The crowd quickly scrambled out of the Battle Hall, all heading toward the city gate.

At this moment, while the crowd was hurrying to the city gate, Xu Nian was walking along the main street leading to the city gate, a Meteorite Iron Hammer slung over his shoulder.

Right now, he was covered by a Triple Gravity Domain.

However, Xu Nian's footsteps didn't seem heavy in the slightest; without close observation, one wouldn't notice any abnormalities on Xu Nian.

Xu Nian walked at an unhurried pace without employing the Disguise Technique, a faint smile on his lips.

"Mo Lang Team, I hope you do not come, otherwise I will let you know that you've messed with the wrong person," Xu Nian muttered with a cold laugh, his eyes filled with determination.

He always adhered to the principle: respect me an inch, I respect you a yard; offend me an inch, I'll kill you a thousand miles.

Therefore, if the Mo Lang Team were to come, he would not shy away from a battle.

...

Meanwhile, as Xu Nian headed towards the city gate, outside the city gate on the Grand Road stood four young men.

Surrounding them were crowds of people whispering about the four young men.

These four young men were recognized by many—not the Mo Lang Team members from the Battle Mansion then who?

Yet, the citizens surrounding them didn't understand whom the Mo Lang Team was laying in wait to ambush?

"Sun Zhan, maybe Xu Nian didn't dare to come after all. The distance from the Battle Hall to the city gate isn't long; he should have arrived by now. Why can't we see him yet?" Sun Zhan leaned against a big tree with a blade of grass in his mouth, a light smile playing on his lips.

"No, the ones I sent out saw him heading this way; if he turned back secretly, those keeping watch would have informed me," Ding Hao said with furrowed brows.

"Could it be that your people lost him, and Xu Nian sneaked out through another city gate? After all, only a fool would knowingly walk into an ambush," Sun Zhan sneered.

Ding Hao clenched his fists, furrowing his brows further, obviously also worried that Xu Nian had secretly escaped.

"No, he hasn't escaped!" However, just then, Lin Rock suddenly spoke.

Ding Hao and the others were stunned, then followed Lin Rock's gaze towards the direction of the city gate.

They saw a young man slowly walking towards them, apparently unaware of any lurking danger.

Ding Hao and Lv Cheng exchanged a glance, their faces breaking into cunning smiles.

Sun Zhan burst out laughing: "It seems he really is a fool to dare come here. Could it be that he hasn't noticed us waiting for him? That's too stupid!"

The people around also turned their gazes towards Xu Nian, realizing that he was the one the Mo Lang Team was planning to ambush!

"At last, we've caught up; Xu Nian is not dead yet, we made it in time!"

Those members from the Battle Hall who had followed also arrived at this moment, their faces filled with joy.

Chapter 168 You Are Not My Match

Xu Nian looked at the crowd of onlookers and a resigned smile appeared on his face.

He hadn't expected Mo Lang Team to be so blatant; at the very least, they should have waited for him to get a short distance from the city gate before ambushing him. Instead, they had blocked his path right under the walls of the county city.

It seemed they were counting on the Ding Family's influence in the county city, which emboldened them to act so recklessly.

Moreover, with the Prefectural Governor currently away from the city, Ding Hao and the others were even more unbridled.

"You've finally arrived. Do you know how many days we've been watching you? To wait for you, my men have been on stakeout day and night outside the Governor Mansion, and I thought you might cower inside for a lifetime," Ding Hao stepped forward and said with a face full of mockery.

Xu Nian chuckled lightly and looked at Ding Hao, "Young Master Ding has really gone through a lot. Are you looking to invite me for tea? If that's the case, why go to such great lengths? You could have simply sent someone to the Governor Mansion to summon me, sparing your men the trouble. I do feel quite bad about it."

"Tea?" Sun Zhan, who stood among the crowd, burst into loud laughter, "I told you this kid is an idiot. He actually thinks we're inviting him for tea."

Ding Hao and the others all laughed out loud, their gazes toward Xu Nian becoming more scornful.

The onlookers also shook their heads and looked at Xu Nian with pity in their eyes.

"Is Xu Nian really stupid or just faking it? Knowing that Ding Hao and his group were lying in wait for him, he still dared to walk into the trap? And now he's saying such things? Could his cultivation have really damaged his brain?" Some of the members from the Battle Hall who had rushed over began to discuss among themselves.

"I think it's very likely. When he chose that three-star mission earlier, I thought he was seeking death. Now, he's actually come here to court his own death. It's quite possible his brain is really ruined and he no longer wishes to live."

Those Battle Mansion members all nodded in agreement, feeling that Xu Nian's cultivation must have damaged his brain; otherwise why would he willingly come here to face death?

As for the idea that Xu Nian might be able to fight against the four people of Mo Lang Team, they didn't even consider it.

"Young master, should we help him?" Atop the city wall, a middle-aged man dressed in Battle Armor stood beside Chen Wudi, looking down at the scene below with a commanding view.

"No need. If Xu Nian is in danger, we will intervene then. Since he hasn't asked for our help, he must be confident in his ability to handle the situation on his own," Chen Wudi waved his hand.

The middle-aged man in Battle Armor nodded, but he didn't share the same opinion.

A three-star Battle Sect, facing off against Mo Lang Team—how much of a chance did he really have?

"Xu Nian, don't think you can fool anyone by playing dumb. That day, you and Chen Wudi plotted against me at Tianhua Restaurant, causing me to lose face. I can't do anything to Chen Wudi, but today, you must die," Ding Hao huffed coldly, a murderous gleam flashing in his eyes.

"Must die? Young Master Ding, it seems our grievances haven't reached the point of life and death, have they? Aren't you being a bit too extreme?" Xu Nian's lips curled into a cold smirk, and his eyes steadily grew colder.

"Ha ha, too extreme? Are you telling me a joke? You dared to covet Chen Yao, causing me to lose face; you used deceit to take five million Gold Coins from me. Any one of these reasons is enough for me to kill you a thousand times over. Do you still think I'm being excessive? When Ding Hao wants to kill someone, do I need a reason?" Ding Hao laughed heartily, his eyes full of arrogance.

The surrounding crowd all shrank their necks, not a single person daring to show any dissatisfaction.

The Ding Family's power was too great for them to provoke.

With Ding Hao being the second son of the Ding Family, within the city, no one dared to offend him.

As long as they were not from the Governor Mansion, even if Ding Hao actually killed someone, no one could do anything about it.

"What a saying, 'want to kill, no need for a reason.' I had intended to give you a chance, but it seems you have become unbearably arrogant," Xu Nian snorted with laughter, his gaze turning thoroughly glacial.

"Brother Ding Hao, why waste words on him? Just let me finish him off," Lv Cheng said with a cold huff.

"Fine, but make sure you leave him alive. I want him to live a life worse than death," Ding Hao said with a cold smile, his face contorted with a ferocious delight.

"Rest assured, the last strike will be reserved for the brother," Lv Cheng said with a cold smile.

After speaking, he turned his head toward Xu Nian, his gaze turning playful.

He had long found Xu Nian displeasing.

He joined the Battle Mansion last year and became a Two-Star Member in just five months.

He had been touted as a once-in-a-century genius in the Battle Mansion.

But ever since Xu Nian appeared, all his glory had been overshadowed, which he found hard to swallow.

So before coming here, he had already agreed with Ding Hao and Lin Rock.

This battle, he would strike first, he wanted to prove to everyone that he, Lv Cheng, was the true genius.

The crowd around also showed curious expressions, as Lv Cheng had indeed made a name for himself in the Battle Mansion over the past year.

If he continued to grow, his future would surely be boundless.

And this Xu Nian was hailed as the Battle Mansion's most promising genius, with these two clashing, it was really hard to say who would win and who would lose.

However, most people still favored Lv Cheng, after all, two months ago, Xu Nian was still a Nine-star Warrior, while at that time, Lv Cheng had already become a Six-star Battle Sect.

"You are not my opponent, go back, I don't want to kill you."

However, it was at this moment that Xu Nian looked at Lv Cheng and spoke indifferently.

The surrounding crowd was also surprised, was Xu Nian bluffing?

Anger surged on Lv Cheng's face as well.

At the very least, his Cultivation was far higher than Xu Nian's, and even if Xu Nian's combat power exceeded his level, he was only at the level of a Six-star Battle Sect ten days ago.

But now, he had reached the Peak of the Six-star Battle Sect and might breakthrough at any moment.

Xu Nian dared to look down on him like this.

"Arrogant, don't think because you managed a fluke victory over Brother Ding Hao, you can defeat me, today I will let you see what real strength is," Lv Cheng shouted loudly, and a powerful aura erupted from him.

The imposing manner of the Six-star Battle Sect roared into being, the fierce aura swept through the surroundings.

Everyone was startled, this Lv Cheng's aura as a Six-star Battle Sect was much stronger than that of an ordinary Six-star Battle Sect, and not too far from a Seven-star Battle Sect.

"Die!" Lv Cheng shouted loudly, directly slashing his blade towards Xu Nian.

Sword Light emerged, piercingly cold, striking fear into hearts.

Yet Xu Nian simply shook his head, his eyes instantly turned sharp, and a Xuan Iron Sword appeared in his hand.

"Puchi!"

Sword Radiance flashed, and blood splattered.

Lv Cheng's body passed directly by Xu Nian, freezing in place on the spot.

"How... How is this possible?" Lv Cheng's eyes widened in shock.

A minute crack at the center of his brow expanded, and ultimately, his entire body split in two and fell to the ground, breathless.

The surrounding crowd was dumbstruck.

A single sword stroke!

Lv Cheng at the peak of the Six-star Battle Sect was cleaved in half?

How could this be possible?

The several Battle Mansion members who had followed from the Battle Hall were also shocked.

Atop the city tower, the middle-aged man clad in Battle Armor was equally amazed, and even Chen Wudi beside him flashed a hint of astonishment in his eyes.

That sword stroke had been too fast, too fast for them to see how Xu Nian even struck.

Ding Hao and others also widened their eyes, filled with shock, unable to believe what they were witnessing.

Xu Nian stood holding the sword, without even giving a glance at Lv Cheng's corpse.

There was no special technique to this sword stroke, just sheer speed and sharpness.

In that instant, Xu Nian had lifted the thrice-enhanced gravity constraint.

With a full-force sword stroke, if he still couldn't kill Lv Cheng, his Cultivation would have indeed been for naught.

Chapter 169 Taking One's Own Life

Blood flowed freely as Xu Nian stood with his sword, a sight that agitated the nerves of everyone present.

A genius of the Six-star Martial Sect Peak was slain by a single sword stroke.

Just how strong is Xu Nian?

"I advise you to go back, or you'll end up like Lv Cheng," Xu Nian said in a cold voice. "Although I do not like to bully others, I am certainly not easy to bully."

His voice was not loud but it was enough to shake people's hearts.

At this moment, everyone felt somewhat bewildered, as if Xu Nian truly had the power to stand against the entire Mo Lang Team alone.

Ding Hao gritted his teeth in anger as he glared furiously at Xu Nian.

He had been defeated by Xu Nian last time, losing face; this time Xu Nian still didn't regard him highly.

If they were to withdraw today, the Mo Lang Team would likely become a laughingstock, and he, Ding Hao, would also become a joke.

"Go to hell!" Ding Hao roared in anger, a sharp sword appearing in his hand as he leaped forth, slashing directly at Xu Nian.

The sharp Sword Radiance flashed on the blade as the Seven-star Martial Sect's might was unleashed without reserve, pressing down hard on Xu Nian.

"So strong, Ding Hao is much more powerful than Lv Cheng. Can Xu Nian block this?" The onlookers couldn't help but exclaim in surprise.

Their eyes were glued to Xu Nian, curious if he could once again work a miracle.

However, facing Ding Hao's fierce attack, Xu Nian not only did not defend but instead planted his sword into the ground.

"What? Does he intend to face Ding Hao's sharp sword with his bare hands? Is he seeking death?"

The crowd immediately exclaimed in shock.

If Xu Nian were to use his swordsmanship again, perhaps he could block Ding Hao's attack, but now he had abandoned his sword to fight empty-handed. Was he courting death?

The middle-aged man on the city tower also frowned, clearly thinking Xu Nian's action was too arrogant.

But seeing Chen Wudi remain calm and composed, he suppressed his confusion and continued to watch the fight below.

Seeing Xu Nian abandon his sword and fight with bare hands, a strong rage surged in Ding Hao's heart.

"Arrogant fool, die!" Ding Hao swung his sword down with fierce Sword Radiance.

Yet Xu Nian simply reached out into the void with his palm, and the Thunder Fire Power surged out abruptly.

"Whoosh!"

Ding Hao's sword struck down, directly slicing through Xu Nian's body, but there was no sensation of the sharp blade cutting through flesh and blood.

The Sword Radiance tore a long trench into the ground, but Xu Nian's figure had vanished.

Ding Hao was shocked and didn't understand how Xu Nian had suddenly disappeared.

"Behind you!"

Just then, a mocking laugh was heard.

Ding Hao spun around only to see Xu Nian standing there with a cold smile.

A chill ran down Ding Hao's spine as he hurriedly swung his sword toward Xu Nian.

"Too slow!"

Before Ding Hao's sword could reach him, Xu Nian's fist had already slammed into his abdomen.

Thunder and Fire Tyrant Fist!

Ding Hao bent over like a shrimp, his face filled with shock as he was sent flying backward, crashing into the city wall, leaving behind a pocked trace on the hard surface.

"Phew!"

Ding Hao spat out a mouthful of blood, then knelt on the ground.

The surrounding crowd was stunned, as the Seven-star Martial Sect's Ding Hao had been defeated.

That punch had fractured several of Ding Hao's ribs, piercing through his lungs, and severely injuring him.

The intense pain twisted Ding Hao's features.

Sun Zhan and Lin Rock, standing nearby, also wore expressions of surprise.

Last time at Tianhua Restaurant, Xu Nian had defeated Ding Hao, but it was extremely strenuous, and there was a lot of luck involved. But this time, the power Xu Nian displayed far surpassed Ding Hao's.

Just by looking at the body skill he had just used, one could tell that Xu Nian's Illusion Fascinate Trace had entered the Subtle Realm.

In just ten days, a Heavenly Rank Body Technique had advanced into the Subtle Realm—how terrifying was that?

"We absolutely must not let this person live, otherwise, we'll all die. This rate of growth is simply too terrifying," Lin Rock and Sun Zhan exchanged glances, both understanding the thoughts in each other's hearts.

At this moment, Ding Hao's face was also filled with shock, having never thought that Xu Nian could suddenly become so strong.

The most critical point was that Xu Nian was six years younger than him.

"No... impossible... How could I lose? Xu Nian, I want you dead without a proper burial!" shouted Ding Hao in disbelief, his face contorted, clearly unable to accept the reality before him.

"Ding Hao, I didn't want to kill you. I had already given you one last chance, but you remained so aggressive. If that's the case, then don't blame me," said Xu Nian as he drew the sword beside him, beginning to walk step by step toward Ding Hao.

With each step he took, it was as if he was stepping on Ding Hao's heart, causing profound disturbances in his mind.

The onlookers all showed extremely surprised expressions. Was Xu Nian really out of his mind, daring to kill Ding Hao?

Did he not know that by killing Ding Hao, he would incur the frenzied retaliation of the entire Ding Family?

"I don't believe you dare to kill me. I am the second young master of the Ding Family. If you kill me, you won't survive either, cough cough," Ding Hao roared at Xu Nian, his face still hanging with stubborn pride.

Xu Nian simply sneered and quickened his pace, the killing intent on him gradually intensifying.

He hadn't killed him right from the start because he wanted to make him experience what true fear was.

Seeing this, Ding Hao was truly terrified.

He had not expected Xu Nian to actually be insane and hurriedly yelled, "Senior brother, save me!"

But as Ding Hao's voice fell, two figures appeared behind him and charged at him.

Xu Nian's gaze became sharp in an instant as he abandoned his pursuit of Ding Hao and turned to unleash a sword strike.

The ultimate move, Fierce Blade Dance.

As the sword cleaved through the air, Wind Blades surged instantly, slashing towards the two assailants.

Sun Zhan and Lin Rock both uttered a cold snort, their eyes flashing with disdain.

Sun Zhan slashed through the air, and Xu Nian's Wind Blade was instantly dissipated.

At the same time, Lin Rock had already penetrated the Wind Blade and reached Xu Nian, sending a punch directly at him.

Xu Nian was startled and quickly used his sword to block.

"Clang!"

An extreme tremor rang out as Xu Nian was sent flying backward with his sword, crashing into a wall and shattering it behind him, blood spilling from the corner of his mouth.

The surrounding crowd all had surprised looks on their faces as both Lin Rock and Sun Zhan had made their moves simultaneously.

It seemed that although Xu Nian was strong, he was ultimately no match for the Mo Lang Team.

"Haha, Xu Nian, you can't kill me. Today you're definitely dead," said Ding Hao, who had already stood up, taken some Healing Medicine, and felt some relief from his injuries. Seeing Xu Nian being blown away, he revealed a vicious sneer on his face.

"Will you end your own life, or should we do it?" asked Lin Rock coldly, looking down at Xu Nian with an air of superiority.

Sun Zhan also stood with his sword, a disdainful sneer on his face.

The surrounding people were shaking their heads; the battle seemed to be coming to an end.

With Sun Zhan of the Eight-star Martial Sect and Lin Rock of the Nine-star Body Sect, either one alone was not someone Xu Nian could contend with. Now that the two had joined forces, did Xu Nian have any chance of survival?

Xu Nian looked at his trembling arms, his eyes sinking into complete darkness.

"End my own life? Do you really think you've won?" Xu Nian said in a deep voice, then once again took a step.

"Boom!"

A Heaven and Earth Phenomenon suddenly erupted from behind him, and instantly, a powerful aura emanated from Xu Nian.

All those present felt a shock in their hearts, staring in utter disbelief at the phenomenon emerging behind Xu Nian.

Chapter 170 Dragon Transformation Shattering Thunder

"Talent Phenomenon... My heavens!"

The crowd around couldn't help but exclaim, never having imagined that Xu Nian actually possessed a Talent Phenomenon.

A Talent Phenomenon was a special physical trait that, according to legend, only those with unique physiques could possess.

Could it be that Xu Nian also had a special physique?

Lin Rock and Sun Zhan were also wide-eyed, surprised that Xu Nian possessed the Talent Phenomenon.

Of course, Ding Hao was the most upset, staring at the Talent Phenomenon behind Xu Nian with intense jealousy in his eyes.

"I didn't expect him to have a Talent Phenomenon as well, but why have I never seen this one before?" questioned the middle-aged Battle Armor man atop the city wall, his voice filled with surprise.

"I've never seen it either, but my father mentioned that Xu Nian's Talent Phenomenon is very strong. It's thanks to him that I was rescued and able to recover my talents," responded Chen Wudi, his face also showing a trace of curiosity.

Although he knew that Xu Nian possessed the Talent Phenomenon, he had never seen it before.

Seeing Xu Nian demonstrate it now, he still felt somewhat astonished.

Xu Nian, holding a long sword, emitted the powerful aura of an Immortal King.

The surrounding world also darkened, with a round moon hanging high in the sky.

"Brother, let me handle him. I've killed many talented ones, but I've never fought someone with a Talent Phenomenon before. Today, I'm quite curious to try," Sun Zhan turned and smiled at Lin Rock.

"Be careful!" Lin Rock nodded.

He trusted Sun Zhan's strength. Even if Xu Nian were stronger, he certainly couldn't match Sun Zhan, a Peak of Eight-star Martial Sect Level, who also had a life-saving technique up his sleeve.

"Ha ha, don't worry, he's dead for sure today," Sun Zhan laughed heartily.

After he said that, he turned his gaze towards Xu Nian, his eyes brimming with a fighting spirit.

Seeing this, Xu Nian slightly relaxed.

If Sun Zhan and Lin Rock joined forces, he might have had to use his final technique, Earth God Devouring Sky.

But now, with only Sun Zhan to face, he might still stand a chance using his own strength.

"Kid, I didn't expect you to possess the legendary Talent Phenomenon, but you're really unlucky, having offended our Mo Lang Team. Today, I'll let you understand the consequences of offending our Mo Lang Team," Sun Zhan sneered and then leaped forward, swinging his battle saber towards Xu Nian.

The Sword Light instantly sliced through the sky, directly aiming for Xu Nian's face.

Xu Nian's eyes also instantly sharpened, a wild wind whipping up around him, directly striking out with his sword.

Gale Sword Technique! Slash!

Bolstered by the Talent Phenomenon, Xu Nian's sword was three times more powerful than usual.

A green Sword Radiance surged out, colliding directly with the terrifying Sword Light.

"Boom!"

Sword Light and Sword Radiance collided, emitting a terrifying booming sound, exploding in midair.

"Ha ha, die!"

At that moment, Sun Zhan reached Xu Nian's face, his battle saber surging with light as he swung down. A strike from him, a Seven-star Martial Sect powerhouse, was undoubtedly fatal.

But, Xu Nian's lips twisted into a cold smile, the Gray Dragon Dragon Energy surged within him, and his eyes suddenly turned green.

In that moment of eye contact with Sun Zhan, there was a brief daze.

"Now! Fierce Blade Dance!" Xu Nian moved, instantly transforming into an illusion on the other side of Sun Zhan, unleashing the Fierce Blade Dance in an instant.

With one slash, countless Sword Radiance surged out.

Under the boost of the Talent Phenomenon, the power of the Fierce Blade Dance was also tripled.

The number of swords around him also tripled, forming a terrifying wind blade storm that instantly swept towards Sun Zhan.

Sun Zhan's expression changed, the Spiritual Energy inside him surged, forming a Spiritual Energy Light Shield.

"Boom!"

Those wind blades struck the Spiritual Energy Light Shield, sending out dazzling sparks.

"Huh? A Spiritual Energy Light Shield?" Xu Nian was taken aback.

He hadn't expected Sun Zhan to deploy a Spiritual Energy Light Shield.

His Wind Blade was completely blocked by the Spiritual Energy Light Shield.

The Spiritual Energy Light Shield is a technique usually employed by warriors from High-level Battle Sects, but attempting to form one similar to those used by Seven-star Martial Sects generally provides no substantial defensive effect, becoming instead quite useless.

However, this Sun Zhan clearly had mastered the secret of the Spiritual Energy Light Shield, and its defense was significantly strong.

"Ha-ha, I almost followed your lead, not expecting you to even know hypnotic techniques. But it seems you forgot that we, from High-level Battle Sect, possess Spiritual Energy Light Shields. Your attacks couldn't possibly harm me!" Sun Zhan laughed loudly as he spoke.

The people around them were all envious; a Spiritual Energy Light Shield was an impenetrable defensive technique.

Using Spiritual Energy to form a protective shield enveloping one's entire body.

Unless overwhelmed by a significantly stronger force, ordinary attacks are generally unable to break through the Defensive Light Shield, making it almost impossible to kill Battle Sect warriors.

"It looks like Xu Nian is done for; if his attacks can't harm Sun Zhan, how can he continue to fight?"

"Exactly, the gap in their levels is too vast. Even with a Talent Phenomenon, Xu Nian's Cultivation is only that of Three-star Battle Sect. The disparity in their realms is too great."

...

The surrounding crowd was abuzz with discussion.

Although Xu Nian's Talent Phenomenon had surprised everyone, Sun Zhan's strength appeared overwhelming. In their eyes, the outcome still appeared a certain defeat for Xu Nian.

Xu Nian frowned slightly; facing Sun Zhan, who was protected by a Spiritual Energy Light Shield, was indeed troublesome.

"Ha-ha, Xu Nian, you're as good as dead! Brother Sun, no need to hold back, just use your killer move and finish him," a person named Ding Hao shouted from the side.

Hearing this, Sun Zhan's mouth curved into a faint smile.

"I intended to play a bit longer, but to avoid complications later, I've decided to end you with one slash. Kid, I'll let you experience the power of my strongest move, the Illusion One Slash," laughed Sun Zhan heartily. Saying this, his aura swiftly began to surge.

"An Illusion One Slash, huh? That's Sun Zhan's signature killing technique. It looks like Xu Nian is really finished," onlookers muttered, expressing their sentiments.

"Should we make a move?" asked a middle-aged man in Battle Armor beside Chen Wudi.

Chen Wudi furrowed his eyebrows and shook his head: "Wait a bit longer, I believe in Xu Nian."

The middle-aged man in Battle Armor was perplexed, unsure where Chen Wudi's trust came from.

In his view, there was no way Xu Nian could withstand Sun Zhan's move.

"Meet your doom!" Sun Zhan shouted loudly, his Battle Saber slashing towards Xu Nian and instantly forming six saber images from various directions aiming at Xu Nian.

Illusion One Slash, although there were six saber images, only one was real.

Ordinary people couldn't determine which one of the six saber images was real, hence, they couldn't defend against it.

Once struck by the actual blade, death was virtually certain.

But that applied to others, not someone with the Gray Dragon Eye.

These supposed illusionary blade images couldn't hide from him.

"Perfect opportunity!"

With a curl of his lips, Xu Nian made his move, directly dodging the real slash.

At the same time, he moved closer to Sun Zhan.

His right-hand sword had disappeared, replaced by an entire arm encased in Blood-colored Dragon Scale Armor.

"Not good!"

Sun Zhan was visibly shocked, not expecting Xu Nian to have seen through his attack and even moved up close.

He quickly activated his Defensive Light Shield in an attempt to block.

"Three-Forging Fist reinforced, Dragon Transformation Shattering Thunder!"

Xu Nian coldly smirked, his right fist thunderously smashing through the Defensive Light Shield, striking Sun Zhan squarely in the chest.

Sun Zhan's chest instantly caved in, his mouth spewing fresh blood.

It was as if his soul had been ejected from his body, causing him to instantly lose consciousness.

"Boom!"

Sun Zhan's body flew backward and crashed into a distant large tree.

The impact shattered the tree, leaving him lying on the ground with a bloody and mangled chest.

The crowd around was dumbstruck, completely petrified in place, feeling as if their hearts had skipped a beat in that instant.