

F Disciples 531

Chapter 531: Great Match

Chen Wentian looked around to make sure that no one was aware of what had transpired.

His other disciples were sitting in front of them and busy watching the duels. There were some glances backward but all they saw was Lin Qingcheng leaning against him with her eyes closed. Although it was an intimate scene, they thought nothing of it. They probably were wishing to be in her place at that moment.

He shooed them away, acting as if nothing was out of the ordinary. He had just done something very risky. If Lin Qingcheng had not been able to maintain her facade, it would have been a great embarrassment for them both. But she had so everything was alright and the danger of being caught only added to the thrill.

Beyond their section of the stands, there were some disapproving expressions from nearby immortals. These people had no possibility of knowing what he had just done. He wasn't quite sure. Perhaps they were jealous of his amazing disciples.

He stared them down one by one, silently telling them to mind their own business. All turned away obediently except for one, a female immortal he recognized.

"Can I help you?" He asked, sending his voice over through spiritual energy.

His recipient was a tall, regal woman with sleek black hair. She was older but still beautiful and her age only enhanced her noble aura. Except for the female immortals of the Virtuous Order, she was perhaps the most attractive... not that he knew anything about it because he wasn't attracted to old people.

Immortal Phoenix Legend Shi Shi eyed him sternly like a teacher to a naughty student, "Immortal Blue Dragon Chen Wentian... I didn't expect this is how you allow your disciples to behave."

As she spoke, he couldn't help but focus on her smooth jaw and her slender neck. Her complexion was flawless apart from a few wrinkles around her eyes and her high cheeks.

"Ahem." He coughed awkwardly, "Hello to you too, Lord Shi Shi. Have you been well? I see you haven't aged one bit since we last met."

Shi Shi snorted, "I had thought you were better than this."

"Huh?" He replied.

"At the Eastern Sanmu Metropolis, you stood up to so many powerful people for the sake of your disciples. It was really something. Really inspiring. If I had been in your position then, I could not have done the same. But... seeing you like this; I thought you were better than this."

Chen Wentian scratched his head, unsure what to make of her words. There seemed to be some hidden message or underlying meaning that he couldn't quite grasp.

"Are you talking about her?" He said, pointing to Lin Qingcheng who was still slumped against him, "She is my prime disciple. What's wrong with her?"

Shi Shi crossed her arms, clearly peeved, "I know you care about your disciples but they are not children nor are they your equals. Do you have any dignity as an immortal? The master is above while the disciple is below. This is the natural order of things. What you let your disciples get away with... you shouldn't treat them like that!"

"I don't really care. I will treat my disciples however I want."

"You should care!" She shot back, "Do you know the number of ridiculous rumors flying around about you? They say you sleep with all of your disciples, that your sect is nothing but an excuse to find pretty girls to warm your bed. They say you even orchestrated the demise of Immortal Frost Diamond Murong Aiyin in order to obtain Long Yifei and the thousands of untouched beauties of Glacier Palace. Now you are acting like this in broad daylight, like a frivolous scoundrel. Your reputation is almost completely ruined!"

"Oh..." He opened his mouth and then closed it.

He knew the gist of the rumors. He didn't care about them before but something about Shi Shi made him concerned for the first time. It was as if he cared about how she thought of him, just a tiny bit.

"Well. As an immortal, you shouldn't believe in idle rumors and lies. You should look at the facts and let them speak for themselves. I have brought nine disciples with me to the Convocation of Swords. Do you know how many disciples I have in total? Eleven. If I was as the rumors describe, why would I have so few disciples? Let me ask you, how many disciples have you brought today?"

She replied quickly, "I have brought twenty-six."

"Out of that number, how many do you expect to enter the Forest of Swords?" He asked.

"It all goes well, there should be at least five."

"Only five?"

"Five is already very good!" Shi Shi retorted with a surprising amount of vigor.

Chen Wentian shrugged with his hands, "Well, I'm sure five is very good. As for me, I expect all nine of my disciples to enter the forest."

"Don't be ridiculous. How can all of them make it?"

"They can make it because my disciples are all talented and I provide the best cultivation resources and methods. I spoil my disciples because they deserve it." He said.

"You don't need to boast. It is unbecoming."

"You don't believe me? Let's make a bet."

Shi Shi shook her head, "Let's not. You helped me and my disciples the last time around. I was able to get out of marrying my disciples to the Rainbow Canyon Temple thanks to the information you provided. I was hoping our two sects could have a friendly relationship and bets have a way of getting in the way of that."

"Ah... not even a friendly bet?"

She answered with a glare but this didn't dissuade him.

"You expect to get five disciples into the forest. I expect nine. Let's bet on the over-under. Loser owes the winner a friendly favor." He insisted.

Shi Shi's glare increased in severity if that was even possible, "Let's be serious. I didn't find you to make idle bets. I wanted to thank you for your help and I wanted to do something for you in return."

"Oh?" He asked, interested in what she had to offer.

He had indeed helped her though he had not done much. He had merely leaked the tidbit of information that two disciples of Rainbow Canyon Temple that had caused the scandal were in fact sleeping with each other. Using this, Shi Shi had been able to make a formal complaint to the Four Kings and get the marriages canceled, saving her disciples from a life of shame.

Shi Shi's eyes softened when she spoke again, "I have a way to dispel all the rumors about you so that you may regain your honor and repair your reputation. Are you interested?"

"Depends."

"It's simple. Your disciples are not young. As their master, you are responsible for important matters concerning their life and happiness."

"What?" Chen Wentian asked, having no idea what she was talking about.

She continued, "You can easily dispel all of these nasty rumors if disciples marry. Have they received any marriage proposals yet?"

"What?" This time, he was quite stunned.

"Listen, I have this talented disciple named Gao Ren." Shi Shi said brightly, "He is thirty-five this year. He is my brightest star at this Convocation of Swords. I think he will be a great match for your disciple, Wu Qianyu."

"What? No! Absolutely Not!"

Chapter 532: New Strategy

"Why not?" Shi Shi prodded, "Gao Ren is quite handsome. He is already at the first lesser realm of Spiritual Growth and making great progress towards Spiritual Formation."

"I said no, that's my final answer!" Chen Wentian retorted.

He was suddenly boiling with anger. The mere thought of his disciples, his women, marrying other people sent him into an uncontrollable spiral of negative emotion. They were his. How can he give them away to other men? Preposterous!

"If you are unwilling to relinquish Wu Qianyu, then perhaps, that Li Yuechan will also be a suitable match." She tried once more.

It was her responsibility to find suitable matches for her talented disciples. Ones like Gao Ren didn't often fall out of the tree. Marrying within the sect or her province was an option but the choices were limited. It was much better to seek equally talented people from other immortal sects.

From her point of view, Chen Wentian and her were both immortals with notable sects. Her proposal was a reasonable one that could lead to better relationships between them. It was always good to have allies. There should be no reason for him to refuse her unless...

"None of my disciples are marrying anyone!"

Shi Shi sighed. It seemed the rumors were true. He was indeed a serial womanizer. She had hoped it wasn't true. She quite liked this new immortal who popped out of nowhere to widespread fame and notoriety. His aura was quite youthful and refreshing.

"I knew it. You are sleeping with them!" She muttered, resigned to the fact and far more disappointed than she expected.

"This conversation is over!" Chen Wentian snapped back and blocked off her spiritual voice with his flaming aura.

He ignored her reaction and refused to look in her direction. He didn't know what her intentions were and he didn't care. He had no need for alliance and he had no need for nosy old bags interjecting themselves into his business. If her disciple was so talented, then she could marry him. Why did she have to come after his disciples?

He had thought that he was starting to understand women after being around his disciples for a while. But it seemed that old immortal women were a different type of animal. He recalled Immortal Gentle Lotus, that slutty old witch, as well as the beautiful but scheming women of the Order. They were all dangerous creatures and he vowed to stay far away from them.

"Master... are you alright?" Zhou Ziyun's voice broke him out of a stupor.

Chen Wentian coughed a few times and looked up at her, "Yeah."

She looked at him suspiciously before speaking, "I have been analyzing the level of competition. From the performances so far, I have come to a certain conclusion."

"Oh? What is it?"

"The challenge tournament is tougher than I expected. It won't be a problem for Chengcheng, Sister Wu, and myself but Sister Li and the others are at a disadvantage because of their specialization. If we just let the tournament run its course naturally, they have a high chance of missing the final ranking by the end of the third day." She paused to gauge his reaction.

Chen Wentian was still annoyed by the previous conversation with Shi Shi. He understood Zhou Ziyun's implication so he was quite eager to hear what she had in mind.

"I do have a strategy for improving their odds but it will require us to be shameless. It is your choice and depends on how determined you are to get everyone onto the final ranking." She said, confirming his thoughts.

He was fine with that. Since everyone already thought of him as a shameless cad, there was no reason to hold back. If all of his disciples could enter the forest, it would mean that his disciples were the best. That would mean his Ten Thousand Flower Valley was the best and all these jealous sect masters and rumor mongers could eat shit for all he cared.

"Let's go with shameless. The more the better." He said and smirked.

"Alright, this is what we should do..."

Several rounds of duels later, it was Zhou Ziyun's turn to take the stage. She wasn't a critical part of the new strategy so she didn't do anything out of the ordinary. She challenged a random cultivator from a minor sect at the bottom of the rankings, a fight she was sure to win. She was at the 8th Level of the Spirit Initiate Realm while her opponent was at the 9th Level.

Unlike Lin Qingcheng's opponent, Zhou Ziyun's opponent wasn't as skilled so she won easily by utilizing the Flying Dragon Saber Art. A mortal sword art had no chance of contending against a saber art created by dragons.

Although it was over before it had even started, she made sure to drag out the fight and not make it so obvious. She wasn't as overbearing as Wu Qianyu or showy as Lin Qingcheng. She also did not use a questionable strategy like the ice sisters. Thus, her win attracted some attention but not as much as the others, which was exactly what she wanted.

The new strategy only showed its true form when Xu Lanyi was selected to challenge someone. Since she had started the day on the raking pillar, she still had one challenge to expend. She could have chosen a wide variety of options but what she chose was truly unexpected.

"I challenge Wu Qianyu of Ten Thousand Flower Valley!" Xu Lanyi's voice brought silence across the entire convocation.

"Wu Qianyu present!" Wu Qianyu's quick response only astonished everyone even further.

"Are they enemies?"

"Why are they dueling each other?"

"Chen Wentian can't even control his women, is he a man?"

Disciples of the same sect challenging each other was not unheard of but it was a rare sight. There was little point except to settle personal grudges. Those that did so would often get swiftly punished by their sect masters afterward.

This Convocation of Swords was a difficult competition between powerful sects. Sects had to be united and combine their strength to achieve anything noteworthy. A self-inflicted wound such as Xu Lanyi's challenge was ridiculous, a testament to a sect's lack of discipline and the sect master's lack of ability.

"Begin!" Jin Wu's voice brought noise and excitement back to the arena.

The audience was eager to see how these two women would settle their scores. However, Xu Lanyi and Wu Qianyu didn't bother to draw their swords or even attempt to fight. Instead, they stood close together in the middle of the stage and had a pleasant conversation.

"Sister Wu, thank you for doing this for us." Xu Lanyi said.

Wu Qianyu smiled, "Even if master had not instructed us to follow this new strategy, I would have done the same if you or your sisters had asked."

"It was my fault for not being diligent enough. I should have spent more time practicing Dugu's Tenth Sword." Xu Lanyi said.

Wu Qianyu shook her head, "Everyone has their own path. This is master's wisdom. You should continue to work on your ice and fire arts. You will have plenty of time to explore sword arts if you wish after you have ascended to the immortal realms."

"I suppose." Xu Lanyi replied and looked around the noisy crowd, "Well, should we piss everyone off?"

"You always have a way with words." Wu Qianyu said lightly.

She then turned around and glided off the stage, forfeiting the duel.

The crowd exploded in complaints but they were all useless as the judge declared very reluctantly, "Winner, Xu Lanyi..."

Chapter 533: Public Opinion

The way of the sword was a conservative one that followed age-old traditions. Those who practiced the sword encouraged noble doctrines and righteous conduct. If the sword they wielded was dignified, then the swordsman had to behave similarly. Many sword arts passed down through generations, that spread across the Eastern Sanmu Subcontinent, had these teachings, teachings that were utterly opposed to the actions of the disciples of Ten Thousand Flower Valley.

If their prior strategy of fleeing from their opponent was offensive, then this new strategy was despicable. The challenge tournament was supposed to be a test of individual strength, whether a person could hold their own against the sword cultivators of the subcontinent to earn the right to enter the Forest of Swords.

If Xu Lanyi was too weak to defend her spot on the ranking pillar, then she didn't deserve it. For her to get a free win like that was unacceptable. It was an inditement against her, Wu Qianyu, their sect, and also their sect master. They were Chen Wentian's disciples. If they were like this, then he was sure to be even worse.

Immortal Thousand Sword Jin Wu, as one of the hosts of the convocation and the one currently presiding over the challenge tournament, could no longer sit still. Amidst the cries of outrage, he took action and arrived in front of Chen Wentian in a whirl of sword energy.

"Lord Chen, what is the meaning of this?" He asked, his face a mask of severity.

"Meaning of what?" Chen Wentian responded uncaringly.

He knew what he was doing would enrage certain people. This was inevitable since many didn't like him to begin with. They were jealous of his rapid rise to fame, jealous of his disciples such as Wu Qianyu and Long Yifei.

He didn't care what others thought of him. Immortals were naturally arrogant and envious creatures. It was a waste of time trying to please everyone. He had always been a loner. The only validation he ever needed was from himself and his soul art. Now that he had a sect, he also cared about what his disciples thought of him but that was it.

"You know what I mean." Jin Wu retorted. "That stunt your disciples just pulled."

"Oh, that. But... I'm confused. Have they broken the rules of the challenge tournament?" Chen Wentian asked

"No, but..."

"Then I don't see what's the problem. Please continue with the tournament."

Jin Wu's spiritual energy rose and fell in great waves as he tried to control his anger, "So... you have no intention of stopping these shameful strategies?"

"I think you know my answer." Chen Wentian answered flatly.

Jin Wu was left speechless. After a long pause, he harrumphed in frustration and took off towards the other three members of the Great Four atop the southern stands.

After a short conversation, all four were left helpless as Chen Wentian's disciples had indeed not broken any rules. They would become the unreasonable ones if they kicked Chen Wentian out over this matter. In a last-ditch effort, they turned to the honored guests to seek their opinion and their support.

"Senior Ancestor Yang?" They asked hopefully.

Yang Maoda didn't even look at them. He was expressionless and unblinking as he stared at Chen Wentian, the enemy of the Yang Clan of Great Waves. According to his young lord, Yang Gehu, Chen Wentian was supposed to be a cunning foe and a strong fighter. Before his eyes, he saw a completely different person, one who was willful and ignorant, who stumbled into situations and likely survived due to dumb luck.

But he knew this version of Chen Wentian was fake. He trusted his young lord's words. This mulish public display had to be an act but the reason for it remained unclear. He could not figure out how behaving like this, ruining one's reputation could be beneficial in any way. And since his enemy's motivation was unknown, it left him confused and unsure of how to proceed.

"Lord Qiu?" Yang Kaitian asked after Yang Maoda remained unresponsive.

Qiu Chuyi bowed his head slightly. "I am merely a guest. It is improper for me to interject in matters such as rules."

He sorely wanted to join them in condemning Chen Wentian but he had been instructed by the Lion Lord and the Eagle Lord not to antagonize anyone during this trip. His job was to observe and not cause any trouble. The Beast God Sanctum was still recovering and building up its strength. Publicly backing the Four Greats would satisfy his own distaste of Chen Wentian but it would also create another enemy who had strong backers in the Virtuous Order. The Beast God Sanctum already had enough enemies in the three beast kings. It didn't need anymore.

Disappointed, the four turned to the final guest, Immortal Ardent Duchess Su Tan. She came from the Huang Family and represented the Immortal Association for the Eastern Sanmu Subcontinent.

"Lady Su, what do you think? What should we do with Chen Wentian?" Jin Wu asked,

Su Tan looked around and merely shrugged, also refusing to speak up. She represented the will of the Immortal Association and their will was to not antagonize Chen Wentian. That battle at the Eastern Sanmu Metropolis between the Virtuous Order and the Sororal Order had shaken the four kings deeply. Compared to figures from the main continent, they were merely small fish in a tiny pond. They did not wish to draw attention to themselves.

In her personal opinion, Su Tan did not have a good impression of Chen Wentian. He was a simpleton and a dirty womanizer. He wasn't very good-looking either.

She preferred refined men, beautiful men, men who would place her and her alone in their hearts. Someone like Chen Wentian was everything she disliked. She would have liked nothing less than to see him publicly humiliated and kicked out of the Convocation of Swords. But she still could not go against her orders so she could not say anything.

The four sword masters turned to each other in disappointment. With no support from these greater powers, they could do nothing. After another quick conversation, they returned to their seats.

Jin Wu flew back to his post at the front of the arena and declared loudly, "The disciples of Ten Thousand Flower Valley have not broken any rules. The challenge tournament will proceed."

Chen Wentian turned to Zhou Ziyun, "You were right. They really didn't dare to do anything to us."

Zhou Ziyun looked up from her scroll where she was jotting down notes, "A small victory. Many people are still angry at us. They will surely challenge us at every opportunity. I'm afraid Xue'er, Yue'er, and the others will have to fight many duels."

"That's good, more practice for you."

She continued sternly, "That's not all. Now that this strategy is allowed, others are sure to use it as well. After all, this is the easiest way to get weaker disciples into the rankings. This will result in many strong opponents coming off the ranking totem on the third day. This adds a substantial amount of uncertainty. The final result and whether or not we will all be able to enter the forest will depend on luck."

"I've always felt that I'm a pretty lucky person." Chen Wentian chuckled, "Three days, two nights. I think that's plenty of time to make some magic happen."

"Oh? What kind of magic, master?" Lin Qingcheng chimed in, appearing beside him.

She looked refreshed and recovered from her previous ordeal.

"I'm glad you asked!" He replied with a devilish glint in his eyes.

Chapter 534: Twin Pearls (I)

The afternoon duels continued at a steady pace. Lin Qingcheng remained by Chen Wentian's side. They sat close together and conversed secretively, occasionally sharing giggles and laughs. Occasionally, their hands would even fight with each other.

"Aiya. Chengcheng is so unfair, keeping master all to herself." Su Xue muttered softly, mostly to herself.

All of the other disciples could see the attention Lin Qingcheng was getting. This elicited many different responses and jealousy was one of them.

Su Yue nudged her twin, "Sis, she is the first disciple. What's the point of complaining? It's natural for the first disciple to be by their master's side."

Although she said this, Su Yue also felt the same as Su Xue. She would have much preferred to be the one sitting beside Chen Wentian, receiving all of his attention. Su Xue and Su Yue were used to being easygoing and broad-minded because they always had to follow their elder sisters. But this didn't mean they didn't have their own desires, desires to be recognized and praised by their master.

They had managed to live a good life so far like this but they weren't quite satisfied. They didn't want to always follow, they wanted to achieve something on their own. This was why they had started exploring some interests separate from their elder sisters such as winemaking. They also held hopes of impressing their master at the Convocation with their improved skills and cultivation progress before they had to resort to the effective but boring delaying tactic.

"I know that. I can still complain, can't I?" Su Xue grumbled.

Su Yue sighed and leaned back into her seat, silently agreeing.

A few rounds later, Lin Qingcheng was challenged by an energetic but no-named cultivator from an unremarkable sect. After she left, Su Xue and Su Yue breathed sighs of relief and together, glanced backward at Chen Wentian. To their delight, he was unoccupied. He had not called Zhou Ziyun, Wu Qianyu, or anyone else to his side.

They looked at each other and nodded resolutely, encouraging each other. They silently stood up from their seats, climbed the short steps, and slipped in beside their master on either side.

"Hmm?" Chen Wentian looked at them in turn quizzically.

"Master..." Su Xue spoke coyly, her voice low and intimate, "Are you enjoying the convocation?"

Chen Wentian held back a smirk. He knew what they were doing but he continued to play dumb. "A little, I guess. A bit boring, I would say."

Su Yue's eyes brightened, "Then, I hope with our company, master won't feel so bored."

Seeing their eager faces and having overheard their private complaints, Chen Wentian couldn't quite hold back any longer. He grinned widely and wrapped his arms around their shoulders, pulling them closer.

"Silly girls, there is a very important reason I had Chengcheng beside me for a long time. Do you want to know why?" He asked.

They shook their heads at the same time.

"Well..." He said, his voice becoming barely a whisper, "I was actually helping her cultivate secretly."

"Cultivate? How does she cultivate?" Su Xue asked.

It was something that none of them knew, exactly how Lin Qingcheng was able to cultivate so quickly. She had to have some unique power but Su Xue and Su Yue had no idea what it was.

Chen Wentian chuckled and shook his head, "I'm sorry, I cannot reveal her unique ability. But working with her has given me an inspiration, an idea to help you and your sisters so that you can cultivate outside of our regular sessions?"

The twins blushed and Su Yue spoke up, "Master, we had no such thoughts, I promise! We just wanted to keep you company."

He smirked, knowing he had already caught their interest. He held up a finger to his lips and then spoke to them using spiritual energy, "Xue'er, Yue'er, I have thought about this matter for a long time. I can't always be with you and your sisters to cultivate using the frozen netherworld jade. This has delayed your cultivation progress and I am very regretful. If it wasn't for me, you both could have been at the 9th Level of the Spirit Initiate Realm already."

"Master, we don't blame you, how can we blame you?" Su Xue insisted, tugging at his sleeve.

He nodded and shushed her again, "Listen, I have devised a method for you to cultivate without me, in broad daylight, or anywhere you want. It may shock you, it may be distasteful, but I hope you can keep an open mind."

He waited for them to nod their heads and continued, "Your dual attribute body is special. You can cultivate both fire and ice at the same time. You can use resources of both elements, balancing them out inside your body and absorbing both at the same time. Based on this concept, our special method of dual-cultivation that we've always done is highly effective. Combining the power of the frozen netherworld jade and my blue dragon flames, you can receive a huge amount of spiritual energy in one go. But as I have said, I can't always be around you so I can't always help you cultivate. Therefore, I have come up with a second method that is substantially weaker but that you can take with you and perform without me."

He retrieved two sets of items from his spatial bag. They were identical and each had one red orb and one blue orb the size of large grapes attached to each other with a fine gold chain. There was another longer chain attached to one end which led to a golden loop.

"This one is an aquamarine pearl and this one is a lava pearl. Both are valuable spiritual crystals that contain a substantial amount of ice and fire spiritual energy. Take it, one set for you and one set for you."

Su Xue and Su Yue held the strange contraption in their hands, feeling the icy and flaming energies radiate off the surface. Although they were weak compared to the frozen netherworld jade, they were superior to ordinary spiritual crystals by several grades.

"You are wondering how to use them? It's quite simple. Since I cannot always be by your side, these orbs will take my place. They are meant to go inside you where they will continue to emit ice and flame energy until they are depleted. Utilizing Summer and Winter's Eternal Sutra, you can control and meld these elements together throughout the day."

He paused after dropping the explanation and observed their faces rapidly shift in color. They went from blue with discomfort to red with embarrassment. He almost laughed as they both glared at him with accusing eyes.

Chapter 535: Twin Pearls (II)

"Why... why..." Su Yue stuttered, almost too embarrassed to utter the words, "Why do we have to have them inside?"

Although they had done many indescribable things together with Chen Wentian, it was all in a safe and private space. They had never dared to talk about such intimate things in public so it was a huge shock to them. They had also never considered putting anything inside themselves even though they knew about such matters.

"Yeah! Why can't we just hold it in our hands and draw out the spiritual energy like that." Su Xue added.

The twins looked at each other for support, believing that this was a trick of some kind.

"You could but it won't be as effective." Chen Wentian said. "The aquamarine pearl and the lava pearl are both high-level elemental crystals. The spiritual energy that they emit is intense and distinctive. If you hold it in your hand, you won't be able to capture all of the escaping spiritual energy even if you expended a lot of your own to control it. See for yourself."

He pulled back on his own immortal aura that was wrapped around the icy aquamarine pearl. Instantly, great waves of cold energy surged forth, causing people in several levels of the stands nearby to look in their direction.

"Until you reach the lesser realms, spiritual crystals of this quality require cultivation arrays made from runes and inscriptions to properly capture it all. But that's not all. You might be able to get away with ice-attribute crystals but you won't be able to use fire-attribute crystals without giving away your dual-attribute physique. It is a very important secret and I wouldn't want you to reveal it just to cultivate in public."

Chen Wentian paused to gauge their reactions. They were still suspicious and reluctant but he could see that they were beginning to come around. They were still far more obedient than the other ice sisters so the twins were the perfect ones to test out these twin pearls on. He just needed to give them a few more pushes.

"If you put these pearls inside you, then guess what? You won't need to expend too much effort to capture all the spiritual energy they emit. You'll also be able to use both attributes at the same time. Your dual-attribute physique and dual-attribute immortal arts mean that you can cultivate twice as fast as even the most talented cultivators with only one attribute."

"I don't know..." Su Xue muttered.

She was teetering on the fence while Su Yue already seemed half convinced.

Chen Wentian rubbed their shoulders, "You two are the closest to a breakthrough to the next level. Think of how much stronger you'll become. You'll definitely be able to enter the Forest of Swords then!"

Their expressions changed as they started to give in so he went for the win, "Don't you trust me? When have I ever led you astray? I spent a lot of money to have these twin pearls created just for you two, my precious twin pearls."

Su Xue and Su Yue both blushed when he said that. Their eyes glittered with happiness and they were convinced.

"Will... it hurt?" Su Yue asked.

"No. The crystal surfaces are polished to remove any bumps and edges, they are as smooth as silk. They won't cause any discomfort inside you."

"And this ring? What does it do?" Su Xue asked, fingering the golden ring that was at the end of the slender gold chain.

"That is just a safety feature, in case you need to take the pearls out quickly."

"Oh..."

"Alright, since you both are willing to try it, let's try it right now." He said brightly.

"Right... now?" They both muttered, stunned.

"Of course! They are meant to be used throughout the day, for you to cultivate secretly while others around you are unaware. Come, the changing rooms are in the back. Go, don't be shy." He said and pushed them towards the rear.

The stands were separated into sections for each sect. Every section was given private changing rooms in case the contestants needed to change out of bloody or damaged outfits after a duel. It provided the perfect cover for this kind of business.

Chen Wentian barely paid attention to the ongoing challenges as he waited impatiently outside. It only took a few moments for the twins to emerge, their faces bright red and both walking with slightly unnatural gaits. He beckoned them over and they sat down on either side of him.

"How do you feel?" He asked them in a whisper.

"It's... a little tight. I'm still getting used to the size." Su Xue said.

He grinned, "I thought you would be used to that size by now since I'm bigger than that."

They both understood his innuendo and did not appreciate it. Su Xue even nudged him in the ribs, having learned the trick from Xu Lanyi.

"Alright, alright, I'm sorry. How are you coping with the spiritual energies?" He asked with a modicum of propriety.

"Very well." Su Yue replied somewhat stiffly. "I'm already utilizing both fire and ice powers to control the energies coming from the twin pearls. How do I look?"

"Very beautiful, with a stern but sexy expression." He replied.

"Be serious!" Su Yue admonished much like her elder sister Song Wushuang.

He chuckled, "I am serious. From my perspective, you simply look like you are in a serious mood. Nothing more. This close to you, I can somewhat sense the mix of fire and ice spiritual energies inside you. But that's only because of my immortal sense. I would say as long as an immortal is not within one meter of you, they won't be able to sense anything."

"What about me, master?" Su Xue asked.

"The exact same, equally lovely, and so similar I almost can't tell you apart." He teased.

The twins blushed prettily before their serious expressions returned. They took on the matter of their cultivation with earnest effort and concentrated on the twin pearls inside them.

Chen Wentian watched them intently, hoping and waiting until...

"Oh!" Su Yue squealed softly.

He could already guess but he asked, "Yue'er what's wrong?"

"I'm... I'm... wet." She mumbled hiding her face with her hands.

A few moments later, Su Xue stirred as well, "Ah, I'm wet too."

"Really?" Chen Wentian asked, pretending to be concerned.

He knew this would happen. A woman's inner depths were naturally delicate so inserting two foreign objects was bound to cause a reaction. There were fiery and icy energies battling constantly, leading to all kinds of turmoil and tension. Such stresses in that sensual environment, it was bound to lead to unexpected pleasure.

"Stay still, let me check!" He said brilliantly.

Before they could think of complaining, his hands were on their upper thigh as his spiritual energy formed in physical shape as he dug underneath their clothes.

However, unlike the previous session with Lin Qingcheng, he wasn't able to get very far before being rudely interrupted.

"Master! Master!" Zhou Ziyun's severe voice drew him out of his real-life fantasy.

"Huh? What's wrong?" He asked dumbly, his mind still not quite there yet.

She rolled her eyes in frustration, "Yingluo is being called down. It's time for the secondary tournament for the Mind Focusing Realm cultivators."

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Chapter 536: Desprate Battle (I)

For the Mind Focusing Realm sword cultivators, the Convocation of Swords organized a series of free-for-all battles that utilized the entire arena. Including Bei Yingluo, around forty other people were called down, their names having been drawn at random.

Bei Yingluo stood near the center of the arena, adorned in a sandy-pink-colored battle robe. Her honey-blonde hair was tied up in a neat bun. She felt out of place as she looked around anxiously at her competition.

Many were at the 10th Level of the Mind Focusing Realm. They had been waiting for this day for years and years. Some were even known to purposefully delay their advancement to the Spirit Initiate Realm just for a better chance of entering the Forest of Swords.

Other competitors were slightly lower in level but none were below the 6th Level. Compared to them, she was an oddity because she was only at the 3rd Level. By all common sense, someone like her should not have participated in the convocation. They would only embarrass themselves and their sect. There was plenty of time to cultivate and wait for the next convocation in five years.

Bei Yingluo gripped the hem of her sleeves and gritted her teeth. She tried to ignore the deafening noise of the crowd and the menacing stares in her direction. She glanced upward towards the east. She squinted and could barely make out her master, still sitting cozily with the twins on either side of him. A flash of envy filled her stomach which quickly turned into a surge of motivation.

Ordinary cultivators could wait five years but she couldn't. She was the disciple of an immortal, an immortal who had so many amazing disciples, each one stronger than her, prettier than her. But this only increased her desire to catch his attention, to make him proud.

His eyes were on her now and she hoped that they would remain until the end, this eleventh disciple with a unique power that defied the heavens.

"Swordsmen and swordswomen of the subcontinent! I present to you the finest sword cultivators of the Mind Focusing Realm!" Immortal Thousand Swords Jin Wu's voice sliced across the arena. He was already floating in mid-air as he addressed the crowd, "This is the first of eleven matches we will hold across today and the next two days. It is a free-for-all battle with the last three standing fighters as the winners who will have earned the noble right to enter the Forest of Swords!"

He paused to let the crowd let out their cheers of excitement and shouts of support.

"Excellent, excellent. The rules are as follows. Only weapons considered swords are allowed. No fatal strikes are allowed. Contestants may go for vital points provided they hold back their attacks. Judges will be posted around the outside of the fighting area and they will be constantly observing. If someone suffers what should have been a critical wound, then it is their loss and they must vacate the arena. Now..."

Jin Wu raised his hands as a light gray energy barrier appeared along the edges of the square platform. This created a huge square set of walls that enclosed the contestants.

"If anyone touches the barrier or is forced to by others, that person is considered out. To prevent everyone from congregating in the middle, every five minutes, the barrier will shrink, decreasing the area available. There is no time limit and the battle will continue until only three people are left. Does everyone understand the rules?"

"Yes, immortal!"

"Yes, Lord Jin!"

"Contestants, prepare for battle!"

Instantly, the forty or so sword cultivators drew their swords and spread out. There were longswords, heavy swords, sabers, and even some short swords barely bigger than daggers. Everyone was at the Mind Focusing Realm so there was no spiritual energy. But their combined martial aura was still something to behold as they all readied their minds and bodies for a difficult struggle.

Bei Yingluo found herself an open spot. Her pudao appeared in a flash. The handle was one meter long and made of steel wrapped with leather. The blade was another meter long. It was wide, straight, double-edged, and tapered to a sharp point.

She gripped the curious sword-like weapon with both hands and looked around for potential opponents or threats. Others were doing the same and many were looking in her direction. She was the weakest and an easy target.

"What's a little chick doing in such a battle?" A derisive voice came from her right. "This place is not for someone like you."

She turned to see a tall, slender young man with an equally slender sword that was as thin as a piece of paper. His robes were white and bland except for the character of Huang which was displayed prominently. It signified that he was a disciple of the Mount Huang Sect.

The young man had a sharp demeanor and his body language exuded confidence. She could tell from a glance he would not be an easy opponent and so she took half step away from him instinctively.

"Hey, you! Do you think I'm an easier target than him? Don't kid yourself!" A gruff voice came from behind.

It belonged to a large woman who was bigger than most men. She carried a heavy sword that was over two meters in length, a massive weapon that suited her equally massive frame. Her sword aura was even more fearsome than the Mount Huang Sect disciple, so much so that other people were giving her a wide berth.

Bei Yingluo felt sweat trickle down her back. She retreated from one monstrous opponent only to be met with another one. Everyone standing on the stage seemed overwhelming to her.

Only a year ago, she was still at the Body Refinement Realm. She had made rapid progress and broke through to the Mind Focusing Realm thanks to her master's teachings and what seemed like endless cultivation resources. Her clan was recovering and she was living a good life.

Despite this, she was still the same person she had been before she joined Ten Thousand Flower Valley. She was inexperienced. She was insecure. She wasn't sure if she could properly call upon her unique ability in times of need. She was still weak...

"Begin!"

Chapter 537: Desperate Battle (II)

Bei Yingluo's grip on her weapon tightened as cries of battle rang out all around her. The two people she had made eye contact with prior were already heading in her direction. The slender disciple of the Mount Huang Sect approached deliberately with steady steps while that giant of a woman had already broken out into a full sprint, charging at her like a rabid cow.

They saw her as an easy target to get rid of. A quick victory would help them build confidence and momentum. They would be seen by others as being strong fighters and gain a strategic edge in this wild free-for-all.

Bei Yingluo shifted her body slightly so that she was exactly between both opponents, keeping track of them out of the corner of her eyes. If she fled, they would both come after her and she wasn't sure if she could outrun them. If she stood and fought, there was no possibility except defeat.

She exhaled and made her decision. She turned towards the slender one and sprinted towards him, fleeing the charging cow who was now behind her.

The Mount Huang Sect disciple made a derisive face. His sword whipped forward at her face, waving and dancing like a snake. His weapon was the infamous soft sword, a weapon made of the most flexible metals. This allowed the blade to move unpredictably and attack from unexpected angles.

Bei Yingluo ignored the incoming flashes of steel. She could barely catch glimpses of the soft sword, let alone defend against it. Instead, she focused on what she had to do and the one chance it gave her to escape this situation.

Her steps didn't slow and within half a breath, she was within range of her opponent. The soft sword snaked towards her neck area but she was no longer there. Thrusting her pudao into the ground and using the ridiculously long sword for leverage, she vaulted into the air.

Ping! Ping!

The soft sword struck the handle of the pudao and bounced off harmlessly.

For a brief instant, everything froze as she balanced on the tip of the handle with one hand, her body completely upside-down. She was like an acrobat under the light of the setting sun, dancing to her own tune.

Her momentum took her over the astonished man. She pulled her weapon along with her as she completed the summersault. She landed lightly on her toes and immediately sprinted away.

"What the..." He muttered but then sensed danger behind.

He whirled around, only to be met with a giant mass of a woman, her equally huge sword about to sweep him off his feet.

"Shit!" He cursed and ducked underneath the blade, "What the hell are you doing?"

"What am I doing? Why are you doing?" The large woman shouted back, her voice like a bullhorn.

"What?"

"Get out of the way or I'll chop you into meat paste!" She shouted again.

The Mount Huang Sect disciple was now thoroughly enraged, "You bitch, taste my sword!"

"Haha, come on!"

Bei Yingluo spared a quick glance backward. Both of her opponents were now locked in furious battle, leaving her in the clear momentarily. Those two probably would have preferred not to fight each other but they were left with no choice after her clever move.

She turned away from them and observed the battle as a whole. Most contestants were busy, fighting in pairs or threes. Some people were quickly defeated while others refused to give up. Dueling partners shifted and changed with the flow of battle. New partners were quickly found and swords clashed without pause. It was like a dance, a deadly dance between sword cultivators struggling for survival and supremacy.

Bei Yingluo dodged and weaved through the throng, never picking a fight with anyone and fleeing with haste at the first sign of danger. Every time she clashed with someone, she expended a lot of strength. She was severely under-leveled and after several rounds of clashes and close escapes, the only thing that kept her going was her excellent conditioning.

Under Chen Wentian's guidance, She had been able to completely rebuild her foundation in the Body Refinement Realm. She consumed the best medicinal pills that could be acquired to strengthen her bones and tendons and removed impurities from her organs. Her physical condition had been honed to perfection by countless rounds of the Twelve Meridians Body Tempering.

Now in the Mind Focusing Realm, she relied on this foundation as she continued to dance around people.

"Where do you think you're going." A voice in front of her made her pause.

A stout young man wearing furs blocked the path. His shirt was open in the front, revealing a hairy chest. He carried a misshapen sword with a wicked spike at the end. He didn't seem orthodox in any way so he was most likely a loose cultivator.

Bei Yingluo looked around. The nearest dueling pair was at least thirty paces away due to the wide arena. It was close enough and she retreated toward them.

The man gave chase but he was far more vigilant than her previous opponents. When she somersaulted over to the other side, he did not get distracted and continued chasing her.

Bei Yingluo muttered a curse. She slid to a halt and turned to face her pursuer. She gripped her pudao resolutely and went into the first movement of the Bei Family Spear art.

The man stumbled as he tried to correct his stance. He didn't expect her to turn and fight so suddenly. In that split second of confusion, her spear-like sword thrust toward him. He felt the phantom of death as the strange weapon far surpassed his expected range and penetrated his guard and aimed for his throat.

Clang!

He managed to twist his sword around to deflect the incoming blade, sending it wide and over his shoulder.

Bei Yingluo did not let him rest. She pulled back and thrust forward again, this time at his legs. He parried and retreated but subsequent thrusts chased after him. freeweb .com

The first movement of the Bei Family Spear focused solely on attack. It utilized the long range of spears to keep an enemy at bay. It called for continuous long-range attacks to control space on the battlefield and control enemies. Without a real spear, she was still able to pull it off with the pudao but only by holding onto the very end of the handle with both hands.

This unnatural form required great strength to maintain. She could not keep going like this for long. She knew her limitations so she attacked with ferocious intensity, pushing her opponent backward in exactly the direction she wanted.

The loose cultivator gnashed his teeth in frustration but absorbed all of the attacks. He was much stronger than her so he was not under any real threat. The only problem was that his weapon was too short so he was forced to heed her flow, at least for now. He waited until she ran out of strength for his counterattack.

But that opportunity never came as he unexpectedly stumbled into some people behind him. He was so focused on the annoying pest in front of him that he did not realize which way he was being pushed.

He whirled around but it was too late. Two sword tips pressed against him before he could react, one on his chest and the other against his neck.

"Hou Bang of Black Oak Valley has been defeated!" A judge declared.

The two swords left his body and resumed fighting with each other.

The one named Hou Bang hung his head for a moment and sheathed his sword. When he looked back up, the girl he had been fighting had already fled far away. He laughed, shook his head helplessly, and left the arena.

Chapter 538: Desperate Battle (III)

"Good shit!" Xu Lanyi exclaimed, "Little sister is doing great!"

The other disciples cheered with her. They were all surprised by Bei Yingluo's performance. Although the battle was still a long way from being over, she had already pulled off several impressive moves. Given the level of competition, being able to survive until now was already quite an accomplishment.

"I'm surprised. Junior Sister Bei has quite a sharp mind. Perhaps she could even compete with Sister Zhou in that area." Wu Qianyu said.

Everybody looked at her in surprise because she rarely made any comments or gave out praises.

Zhou Ziyun smiled wryly but didn't respond. She also was taken aback by Bei Yingluo's cleverness in using other contestants against each other.

Bei Yingluo was always quiet and humble around her senior sisters. She never gave off indications of such ability before. In fact, she was also like this in front of her family and her clan so this change was truly unexpected.

Chen Wentian rubbed his chin and pondered the question. In actuality, he wasn't really surprised because he had seen this side of Bei Yingluo before. It had only been a few times but this time, he was finally able to figure it out.

The moves she made in the midst of the free-for-all battle were all risky bets that weren't guaranteed to succeed. If she had been a little slower, if she had not maneuvered her body correctly, if her opponents had realized what she was doing, there were many factors that could have resulted in quick defeat. What kept her going was a little bit of cleverness but that wasn't the most important thing. The most important thing was her desperation as well as a fearsome level of decisiveness when faced with such moments.

Her desperation in a life-or-death situation had unlocked her unbelievable realm-hopping ability for the first time. Afterward, it was that same desperation that drove her to beg him to take her in. He was the only choice out of the monkey fortress and she took it.

He didn't why but she was fighting with a similar sense of desperation today. He was curious just how far she was willing to go and how far she could go.

Immortal Thousand Swords Jin Wu soon announced that the five-minute mark had passed. Immediately, the outer barrier rapidly shrank until the width of the square decreased by a third. Several contestants that had not been prepared were left on the outside looking in.

In total, there were no more than thirty people left in the arena. One thing of interest to the audience was that two distinct groups of people had formed out of the chaotic melee. One had six people and the other had three. The larger group consisted of members of the Four Greats while the smaller group were disciples of the Tower of Swords.

These two groups preyed on individual fighters. They ganged up on people in twos and threes, easily overwhelming even the toughest opponents. The two groups made a point to avoid each other and only go after individuals. It was incredibly unfair but there was nothing in the rules against this so the lesser sects and loose cultivators could do nothing but gnash their teeth in impotent fury.

Another five minutes passed and the arena was barely one-third of its original size. The Four Greats and the Tower of Swords were still standing strong. The rest had dwindled down to merely nine contestants including Bei Yingluo.

She was still in it, a fact which was already a small miracle. She had expended a tremendous amount of strength running from the two groups of bullies, making many other contestants fall to their swords in her place.

By now, those remaining had realized the dangerous situation and stopped fighting each other. They all warily faced the disciples of the Four Greats and the Tower of Swords while still keeping an eye on others around them.

Bei Yingluo leaned on her pudaο and gasped for breath, taking the moment to try and recover. She also saw the situation for what it was. Soon, the two groups would continue to pick off the individual contestants one by one until no one else was left. Then and only then, the two factions would vie for supremacy.

She shook her head as dark thoughts threatened to overwhelm her weary mind. If she did nothing, then she would also lose without a doubt. But what could she do when here so many strong cultivators had already failed?

"Brother Chang Bo! Brother Chang Bo! Do you remember me?" One of the remaining contestants shouted. "I am Kang Ni from the Legendary Fighter League. Let's team up! Otherwise, these bastards from the Four Greats and the Tower of Swords will eat our lunch for free!"

The one named Chang Bo shot a glare at Kang Ni, "Why should I? Do I have to remind you what your sect did to my senior brother at the Glittering Cave?"

"That was an accident, an accident!" The other insisted but it was far from convincing.

These sects all had their histories and reputations. Many had already fought against each other before in sword meets or even in street brawls. They were rivals to begin with so it was impossible for them to help each other, even in such a situation.

After a few more verbal exchanges, it was clear that Chang Bo and Kang Ni were done talking and were about to start fighting.

Bei Yingluo couldn't let that happen, no matter what. If they did, then it was all over. In a moment of desperation, she made a rash decision.

"Stop! Stop fighting!" She shouted.

Nobody had even bothered to pay attention to her since she was so weak. Her interjection was so surprising that it had the intended effect, freezing everyone in their tracks.

"I am Bei Yingluo from Ten Thousand Flower Valley. Surely, all of you have heard of it, my master Immortal Blue Dragon Chen Wentian and my senior sister the famous Wu Qianyu."

"So what?" Chang Bo snapped.

Bei Yingluo ignored him and spoke rapidly, "The Four Greats and the Tower of Swords are so shameless, using numbers in what was supposed to be a free-for-all battle. Since they can do it, then we have to do the same. We have to all group together or we will be picked off by those guys one by one."

"But..." Chang Bo wanted to interject but Bei Yingluo shouted over him.

"I know you all don't want to listen to me. I know you don't trust me or anyone else. But I'm sure you all will trust this." She swept her palm outward.

There were many flashes of light that left sparking red crystals in her palm.

"Red spiritual crystal!"

"So much!"

"That's right. If you work with me, I will give each one of you one kilogram of red spiritual crystal!"

This had the intended effect and all of them stared at the crystals in her hand hungrily. Red spiritual crystal was exactly what cultivators at the peak of the Mind Focusing Realm needed. One kilogram of the precious resource was enough to allow almost anyone to break through to the Spirit Initiate Realm. This kind of offer was too tempting to ignore.

Bei Yingluo placed a fist over her heart, "I swear on my honor as a disciple of Ten Thousand Flower Valley. It doesn't matter if we prevail or not, help me fight the disciples from the Four Greats and the

Tower of Swords, one kilogram of red spiritual crystal is yours. Afterward, should we prevail, we can resume fighting each other!"

"You can't do that!" Someone from the Four Greats shouted.

"That's unfair!" Another idiot on their side joined in.

However, it was too late for them. There were few rules for this free-for-all battle. There was nothing against teaming up and there was also nothing against buying a team. It was certainly a far more shameless approach but Bei Yingluo had learned from the best.

Chang Bo cupped his fists and saluted her, "Miss Bei. I, Chang Bo of Myriad Castle, accept your plan."

"I agree as well!" Kang Ni joined in.

After those two, the others quickly fell in line without complaints.

Chapter 539: Desperate Battle (IV)

After they finished saluting Bei Yingluo, the eight cultivators from various factions looked to her for instructions. She was younger and weaker than all of them but they now saw her as their leader. She was a disciple of Ten Thousand Flower Valley. Her status was enough to garner respect.

Her wealth was also frightening. She owned a spatial bag and could throw around red spiritual crystals like it was candy. These two things were hallmarks of immortal lords, not a young woman at early levels of the Mind Focusing Realm. They wouldn't dare to offend her now.

"Miss Bei, what are your plans?" Chang Bo asked, taking charge as her primary subordinate.

He was tall with a striking, memorable face. His cultivation was among the best so nobody else bothered to fight with him for this position

"Let's strike while the iron is hot!" She said and pointed toward the group of disciples from the Tower of Swords, "Take them out!"

"Great idea, let's go!" Kang Ni said.

He was the utter opposite of Chang Bo, short with plain, forgettable features. Due to this, his forte was being loud and energetic.

They headed towards the side of the arena with the Tower of Swords disciples. Outside of Chang Bo and Kang Ni, the rest of Bei Yingluo's group consisted of two other men and four women. Their ages were all in the mid to late twenties and their cultivation was not lower than the 9th Level of the Mind Focusing Realm. To have survived the chaotic battle until now, they were all experienced fighters.

"You can't do this!" One of the Tower of Swords people shouted.

"Judge! Judge! Do something!" Another voice bellowed furiously.

The judges around the arena looked around at each other, each hoping the other would do something. They were all members of the Eastern Sword Alliance. But their own people had grouped together first to bully others during what was supposed to be a free-for-all battle. It would be hypocrisy to the extreme if they were to say anything now when the eyes of the subcontinent were on them.

Ignoring all the noise, Bei Yingluo and her cadre surrounded the three disciples from the Tower of Swords. They had an overwhelming advantage, being nine people against three. With this advantage, they quickly managed to corner the three against the barrier without even drawing their swords.

At this, the one named Kang Ni laughed mockingly, "So, do you want to give up peacefully... or do you want us to make your lives difficult?"

The disciples of the Tower of Swords glared at them defiantly for a moment before giving up and leaving the fighting area through the barrier. They were overwhelmed by numbers and chose to lose with dignity rather than be beaten into submission.

Bei Yingluo's group turned around and faced the disciples of the Four Greats. This time, it was nine to six. If one disregarded Bei Yingluo's strength, it was still eight to six. This was not impossible odds depending on circumstances and how well individuals worked together or interfered with each other.

"Same goes for you!" Kang Ni said, brandishing his sword towards their opponents, "Give up now or we will make you wish you had!"

"Hahaha, nonsense! Who are you to say that? Loser or winner has yet to be decided!" Someone retorted.

"Yeah, that's right. Bring it on!"

Although they sounded brave, doubt was visible on a few faces.

"Miss Bei, how should we proceed?" Chang Bo asked, "Six is more troublesome than three but not by much. There are disciples from each of the Four Greats. We can use this against them if we divide and conquer."

Bei Yingluo nodded, "Good idea, I will leave it to you."

Chang Bo saluted and started barking out orders.

Their group split into two. One had four people and directly engaged four opponents in one-on-one duels. The other five, including Bei Yingluo, circled two disciples from the Mount Yun Sect. These two shouted insults at their enemies as well as their allies for not coming to their aid. They were eventually silenced and the same process repeated itself. Two more disciples of Mount Huang Sect fell, followed by two more.

The rout was complete. the biggest sword sects of the subcontinent suffered joint humiliation at the hands of Bei Yingluo and Ten Thousand Flower Valley. Although those sects were undoubtably furious, other sects and participants of the convocation were not. These smaller or lesser sects had always been bullied by the Tower of Swords and the big four. They were glad to finally get a taste of delicious payback.

Nine contestants remained as the battlefield shrank further. They stood around, unsure of what to do after defeating their opponents. This was still supposed to be a free-for-all battle and only three people could be the ultimate winners.

Bei Yingluo saw the situation for what it was. She was still the weakest out of all those that remained. She doubted she could buy her way to the top three. Red spiritual crystal was precious but an opportunity to enter the Forest of Swords was another entirely. One could always be obtained with enough money while the other was possibly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

She stepped away from Chang Bo and raised her pudaο, "Our alliance ends here. Thank you all for your help. Regardless of who ends up the victors today, I hope that each of us will hold no resentment towards each other."

The others looked at each other and then at her. There was a long, awkward pause where nobody wanted to be the first one to break the bond of cooperation.

"Miss Bei," Chang Bo said, his voice strong but respectful, "I don't want to fight you. I don't think the others want to fight you either. None of us would be standing here right now had you not united us all. As such, I believe that we should all let Miss Bei have one of the winner slots, what do you all think?"

"I agree!" Kang Ni said.

"So do I!" Added another.

And soon, the rest joined in.

"Looks like we are all in agreement." Chang Bo said.

"But... what about the rest of you? It's not fair for you." She tried to argue though her tone wasn't convincing.

"Hahaha, don't worry about us. We have eight of us left, right? Perfect numbers for a mini tournament. Let's randomly draw lots and fight each other. The two people who are victorious at the end take the two remaining winner slots. How about it?"

Everyone agreed readily.

Bei Yingluo stepped back and let them fight it out. They drew lots for their opponents in the first round. After they finished fighting, the four losers stepped off the stage while the four remaining drew lots again for one more round. After that, only two people were left along with Bei Yingluo, Chang Bo and a heroic-looking woman by the name of Chu Weifeng.

As the judges declared the three of them the winners of the Mind Focusing Realm battle challenge, they met up with the other members of their impromptu group who were still waiting for them. Bei Yingluo kept her promise and distributed one kilogram of red spiritual crystal to each of them.

"Thank you, everyone." Bei Yingluo said earnestly. "Although we were merely drawn together by chance and circumstance, I hope that this alliance of necessity can turn into friendship in the future."

"Well said!"

"Well said!"

Chu Weifeng saluted her, "Miss Bei is young in age but wise in years. I, Chu Weifeng of the Red Peak School, accept this friendship with honor."

"I as well!"

"Me too!"

Bei Yingluo, feeling moved, reached into her spatial bag and retrieved a bag of small stones engraved with distinctive writing. She gave one to each person, saying, "This is the token of my Bei Clan, an official branch sect of Ten Thousand Flower Valley. If you ever wish to visit my Dragon Flower Province or Thousand Flower City, just show this token and you will receive eminent treatment."

After doing so, she bid goodbye to these newfound friends and returned to her master.

Chapter 540: Not Worrying

"Sister Bei, you were amazing!" Xu Lanyi was the first to shout out when Bei Yingluo returned to the stands.

Bei Yingluo's lips split into a wide smile as the others crowded around her, offering congratulations. They were all greatly impressed by what had happened and the way she had achieved it. What she had done was not only get top three in the battle tournament but also win the hearts of the audience.

She had turned the messy free-for-all into a battle between two different factions. On one side was the Tower of Swords and the Four Great Sects. They were the best sword sects and the expected winners of the convocation. On the other were Ten Thousand Flower Valley and the lesser sects. They weren't expected to do well but managed to do so anyway.

Bei Yingluo was equally excited and laughed joyfully amidst it all. She was the lowest ranked disciple but she was finally the center of attention. This was finally her time to shine.

She had given it all and she had taken many risks. There were many times she could have been kicked out of the battlefield before it had reached the final phase. There was no guarantee that others would listen to her words or agree with her idea. Also, if the Tower of Swords and the Four Greats were a little more intelligent and actually team up together, her alliance would not have stood a chance.

"Yingluo."

She turned to see the person she wanted to see the most. Chen Wentian had gotten up from his seat to join the huddle.

Everyone became silent as Bei Yingluo stared at her master with trepidation. Everything she had just done, she had done so that he would notice her, so that he would notice her strength. She didn't know how he would react but she hoped that she had done enough.

Chen Wentian smiled and nodded toward her. If they were in private, he would have embraced her lovingly. But they were in public so he rubbed her shoulder. (f)ree

He was once again astounded by his luck. Every one of his disciples was special in their own way and Bei Yingluo was no different. In addition to her mysterious power, she was clever and resourceful. She rarely showed this side of her since she usually remained lowkey, not trying to outshine her senior sisters.

He really liked this side of her. She was carefree like Lin Qingcheng but could be cunning like Zhou Ziyun or decisive like Wu Qianyu when the situation called for it. Bei Yingluo was a flexible person. She was a survivor. She was someone that got along with everyone.

She was a good person to have in his sect.

"Are you alright, are you hurt anywhere?" He asked softly.

As the others held their breath, she shook her head, "No, master."

He smiled again and leaned into her, whispering in her ear, "You did great, beyond my expectations. I'll give you a special reward tonight."

His voice was quiet but purposefully not quiet enough so that some of the others heard it as well. As he leaned back, several of them had their mouths agape as they stared at him with scandalized expressions. The object of his teasing, Bei Yingluo didn't reply but she was blushing from ear to ear.

He grabbed her hand and pulled her to sit down with him, "Since you are the star of the moment, you get the seat of honor beside me."

Xu Lanyi snorted loudly at this, "What seat of honor? More like the seat of... MMMMmm!"

She was quickly silenced by Song Wushuang's forceful hand as the others laughed. They all knew what kind of shenanigans were likely to take place beside him. In their minds, that seat was much more dangerous than fighting in the arena below.

The rest of the competition passed by in a blur. Dinner was served the same way as lunch as the duels lasted into the early evening. Chen Wentian's disciples were called up a few more times to face challenges or to make their challenges but nothing notable happened.

Wu Qianyu challenged a nobody from one of the lesser sects and returned to the ranking pillar with ease. Lin Qingcheng was challenged by a brave soul but his sword was broken after several exchanges. The others that had been challenged continued to employ delaying tactics to great success.

Even the crowd lost most of their energy as the first day dragged on. The only exciting event was the first appearance of Peng Xiling from the Tower of Swords. He was the brightest star beside Wu Qianyu and he was finally challenged by a rival from the Mount Tai Sect of the Four Greats. But after Peng Xiling had defeated his opponent, the crowd once again lost interest and remained like that until the challenger's caldron emptied and there were no more duels to be had.

Immortal Rumbling Blade Hei Shanzhi of the Mount Yun Sect flew into the air. He had taken over hosting duties from the previous one as the sun was setting but now it was already dark.

"This concludes the first day of the Convocation of Swords. Everyone may return to their quarters where you will be provided food, rest, and treatment for any wounds suffered. We shall resume at sunrise tomorrow!" He declared.

Some immortals immediately flew off. Others stayed to walk with their disciples back to their lodgings. Chen Wentian grabbed all of his disciples with his spiritual energy and rose into the air. They floated lazily towards their hotel, giving them a magnificent view of Everblade City.

While the others gazed at the color patterns of bright lanterns, Zhou Ziyun was squinting at her notebook and scribbling away. Chen Wentian produced a ball of flame on his fingertip and gave her some light.

"Results for today?" He asked, peering over her shoulder.

"Mmm." She mumbled.

"How does it look?"

"About as expected. We did well today. All of us ended the day atop the ranking pillar. It doesn't really matter the position, just that we are on it. If we maintain our strategy, we should end the tournament like this."

"What about the other sects?" He asked curiously.

She flipped over several pages and said, "The Tower of Swords is doing the best. They have close to forty people in the rankings. Their numbers may even increase as they have brought double that number in total attendees. The Four Great Sects are also doing well. All four together, they have taken over a hundred slots. The rest are a mixed bag of various sects, too numerous to go over in detail."

"Good." He replied simply.

Everything was within his expectations and his mind had already drifted towards other more important matters.

She looked up from the text and turned to him, "However, I suspect that our opponents will not sit still. We showed our hand today so others may come up with the proper counterattack by tomorrow."

He nodded while thinking about it. He understood her concern. He was usually worrying about random things her like, perhaps even more so.

In the past, when he was cultivating towards the immortal realm, he was constantly on edge, constantly looking out for the next danger that could end his journey. He never slept well at night. He saw shadows of ill-intent in everyone he met. He trusted no one and he never relaxed.

Now that he was an immortal, he felt that those days in his youth had been a miserable existence. His life at the moment was filled with joy. Tonight especially, he was in a very good mood. All of his disciples had done so well and he wanted to reward them.

He wasn't worried about tomorrow. He wasn't motivated to worry about tomorrow. All he cared about was tonight.

His mischievous actions during the day left him frustrated and eager to let loose. He slapped her butt and grinned at her reaction, "Come on, relax. We can worry about tomorrow when tomorrow comes. Tonight is a beautiful night. Let's just enjoy it!"