

Eternal Heart 361

Chapter 361: Trading Injury for Injury

At the martial arts platform, in the blink of an eye, Chen Yu had withstood the might of Ye Chengfeng's three swords.

To date, the only person who had managed to withstand Ye Chengfeng's three swords was Yuan Chen.

Of course, there was one point where Yuan Chen still fell short of Chen Yu.

Chen Yu not only withstood Ye Chengfeng's three swords but also inflicted injuries on Ye Chengfeng three times, pushing him to an extremely sorry state and nearly causing a disastrous defeat.

"It's unbelievable, a cultivator below the Guiyuan Realm like Chen Yu could actually withstand the power of Ye Chengfeng's three swords and pressure him into such a disheveled state!"

"If only, Ye Chengfeng's fourth sword is coming; this battle should be over now."

"However, the fact that Chen Yu could fight against Ye Chengfeng to this extent is already shocking and extraordinary. What a pity he is so young; he could surpass Ye Chengfeng in the future."

Ye Chengfeng's sword attacks were each more powerful than the last.

The might of this fourth sword would require even the defensively talented Guiyuan Realm prodigy Yuan Chen to use all his strength to defend.

And Chen Yu, without a doubt, was destined to lose!

Not only did the spectators think this, but Ye Chengfeng himself believed it, the corners of his mouth revealing a smile of victory.

But the next scene caused Ye Chengfeng's heart to tremble, and the smile on his lips disappeared.

The surrounding spectators, including the higher-ups from the four major academies, were all shocked and discolored.

They originally thought that facing the fourth sword, Chen Yu would decisively admit defeat or, at the very least, defend with all his might to avoid serious injury.

But Chen Yu's actions refuted everyone's expectations.

Just then.

Roar!

Chen Yu, facing Ye Chengfeng, charged wildly, demonic qi swirling around his body, stirring up a formidable black wind.

Chen Yu stared intently at Ye Chengfeng, his eyes exuding a fearsome demonic presence as if he were an unparalleled evil demon swiftly closing in on Ye Chengfeng.

Indeed, facing Ye Chengfeng's fourth sword, Chen Yu neither admitted defeat nor defended with all his might but instead launched a frontal assault.

"Impossible... Facing my fourth sword, he actually

Ye Chengfeng's eyes widened in disbelief as the approaching Chen Yu filled his mind with a momentary blank.

At this instant, doubt crept into Ye Chengfeng's heart; he even began to wonder if his sword could defeat Chen Yu.

Otherwise, how could this situation arise?

Swoosh!

Ye Chengfeng swung his sword, and a gleaming white sword light burst forth, startling all around.

At the same time, Chen Yu approached to within twenty feet of Ye Chengfeng.

"Defeat!"

Chen Yu erupted with full force, unleashing a claw strike that formed a ferocious and sinister demon rune giant claw.

"He's going for it, sacrificing himself in the attack, exchanging injury for injury

At this moment, Ye Chengfeng finally understood.

If he committed to releasing this strike, he would be too late to defend against Chen Yu's attack.

If he retracted his strength now to fend off Chen Yu's attack, then his sword would fail to defeat the defensively skilled Chen Yu.

In other words, if he wanted to defeat Chen Yu, he would have to carry out this strike persistently, but by then, he might also be defeated by Chen Yu, leading to a draw.

"If I retract my strength now, block Chen Yu's strike, and then prepare the fifth sword, Chen Yu will certainly die

In that instant, thoughts of withdrawal emerged in Ye Chengfeng's mind.

But in the next moment, he sobered up; if he were to back down now, his Sword Dao would change course and go astray.

"Chen Yu, let's settle the winner with this strike!"

Ye Chengfeng shouted, his eyes filled with unwavering determination.

Chen Yu let out a soft chuckle; he had just seen a moment of hesitation on Ye Chengfeng's face. If Ye Chengfeng had truly chosen to pull back and defend, then in the following moments, he would not be able to do anything to Chen Yu.

But in the end, Ye Chengfeng chose to forge ahead, pursuing the strike to the bitter end!

As they watched the two prodigies on the platform execute their ultimate techniques, even hinting at the possibility of mutual destruction.

The judges nearby, including the senior staff from the Sky Sword Academy and No Demon Academy, grew tense, even considering intervening.

But the grand competition of the academies had rules: outsiders must not interfere, or they would face severe punishment.

"These two are going for mutual destruction!"

"Absolutely terrifying, both of them are madmen."

The crowd erupted in exclamations.

Boom!

After Ye Chengfeng had fully executed his strike, he instantly utilized a secret technique, transforming his True Yuan into numerous crystalline small swords creating a shield of swords in front of him.

On the other side, after executing “Demon Annihilation Claw,” Chen Yu also immediately used the defensive battle skill “Demon Scale Guard.”

Thump! Thump! Thump!

His heart pounding and with the enhancement from the Dragon Scale Bloodline, Chen Yu fully activated his Demon Rune Battle Technique.

In the blink of an eye, the sword light and demonic qi engulfed the figures of the two combatants.

"What's the outcome?"

Yuan Chen, Duan Xinyue, and other watching prodigies also held their breath.

Boom!

Amidst the explosion of demonic qi, Ye Chengfeng was hurled out, his treasured sword falling to the side.

He flew out of the martial arts platform and crashed to the ground with a swath of blood across his chest, falling unconscious.

On the other hand, Chen Yu was also blasted by the sword light, his protective battle technique shattered, and a crack appeared in his chest armor. The parts not covered by the armor bore a half-inch deep sword wound, his Dragon Scale defense breached for the first time, and blood oozed out.

However, Chen Yu managed to stop at the edge of the martial arts platform.

"I won."

At that moment, Chen Yu revealed a slight smile.

His last exchange with Ye Chengfeng was perilous, but it was also within Chen Yu's expectations.

By exchanging injury for injury, with his strong physique and high defensive power, Chen Yu naturally had the advantage.

"Am I seeing this right? The number one person in Sky Sword Academy, the sword prodigy Ye Chengfeng, has actually been defeated by Chen Yu."

"This has to be the biggest upset of the competition, Chen Yu defeating Ye Chengfeng, likely placing him second!"

"This is already the second Guiyuan Realm prodigy to fall at Chen Yu's hands, isn't it?"

Cries of astonishment rang nonstop, deafening.

Moments later, cheers erupted.

"This young man's temperament is quite extraordinary; he actually chose to trade injury for injury with Chengfeng, relying on his physique and defensive power, which naturally can withstand more damage, but Chengfeng, as a Sword Cultivator

The elder with white eyebrows from Sky Sword Academy sighed.

Of course, if Chen Yu hadn't had the courage to make such a decision, he would have had to face Ye Chengfeng's fifth sword. By then, no matter how skilled Chen Yu was, defeat was certain.

It was precisely because Chen Yu saw through this that he made his decision, not giving Ye Chengfeng the chance to unleash his fifth sword.

"This kid, he really knows how to use his own advantages. If it were an ordinary person, upon seeing Ye Chengfeng's sword, fear would have already arisen in their heart

The man in the Golden Cloud Robe showed a look of admiration.

"Chen Yu's victory!"

The referee was also stunned for a moment before announcing the result of the match.

When Chen Yu stepped down from the stage, everyone looked at him as if they were looking at a monster.

"How can he be so strong

Luo Haotian felt fear rising in his heart.

Unconsciously, Chen Yu had surpassed him, making Luo Haotian feel powerless.

Yuan Chen also laughed heartily, not expecting his junior brother to defeat Ye Chengfeng; as his senior brother, he had been overtaken.

On the other hand, Duan Xinyue remained silent, her heart filled with gloom.

"This young man, he actually defeated Ye Chengfeng?"

Yunhai Zhen's bright eyes were fixed on Chen Yu.

In his eyes, of this tournament, the only ones who could pose a threat to him were Ye Chengfeng or perhaps Yuan Chen.

Yet unexpectedly, Ye Chengfeng was defeated by someone other than him.

"Interesting!"

Yunhai Zhen revealed a hint of a smile, his body exuding an invisible aura of authority that spread in all directions, startling some of the people nearby.

After the match ended, Chen Yu left the stage and returned to his seat.

At this moment, he was quite weak.

In his fight against Ye Chengfeng, his heart had been constantly charging and bursting with energy.

"Junior brother, the wounds caused by True Yuan are very hard to heal. Here is a 'Spring Transformation Pill', which can heal the injuries caused by True Yuan

Yuan Chen came over, taking out an Elixir.

"Thank you, senior brother!"

Chen Yu took it without hesitation.

In fact, he could feel the wounds on his body healing.

To conceal this, Chen Yu consumed the Elixir given by Yuan Chen.

On the other side, Ye Chengfeng was carried aside by the elders of Sky Sword Academy and given a sacred healing medicine, rapidly recovering from his injuries.

If Ye Chengfeng could not continue to fight, his ranking in this competition would likely fall behind.

However, it was not long before Ye Chengfeng awoke, giving Chen Yu a deep look.

"Next time, I will win."

Ye Chengfeng said softly before turning to concentrate on healing his wounds.

On the other side, Chen Yu was cultivating and did not notice these events.

During that last battle, Chen Yu had achieved a great deal of insight. He was also cultivating the Demon Rune Qi and practicing the Secret Technique given by the Red Flame King to condense his True Yuan.

The matches continued.

"The third match, Tang Mo versus Yin Chengzhuang

The competition went on.

Tang Mo and Yin Chengzhuang, both from Yunyang Academy, ranked second and third respectively; their battle was also quite spectacular.

However, many of the contenders were still thinking about the previous battle.

"Damn it, how can this kid be so formidable, keeping his strength so hidden, even Ye Chengfeng was defeated."

Duan Xinyue was conflicted within.

If she faced Chen Yu again, she really wasn't confident she could defeat him.

"If he can defeat Ye Chengfeng, does that not mean he has a chance to claim the second place in this competition?"

Zhou Yuning was extremely surprised at the thought.

Of course, Chen Yu only had the chance to vie for second place; the specific outcome was still uncertain.

In his opinion, after the fight between Chen Yu and Ye Chengfeng, the former must have sustained severe injuries. If Chen Yu encountered a formidable opponent in the next round, he might even be defeated.

For example Ye Chengfeng, if he met Duan Xinyue in the next round, his chances of winning seemed slim.

The third match ended quickly, with Tang Mo slightly better.

Time passed, and after this round, Chen Yu was deeply engaged in his cultivation, paying no attention to external matters.

Soon, the fourth round of the competition began.

"Chen Yu against Zhou Yuning!"

Chen Yu opened his eyes slightly.

"I concede."

Zhou Yuning immediately declared.

In Sky Sword Academy, even holding off one of Ye Chengfeng's swords was difficult for him.

Even if Chen Yu was injured at the moment, he was no match for him.

Seeing his opponent concede, Chen Yu continued his cultivation.

Now, he had two opponents left, his senior brother Yuan Chen and Yunhai Zhen, the top contender of Yunyang Academy.

Only by defeating these two could he compete for the first place.

But the strength of Yunhai Zhen was unimaginable, he hadn't yet shown his full power; Chen Yu wasn't confident of victory against him.

The fourth round ended quickly.

In the fifth round, Chen Yu's opponent once again conceded.

Until the seventh round.

"Duan Xinyue against Yunhai Zhen

The referee announced the combatants.

All of Liuyun Mountain Range was excited.

So soon, a battle between two Guiyuan Realm contenders appeared again!

Previously it was Yuan Chen and Ye Chengfeng, and now it was Duan Xinyue and Yunhai Zhen.

Chapter 362: Becoming Your Whetstone

"Duan Xinyue vs. Yunhai Zhen."

As soon as the opponents were announced, the spectators throughout the Liuyun Mountain Range were energized.

"A battle between the number ones of the big four academies!"

"Yunhai Zhen, being the top of the Celestial Ranking, Duan Xinyue stands little chance, but she should be able to force Yunhai Zhen to show his true skills. I really want to know how strong Yunhai Zhen has become."

For this battle, the vast majority predicted that Duan Xinyue would undoubtedly lose.

But so far, Yunhai Zhen has been defeating opponents with a single move, and no one knows the extent of his real strength.

This battle might let them find out some.

"At last, we don't have to keep going like this."

Yunhai Zhen suddenly stood up and flew onto the dueling platform.

With his hands behind his back, his long hair and golden robe fluttered without wind, his eyebrows emitted an invisible pressure. Just standing there on the dueling platform, he made some onlookers tense up and hold their breath.

Swoosh!

Duan Xinyue also stepped onto the dueling platform.

In the academy's great tournament, the opponent she least wanted to face was Yunhai Zhen, but she had encountered him.

She knew she was no match for Yunhai Zhen, but as the top student of Sky Star Academy, she couldn't just admit defeat.

Standing opposite Yunhai Zhen and catching his gaze, Duan Xinyue suddenly felt a scorching pressure descend, making her exceedingly uncomfortable. She knew this was the combination of Yunhai Zhen's powerful spiritual power and authority.

Near the dueling platform, the other ten contestants all looked towards it, including Chen Yu, who had previously been meditating with closed eyes, now opening them.

If Chen Yu wanted to claim the top spot, he inevitably had to face Yunhai Zhen.

And so far, no one had pushed Yunhai Zhen to reveal his true abilities.

On the dueling platform, Duan Xinyue and Yunhai Zhen faced each other, both hesitating to make the first move, but everyone could feel the tense and restrained atmosphere.

"No flaws!"

Duan Xinyue stared intently at Yunhai Zhen but found no openings or weaknesses.

And facing Yunhai Zhen for a long period was a torment on her psyche as well—the overpowering spiritual pressure left her gasping for breath.

Swoosh!

Finally, Duan Xinyue made the first move, dragging a layer of black starlight with her right fist shining with dark light, closing in on Yunhai Zhen.

As Duan Xinyue approached Yunhai Zhen's right side, Yunhai Zhen suddenly drew his sword.

Boom!

A stunning, searing sword light slashed towards Duan Xinyue close to the dueling platform.

It even left a scorch mark on the solid platform.

Yunhai Zhen was not like Ye Chengfeng—who built up his strength with each sword strike, each one stronger than the last—but Yunhai Zhen's attacks were equally formidable.

Swoosh!

Duan Xinyue shifted her feet slightly and dodged.

However, just then, Yunhai Zhen's second sword attack came, as if he had anticipated Duan Xinyue's movement.

Unable to dodge, Duan Xinyue threw her fists fiercely, releasing a dark stellar light.

Rumble!

The hot red sword light gradually engulfed the dark glow and continued to advance forward.

Swoosh!

Duan Xinyue hurriedly retreated to escape the explosion zone.

Before even landing, Yunhai Zhen swung another sword cut at her, cornering Duan Xinyue.

Outside the dueling platform, the other ten competitors were stunned.

From start to finish, Yunhai Zhen stood in place, motionless, yet he forced Duan Xinyue to react defensively, dodging and weaving.

"Who knew Yunhai Zhen's strength had reached such a level."

Even Tang Mo, the second-ranked of Yunyang Academy, was utterly shocked.

"So strong, almost impeccable in every aspect, not to mention any vulnerabilities."

Chen Yu watched Yunhai Zhen on the platform, who from start to finish hadn't moved an inch, yet seemed to control the entire fight, playing Duan Xinyue like a puppet.

Though Ye Chengfeng was strong, his weakness was clear—the buildup time after each sword strike.

But Yunhai Zhen gave the impression of being impenetrable, controlling the overall situation.

The senior members of the four academies also watched the battle on the platform.

"This battle's outcome is already determined; I just hope New Moon can gain something from this experience."

The vice-chancellor of Sky Star Academy calmly said.

On the dueling platform, Duan Xinyue's forehead was dripping with perspiration.

She realized that from the beginning to end, the initiative was in Yunhai Zhen's hands.

Yunhai Zhen stood in place, immobile, while Duan Xinyue could not get within thirty feet of him, facing his powerful attacks; any slight mishap could lead to her defeat.

She felt like prey caught in a trap, struggling incessantly but futilely, just waiting for the hunter to come and claim her life.

"I must disrupt his rhythm."

Duan Xinyue thought to herself.

"Starfall Chaos!"

Duan Xinyue's True Yuan surged, and around her body, black light shimmered, forming a dense sphere of black light.

Whoosh whoosh—

All the black spheres lit up, rushing into the sky and tracing black arcs before crashing down towards Yunhai Zhen.

Nearly a hundred black spheres attacked Yunhai Zhen from all directions.

After performing this attack, Duan Xinyue did not stop there.

"Dark Sky Star Transformation."

Buzz!

Around her body, a layer of dim dark starlight emerged, forming a vast circular sphere with a diameter of thirty feet, emitting a suppressive and terrifying aura.

"Daylight Flame Slash!"

Yunhai Zhen's expression unchanged, raised his golden dragon-embossed sword, swinging it repeatedly.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

A series of fierce, scorching sword lights formed a circle, spreading out.

Bang bang bang~

As all the black spheres fell, they were extinguished by the sword lights.

Moreover, many of these sword lights shot out, attacking Duan Xinyue.

Boom bang!

In an explosive state, Duan Xinyue, with increased speed and strength, either dodged or struck, breaking Yunhai Zhen's attacks.

"Good, I got closer!"

Duan Xinyue finally closed within thirty feet of Yunhai Zhen, clutching her fists tightly, the True Yuan fluctuations growing stronger.

"Dark Star Fist!"

Duan Xinyue shouted lowly, throwing a punch.

Instantly, the black light around her body vanished, all the power flowing into that one punch.

This punch was almost Duan Xinyue's strongest strike.

A pitch-black sphere of light crushed forward, the surroundings appearing twisted.

"Is this your strongest attack? Then it can end now."

Yunhai Zhen's expression remained largely unchanged.

The space around him suddenly turned crimson, with golden flames emerging.

His sword also burst into dazzling golden light and emitted a suction force, drawing all the surrounding flames towards it.

"Destruction Flame Dragon Slash."

With a sweep of his sword, a beam of golden light and flames burst forth, with the flames rising and vaguely forming the phantom of a fire dragon.

The force of this strike made everyone who had made it to the finals tense up and feel shocked.

Even Ye Chengfeng paused in admiration of Yunhai Zhen's sword.

Swoosh!

The flame sword light rushed out, colliding with the black stars, and in moments, the black stars split in two.

Swoosh—

The flame sword light continued to surge forward, heading straight for Duan Xinyue.

Duan Xinyue's eyes widened, and she immediately circulated her True Yuan, waving her arms to form a dark light shield.

Boom!

The sword light struck, causing Duan Xinyue's arms to tremble, shattering the light shield in front of her as she was blasted off the competition stage.

"Yunhai Zhen wins!"

After the match, Yunhai Zhen was still standing in the same spot, having not moved an inch from start to finish.

"This

Many students were dazed in their spots, their expressions stiff.

Being peers in the Guiyuan Realm, it was incredible how easily Yunhai Zhen defeated Duan Xinyue, and it appeared that he didn't even use his full strength, making him profoundly unfathomable.

They were also called geniuses in their daily lives, but compared to Yunhai Zhen, they were merely fireflies to the bright moon.

"Lv Qiuling against Zhou Yuning!"

The match continued.

It was now the seventh round, and the competition had passed its halfway point.

Many were already speculating about the outcome of the matches.

"There's no doubt Yunhai Zhen is in first place, but Duan Xinyue and Yuan Chen have yet to compete, so it's hard to say who is stronger. As for Ye Chengfeng, who is injured, he no longer possesses peak combat power. The ranking among these three is difficult to predict."

"What about Chen Yu?"

Someone asked.

"If nothing unexpected happens, Chen Yu might even defeat Duan Xinyue and Yuan Chen to take second place in the tournament."

"I'm not so sure. You guys don't know how powerful Ye Chengfeng's sword is. Chen Yu took a heavy hit from Ye Chengfeng's fourth sword strike, he's likely seriously injured and probably not a match for Yuan Chen and Duan Xinyue."

...

Eighth round.

"Yuan Chen versus Chen Yu."

"Finally, it's time for No Demon Academy's Chen Yu and Yuan Chen, and I heard they are both fellow disciples."

"I wonder if the senior brother is more formidable, or if the junior surpasses the senior."

The vice president of No Demon Academy, Yi Lantian, also showed a slight movement in his expression. He had not expected that by allowing Chen Yu to participate in this tournament, he would see his two disciples competing against each other.

"Senior brother, let's fight."

Chen Yu said with a smile.

Ever since he became Yi Lantian's disciple, Yuan Chen had always treated Chen Yu very well.

Although Chen Yu did not want to fight Yuan Chen, it was inevitable in a competition.

"Little brother, don't underestimate your senior brother. If you go easy, I'll unapologetically snatch your ranking!"

Yuan Chen also said with a smile.

Back in the academy, during their twenty-move agreement, Yuan Chen noticed that Chen Yu was holding back some of his strength, and still had hidden reserves.

Now, as the two stood on the arena, it seemed like they were about to resume that unfinished challenge from last time.

"Hmm!"

Chen Yu nodded.

Boom~

Chen Yu suddenly erupted, activating his Secret Pattern Demon Body, and surged forward.

His hand on the Giant Ruler Sword, demonic patterns moving, swung fiercely.

"Bring it on!"

Yuan Chen shouted, releasing a blast of icy palm shadows.

Boom!

After the strike, the two swiftly moved closer, their palm glow and sword light crisscrossing back and forth, the sounds of explosions incessant.

"Little brother, are you aiming for first place?"

Yuan Chen asked during the exchange.

"Yes!"

Chen Yu hesitated for a moment before answering.

He naturally wanted to take first place, but he wasn't very confident in facing Yunhai Zhen.

Although they were talking directly, the storm of battle was too fierce, making it difficult to catch their figures; naturally, no one overheard their conversation.

"If that's the case, big brother will lend you a hand."

Yuan Chen took a deep breath, then said with a smile.

Chen Yu's expression was startled.

"You've reached a bottleneck, haven't you? Let me be your whetstone and help you break through."

Yuan Chen communicated telepathically.

"What?"

Chen Yu was shocked by Yuan Chen's sudden remark.

But a moment later, his expression steadied, revealing a determined look.

"Okay."

Chen Yu nodded.

He understood his senior brother's character and personhood well. Yuan Chen had lost to Ye Chengfeng, and no matter how well he performed now, he could only secure second place.

But Chen Yu hadn't lost a single match yet, which meant that among the twelve finalists, aside from Chen Yu, no other contestant stood a chance against Yunhai Zhen!

If Chen Yu succeeded, it would not only be his honor but also an accolade for the No Demon Academy. As Chen Yu's senior brother, Yuan Chen would be happy too.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Chen Yu abandoned using any other techniques and relied solely on the force of his Secret Pattern Demon Body and the power of Demonic Qi, attacking fiercely.

On the competition stage, tremendous Demonic Qi and cold frost surged and intertwined.

Chen Yu's eyes glinted brightly. He continually swung the Giant Ruler Sword, increasing the ferocity of his attacks, his fighting spirit continuously rising.

His spirit soared, and True Qi wildly circulated within his body, gradually extracting his internal potential.

Their fierce battle continued for a long time, surprising the spectators nearby, who thought Chen Yu and Yuan Chen must have some deep-seated enmity.

"Yuan Chen and Chen Yu are doing what? Oh, I see."

From a distant peak, Yi Lantian's eyes flickered with confusion before a relieved smile appeared.

Chapter 363: Unmatched

On the sparring platform, the battle between Chen Yu and Yuan Chen was unusually fierce and ferocious.

Both sides kept on attacking relentlessly, growing increasingly vicious, as if they had deep-seated grudges against each other.

"It seems that even among brothers, when faced with the issues of benefits and honor, they will brutally fight each other with no mercy,"

"I just don't know which of these two brothers will have the heart to crush the other in the end."

Many spectators looked on as if they were watching an exciting drama.

However, those with profound strength, including the finalists, had all noticed something peculiar.

Although Chen Yu and Yuan Chen fought intensely, neither had used any of their ultimate moves or trump cards.

There were several instances where the opponent exposed a tiny flaw that, if exploited with an ultimate move, could have instantly given the attacker an advantage.

But such opportunities never materialized, which undoubtedly proved that neither wanted to defeat the other; they must have had some other purpose.

On the sparring platform, Chen Yu fought more and more bravely, battle intent surging, as if his energy, vital signs, and blood were burning up, erupting continuously.

Chen Yu's cultivation had already reached its limit, but a breakthrough was not so easy to achieve; it needed a catalyst.

At this moment, Yuan Chen willingly became Chen Yu's whetstone, honing him and lending him a helping hand.

Moreover, in their head-on clash, Chen Yu's Secret Pattern Demon Body was enduring continuous trials and improving steadily.

Thump! Thump! Chen Yu's heart beat rapidly, a vigorous vitality bursting forth, flowing through his entire body and converging in his Demon Body, with some also reaching the True Qi mass in his Qi Sea.

At this moment, Chen Yu's momentum greatly increased, his True Qi became more refined, akin to a volcano ready to erupt at any moment, exerting a sense of pressure on Yuan Chen.

"Yuan Chen is helping Chen Yu break through!" Ye Chengfeng's eyes shone brightly for a moment.

"I didn't expect they had such a plan."

At this point, almost all the other ten finalists had figured it out.

They couldn't help but admire Yuan Chen for making such a choice, willingly becoming the whetstone for Chen Yu.

"Hehe, it seems their real target as brothers is me." Yunhai Zhen's calm face revealed a relaxed smile.

Suddenly, on the sparring platform, Chen Yu's True Qi, presence, and pressure suddenly intensified.

Within the Qi Sea, the True Qi mass expanded a notch, and the demonic patterns' energy became more condensed.

"Success!" Chen Yu's face lit up with joy.

Now, he had finally reached the Peak of Middle Innate.

"Do we need to continue?" Yuan Chen asked with a smile.

"Let's go on, with the improvement of my cultivation, there's also the possibility of enhancing my Cultivation Technique," Chen Yu replied truthfully.

Reaching the Peak of Middle Innate, Chen Yu's demonic pattern energy made further progress, which meant the "Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record" might also be enhanced.

Furthermore, this technique combined the paths of the demonic way and Body Cultivation, and Chen Yu's talent in Body Refinement was unparalleled.

"Good." Yuan Chen agreed, and the two continued their sparring.

By now, unless someone was foolish, basically everyone understood what Chen Yu and Yuan Chen were doing.

"Is this... what they think the Academy Competition is for? Sparring and helping each other?"

"Such a battle is indeed too boring."

Originally, everyone thought this was a deadly fight between brothers, but it turned out to be a friendly exchange.

The battle had gone on for quite a while, and the two only fought fiercely without showing any intention to seriously harm each other.

For the spectators, this type of combat was indeed boring.

However, the Academy Competition had no explicit rule against this.

Until the fight approached half an hour.

"Chen Yu, Yuan Chen, if you do not determine a winner soon, the match will end in a tie," the referee announced impatiently.

The competition had a rule to prevent drawn-out battles: if a sparring match reached half an hour, a winner would be decided depending on the situation.

"I concede," Yuan Chen said.

After Chen Yu's breakthrough, even if the two truly competed to determine the winner, Yuan Chen was sure to lose.

"Chen Yu wins." The referee symbolically declared victory.

After stepping down from the platform, Chen Yu immediately consumed some precious healing and cultivation materials and began to meditate with closed eyes.

Firstly, he needed to consolidate his new level at the Innate Peak.

Secondly, with the improvement in cultivation and continuous strengthening of his physique, his “Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record” had the potential to progress further.

“Vice Dean Yi, it seems your new disciple intends to compete for first place,” said an old man with white eyebrows from the Sky Sword Academy with a smile.

From Chen Yu and Yuan Chen’s previous exchange and Chen Yu’s current cultivation, he naturally inferred this point.

Yi Lantian remained silent; even he had not anticipated this turn of events.

“Haha, although Chen Yu is a monstrous talent, he is still inferior to Yunhai Zhen, who is the strongest genius of this era and unbeatable,” laughed the Vice Dean of Yunyang Academy.

He noticed Chen Yu’s intention but didn’t mind.

The competition continued.

The ninth round, another major battle in the Guiyuan Realm, began.

“Ye Chengfeng versus Yunhai Zhen!”

“Finally, it’s their turn, both the number ones of their academies, both swordsmen, one ranked first and the other second in the rankings!”

Before the Academy Competition, this was the fight everyone was most looking forward to.

On the sparring platform, the two held their treasured swords, locking eyes.

Two invisible sword lights flashed through the void.

Ping! A radiant white and incredibly sharp sword light collided with another overpowering and scorching sword glow, causing a thunderous explosion in the void.

In the next moment, Ye Chengfeng took the lead in attacking, unleashing a striking sword glow that penetrated everything, then descending to strike at Yunhai Zhen.

Clang! Yunhai Zhen raised his golden flaming sword, releasing boundless heat energy to block Ye Chengfeng's sword strike.

Boom!

He swung his arm, and a burst of golden flame erupted, shattering Ye Chengfeng's sword move, and at the same time, he unleashed a sword strike.

After Ye Chengfeng struck with his sword, he immediately employed his movement technique to weave and dodge about, avoiding Yunhai Zhen's sword.

But following close behind, Yunhai Zhen's second and third sword strikes came chopping down.

Unlike Ye Chengfeng, Yunhai Zhen's sword was incredibly fast, giving his opponent no chance to catch a breath.

At a certain moment, Yunhai Zhen took the initiative and charged forward, pressing in on Ye Chengfeng.

Ding-dang!

Yunhai Zhen's speed was also exceedingly fast; the two collided in an instant, a sharp clashing sound of swords rang out, accompanied by the astonishing fluctuations of True Yuan scattering in all directions.

Ye Chengfeng let out a muffled groan as he staggered backward, fresh blood spilling from the corner of his mouth.

"Alas, Chengfeng's previous injuries have not fully recovered."

The white-browed elder from Sky Sword Academy sighed.

"Ye Chengfeng, you are not in peak condition, you are no match for me."

From that last clash, Yunhai Zhen could tell Ye Chengfeng's condition.

It was only a peak condition Ye Chengfeng that Yunhai Zhen would truly regard as an opponent.

Ye Chengfeng in this state was somewhat disappointing to Yunhai Zhen.

"Second sword!"

As Ye Chengfeng was forced back by Yunhai Zhen, the second sword struck, its power stronger than before.

"Destruction Flame Dragon Slash."

Yunhai Zhen's pupils contracted, and with a sweep of his sword, a dazzling golden flame sword light shot out, the flames upon it rising and vaguely forming the phantom of a flame dragon.

Boom!

Yunhai Zhen took the offensive, his sword shot out, directly crushing Ye Chengfeng's second sword and attacking Ye Chengfeng.

Such a fierce and domineering approach had the crowd below taking a sharp breath.

Facing Ye Chengfeng, they would think about how to block his sword, but Yunhai Zhen chose to shatter Ye Chengfeng's sword!

Boom!

Ye Chengfeng was injured once again by the residual effects of Yunhai Zhen's sword, retreating a distance, his complexion somewhat pale.

"Ye Chengfeng, you were the opponent I had my eye on; I shall use some of my techniques to defeat you."

Yunhai Zhen stared at Ye Chengfeng, a hint of seriousness in his eyes.

Weng-boom!

Suddenly, the aura on his body surged, and within a dozen or so feet, a layer of golden flame appeared, exerting a tremendous pressure.

Gradually, Yunhai Zhen's skin became coated in a layer of gold and a hint of flame patterns emerged.

Boom!

The surrounding flames roared, turning into a sea of fire.

In the heart of the sea of fire, Yunhai Zhen, resplendent in golden light, burning with golden flames, resembled a dazzling golden sun.

At this moment, the other ten finalists all felt a sense of fear and submission toward Yunhai Zhen.

"Yunhai Zhen has unleashed his Bloodline Power!"

"Such rich bloodline, truly worthy of a royal talent!"

A buzz arose from the crowd.

On the other side, Ye Chengfeng's brow furrowed, feeling unprecedented pressure; the power he had been accumulating for his sword strike was yet to be unleashed.

"Ye Chengfeng, let's end this!"

Yunhai Zhen extended a hand, and instantly, the golden flames around him spread out, turning into fire dragons that coiled toward Ye Chengfeng.

At the same time, the treasured sword in his other hand swung out, a golden dragon-patterned sword light fiercely surged forward with an indomitable momentum.

"Slash!"

Ye Chengfeng's eyes showed determination as he released the power he had been gathering for a long time in one strike.

A crystal-white sword light, trailed by a layer of white sword shadows and dozens of feet in length, came crashing down thunderously.

Rumble!

On the dueling platform, flames boiled, explosions sounded in succession, deafening.

A white figure was seen being thrown from the storm of flames, landing outside the platform.

"Defeated!"

Ye Chengfeng said weakly.

In that last exchange, had he not retreated in time, his life could have been threatened.

"Yunhai Zhen wins."

"He's too strong. Once the bloodline is unleashed, one sword sent Ye Chengfeng flying."

"Truly the most outstanding talent of this generation."

An uproar ensued.

The final clash between the two made some of the Guiyuan Realm spectators slightly move, lamenting their inferiority.

"Yunhai Zhen wins!"

The competition continued.

At this moment, Yunhai Zhen undoubtedly stood at the pinnacle above everyone else, with the other three Guiyuan Realm geniuses being suppressed, dimmed in his presence.

In this round, Chen Yu encountered Duan Xinyue, but Chen Yu's cultivation had broken through, and he was stronger than before.

After more than a hundred moves in a direct confrontation, Duan Xinyue was defeated by Chen Yu.

Tenth round.

"Yunhai Zhen battles Yuan Chen!"

Having reached the tenth round, with just two more rounds to go, the academy's grand tournament was nearing its end.

On the dueling platform.

Yuan Chen and Yunhai Zhen had already crossed swords, the left side of the platform filled with icy chill, while the right was engulfed in golden light.

As the two fought, the golden light steadily advanced forward.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

Yunhai Zhen sent continuous sword lights crashing down rapidly, and although Yuan Chen defended with all his might, he still fell short.

At a certain moment, the golden light made a decisive push, evaporating all the fog on the platform.

Bang!

Yuan Chen was sent flying by Yunhai Zhen's sword, a charred sword mark across his chest, he crashed outside the platform, spewing a mouthful of fresh blood.

Throughout the process, Yunhai Zhen appeared nonchalant, his sword striking after sword striking down Yuan Chen.

"Beyond anyone's reach; the other three Guiyuan Realm talents are all beneath Yunhai Zhen's feet!"

"Yunhai Zhen, undoubtedly number one!"

At this point.

Below the stage, Chen Yu's body shimmered with black demonic light, his surface covered in ancient patterned demonic energy rising up.

At this moment, Chen Yu, like an ancient demon awakening, his eyes emitting a terrifying demonic light, instilled fear in the hearts of the spectators, involuntarily causing them to recoil in dread.

Chapter 364: Chen Yu VS Yunhai Zhen

Just now, Chen Yu's "Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record" had achieved minor completion of the third layer, boosting both his True Qi and Secret Pattern Demon Body substantially.

However, the moment he opened his eyes, he saw Senior Brother Yuan Chen defeated by Yunhai Zhen, falling outside of the sparring platform, spitting out a mouthful of blood.

"Senior Brother."

Chen Yu immediately went over.

"I'm fine!"

Yuan Chen waved his hand.

He was naturally skilled in defense, so his injuries were not serious.

"Chen Yu, you are cultivating one of the top ten unique ancient skills, 'Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record,' right? Just now, your cultivation technique seemed to have improved. I hope that in the upcoming match, you can provide me with some enjoyment."

Yunhai Zhen's eyes looked towards Chen Yu, his lips curling into a hint of a smile.

He had been slightly disappointed with his battle against Ye Chengfeng, as Ye Chengfeng was not in top form.

But Chen Yu had defeated Ye Chengfeng before, and even allowed Yuan Chen to willingly serve as his whetstone to assist in his breakthrough.

At this moment, Chen Yu had already surpassed Duan Xinyue, Yuan Chen, and Ye Chengfeng, so he could indeed provide some entertainment for Yunhai Zhen.

At this time, it was not strange for Yunhai Zhen to say such words, as everyone could see.

Chen Yu had defeated opponents like Ye Chengfeng and Duan Xinyue relying on his own strength and had improved with the help of Senior Brother Yuan Chen.

Now, Chen Yu possessed the strength to challenge Yunhai Zhen!

"I never would have thought that Chen Yu, a student participating in the academy tournament for the first time, could reach such heights."

"So far, the only ones who have not been defeated are Chen Yu and Yunhai Zhen. Unexpectedly, it's Chen Yu who will be contesting with Yunhai Zhen for the top spot."

At this moment, many people felt a sense of unreality.

Previously, in their eyes, Chen Yu was just an ordinary student, but as the tournament commenced, Chen Yu rose like a dark horse, advancing irresistibly, and eventually reached the point where he could challenge Yunhai Zhen.

"However, it's impossible for Chen Yu to defeat Yunhai Zhen."

Everyone who had witnessed Chen Yu's rise was convinced that Chen Yu's ascent would end upon facing Yunhai Zhen.

The tournament continued.

After the improvement of his cultivation technique, Chen Yu then set his sights on the "Blood Crystal Flame."

He had already refined more than thirty percent of this flame previously and now, with the surge in his spiritual power, he should be able to refine even more.

It was said that Yunhai Zhen also possessed a True Fire Spirit Flame, but so far, no one had forced him to use it.

Therefore, to defeat Yunhai Zhen, the power of the "Blood Crystal Flame" was essential.

With the help of the Flame Spirit, coupled with Chen Yu's powerful spiritual power, the refinement of the spirit flame progressed very smoothly.

Beside his Qi Sea, the blood-colored flame grew larger and larger...

Time passed, and at a certain moment—

"Chen Yu versus Luo Haotian."

The referee announced the next match.

"Chen Yu!"

Luo Haotian's gaze trembled, a wave of fear rising in his heart.

Before the tournament, he was brimming with confidence; if he faced Chen Yu, he would certainly crush him.

However, during the tournament, he could only watch helplessly as Chen Yu rose in power and surpassed him, becoming an existence that could rival Guiyuan Realm prodigies.

The disparity between then and now was a huge blow to him.

Luo Haotian knew there was no chance of winning against Chen Yu.

But how could he readily admit defeat in the face of Chen Yu?

Luo Haotian resolutely stepped onto the sparring platform.

"Senior Brother Luo, I trust you have been well."

Chen Yu grinned.

He was aware that during the clash of the freshmen and his adventure in the Red Earth Secret Realm, Luo Haotian had interfered, intending to harm Chen Yu.

But now, Luo Haotian could no longer affect Chen Yu in any way.

Luo Haotian's expression was somber, and without responding, he mobilized his True Qi, preparing his defenses.

After all, it was futile for him to attack since it wouldn't harm Chen Yu in the slightest.

Choosing to defend might allow him to withstand a few moves from Chen Yu, so as not to lose too much face.

Boom~

A tyrannical demonic might suddenly erupted from within Chen Yu's body.

In his eyes, a black light surged, as if two beams of demonic light from the Nine Nether Hell burst forth, charging towards Luo Haotian.

Bang!

Suddenly, Luo Haotian felt an overwhelming demonic spiritual pressure; it was as though he was in a demonic abyss, with two gigantic demonic eyes from the void staring fixedly at him, exuding a terrifying demonic intent.

Those demonic eyes, as if belonging to a horrendous demonic being, could easily exterminate him.

Swoosh!

On the other side, seeing Luo Haotian stunned by his spiritual power and demonic intent, Chen Yu immediately charged forward.

When Chen Yu reached Luo Haotian, he suddenly came to his senses, with a look of panic on his face.

He quickly activated his bloodline power, stretching out his hands in an attempt to block Chen Yu's attack.

But his reaction was ultimately too late.

Thump!

Chen Yu fiercely swept out a kick, the potent force and demonic pattern energy shattering Luo Haotian's True Qi.

That kick landed on Luo Haotian's chest, the immense force sending his body flying backward and crashing down outside the sparring platform.

One kick resolved the dispute with Luo Haotian.

The fight over, Chen Yu gave Luo Haotian one glance before stepping down from the platform.

On the ground, Luo Haotian lay dusty and dazed, his eyes filled with lost defiance.

He couldn't believe that the once insignificant ant had now defeated him with a single kick, such humiliation!

"Did Luo Haotian throw the match?"

"Even if Chen Yu possesses strength comparable to Guiyuan Realm geniuses, just casually kicking and defeating Luo Haotian seems a bit too weak."

The crowd discussed this briefly, not paying much attention to Luo Haotian.

Now, everyone was looking forward to Chen Yu's showdown with Yunhai Zhen.

After all, the other three great Guiyuan Realm prodigies had been trampled under Yunhai Zhen's feet.

Even though no one favored Chen Yu, they were eager to see how long he could last against Yunhai Zhen.

After the match, Chen Yu returned to his seat and continued to quietly refine the "Blood Crystal Flame."

Time went on, and after the tenth round, the tournament welcomed the eleventh.

The audience's expectations were not betrayed, as the first battle of the eleventh round was Yunhai Zhen versus Chen Yu.

"Good, we've finally arrived at this battle."

"After this fight, Yunhai Zhen will truly deserve to be number one!"

"Alas, Chen Yu is also a prodigy, it's just too bad he's too young and has encountered Yunhai Zhen. Although he will miss winning the tournament this time, he can wait for the next one."

Countless people around were sighing and discussing.

"Junior brother, go for it."

Yuan Chen said with a smile.

Although he didn't hold much expectation, Chen Yu's performance had already been good enough. It didn't matter whether he won or lost.

"Okay."

Chen Yu nodded.

Senior brother Yuan Chen was willing to be Chen Yu's sharpening stone to enhance Chen Yu's strength.

In this battle, Chen Yu would go all out.

"Chen Yu, come, let me witness your 'Ancient and Modern's Number One Defense Technique'!"

Yunhai Zhen was already standing on the stage, speaking in a calm and collected manner.

"Even if Chen Yu has cultivated the 'Ancient and Modern's Number One Defense Technique', he will still be bruised from every direction under Yunhai Zhen's offensive."

Ye Chengfeng said impassively.

Swoosh!

Chen Yu leapt up and landed on the stage.

When he saw Yunhai Zhen's eyes, Chen Yu immediately felt a powerful and domineering oppression sweeping over him like a golden ocean of fire, threatening to completely bury him.

Boom!

Inside Chen Yu's soul, a boundlessly domineering demonic intent burst forth, instantly dispelling the golden light and fierce fire around him.

In the void, it was as if an ancient ferocious demon and a golden light giant dragon stood in opposition, their formidable spiritual powers colliding and stoking gusts of wind.

"Not bad, your resolve can actually stand shoulder to shoulder with mine!"

A smile crept onto Yunhai Zhen's face. Although the battle with Ye Chengfeng left him somewhat disappointed, this battle might bring him a lot of fun.

Whoosh!

No sooner had he finished speaking, Yunhai Zhen casually swung the golden dragon-patterned sword in his hand, and a golden flame sword Qi slashed towards Chen Yu.

Immediately, Chen Yu stimulated his 'Secret Pattern Demon Body' and drew the 'Giant Ruler Sword'.

He mobilized the demonic pattern Qi and struck with all his might.

Boom bang!

Yunhai Zhen's sword light instantaneously engulfed Chen Yu's attack, booming towards and exploding on Chen Yu.

"Ah, the gap is so big."

A spectator sighed.

However, out of the exploding golden flame light suddenly rushed a pitch-black shadow, heading straight for Yunhai Zhen.

"He didn't get hurt at all?"

Yunhai Zhen's eyes narrowed slightly.

"Again!"

He swung his golden sword, and myriad beams of golden fire Qi sword light shot out, all bombarding Chen Yu.

Yunhai Zhen's attack was incredibly fast, and each strike was overwhelmingly powerful and impeccably precise.

It was precisely because of this that he stood unmoved in his spot, controlling the situation, toying with his enemy to death.

"Slash!"

Chen Yu shouted, his heart building up power, demonic pattern Qi spreading over his body.

After breaking through to the third layer of the 'Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record', Chen Yu's defensive power had increased even further; even now, facing the fourth sword from Ye Chengfeng, Chen Yu could block it safely.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The 'Giant Ruler Sword' swung, meeting each golden flame light slash.

Although Chen Yu's attack was not comparable to Yunhai Zhen's and couldn't destroy his attack,

The sword Qi weakened by the 'Giant Ruler Sword', falling upon Chen Yu's 'Secret Pattern Demon Body', instantly dissipated, unable to inflict any real damage.

"Truly the 'Ancient and Modern's Number One Defense Technique'."

A bright light flashed in Yunhai Zhen's eyes.

Hum!

True Yuan surged within him, and the space all around showed layers of golden fire Qi.

"Destruction Flame Dragon Slash."

Yunhai Zhen's gaze sharpened, a blinding golden light of fiery sword Qi shot out, with flames rising around it, faintly forming the phantom of a golden fire dragon.

Facing Chen Yu, he used his killer move straight away.

But at the same time, Chen Yu also stimulated the demonic pattern on his right arm, fiercely unleashing a "Demonic Annihilation Claw."

This time, Chen Yu still chose to exchange injury for injury.

After executing this strike, he immediately stimulated the second demonic pattern.

A layer of demonic scale light Qi surged out, rapidly constructing a demonic scale shield over his body.

"An exchange of wounds? You're underestimating me."

Yunhai Zhen chuckled.

After slashing with his sword, his other hand suddenly shot out, striking a golden Fiery Flame Light Fist, meeting Chen Yu's Demonic Annihilation Claw.

However, on the other side, Chen Yu also made a shocking decision.

Swoosh!

Chen Yu took out the black broken wing, his speed instantly doubled, and under full defense, he went head-on into Yunhai Zhen's attack.

To outsiders, this looked completely suicidal.

It was known that Duan Xinyue was defeated by Yunhai Zhen's move; yet now, Chen Yu went headlong into it.

Although they knew Chen Yu was also exchanging wounds, what if he was killed instantly? How could he exchange then?

"Dragon Scale Bloodline!"

Chen Yu burst forth with an ancient bloodline power, a translucent blood-colored scale pattern appearing on his arms.

Boom bang!

The golden flame light exploded, forming a fiery storm that swept in all directions.

Swoosh!

Suddenly, a figure rushed out from within the flames, which was none other than Chen Yu.

At this moment, he bore a charred mark on his chest—undeniably Yunhai Zhen's sword had been tremendously powerful.

"Demonic Annihilation Claw."

Chen Yu's arm, covered with demonic pattern Qi and translucent blood-colored scales, fiercely swung out a claw. On an ancient and primitive demonic hand, a layer of eerie blood-colored scale pattern appeared, howling forth.

And this time, Chen Yu used the power of Half-step True Essence.

It was a force that Chen Yu had not yet used.

Once Half-step True Essence was utilized, Chen Yu's attack potency would increase by several degrees.

The moment that demonic claw flew out, Yunhai Zhen's gaze hardened, becoming serious and focused; he quickly swung out his sword.

Boom bang!

The strong and bizarre demonic claw tore the golden flame sword Qi apart, roaring towards Yunhai Zhen.

Chapter 365: Shocking Confrontation

Countless spectators watched in shock as Chen Yu, like a moth to a flame, charged toward the dazzling firelight of Yunhai Zhen.

"This kid is insane, completely fearless of death."

"I think he's courting death. With Yunhai Zhen's strength, a full-force explosion could kill Chen Yu in an instant."

However, the next moment, the change on the martial arts platform stunned them all.

Boom!

Chen Yu suddenly unleashed a claw strike that smashed the hurriedly swept out sword light of flames from Yunhai Zhen.

"What a strong attack."

Yunhai Zhen inwardly exclaimed in surprise.

Chen Yu's attacks had always been far weaker than Yunhai Zhen's. Previously, he had relied on his formidable physique for defense to hold on against him.

Moreover, knowing that Chen Yu was cultivating the number one defensive Cultivation Technique, "Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record," Yunhai Zhen had not taken Chen Yu's attacks seriously.

But now, the attack that Chen Yu suddenly unleashed was shockingly powerful.

In that attack, Yunhai Zhen even felt a surge of powerful Half-step True Essence.

Innate Middle Stage with Half-step True Essence? How is that possible? It's unheard of.

Therefore, Yunhai Zhen was caught off guard.

Tinging and sizzling!

Yunhai Zhen positioned his golden-dragon-patterned long sword in front of his chest, erupting True Yuan from within his body to withstand Chen Yu's claw strike.

His figure continuously slid backward, and his arms also felt an overwhelming force.

Chen Yu's Half-step True Essence was condensed on top of the demonic Qi, almost comparable to the True Yuan of the Guiyuan Realm.

At the same time, the amplification from the dragon scale bloodline greatly increased Chen Yu's strength, making his attacks extremely potent.

Boom!

A blast of demonic Qi and golden flames exploded.

After everything had dissipated, Yunhai Zhen stood unaffected, yet the clothes on his left shoulder were shredded, and the golden inner armor beneath bore several slash marks.

Chen Yu's attack had penetrated the inner armor and injured Yunhai Zhen.

"Injured?"

Yunhai Zhen's gaze slightly faltered for a moment, not expecting that a moment of negligence would result in an injury.

This was the first time he had been injured in the ongoing martial arts competition.

With no time to ponder further, Chen Yu charged again, like a peerless demonic beast, his intent filled with chilling ferocity.

At the same time, the surrounding cultivators completely boiled over in excitement.

"Chen Yu actually repelled Yunhai Zhen and even wounded him; this is too unbelievable."

"It seems that with the help of his senior brother Yuan Chen, Chen Yu's strength has increased a lot!"

The other ten people outside the martial arts platform were even more astonished.

They had fought with Yunhai Zhen and knew the terror of his abilities. Yunhai Zhen, when standing on the martial arts platform, seemed to control the entire battlefield, toying with his opponents at will.

However, in the fight against Chen Yu, not only did Yunhai Zhen seem to lose this control, but he was also injured by Chen Yu.

"Yunhai Zhen's control is indeed very strong, but our junior brother's way of fighting, simple and rough, is completely unaffected by Yunhai Zhen, no matter what Yunhai Zhen does. Our junior brother confronts him head-on, attacking fearlessly regardless of life or death."

Yuan Chen analyzed.

Boom!

On the martial arts platform, Chen Yu and Yunhai Zhen clashed once again.

This time, the two of them appeared evenly matched.

Bang, bang, bang!

Chen Yu closed in on Yunhai Zhen, swinging the Giant Ruler Sword fiercely, and with his other hand, he threw out wild punches in a reckless onslaught.

This manner of attack was as simple as it could be and even looked somewhat foolish.

The opponent merely needed to temporarily avoid or dodge, and once Chen Yu exhausted his stamina, victory would be theirs.

But Chen Yu's method was effective against Yunhai Zhen.

As the top cultivator of Yunyang Academy, how could Yunhai Zhen retreat and dodge against a mere Innate Middle Stage student?

Cling, cling, bang!

Yunhai Zhen swung his sword repeatedly. His attacks were fast, but Chen Yu was faster and more ferocious.

Chen Yu seemed to have gone mad, utterly disregarding defense, attacking wholeheartedly.

But how could Yunhai Zhen's defense compare with Chen Yu's, which needed to be maintained?

Gradually, Yunhai Zhen was suppressed by Chen Yu.

This scene left the nearby spectators dumbfounded.

"Alas, Hai Zhen is too stubborn; if he would just step back and wait for Chen Yu's energy to deplete

Yunyang Academy's deputy dean said with emotion.

However, he was not the least bit worried.

Boom!

On the martial arts platform, a powerful Bloodline Power radiated from Yunhai Zhen, his momentum suddenly increasing, emanating a heart-palpitating aura.

Gradually, Yunhai Zhen's skin took on a golden hue, with traces of flame patterns emerging.

Centered around him, a golden sea of flames appeared.

Yunhai Zhen, standing in the center of the inferno, shone brilliantly with golden light, burning with golden flames, looking like a dazzling golden sun.

"Eh? How is it that this kid's Bloodline Power is not suppressed in my presence?"

After igniting his Bloodline Power, Yunhai Zhen discovered an astonishing fact.

His bloodline concentration was extremely high; among his peers in the top ten Ancient Clans, their bloodlines were almost always suppressed by his presence, yet Chen Yu's bloodline within seemed mostly unaffected.

But that did not matter. With the Bloodline Power ignited, Yunhai Zhen's attack power would scale a level higher, something Chen Yu could not defend against.

Yet at the moment Yunhai Zhen attacked, the Bloodline Power in Chen Yu opposite him grew stronger and stronger.

Roar!

Suddenly, a faint sound of a dragon's chant came from Chen Yu, carrying a hint of Ancient dragon's majesty.

The blood-colored scale patterns on his body became more and more real, as if turning into actual scales.

At this moment, Yunhai Zhen's "Fiery Sun Bloodline" was actually suppressed somewhat.

Thump, thump! Thump, thump, thump!

Seizing this opportunity, Chen Yu's heart burst forth, doubling his speed and strength.

Bang, bang, bang!

He wielded the sword in his left hand, continuously slashing, and his right hand, covered in Secret Patterns, unleashed the "Demon Extinguishing Claw."

On the other hand, Yunhai Zhen did not show weakness, striking back.

However, Chen Yu endured the opponent's attacks with the defense of the Secret Pattern Demon Body and dragon scale Bloodline, attacking recklessly without concern.

His body continuously bore burn marks, which healed rapidly.

In contrast, Yunhai Zhen was once again pressured by Chen Yu. His golden robe kept shattering, and cracks appeared on the golden inner armor.

At a certain moment, Chen Yu's attack speed slowed down, and he opened his mouth to take a fierce inhalation.

Roar!

A thunderous roar burst forth, charging toward the front.

Although Yunhai Zhen managed to leave several marks on Chen Yu's body, he himself was affected by Chen Yu's "Copper Lion Roar", his head buzzing, a tremendous pain spreading from his organs.

Boom!

Chen Yu swiped a claw, repelling Yunhai Zhen several zhang away, shredding his clothing at the chest to reveal the golden armor underneath.

But the immense force of Chen Yu's strike penetrated the armor, affecting Yunhai Zhen's body, causing a trickle of fresh blood to seep from the corner of his mouth.

Previously, Yunhai Zhen was merely grazed by Chen Yu, but this time, he was genuinely wounded by him.

At this moment, the entire area near the dueling stage fell silent, all eyes were glued to the stage, nearly bulging out of their sockets.

"Golden Light Sun Shattering Slash."

Yunhai Zhen's expression turned fierce; golden flames boiled around him, a terrifying force emanating from the dragon-patterned sword.

Boom!

The golden sword in his hand blazed fiercely, sweeping out a sword arc, a striking golden rainbow piercing through, its radiance making everything else appear dim and colorless.

"Demonic Scale Armor."

Chen Yu immediately used the battle skill of the second demonic pattern and, this time, he activated some Half-step True Essence.

A layer of dark red demonic scales shimmered around Chen Yu.

Having deployed his defensive battle skill, Chen Yu still advanced towards Yunhai Zhen, ready to exchange wounds for wounds.

Boom Bang!

On the dueling stage, the sword light fell, and golden flames surged.

Simultaneously, a ball of pitch-black Demonic Qi exploded around Yunhai Zhen's position.

"Damn it!"

Yunhai Zhen couldn't help but curse.

This Chen Yu was simply mad. Without a hint of fear for himself, no matter how he attacked, Chen Yu seemed to have no regard for life or death, only wanting to injure him.

Swish!

Among the sea of fire, Chen Yu charged out again, his body covered in numerous wounds, but he didn't seem to care at all.

"Chen Yu, you are much stronger than Ye Chengfeng. To push me this far, I have decided to let you fall to my most powerful technique."

Yunhai Zhen's inner irritation gradually subsided, as if this battle was about to conclude.

Swoosh!

He raised his palm, and on it, suddenly appeared an eye-piercing golden flame, exuding a terrifying, bone-chilling pressure.

"Fierce Sun True Fire!"

"The Yun Family excels at refining True Fire Spirit Flame, and reportedly, Yunhai Zhen's 'Fierce Sun True Fire' has even swallowed and merged with another True Fire, possessing extraordinary power!"

"Such True Fire ranks in the top ten throughout Yun Zhao Country; this battle is already over."

The spectators couldn't help but exclaim.

For Chen Yu to drive Yunhai Zhen to this extent was already incredibly impressive, but ultimately, Chen Yu was doomed to fall before Yunhai Zhen.

Yuan Chen also shook his head slightly; the power generated by Yunhai Zhen's Bloodline Power combined with the powerful "Fierce Sun True Fire" could not be withstood head-on even by strong Guiyuan Realm cultivators.

However, when everyone's gaze returned to Chen Yu, they were taken aback once again, their eyeballs widening.

Facing Yunhai Zhen who had brought forth "Fierce Sun True Fire," Chen Yu still maintained his fearless demeanor.

Swish!

Chen Yu quickly closed in on Yunhai Zhen, his presence surging, his demonic intent austere.

"Since you seek death, then let me show you my ultimate strength!"

Yunhai Zhen's face turned slightly angry.

He was extremely annoyed that Chen Yu was unfazed, even after unleashing such a technique.

Boom!

Yunhai Zhen slapped his hand onto the sword, and instantly, the Fierce Sun True Flame melded into the blade, setting the entire golden sword ablaze.

Upon seeing this sword, several seasoned Early Guiyuan Realm cultivators nearby trembled.

But at that time, Chen Yu's hand also manifested a flame, blood-red and eerily translucent.

"Is this... True Fire Spirit Flame!"

"Heavens, Chen Yu also possesses a True Fire Spirit Flame! What kind is that?"

"That is one of the Blood Dao Sacred Flames, the Innate Spiritual Flame, 'Blood Crystal Flame'!"

When this flame appeared, it caused a commotion that far surpassed Yunhai Zhen's "Fierce Sun True Fire."

"How is this possible... I am supposed to be the strongest!"

Yunhai Zhen's expression froze for a moment, then he suddenly bellowed and swung his sword.

Boom!

A flash of golden light, and a golden dragon-patterned pillar, carrying a dazzling golden blaze, struck out, reducing everything in its path to dust.

"Demonic Extinction Claw!"

The demonic pattern on Chen Yu's right arm surged, and Half-step True Essence gushed forth.

Thud, thud! Thud, thud, thud!

His heart erupted at full force, Chen Yu slashed out with his claw, creating an ancient and sinister blood-red scaled claw.

At the same time, the Blood Crystal Flame merged into the dark red claw.

Whoosh!

This Demonic Extinction Claw, now wrapped in a blood-red flame, burst forth with an incredibly fierce and domineering presence, intent on ripping everything apart.

Boom Bang!

Both attacked almost simultaneously, and a destructive storm rose into the sky—the golden and dark red flames wildly intertwined.

The power generated by this clash could easily annihilate a regular Innate Peak cultivator.

Roar!

The dark red flames rolled like they had a life of their own, and in moments, they engulfed and dispersed the golden flames.

Under Chen Yu and the Flame Spirit's control, the power of the "Blood Crystal Flame" reached its limit, and with its inherently higher quality than Yunhai Zhen's "Fierce Sun True Fire", Chen Yu had the upper hand in this strike.

Bang!

A dim demonic clawed hand, with five fingers ringed with blood flames, broke through everything and charged at Yunhai Zhen.

"No... this can't be!"

Yunhai Zhen's face was filled with horror and disbelief.

His most powerful strike was actually inferior to that of Chen Yu!

He immediately swung out with his sword, but having already released his pinnacle strike, he was now powerless to follow up.

Boom Bang!

Yunhai Zhen was blasted over a dozen zhang away, the inner armor at his chest shattered, several wisps of blood-colored flames dancing on his body.

Chapter 366: The First in the Grand Competition

The moment Yunhai Zhen was struck flying, countless people around him gasped in cold air, widened their eyes, and waves of shock surged through their minds.

If the first time Chen Yu managed to injure Yunhai Zhen, it could be said that Yunhai Zhen had underestimated Chen Yu's attack and had been careless.

But the second time, when Chen Yu fearlessly faced death and suppressed Yunhai Zhen, wounding him head-on, it had already shocked countless people.

Yet this time, Yunhai Zhen had brought out his full strength, even unleashing the "Fierce Sun True Fire," but was still pushed back by Chen Yu.

"My God, impossible, Yunhai Zhen was actually repelled by Chen Yu."

"It's unbelievable, is this Chen Yu's first time participating in the academy's grand competition? To surpass everyone, even the top contender from Yunyang Academy is no match for him."

At this moment, spectators around could no longer remain calm, and their excitement roared up like a tsunami.

"This is impossible... How could that boy possess the 'Blood Crystal Flame,' such a mighty True Fire Spirit Flame?"

A man dressed in a Golden Cloud Robe stared at Yunhai Zhen and Chen Yu on the combat stage, his expression slightly darkening.

He had always been extremely confident, believing Yunhai Zhen would definitely secure the first place.

But now it was different, even with Yunhai Zhen's strongest trump card unleashed, he was still repelled by Chen Yu.

"Blood Crystal Flame!"

A woman from Sky Star Academy, clad in palace attire, her eyes twinkled slightly.

Such a powerful True Fire Spirit Flame was coveted even by the top-ranking warriors of the Guiyuan Realm.

"This

The instructors from No Demon Academy were all stunned, completely unaware of this.

This surprise came so unexpectedly that they were somewhat at a loss.

On the combat stage.

"No... possible!"

Yunhai Zhen stared at Chen Yu, filled with endless resentment.

Wasn't the first place supposed to be his for the taking? How could such a change happen at the last moment?

"No, I haven't lost yet."

Yunhai Zhen's eyes suddenly focused, calming down.

Chen Yu, after all, was at the Peak of Middle Innate and, even possessing Half-step True Essence, it was limited in quantity and the number of times he could use the "Blood Crystal Flame" was finite.

Yunhai Zhen still had the power to fight; as long as he didn't confront Chen Yu head-on, he could wear Chen Yu down.

He now regretted not adopting this tactic from the start, which would have prevented such an outcome.

Boom!

A jet of Golden Flame True Essence emerged from his body, slowly dispelling the traces of the "Blood Crystal Flame" on him.

Roar!

On the other side, the wings on Chen Yu's back fluttered, creating a gust of angry wind as he swiftly attacked.

The competition wasn't over until Yunhai Zhen admitted defeat.

Swoosh!

While flying, Chen Yu dragged several afterimages, approaching Yunhai Zhen.

In an instant, a domain of demonic Qi storm was constructed, enveloping Yunhai Zhen within.

Inside the demonic Qi storm's domain, Chen Yu's speed became extremely fast.

Bang, bang, boom!

From all directions and various angles, he launched a fierce attack on Yunhai Zhen.

"Get lost!"

Yunhai Zhen, now ridding himself of the Blood Crystal Flame on his body, stood up; he had to escape the domain if he wanted to wear Chen Yu down.

Yunhai Zhen immediately swung his sword, his spiritual power strong, accurately predating Chen Yu's actions.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Chen Yu didn't retreat, his heart bursting with one claw strike coming his way.

Moreover, this claw still contained some "Blood Crystal Flame."

Boom!

The dark red Blood Flame Demon Claw tore through Yunhai Zhen's sword and blasted through it.

"Why are you still so strong

Yunhai Zhen roared resentfully, his figure flying backward.

After the previous fierce battles, he was already physically drained, with little True Essence left, compounded by various injuries, currently performing at less than 60% of his peak.

But Chen Yu, despite the injuries that would have been enough to kill someone at the Innate Peak several times over, was still ferocious, capable of unleashing power nearly at his peak.

In reality, Chen Yu was also nearly exhausted; this state wouldn't last much longer.

His Half-step True Essence wasn't as good as Yunhai Zhen's breakthrough to the Guiyuan Realm, he had sustained many injuries, and his heart was continuously in a charged or burst state, which could not be maintained for much longer and would leave him weakened afterward.

Bang, bang, boom!

Yunhai Zhen heavily crashed to the ground, spitting out a mouthful of golden-red blood.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Chen Yu approached Yunhai Zhen; his heart's burst state had ended, yet suddenly it beat again, creating a strange suction force.

"This state... not good!"

Chen Yu's expression shook.

He knew this was the state where his heart was about to extract bloodlines.

If indeed, under everyone's watchful eyes, Chen Yu's heart extracted some of Yunhai_Zhen's bloodlines, his greatest secret would be exposed, and even with the vice president of No Demon Academy to rely on, he might not be able to safely leave this place.

Chen Yu concentrated deeply, trying his best to suppress the suction force produced by his heart.

Meanwhile, lying on the ground, Yunhai Zhen suddenly felt a powerful oppressive and pulling force.

The blood within his body churned tumultuously, flowing back and forth, spilling out from the wounds on his mouth.

"What... is this?"

Yunhai Zhen was terrified internally.

His rich Fiery Sun Bloodline was trembling and exhibiting such abnormalities.

Suddenly, Yunhai Zhen thought that Chen Yu had chosen the Blood Path Division at No Demon Academy and might have practiced some kind of Blood Path secret technique.

Especially when the enemy was injured, some Blood Path secret techniques were extremely terrifying and could be exceedingly useful.

Furthermore, at this moment, Yunhai Zhen felt an overwhelming sense of inevitability from Chen Yu.

Throughout his life, Yunhai Zhen had never felt such fear towards any of his peers, let alone Chen Yu, who was much younger than him.

"I admit defeat!"

Yunhai Zhen, overcome with fear, shook his head slightly and uttered these three words.

At this moment, his injuries had worsened, and it was impossible for him to be a match for Chen Yu. Continuing the fight would only lead to a more miserable defeat.

"It's over."

Chen Yu heaved a sigh of relief, turned, and walked away. His heart slowly calmed down and returned to normal.

At the same time, the hearts of the countless spectators also settled.

This shocking battle had finally ended.

And the outcome was so unexpected that it was hard to believe.

Before the competition, some had speculated that someone might challenge Yunhai Zhen's position, but after witnessing Yunhai Zhen's strength during the competition, that notion had been dismissed.

But in the end, Yunhai Zhen was defeated!

"This must be the most unexpected match in the history of the academy's competitions,"

"Indeed, to think that the first place was taken by a dark horse participating for the first time."

With Yunhai Zhen's defeat, although the competition had not ended, the position of first place was essentially confirmed.

"Chen Yu's victory."

The referee finally announced the result.

After stepping down from the competition platform, Chen Yu's aura subsided.

"Fortunately, there's nothing else after this."

Chen Yu returned to his seat, sat down heavily, and took some elixirs for healing and recovery.

"Junior brother, I didn't expect you to actually do it."

Yuan Chen expressed his joyful smile.

"This is also thanks to senior brother's help,"

Chen Yu seriously said.

This final battle was extremely tough.

Chen Yu's journey to this point, with every experience along the way, had played a significant role.

For example, if Chen Yu hadn't seized the Demon Spirit Poison Heart Flower found by Lv Ze, if he hadn't entered the ancient ruins, if he hadn't had the help of his senior brother Yuan Chen... he probably wouldn't have been able to defeat Yunhai Zhen.

Nearby, Luo Haotian, Lv Qiuling, Yin Chengzhuang, and others occasionally looked at Chen Yu with complex feelings.

They had almost made mortal enemies with Chen Yu, but who could have predicted that Chen Yu would be so extraordinary as to defeat Yunhai Zhen? In the future, Chen Yu's achievements would undoubtedly be incredibly dazzling.

If they could choose again, they would definitely want to befriend a peerless talent like Chen Yu.

The competition continued, but the real major battles had basically concluded; the final round was merely a formality.

...

"The current academy competition has finally come to an end. Now to announce the rankings!"

The academy competition had a hundred rankings, and anyone whose name appeared on this list was considered one of the top talents in the whole Yun Zhao Country.

And the prizes were awarded to only the top fifty.

Among them, the rewards for the top twelve were the most generous.

"Eighth to twelfth place, come forward to receive your prizes."

These individuals were Luo Haotian, Lu Fan, Luo Qiuman, Zhou Yuning, Lv Qiuling.

Among them, Lv Qiuling was the most reluctant, believing she wouldn't have ranked so low if she hadn't lacked a Spirit Pet.

Next, came fourth to seventh place, who were Yuan Chen, Duan Xinyue, Tang Mo, and Yin Chengzhuang.

"Finally, the top three prizes!"

The top three were Chen Yu, Yunhai Zhen, and Ye Chengfeng.

Third place: Reward of one hundred thousand Grade Essence Stones, the Viscount title, one top-quality supreme treasure, one Origin Transformation Pill, and a five-day study period in the imperial palace ancient ruins.

Second place: Reward of one hundred twenty thousand Grade Essence Stones, Viscount title, one top-quality supreme treasure, one Origin Transformation Pill, and a seven-day study period in the imperial palace ancient ruins.

These rewards, once announced, caused a sensation.

"Such generous rewards are almost too extravagant."

"But it is well-deserved, as this year's academy competition far surpasses all previous competitions."

It was known that when Chen Yu had initially participated in the hunting competition, he had only received ten thousand Grade Essence Stones, yet now just the third place alone rewarded one hundred thousand Grade Essence Stones.

Moreover, the rank of Viscount was higher than Baron.

In Yun Zhao Country, the lowest noble rank of Baron could be obtained through other means, but achieving the Viscount rank was significantly more challenging, and higher ranks required substantial contributions to Yun Zhao Country.

And the Origin Transformation Pill could increase the chances of breaking into the Early Guiyuan Realm.

In reality, these rewards were not very significant to Yunhai Zhen or Ye Chengfeng.

But the last prize, the opportunity to study in the ancient ruins, was more attractive to them.

"Next, the awards for the first-place winner of the academy competition will be presented!"

All eyes immediately turned in that direction.

In past academy competitions, the first-place prizes were always the most substantial.

With the second and third-place prizes being so impressive this time, what would the first-place prize be?

"First place, one hundred fifty thousand Grade Essence Stones, Viscount title, one Origin Transformation Pill, ten days of study in the ancient ruins, and finally, a reward of one 'Spirit Communicative Artifact'!"

"A 'Spirit Communicative Artifact' they're actually awarding a Spirit Communicative Artifact!"

"Spirit Communicative Artifacts, those are even beyond ordinary treasures!"

Spirit Communicative Artifacts, also known as "Spiritual Artifacts," usually possess some level of sentience and require nurturing to be used; powerful Spiritual Artifacts even have unique characteristics.

Spiritual Artifacts were exceedingly rare, and most in the Early Guiyuan Realm didn't own one.

"Chen Yu, choose one."

The man in the Golden Cloud Robe waved his sleeve, and four Spiritual Artifacts appeared in front of Chen Yu.

As Spiritual Artifacts varied in function and attributes, the four major academies had prepared four different Spiritual Artifacts for the first-place winner to choose from.

Chapter 367: Returning Home

Spiritual Artifacts were scarce, and at that moment, almost everyone's attention was focused on those four spiritual artifacts.

The first spiritual artifact was a golden-red broadsword.

The second spiritual artifact was an ancient turtle-shaped shield.

The third spiritual artifact was a cold jade treasure sword.

The fourth spiritual artifact was a cloud-pattern treasure pearl.

Each of the four spiritual artifacts emitted varying degrees of splendid light, making their exceptional nature evident at first glance.

"The first spiritual artifact is named 'Burning Blade,'" this blade contains a certain explosive effect that can amplify its attack power, explosive force, and astonishing defensive-breaking abilities

A man in a Golden Cloud Robe introduced to Chen Yu.

"Contains explosive effects!"

Chen Yu was somewhat surprised.

Ordinary treasures did not usually possess such special attributes.

Explosive effects meant augmenting the power of each swing; once an enemy was struck, the inflicted wounds would be extremely severe.

"The second spiritual artifact is named 'Turtle Shell Shield,' a defensive artifact. Activating this shield can instantly deploy a defensive barrier with outstanding defensive capabilities. Even if someone in the late Innate phase activated it, someone in the early Guiyuan Realm absolutely wouldn't be able to break through it. However, this shield has a drawback; it can't be activated consecutively

Compared to the first spiritual artifact, the second was slightly inferior.

"The third spiritual artifact is named 'Water Cold Spirit Sword,' the most outstanding among these four treasures. The blade of this sword is like water but possesses icy cold properties. When stimulated, it can turn into an ice-cold sword, which can be both flexible and firm

"The fourth spiritual artifact is named 'Smoke-Spitting Pearl,' an auxiliary treasure that can spit out a large range of fog, and the holder of this pearl will have a concealing effect within the fog. Additionally, this Smoke-Spitting Pearl has space inside, which can also be considered a storage space tool."

The fourth treasure was moderate.

After introducing the four spiritual artifacts, the man in the Golden Cloud Robe carefully sized up Chen Yu.

Yunhai Zhen could be considered an unmatched talent of this era, secure to rank first in this competition; yet he had been defeated by Chen Yu.

This undoubtedly proved that Chen Yu was a talent far surpassing Yunhai Zhen.

In such close observation of Chen Yu, the man in the Golden Cloud Robe realized Chen Yu's prowess.

The injuries left from the fierce battle with Yunhai Zhen not long ago had mostly healed, and his spirit was extremely vigorous; if he hadn't consumed some heaven-defying Elixir, such recovery would have been astonishing.

Moreover, a major factor allowing Chen Yu to defeat Yunhai Zhen was the Innate Spiritual Flame known as 'Blood Crystal Flame.'

Even though this flame was a Blood Dao Sacred Flame, it still held immense attraction for him.

And the fact that Chen Yu had obtained this flame showed his astonishing fortune.

"If only this lad were a student of Yunyang Academy

The man in the Golden Cloud Robe thought internally.

If Chen Yu were from Yunyang Academy, he could naturally be pulled into the Imperial Family and serve the family in the future.

Across from him, Chen Yu's gaze swept over the four spiritual artifacts, pondering carefully.

Although Chen Yu used a sword, the best-quality 'Water Cold Spirit Sword' was clearly unsuitable for him; next, the 'Burning Blade' would perform best in the hands of a Fire Dao Practitioner.

The 'Turtle Shell Shield' had excellent defensive power, but since Chen Yu cultivated the 'Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record,' his own defensive power was already outstanding and didn't need much enhancement.

"That leaves only the 'Smoke-Spitting Pearl,' the auxiliary spiritual artifact!"

Chen Yu's gaze settled on the fourth cloud-pattern treasure pearl.

"Ah, among these four spiritual artifacts, none is most suitable for Chen Yu."

A vice dean from No Demon Academy sighed softly.

After all, it was the first time spiritual artifacts were rewarded in the academy competition, so it was impossible to prepare too many spiritual artifacts, and the quality of spiritual artifacts was just average.

However, even so, these four spiritual artifacts were still many times better than top-tier treasures; generally, anyone in the Guiyuan Realm would be greatly tempted.

"I want this one!"

Chen Yu suddenly spoke up, pointing to the fourth spiritual artifact.

"Oh?"

The man in the Golden Cloud Robe was slightly surprised.

But he knew that among these four spiritual artifacts, none matched Chen Yu's attributes well; rather, the last auxiliary spiritual artifact could be used similarly by anyone.

"Alright!"

The man in the Golden Cloud Robe collected the other three spiritual artifacts.

Next, Chen Yu received the Primordial Stones, Origin Transformation Pills, and noble title rewards before the award ceremony finally concluded.

"Congratulations to Vice Dean Yi, with No Demon Academy taking first place this time, the rankings of three students in the academy competition are quite impressive. This academy competition is truly a well-deserved victory for the top winner."

A woman in palace attire stood up to offer her congratulations.

No Demon Academy's performance in this competition was indeed astonishing, with Chen Yu ranked first, Yuan Chen fourth, and Luo Haotian eighth.

Besides, leaders from Heavenly Sword Academy and Yunyang Academy also offered their polite comments.

Moreover, other academies affiliated with No Demon Academy also came forward with their congratulations, some even directly presenting congratulatory gifts.

No Demon Academy's amazing success in this competition also represented immense good fortune; if they could benefit from it, that would be enough.

After the competition, many academies dispersed.

However, the higher-ups from the four major academies gathered together, seeming to discuss something.

"In this academy competition, it has been confirmed that a sizable number of hidden operatives from various sects are embedded within our four major academies."

The man in the Golden Cloud Robe said.

The first phase of the assessment exposed the true colors of these hidden operatives, allowing the four academies to suddenly realize there were so many, with some students even being key figures cultivated by the academies.

"These remnants of sect forces have become increasingly rampant now."

A white-browed elder said displeased.

Within Heavenly Sword Academy, two exceptionally talented students died in trials, and based on various clues, it was likely they were assassinated.

"Among these hidden operatives, there are not a few top experts. This shows the sect forces have become stronger, and additionally, there seems to be one powerful hidden operative we have yet to catch

The woman in palace attire said.

As many students reported, there was also an assassin in a black mask with formidable strength who carried out operations very smoothly, thus remaining undiscovered.

She was worried that this assassin could be one of the top talents within the four major academies; if not identified and inadvertently nurtured, it would be a real joke.

Of course, this assassin might not necessarily be lurking within the four academies; it was also possible

On the other side, members of the No Demon Academy gathered together.

By the time they had arrived, there were a total of twenty students, but now only thirteen remained, some having perished during the first phase of the trial.

"Brother Chen, you are truly impressive—to have defeated Yunhai Zhen, I am in awe!"

Kong Zhong said with a smile.

Initially, he had competed with Chen Yu in a hunting competition. Now, Chen Yu had left him far behind.

"Chen, you indeed have great fortune. Ever since you entered the academy, you have risen rapidly, at a stunning speed."

Jin Zhuo Peak, although not good with words, also came over to butter up.

After all, he had once tried to harm Chen Yu a long time ago. Although they had cooperated in a secret realm later, he still feared Chen Yu might harbor resentment for the past events.

Apart from Chen Yu, Yuan Chen, Luo Haotian, Situ Lin Yu, and Duan Hao, also achieved excellent results, attracting much attention.

Among them, Situ Lin Yu, with his Late Innate cultivation, ranked twentieth, which was quite remarkable.

However, because of Chen Yu's brilliance, his light was overshadowed.

"Let's go!"

A teacher shouted loudly.

It turned out the discussion among the upper echelons of the four major academies had concluded.

Yi Lantian called out his flying mount, and everyone boarded, ready to return to the academy.

When they had arrived, the higher-ups were somewhat worried, but now most of them had glowing faces.

Boom!

The strange flying mount beneath their feet flapped its wings, carrying everyone into the sky.

Chen Yu looked back. Among the crowd from Sky Sword Academy, he saw a figure in white—it was Ye Luofeng, who was also looking at him at this moment.

At this time, Chen Yu remembered their five-year agreement.

There was still some time until the five-year agreement, but Chen Yu's strength had improved far beyond his own expectations.

"It seems that this trip to the ancient country was completely worth it."

If Chen Yu had stayed in his original place, he probably would not have achieved as much as he did now.

"Not even a greeting before leaving

Ye Luofeng watched Chen Yu leave, biting her red lips, a mix of annoyance and loss surfacing in her heart.

...

The team from No Demon Academy arrived at Yunyang Holy Mansion and used the Transmission Array to return to Tianhe Prefecture.

In less than half a day, the group smoothly returned to No Demon Academy.

Such a huge mount caused quite a stir and instantly attracted many people's attention.

"Welcome back, Vice Dean and all instructors!"

Many students immediately saluted.

"Vice Dean, why not call everyone out and announce this news?"

A branch dean suggested with a smile.

After all, No Demon Academy had secured first place—a joyful event that should be widely shared.

Yi Lantian nodded.

Several branch deans immediately sent out the message through their tokens.

Instantly, sounds of vibration came from all over No Demon Academy; some teachers, instructors, and students ran out heading towards the Central Square.

"The teams from the academy competition have returned."

"I wonder how our academy fared in this competition?"

"It's hard to say. Yunyang Academy is too strong. The first place must surely be theirs again. With Brother Yuan Chen ranked third in heaven's ranking, third place is the best we can hope for."

People chattered, watching the thirteen students standing beside the academy's upper echelons.

"This time, the academy competition's results are quite gratifying—we have three people in the top twelve."

Yi Lantian spoke, his hoarse and aged voice echoing in the air.

"A satisfactory result? Does it mean Yuan Chen's ranking is not just third?"

A group of teachers, with a black-robed beauty among them, showed signs of amazement. When Chen Yu and Kong Zhong had entered the academy, it was this black-robed beauty, 'Gulifu,' who had welcomed them.

"Among them, Luo Haotian ranked eighth in the competition. No Demon Academy will reward two hundred thousand No Demon Points."

Yi Lantian announced.

While announcing the results, he simultaneously awarded prizes, motivating more students.

"Congratulations, Senior Brother Luo!"

"Senior Brother Luo's strength is formidable, and this ranking is well-deserved."

Some students flattered.

But Luo Haotian looked slightly distracted, his expression not too pleasant.

"Yuan Chen secured the fourth place for No Demon Academy, a reward of three hundred and fifty thousand No Demon Points!" Yi Lantian said.

"Fourth place?"

"Only fourth place. This time the competition results should be at the bottom, how is that something to celebrate?"

Many students and some teachers did not understand.

"Did Yuan Chen underperform?"

Gulifu was puzzled; logically, if Yuan Chen performed well, he could have achieved third place, but now it was only fourth.

"Wait, weren't there three people who made it into the top twelve? Who is the third person?"

A teacher asked doubtfully.

"The last person to enter the top twelve of the academy competition was Chen Yu!"

This announcement caused many to open their mouths wide, dumbstruck.

"Impossible, right? Did Chen Yu really make it into the top twelve?"

"Wasn't Chen Yu only ranked thirteenth in the slot contest?"

Many people could hardly believe it.

Gulifu looked stunned, not expecting that a student she had once troubled had made it into the top twelve during the academy competition.

"Chen Yu secured the first place for No Demon Academy, a reward of five hundred thousand No Demon Points!"

Upon hearing this, the entire No Demon Academy fell into complete silence, then suddenly burst into an uproar.

Chapter 368: Refining the Spiritual Artifact

"First place? No Demon Academy actually won first place in this academy competition?"

"Am I hearing this right? Did Chen Yu win first place? How is that possible? Chen Yu was only ranked thirteenth in the quota battle, how could he possibly defeat geniuses like Yuan Chen, Duan Xinyue, Ye Chengfeng, and Yunhai Zhen to win first place?"

"Yes, the first place winners of the four major academies usually possess combat strength comparable to the early Guiyuan Realm. Even if Chen Yu made great progress, he couldn't possibly defeat all of them, right?"

People who hadn't watched the competition were shocked by the news and left with only doubt and denial, believing it was simply impossible.

Some teachers who had watched the competition just smiled. They wouldn't have believed it either if they hadn't seen the competition themselves.

"Old Song, what exactly happened? Did Chen Yu really become the champion of the competition? Were the rules different this time, or was there some anomaly during the competition?"

An elderly man with a long beard approached a teacher who had watched the competition. This elderly man was a senior teacher responsible for managing the exotic adventure Transmission Arrays.

Other senior teachers who remained at No Demon Academy also crowded around, inquiring about the details.

"In this academy competition, in the first round, Chen Yu won second place. In the second round, he first defeated Duan Xinyue, then Ye Chengfeng, and finally had a major battle with Yunhai Zhen, which he won—securing first place!"

Yi Lantian announced this again, his words short yet even more shocking.

This was said by the vice-principal himself—could there be any mistakes?

Upon hearing this, the surroundings fell silent for a moment before erupting again.

"Chen Yu actually defeated the top candidates of the four major academies, even Yunhai Zhen who possesses strong bloodline and true fire lost? Does that mean Chen Yu now has the combat strength to defeat early Guiyuan Realm?"

Among the teachers, Gulifu turned pale, disbelieving.

In such a short time, Chen Yu had grown to this extent.

She hadn't yet broken through to the Guiyuan Realm, which meant she was no longer a match for Chen Yu.

Not just her, the majority of the teachers at the academy were no longer matches for Chen Yu.

Gulifu was deeply affected, feeling lost within. If she had known this would happen, she would have tried to establish a good relationship with Chen Yu when she first met him. Just a little favor from him in the future could drastically change her life trajectory.

At the same time, students who had offended Chen Yu felt their hearts leap to their throats.

But many more students came to congratulate Chen Yu and curry favor with him.

Now that Chen Yu had achieved such a brilliant success, it was hard to imagine how far he would go in the future.

"I really didn't expect Brother Chen to be so impressive, achieving first place directly in the competition."

Yang Zhang, who had initially had a good relationship with Chen Yu, was moved and laughed.

"Chen Yu, come with me."

Yi Lantian said to Chen Yu, releasing a powerful True Yuan Power that enveloped Chen Yu, lifted him up, and disappeared into the mist.

The Sanctuary, Yi Lantian's residence.

"Here are five hundred thousand No Demon Points as a reward!"

Yi Lantian casually took out a token and handed it to Chen Yu.

After taking the five hundred thousand No Demon Points, Chen Yu returned the token.

"You have so many secrets, even I don't know them," Yi Lantian said with a slight smile after awarding the points.

"I carry too many treasures and dare not show them off," Chen Yu said with a grin.

In this academy competition, he had given it his all, revealing almost all his cards, including things Yi Lantian could certainly have noticed—like Chen Yu's strong recovery ability, special physique, and bloodline, none of which he had disclosed to Yi Lantian.

Yi Lantian nodded and didn't pursue further.

Everyone has their secrets, and he didn't insist if others didn't want to share.

Moreover, when he took Chen Yu as a disciple, he had also had people thoroughly investigate Chen Yu's background, which was clean with no powerful backing.

At that time, it would have been indeed dangerous if Chen Yu had revealed all these.

"This competition has brought you first place, glory, and plentiful rewards; however, it also bears certain risks," Yi Lantian said again, worry evident in his eyes.

"Master, are you referring to the remaining sect forces?"

Chen Yu asked.

"Exactly, this competition ranks the geniuses of the ancient country, but for the remaining sect forces, the rankings of the academy competition are akin to an assassination leaderboard!" Yi Lantian's eyes turned sharp.

From the first round of this competition, it's clear that the remaining sect forces have infiltrated the major academies and even the Imperial Family.

It's hard to imagine what level these secretly hidden sect forces have reached.

With Chen Yu's achievement of first place with the cultivation level of the Peak of Middle Innate, he had almost become the primary assassination target of the sect forces.

"I understand," Chen Yu nodded, having thought about this himself.

But if he hadn't striven for it, he wouldn't have even made it into the top ten in the second round, and thus would've missed out on the substantial rewards of the final competition.

This would significantly slow his overall progress.

"What are your plans moving forward?" Yi Lantian asked.

"I plan to study within the academy for two more years, then leave Yun Zhao Country," Chen Yu answered truthfully.

In two years, he would reach the five-year agreement with Luofeng, and at that time, he would return to his hometown.

Thinking of this, Chen Yu couldn't help but think of his parents, his former Yunyue Sect, hoping they were well, and his master, Elder Mao...

He also thought of Lv Tiezu, who had once driven him to desperation, the number one person from the Three Sects; involuntarily, his fists clenched slightly.

"Oh? Leaving Yun Zhao Country?" Yi Lantian was slightly surprised.

Of course, when he had initially inquired about Chen Yu's background, he knew Chen Yu wasn't from Yun Zhao Country.

But that was perhaps for the best. Once he left Yun Zhao Country, Chen Yu's safety could be better guaranteed.

"Alright, if there's nothing else, you may leave now."

...

After bidding farewell to his Master, Chen Yu first went to the No Demon Main Hall.

"Chen Yu, what brings you here—trading items or posting a mission?"

An elderly man greeted him enthusiastically.

"I'm here to claim the reward for eliminating the infiltrators!"

Chen Yu said, taking out a blood-stained cloth bag and a token.

This token was evidence of Ren Han's sect identity.

"So, it's about that matter. The No Demon Main Hall had your reward prepared early and was about to send it to you later."

The elderly man smiled with squinted eyes.

Chen Yu felt somewhat uncomfortable with the elder's demeanor.

Now that he was the champion of the grand competition, countless people wanted to establish a close relationship with him.

Without saying much more, Chen Yu collected his reward and left the place.

"Two hundred thousand No Demon Points, fifty thousand low-grade Primordial Stones, one Refining Token for a High Grade Treasure!"

Ren Han had significant influence and power at the No Demon Academy, so Chen Yu's rewards were substantial, including two hundred thousand No Demon Points, fifty thousand low-grade Primordial Stones, and one Refining Token for a High Grade Treasure.

Among these, Chen Yu most needed the No Demon Points, but the most precious was the Refining Token for a High Grade Treasure.

With the token, he could commission one of the Artifact Refining Masters at the No Demon Academy to forge a weapon suitable for himself.

Back in his residence, Chen Yu began to organize his gains.

In the first part of the competition, Chen Yu had acquired a vast amount of vintage and valuable materials, of which only a small portion was useful to him; the rest could be sold or traded.

Some rare ores would allow Chen Yu to forge a better weapon.

Besides that, Chen Yu had many spoils of war, including more than a dozen High Grade Treasures and two High Grade Treasures, which, if sold, could fetch a considerable amount of Primordial Stones.

Then there was Chen Yu's grand competition reward: one hundred fifty thousand low-grade Primordial Stones, one Origin Transformation Pill, and one Spiritual Artifact.

Chen Yu was still some distance from reaching the Guiyuan Realm, and he wouldn't need the Origin Transformation Pill any time soon.

"The Smoke-spitting Pearl!"

Chen Yu took out a Cloud Pattern Treasure Pearl and began to refine it.

To fully harness the power of a Spiritual Artifact, refinement was necessary.

Two days later, Chen Yu had completely refined the Smoke-spitting Pearl; his True Qi could circulate faster within the artifact, and his Spiritual Sense formed a faint connection with it.

Chen Yu's Spiritual Sense delved into the Smoke-spitting Pearl, and indeed, there was a small space inside filled with swirling clouds.

This space was about as big as a small room, much larger than the storage bag he currently used.

"Let's test the effect of the Smoke-spitting Pearl."

Chen Yu channeled his True Qi into it, and instantly, a white mist started emanating from the surface of the pearl and quickly filled his courtyard.

Moreover, this mist did not feel out of place—it seemed like natural fog.

Gradually, the fog spread out, enveloping Chen Yu's entire courtyard and continued to expand outward.

"The range of the fog can reach at least a hundred zhang!"

Chen Yu estimated.

This was while he used Magic Pattern Qi; if he used half-step True Essence, the range the Spiritual Artifact could cover with the fog would be even greater.

Moreover, when his Spiritual Sense penetrated into the Smoke-spitting Pearl, Chen Yu could directly see everything within the mist-covered area.

Outside.

Several students came to visit Chen Yu.

Two days had passed since the grand competition, and news about it spread fast, centered around the Yunyang Holy Mansion.

Tianhe Prefecture, being adjacent to Yunyang Holy Mansion, naturally got the news first.

At this time, those who initially harbored doubts finally fully believed.

Among the senior students of the Blood Slaughter Institute, a group had once provoked and offended Chen Yu.

This day, they came with generous gifts to visit Chen Yu.

"Eh? What's going on, how come there's suddenly so much fog?"

"I can't see anything."

"No Demon Academy is in a secret realm; logically, the weather shouldn't change so abruptly."

...

"Not bad."

Chen Yu smiled and put away the Smoke-spitting Pearl.

At that moment, the students outside were quite frightened; the fog was thick just a moment ago, and they couldn't see their hands in front of them, but suddenly it all disappeared.

"Brother Shi, this place feels strange; perhaps we should leave."

The students were spooked by the scene and were ready to beat a retreat.

Just then, Chen Yu stepped out of his yard.

"Chen Yu

Several people were suddenly alarmed.

"Do you need something?"

Chen Yu looked at the few people, not recognizing any of them.

"Brother Chen, I'm Shi Wei from the Blood Slaughter Institute. I was blind before to not recognize Mount Tai

A young man in black armor said with an awkward smile, offering some Primordial Stones and No Demon Points.

This Shi Wei, because of a matter concerning a cultivation cave in the past, had offended Chen Yu and later even arranged for Blood Demon Hand to deal with Chen Yu.

"Oh, those trivial matters of the past, don't worry about them."

Chen Yu did not dwell on the issue.

Seeing that Chen Yu really didn't mind, the black-armored youth and the other students left the place.

After leaving his residence, Chen Yu also learned news that Ren Han's head was hung in the Central Square of the No Demon Academy to proclaim the school's authority and deter any sect infiltrators.

Chapter 369: Custom Treasures

Chen Yu arrived at the trading area of the No Demon Main Hall and purchased some elixirs for Body Refining effects and to promote cultivation.

"Next, since there's basically nothing else to do, I might as well stay at the academy, concentrate on my cultivation, and improve my strength."

After buying some items, Chen Yu returned to his residence.

With his current strength, he could handle most opponents in the Early Guiyuan Realm, but if he encountered someone at the Early Guiyuan Realm Peak, that would be a different story.

Moreover, he was now targeted by the sect forces of Yun Zhao Country, which posed a great danger.

Therefore, Chen Yu decided to go into retreat within the academy to improve his cultivation base.

Strength is the only guarantee!

After returning to his residence, Chen Yu started his retreat.

First, he took an elixir that promoted cultivation and began to consolidate the cultivation base he had just broken through.

Secondly, he started circulating the Demonic Pattern Qi for Body Refining.

Using his True Qi to torment his body was an extremely painful thing, but Chen Yu, having come this far, did not hesitate to undertake the Body Refining process.

A month later, Chen Yu's cultivation base was completely stable and began to show a trend of gradual improvement.

Following that, Chen Yu entered the pool of Demonic Qi to practice the "Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record."

The first two layers were relatively easy for Chen Yu as he only needed to convert the existing True Sinister Qi into Demonic Pattern Qi. However, once he had completed that conversion, he felt the speed of his cultivation slow down.

Although Chen Yu's speed in Body Refinement had always been relatively fast, this Cultivation Technique was a fusion of demonic arts and Body Cultivation. When the speed of True Qi cultivation slowed down, it also somewhat dragged down his Body Refinement.

"It really lives up to being one of the ancient ten great extraordinary techniques; the difficulty is not ordinary."

Chen Yu didn't give up.

Although this technique was extremely difficult to cultivate, the effects after mastering it were incomparable to ordinary techniques.

It could be said that if Chen Yu hadn't switched to cultivating the "Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record" before the competition, he would have had a hard time achieving good results in the Great Success competition.

In the center of the Demonic Qi pool, with only Chen Yu alone, his whole body was enveloped by black water, with bubbles continuously rising to the surface.

Cultivating in the Demonic Qi pool not only increased the speed of cultivation but also improved the effects of Body Refinement.

Two months later, Chen Yu consolidated the third level of the "Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record" to Great Success and began to push upward.

Chen Yu concentrated on cultivating, oblivious to external affairs, as time flowed away like water.

...

To the south of Yun Zhao Country, a gloomy mist stretched across the chilly gorges below.

Hoo hoo!

Two dim, ghostly flames flickered and shone in the cold wind, revealing a colossal ancient hall's silhouette in a shadowy and eerie manner.

Boom!

Suddenly, a tremor came from inside the ancient hall.

"What did you say? Ren Han is dead?"

In a grand hall, a middle-aged man, whose features were as firm as a sculpture's and who bore some resemblance to Ren Han, roared.

Boom!

A vast Demonic Qi emanated from behind the man, twisting and leaping in the air, exuding a terrifying aura.

"Yes... Elder Ren, your son's identity was exposed during the academy's competition, and he has been killed. His head is still displayed in the square of the No Demon Academy."

Below, a young man in a black tight-fitting outfit trembled uncontrollably.

"What!"

Elder Ren's eyes widened, revealing a terrifying expression, and his hand shot out violently.

Immediately, an invisible black Demonic Qi was released, enveloping the young man in an instant, seizing his throat, and lifting him into the air.

Swish!

Suddenly, a weird blood light appeared in the grand hall, rapidly revealing a figure within.

It was a woman with a graceful figure, blood-red hair, and a blood-colored dress adorned with a sinister, vivid blood moon pattern.

"Elder Ren, what has angered you so?"

The blood-haired woman let out an enchanting and seductive voice.

Elder Ren's eyes hardened, and he gradually calmed down.

"Who is it? Who killed my son?"

Elder Ren demanded in a low voice.

This time, many talents from the four major academies had died, and the results were abundant.

But his own son was miserably killed during the competition, and his previous joy was instantly washed away by rage and hatred.

"It was a student from the No Demon Academy named Chen Yu, and moreover, this person is the top scholar of this academy's competition!"

Despite being choked, the young man in black managed still to speak.

"Chen Yu! The top scholar of the competition?"

Elder Ren's face darkened as he recalled carefully, finally remembering something.

Earlier, hadn't Ren Han sent a message for someone to assassinate Chen Yu? And yet it had failed.

"I've heard about this young man, the new disciple of the deputy headmaster of the No Demon Academy. He should be under twenty and yet managed to claim the top spot in the competition!"

The blood-haired woman appeared interested.

"No matter who he is, since he dared to kill my son, I will have him slain!"

Elder Ren's eyes emitted a fierce light.

Bang!

The black Demonic Qi dissipated, and the young man in black fell to the ground, hastily kneeling, fearful of angering Elder Ren again.

"Don't be too impulsive, Elder Ren. When I first heard about this boy, he was only at the Early Innate phase. Therefore, his cultivation must not have been at the Innate Peak during the big competition. Moreover, being under twenty, he obviously has a heaven-defying destiny. Such a genius shouldn't be antagonized. Wouldn't it be more beneficial to our organization and your alliance's plans if we could draw him in?"

The blood-haired woman cooed, her voice sounding like a demonic tune, both beautiful and alluring yet dangerous and eerie.

"Hmph, what use would it be to recruit someone who hasn't even reached the Guiyuan Realm?"

Elder Ren's countenance was cold.

In fact, he had already decided to kill Chen Yu in his heart, but he couldn't well refute the blood-haired woman before him.

"Elder Ren, do not act rashly."

The blood-haired woman advised once again.

"Hmph!"

Elder Ren humphed, saying no more.

...

At the No Demon Academy, with nothing else to distract him, Chen Yu resolved to enter retreat, and a year quickly passed.

In this year, Chen Yu's cultivation improved to the Late Innate phase, and the third level of the "Heavenly Demon Secret Pattern Record" reached Great Success.

A third demonic pattern had already begun to appear on the upper front of his chest.

As the final Demonic Pattern fully emerged, Chen Yu could begin cultivating the corresponding Combat Technique of the third Demonic Pattern.

"My swordsmanship has lagged behind in recent times."

Chen Yu sighed and took out a golden command token from the Smoke-spitting Pearl.

"I'll go forge an exceptional treasure; meanwhile, I can refine my swordsmanship."

With this thought, Chen Yu left his residence.

No Demon Academy, as one of the four major academies, not only had dedicated Array Masters, Alchemists, but also Artifact Refiners.

That day, Chen Yu made his way to the artifact forging critical area of No Demon Academy.

From afar, Chen Yu felt a scorching breath emanating from a valley.

Outside the valley, there were four guards currently engaged in conversation with a woman in white.

"Miss Shang, please!"

The four guards opened the Array Barrier with smiling faces.

This woman was none other than Shang Han, the top-ranking beauty of No Demon Academy.

However, Shang Han noticed Chen Yu, her expression froze, and she suddenly looked very unnatural, forgetting to enter the valley for a moment.

"This is a critical area for Artifact Refining, no outsiders allowed in?"

Seeing Chen Yu approaching, the four guards blocked his way.

Moreover, the guards caught the expression on Shang Han's face; it seemed like they recognized Chen Yu and that their relationship wasn't too good.

"This is not the place for you!"

One guard shouted sternly and stepped forward with a fierce and authoritative look.

Since Shang Han didn't like this fellow, they naturally wanted to seize the opportunity to make a good impression.

Chen Yu glanced at the four men; it seemed they were stationed here all year round and didn't know what was happening outside, otherwise they would never dare speak to him in such a manner.

Chen Yu couldn't be bothered to say more and took out a golden command token.

The moment the command token appeared, the guards' eyes trembled. Shang Han's bright eyes also flickered slightly, showing a hint of envy.

That golden token signified that one could request an Artifact Refiner of No Demon Academy to custom-make an exceptional treasure.

"My apologies for the earlier offense, please forgive us," the guard who had shouted at Chen Yu immediately said with a salute.

Chen Yu ignored Shang Han and went through the barrier first.

Immediately after, Shang Han also hurried in.

"That young man looks somewhat familiar!" said one guard.

"To be so young and yet possess that golden command token... he is no ordinary person... I remember now, he's Chen Yu!"

"Chen Yu? Are you talking about the genius disciple who secured first place for our academy in the Grand Competition this year?"

"My heavens, I actually dared to shout at the strongest genius disciple of our academy!"

The guards' faces turned pale, and they broke out in cold sweat.

Stationed here all year, they only heard bits of news sporadically; otherwise, they certainly would have recognized Chen Yu.

Inside the gorge, row upon row of palace pavilions were built atop the cliffs.

In the center, an enormous palace stood, shaped like a furnace, blazing with fire.

Chen Yu and Shang Han entered one after the other.

Upon entering, they saw several figures busily at work.

"Shang Han, you're here," said a bald elder, holding a golden spear tip, wiping it as he walked over to her.

"Uncle Liu, I'm troubling you this time," Shang Han said with a slight smile.

Given the unique nature of the profession of Artifact Refiner, even though Shang Han was a genius of the Shang Family, she remained courteous in the presence of a top-level Artifact Refiner.

Moreover, Uncle Liu had some connections with the Shang Family, so Shang Han's cost for forging would be much lower.

"What are your requirements? Let's hear them," Uncle Liu asked casually.

"I want to custom-make a piece of exceptional defensive inner armor," Shang Han stated her request.

Uncle Liu's expression became slightly somber, looking a bit displeased.

Artifact Refiners held a noble profession; usually, they would craft treasures based on their interests, never worrying about a lack of buyers.

In the eyes of an Artifact Refiner, the most troublesome thing was custom-making treasures. Sometimes the requirements from disciples were too extensive, or even incompatible with the principles of artifact forging, causing the Artifact Refiner's crafting process to be extremely slow and the end product not very satisfactory.

Therefore, Artifact Refiners generally disliked custom-making treasures for others.

Furthermore, as Shang Han was a woman, females typically require inner armor to be attractive, soft, and comfortable, which is very troublesome.

"Uncle Liu, my father asked me to bring you a 'Jade Toad Stone,'" Shang Han promptly took out a stone that looked like beautiful jade from her storage bag.

Uncle Liu's eyes flickered and his expression softened a bit as he took the Jade Toad Stone.

"And what about you?" Uncle Liu's gaze fell on Chen Yu, who was not too far away.

"I am here to custom-order an exceptional treasure," Chen Yu answered truthfully.

"Custom-make an exceptional treasure!" Uncle Liu's face turned grim, feeling somewhat annoyed inside.

Another custom order!

Now, he seemed to dislike Chen Yu even more.

Swish!

To avoid trouble, Chen Yu immediately took out a golden command token.

"Alright, come with me," Uncle Liu said, seeing the golden command token, with a begrudging feeling in his heart.

The two followed Uncle Liu to a huge stone platform.

"State the type, attributes, and characteristics of the treasures you wish to custom-make!" Uncle Liu addressed Chen Yu and Shang Han.

Since Shang Han was from the Shang Family and he had accepted a favor, he would take slightly better care of her order.

As for Chen Yu, he would only do a cursory job as making two exceptional treasures would be too draining and too much of a hassle.

Chapter 370: Master Makes a Move

When Chen Yu and Shang Han put forward their requirements for artifact refining, the bald elder began to design the crafting plan.

Chen Yu had a golden command token and did not need to pay for artifact materials, while Shang Han would pay for the necessary materials himself or purchase them with Primordial Stones from here.

Chen Yu's request was for a heavy sword similar to the Giant Ruler Sword, with the quality standard being at least a top-notch High Grade Treasure.

"A top-notch High Grade Treasure?"

The corner of the bald elder's mouth couldn't help but curl into a smile.

With his abilities, he could barely craft top-notch High Grade Treasures, and naturally, he didn't want to exhaust a great deal of effort to create one for Chen Yu.

When the time came, providing Chen Yu with an excellent High Grade Treasure would be considered quite good.

Chen Yu, a mere student, what could he do to him? He'd still have to leave with an excellent High Grade Treasure.

After the crafting plan was ready, the bald elder began to refine the treasure.

First, the bald elder helped Shang Han refine a top-quality inner armor.

To this, Chen Yu had no objections until eight days later when Shang Han's inner armor was near completion. The bald elder handed it over to other Artifact Refiners to finish while he started crafting a High Grade Treasure for Chen Yu.

"Hmm?"

Chen Yu watched the bald elder's actions with a slight frown.

Although he didn't understand Artifact Refining, he could still recognize the quality level of some materials.

The materials the bald elder was using were all subpar, in Chen Yu's estimation, enough to forge at best an excellent High Grade Treasure.

"Master Liu, what I require is at least a top-notch High Grade Treasure!"

Chen Yu reminded him.

If it weren't for the golden command token, which allowed custom High Grade Treasure orders, Chen Yu could have easily spent Primordial Stones to purchase a top-notch High Grade Treasure.

Through the academy's grand tournament, his accumulated wealth was already astonishingly large.

"Don't rush, don't rush. If luck is on our side, this master might help you craft a top-level High Grade Treasure."

The bald elder said nonchalantly.

With luck, these materials could indeed be used to craft a top-notch High Grade Treasure, but he had never successfully done so.

As Chen Yu didn't understand the craft of Artifact Refining, he waited another few days.

By then, the bald elder had completed half of Chen Yu's ordered treasure.

"Master Liu, this sword seems not to meet the requirements I described, does it?"

Chen Yu took the initiative to ask.

"Your requirements don't align with the principles of Artifact Refining, so I made some modifications on your behalf," the bald elder said with a disdainful arrogance.

According to Chen Yu's observations, the overall size and thickness of the sword had been reduced by twenty to thirty percent by the bald elder, which greatly saved on materials.

"Since the master is unable to fulfill my requirements in Artifact Refining, it might be better to refine my High Grade Treasure into a top-quality one."

Chen Yu took out the Giant Ruler Sword from the Smoke-spitting Pearl.

In Chen Yu's view, it might be that Master Liu's skills were too lacking to fulfill his request in Artifact Refining.

Hence, it might be more practical for Chen Yu to choose to refine the Giant Ruler Sword.

Chen Yu was quite comfortable using the Giant Ruler Sword, and refining an artifact is much simpler than crafting a new one; even the bald elder with his inferior Artifact Refining skills should be able to meet his demand.

"What? Are you questioning my Artifact Refining skills?"

The bald elder's complexion changed instantly, he lifted his head, almost looking at Chen Yu through his nostrils.

Nothing irked an Artifact Refiner more than having their skills doubted, and thus the bald elder was quite irate.

Chen Yu didn't respond; he did indeed question the bald elder's skills but he still gave the man face, opting not to voice it explicitly in front of all these people.

Nearby, a few Artifact Refiners observed the situation.

Normally in the revered place of Artifact Refining, it was rare to see students arguing with an Artifact Refiner, as disputes were typically between Artifact Refiners themselves.

"Also, what sort of sword is this? Low-grade materials and far too rough workmanship. Any ordinary Artifact Refiner here could forge a treasure far superior to this sword. By asking me to refine such a defective sword, you are insulting my status as an Artifact Refining Master!"

The bald elder glanced at the Giant Ruler Sword in Chen Yu's hand and began to belittle it relentlessly, deeming it worthless.

"Master Shen, have you completed the components I asked you to refine for me?"

At that moment, an elderly man with pale hair and a slightly hunched figure walked out from deep within the palace.

"Master Shen!"

All the nearby Artifact Refiners bowed respectfully to the hunched elder, showing great deference.

"Master Shen, it's almost finished. It was delayed a bit because these two students had requests for artifact crafting."

The bald elder changed his attitude completely, presenting a golden spear tip.

The hunched elder seemed not to hear the bald elder's words, his gaze directly fell upon the Giant Ruler Sword in Chen Yu's hand, showing a look of surprise and nostalgia.

"Master Shen, it's this student. I have already begun crafting a top-quality treasure for him, but midway, he suddenly changed his mind, asking me to refine this defective heavy sword for him. The craftsmanship of this sword is so rough that it shows the Artifact Refiner who made it put no heart into it. Even if I were to refine such a defective product, it would require a vast amount of effort, and the end result wouldn't be significantly improved."

The bald elder immediately accused Chen Yu.

Master Shen was the top Artifact Refiner in the whole revered place of Artifact Refining, highly esteemed and influential, even Yi Lantian had to show him respect.

Chen Yu had dared to offend the bald elder, so in front of Master Shen, he twisted the facts to frame Chen Yu.

If he angered Master Shen, there would be no place for Chen Yu in the No Demon Academy.

However, when the bald elder finished speaking, he found that Master Shen's expression turned even more uncomfortable.

The bald elder rejoiced in his heart, thinking Master Shen was angered by Chen Yu's "transgressions."

"Chen Yu, your top-quality treasure will still be refined for you by our Artifact Refining sanctuary; as for everything else, you should not concern yourself. And this worthless sword, you should quickly put it away and not taint Master Shen's eyes with it."

The bald old man scolded Chen Yu while flattering Master Shen.

"Enough."

Master Shen suddenly shouted, and the entire palace fell silent at once, save for the sound of flames burning in the furnace.

The bald old man felt a surge of joy within, not expecting Master Shen to be so angry. It seemed Chen Yu was in for a harsh reprimand.

"Liu Yuan, from now on, you should not stay here. Go elsewhere. I will take care of this young brother's refining demands!"

Master Shen's aged face was very solemn, emanating an invisible dignity.

"What?"

The bald old man stood frozen, his mind buzzing, unable to comprehend what was happening.

Wasn't Master Shen supposed to reprimand Chen Yu? Why was he scolding him instead?

Moreover, Master Shen directly transferring him away was tantamount to a demotion and punishment.

Secondly, Master Shen was personally taking on Chen Yu's refining requests.

It was well-known that Master Shen's Artifact Refining skills were renowned throughout Yun Zhao Country.

Master Shen had always refined Divine Weapons according to his own desires, rarely crafting tailored treasures for others.

What on earth was going on?

Of course, it wasn't just Liu Yuan who was clueless—the same went for Shang Han, Chen Yu, and the other Artifact Refiners here.

Chen Yu did not know the identity of Master Shen but recognized the exceptional status of the man from the moment he appeared.

And now, this Master Shen was going to personally fulfill Chen Yu's refining request, which naturally delighted him.

"Young brother, let this old man have a look at the treasure in your hands."

Master Shen looked at Chen Yu, his expression returned to normal, dignified yet with a hint of kindness.

Chen Yu immediately handed over the Giant Ruler Sword.

Master Shen's gaunt arms easily grasped the Giant Ruler Sword, and his other rough hand gently stroked it, his face displaying a nostalgic expression.

"Giant Ruler Sword."

After much contemplation, Master Shen directly named the sword.

Chen Yu had not mentioned the name of the sword before.

"Could it be

The bald old man watched this scene, and cold sweat poured down his forehead.

Normally, any weapon would be named by the Artifact Refiner, with only a few exceptions where the refiner could not be bothered to name it.

"Could it be that this Giant Ruler Sword is Master Shen's own work?"

The bald old man was inwardly shocked.

Just now, he had disparaged the weapon in front of Master Shen, deeming it worthless.

"Young brother, let us go inside to discuss."

Holding the Giant Ruler Sword, Master Shen headed inside.

"Good."

Chen Yu too had noticed something unusual.

When he first obtained the Giant Ruler Sword, he knew its history.

This sword was ancient, crafted by a highly obsessive Artifact Refiner.

Back then, the refiner had aimed to create a High Grade King-level Treasure, but failed entirely. Out of desperation, he fused all the failed remnants together into this Giant Ruler Sword.

It seemed very likely that the refiner who originally made the Giant Ruler Sword was none other than Master Shen.

Beside him, Shang Han watched Chen Yu and Master Shen walk away, the surprise in his eyes fading into a look of envious dissatisfaction.

Soon after, Chen Yu followed Master Shen to a spacious Artifact Refining chamber.

"Master Shen plans to personally refine a treasure for me?" Chen Yu asked with a smile.

"No, I will help you refine this sword!" Master Shen, eyeing the Giant Ruler Sword, held a hint of obstinacy.

He was, by nature, an uncompromising Artifact Refiner determined to succeed in creating the Divine Weapons he envisioned.

Years ago, he had set out to create a High Grade King-level Treasure but repeatedly failed. Eventually, out of materials and out of options, he used all the failures to create this Giant Ruler Sword.

Now, encountering the Giant Ruler Sword again, a strong resolve ignited within him to erase this blemish from his career of refining.

And then Liu Yuan had just earlier belittled the sword as worthless.

Master Shen had his pride as an Artifact Refiner and decided to exert every effort to help Chen Yu refine this Giant Ruler Sword.

"That's even better," Chen Yu said, smiling.

Having grown accustomed to using the Giant Ruler Sword, if not for its relatively low grade, he would not have considered replacing it.

Following that, Master Shen set to work.

The Giant Ruler Sword was his own creation, allowing him to assess its condition with a glance, instantly familiar with its intricacies.

After some thought, he outlined a plan for meticulous refinement.

Then began the intricate process of refinement.

Five days later, Master Shen let out a light chuckle, revealing to Chen Yu the newly refined Giant Ruler Sword.