

## Medical 411

### Chapter 411 The Golden Badge\_2

Although these teams constantly push their limits, a single mistake could tip the balance of the fight. As the battles dragged on, their focus was stretched to its breaking point.

The match would not end until someone died or surrendered their badge, and these prolonged battles painted a gruesome scene before the audience as blood streamed down bodies, pooling on the ground below. Watching the brutal fights, Yan Xiaobao immediately understood that most warriors would not make it through the next few days alive.

After observing the fights for a moment, Yan Xiaobao turned around and walked toward the center of the arena. He came to the sudden realization that this tournament was far from the gentle contests he'd encountered before. Death was a near-universal outcome.

As he approached the arena, four guards puffed up their chests, blocking Yan Xiaobao's path with an air of disdain.

"No one is allowed to enter," one of the guards declared with a booming voice, its tone laced with spiritual energy. His voice carried layers of intimidation with every word.

Staring at the man, Yan Xiaobao felt deeply irritated. Without a moment's hesitation, his hand shot forward, stopping mere inches from the guard's face, as he held up his golden badge. The badge gleamed brightly, and the guard's face splattered with the spittle of Yan Xiaobao's previous anger.

At first, the guard was startled by Yan Xiaobao's swift reaction, but as soon as his eyes landed on the golden badge before him, his shock quickly turned into fear. His confidence crumbled, shifting from arrogance to meek subservience in seconds.

With a bow and stammering apologies, the guard dared not display any defiance again. Yan Xiaobao rolled his eyes in disgust.

"Milod, my apologies! Please forgive me! I had eyes, but I failed to see!" The guard nearly grovelled to the ground, but Yan Xiaobao ignored him and stepped past, not even sparing the young man another glance.

If these guards weren't part of the Mercenary Guild and under the influence of Xu Biao, Yan Xiaobao would have eradicated them long ago. His cloak still showed remnants of the spittle, and Yan Xiaobao's ice-blue eyes were filled with frustration as he found a quiet corner, surrounded by his companions, to replace his stained cloak.

While he changed his cloak, his friends noticed his foul mood and shivered slightly. They realized that their close friend might be planning to unleash his anger in the upcoming battles. They all knew why Yan Xiaobao hadn't directly dealt with the guard; it was Xie Lan's influence that restrained him.

Xie Lan herself knew that her position as a representative of the Mercenary Guild came with a great deal of responsibility and status. She had been tempted to execute the guard herself, as punishing someone for offending her master's distinguished guest would have been justified.

In the end, the guard was spared. Yet, he fully understood how narrowly he had escaped death by the width of a hair, prompting a sudden transformation in his demeanor. He began showering every nearby person with excessive hospitality.

Having swapped out his cloak, Yan Xiaobao surveyed the area, his mood greatly improved upon noticing that few people had entered the arena so far.

The arena reminded him of the amphitheatres of the old world, except that this stage was square instead of round. All the seating areas were elevated, offering a clear view of the platform where groups would clash.

Currently, there were no warriors on the stage, but the sun was nearing its zenith, signaling that it wouldn't be long before spectators were allowed into the rest area.

Scanning the surroundings, Yan Xiaobao spotted four groups of mercenaries. One group, like Yan Xiaobao's team, consisted of just five members, while others had six to ten members each. Observing these groups, Yan Xiaobao knew he couldn't afford to let his guard down.

The first group, also with five members, wore ordinary clothing, but their faces were completely hidden behind masks, not even revealing the color of their eyes.

The masked group's appearance mirrored Yan Xiaobao, who was concealed beneath his cloak. Cloaked and masked, the groups silently stared at each other, ramping up the tension on the stage.

Clap, clap, clap. Applause rang out across the stage as a team of seven marched forward. Their gaze locked onto the man draped in a black cloak, with most of their attention fixed on Yan Xiaobao.

"Well, well, well. If it isn't the newcomer in town," their leader said with a mocking tone. "When we returned from the tunnels, we heard about a mysterious group showing up in the city. Who would have thought you'd actually have the skills to enter the arena right away."

Now, every group on the stage trained their eyes on Yan Xiaobao and his companions, eager to witness their response.

Most of these groups were already familiar with one another, but this new group was an enigma. Any shred of information they could gather about them might prove invaluable. Chief among their curiosities were the newcomers' cultivation levels, though few believed they'd glean this information right away.

As expected, Yan Xiaobao completely ignored the seven-member group. He walked past them without acknowledging their taunts.

The leader's face darkened with rage as his hand reached for Yan Xiaobao's cloak, accompanied by a threatening expression.

All the mercenaries in the arena instinctively leaned forward in their seats with anticipation, eager to see Yan Xiaobao's features revealed at any moment. Yet, what followed shattered their expectations.

Instead, a blood-curdling scream pierced the air as a hand fell to the ground, severed cleanly at the wrist. Veins bulged on the leader's forehead as he clutched the stump of his hand, his cries of pain echoing throughout the arena.

"Sorry," a playful voice came from the back as a middle-aged man stepped forward. While they worked to reattach the severed hand at the wrist, another figure performed hand gestures, a green light illuminating his palms.

Although the injured leader didn't understand what had happened, some among the crowd saw it clearly. The moment his hand reached for Yan Xiaobao's cloak, a snake tail lashed out from beneath the fabric, whipping through the air and severing it in one swift motion. Then, the tail retreated beneath the cloak once again.

It became evident that at least one member of Yan Xiaobao's group was not human. Judging by their sudden, decisive movements, the group's strength was likely at least that of intermediate-level Dantian Experts.

To enter the arena, a silver badge from the Mercenary Guild was required. However, these badges were seldom displayed openly unless absolutely necessary, as everyone aimed to keep their true abilities as hidden as possible. The more mysterious one appeared, the better their chances of survival.

After the hand was severed, no one dared to obstruct Yan Xiaobao and his companions as they walked through the groups toward a comfortable rest area. There, they settled down and studied their surroundings.

Minutes passed before more groups began entering the arena. Eventually, nine mercenary groups arrived in total. Yan Xiaobao watched each one with curiosity, noticing how randomly they chose their seats among the audience. At this early stage, he had no idea which group he would end up fighting.

After the final batch of mercenaries entered the arena, an old man suddenly stepped onto the stage and stood at its center. He remained silent and still, waiting for the mercenary groups to quiet down so he could speak.

Gazing at the man at the center, Yan Xiaobao felt a pang of unease. Not only was the man's clothing adorned with the Dragon Emblem, marking him as likely affiliated with the Dragon Army, but the aura surrounding him exuded a danger reminiscent of Xu Biao and Xie Lan, if not even greater.

"Forgive me for interrupting," the man said, his voice low yet resonating across every corner of the arena, silencing even the chatter of those who had been loud moments before.

"The tournament will begin shortly. I ask the first group to step onto the stage. Everyone else, please move to the front row and remain seated until it's your turn to fight."

With that, many mercenaries complied with his instructions. Yan Xiaobao and his team were the first group to be called onto the stage, being the only team in possession of a golden badge—a fact unknown to the other participants.

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#### Chapter 412 Start Killing

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When Yan Xiaobao moved to the ground, a smile appeared on his face, for he saw that the group they opposed had once tried to stop them.

The white-haired young man was filled with irritation and weary of the day's events. First was the overcrowded city, second were the pesky guards, and third was the mercenary group that had tried to block him.

At last, he could finally let loose. Yan Xiaobao could finally start killing.

The young man never questioned why he suddenly felt such a strong killing intent, even though he did not sense the influence of the red fog within his Dantian Cave.

Laughter echoed in the air as a middle-aged man strode confidently onto the stage, followed closely by his entourage. Hui Yue noticed that the man whom Sha Yun had cut off managed to reassemble his group.

Watching how he pieced it back together, Hui Yue could immediately tell that the next thing this man would lose wouldn't be his hand but most likely his head. Hui Yue hated it when her efforts were undone.

Normally, battles involving groups like this heavily depended on teamwork. However, Hui Yue and her entourage had never truly fought in the manner expected of them today. Instead, they usually acted individually, doing their best to avoid interfering with one another.

As they walked to the stage, the grand gates suddenly opened. The audience poured in from the entrance, eager to take their reserved seats and witness the battle they had anticipated with such fervor.

The first row was packed with mercenaries, every pair of eyes fixed on Hui Yue's team and their opponents. For as long as the fight had not started, the two groups could roam freely.

Hui Yue stood in a corner, observing the many individuals finding their places. Then, he finally opened his mouth and said, "We aren't used to fighting like this." He sighed as he glanced once more at their opponents.

"Fighting in someone else's way won't help us," he continued, analyzing their options. "I propose that we pick one target and take them down. If we run into trouble, just call for help."

"As if we'll need help," Deng Wu chuckled under his breath, glancing mockingly at their opposition. Even Wang Julong nodded in agreement with the brash young man. Beside her, the Poison Wolf was patiently waiting for the battle to begin, venom dripping from the thorns lining the creature.

Hearing this plan, Xie Lan's face unexpectedly twisted in displeasure. No strategy, no teamwork-based double offensives, not even emergency spell formations. It looked as if more time would be spent competing against one another than aiding anyone in distress.

"Oh, Xie Lan," Hui Yue seemed to suddenly remember the older woman, as if preparing to task her with eliminating the opposition leader. However, her shock was palpable when she heard his next words: "Though you're stronger than all of us, hold back your attacks. We wouldn't want the world to realize we have a King-level expert in our team."

With that, Hui Yue paid Xie Lan no further attention. The woman stood alone, stunned by the perplexing personality of this group's leader. She couldn't comprehend these strange individuals, yet somehow, as she anticipated the fight, a smile spread across her face.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the man in the middle spoke again, and with his very first words, silence swept across the crowd. All eyes were glued to the stage, the faces alight with excitement, a bloodthirsty energy rippling among those present.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the man repeated, this time with a smile on his face, "allow me to introduce the two groups that will begin this match. First, on this side, we have the Mountain Mercenary Company. We all know and revere them. They are the first-seeded team this year."

"And opposing them, the strangers! The newcomers who shook our serene city to its very core! These individuals remain an enigma—the Black Invisible Mercenaries! Who would have thought they'd qualify as a seeded team!"

The introductions were met with a chorus of roars and cheers from the audience, who shouted out the names of the two teams as they looked down onto the stage.

Amid the clamorous cheers and deafening roars, the two groups slowly advanced toward the center of the stage. As all the noise gradually died down, everyone noticed Hui Yue and his team showed no intention of removing the cloaks that covered them.

Their mysterious demeanor elicited further cheers from the audience, who worshipped secrecy. Yet, the other mercenaries frowned upon observing the sight. All of them had expected the cloaks to be thrown off, revealing something about these enigmatic strangers.

Were their cloaks capable of absorbing all forms of energy? But even if they could shield the mysterious group's five members, how could they possibly utilize their energy while being completely suppressed under the cloaks? Every mercenary was greatly perturbed; no one knew how to deal with the group who stood onstage appearing utterly aloof.

Onstage once again, Hui Yue observed the five mercenaries stepping forward to confront them. He couldn't help but feel surprised—not everyone from the opposing group had shown up. After all, these battles seemed more about thinning the population in the town and appeasing the audience's craving for blood than ensuring a fair fight. He hadn't anticipated an evenly matched confrontation.

"The old man in the middle," Hui Yue said, pointing through his cloak at the elderly figure who looked like a leader. "He's mine."

"Fine," Deng Wu responded, his hand pointing at a woman. Her face was beautiful, but her overall attractiveness was rather average. "Then she's mine."

## Chapter 413 Start Killing\_2

"I'll take that guy," Wang Julong pointed at the man behind him. This individual was clearly an expert with an affinity for the wood element.

"The guy without a hand," Sha Yun gestured toward the man. Although the man was now holding one hand, he clutched it with the other, his face displaying an obvious look of terror. As for why he was chosen as one of the contestants, Hui Yue couldn't fathom. After all, the man had been thoroughly defeated both physically and mentally. Staying here was akin to a death sentence.

With a deep sigh, Xie Lan understood what Hui Yue and the others were going for, though she found it slightly childish. Soon enough, she joined in. "The one on the left is mine," she muttered with a hint of exhaustion, refusing to point at the girl who looked visibly confused.

It wasn't just her confusion. When their voices echoed, the entire audience was startled, and the opposing team couldn't figure out why their members were being singled out. Only a handful of mercenaries in the arena grasped the purpose behind this, their faces showing amused smiles. These unfamiliar figures undoubtedly stood apart from anything they had ever seen before.

"So, my dear invisible friends," Hui Yue stood beside Xie Lan and asked, "does your master prefer dead opponents, or ones who are still breathing?"

Calling out Xie Lan's name in the middle of a crowded stage was foolish, as was calling out Xu Biao's name. Thus, Hui Yue decided to improvise slightly. Hearing his question, Xie Lan's eyes glinted with gratitude as she responded, "While we prefer them alive, sometimes it's not possible. Keep them alive unless you can't win. Otherwise..."

Hui Yue nodded. Killing an opponent was never difficult. All it required was determination and swift action.

Defeating an opponent while keeping them alive, however, was much harder. It demanded strict control over their energy, releasing just enough to ensure victory but not enough to cause serious harm. Moreover, the opponents clearly didn't care about Hui Yue and his team, launching their fieriest attacks right away.

The arena was filled with chaos as gusts of wind surged, hearts pounding irregularly. Everyone was caught in a collective frenzy of excitement, eager to witness how this seemingly frail group of cultivators cloaked in black would fight.

Although most of the audience, save for a few mercenaries, paid no attention to the black-cloaked team's act of calling out their opponents, most had completely overlooked it, failing to grasp the significance behind the gesture.

However, some mercenaries had a crystal-clear understanding of what this peculiar behavior implied, as did the masters.

The upcoming fight was a group battle. And while most of the mercenaries who understood the dynamics felt unimpressed by the black-cloaked group, the host couldn't help but smile awkwardly as he remarked aloud.

"Let the battle begin!" the host declared in his usual tone, promptly retreating to a vantage point offstage, his gaze keenly tracking every move.

The opposing team didn't launch their attacks on Hui Yue and the others right away. Instead, they began their chants, summoning elemental flames which manifested as faint hues of varying colors around their bodies, thus forming spiritual energy shields.

As Hui Yue observed Wang Julong, a faint smile appeared on his face. He noticed Wang Julong standing there, seemingly unfocused, yet beside her, an enormous poppy flower had already dug its vines into the stage, creeping toward the individual Wang Julong had initially singled out.

Sha Yun targeted her opponent, her entire tail gradually coming into view for both the audience and adversaries. A collective gasp ran through the crowd as astonishment gripped them. There was no doubt this was a Demon Beast concealed beneath the cloak. Could they all be highly intelligent Demons?

Deng Wu was also busy. Various inscriptions adorned his hands. Because their aim wasn't to kill, Deng Wu didn't utilize soul shadows. Instead, he relied on various attacks stored in inscriptions, releasing them one by one, preparing them for immediate use.

Hui Yue remained calm, refraining from using any abilities, opting instead to summon black blood from his Memory Stone after careful deliberation. This marked the first move exhibited by the black-cloaked group before the audience.

Hui Yue drew a dagger, and vines from the stage surged forward, subduing the man Wang Julong had pointed to earlier. Poison seeped from the thorns, rendering the opponent incapable of continuing the fight. With the expert of the Wood element taken out, the opposing team's situation instantly improved for Hui Yue's group.

Once Wang Julong's massive poppy flower eliminated her target, she let out a hum upon spotting Deng Wu. Though her face was hidden in the shadow of the cloak, her posture required little guesswork—she was obviously smirking, immensely pleased with being the first to finish her target.

After completing her task, Wang Julong gracefully sat on the stage, allowing her flower to blossom while she watched the rest of the battle unfold beside her.

The opposing team, driven by fury, gritted their teeth and lunged at Hui Yue, their bloodshot eyes burning after witnessing one of their teammates handled so easily.

Even in their rage, they remained tournament seeds. Sha Yun's tail lashed out like a whip, relentlessly attacking her designated target. Whenever he failed to dodge swiftly, crimson streaks would appear on his skin, showing Hui Yue just how lenient she was.

This team lacked exceptional individual strength on their roster. Their high rankings stemmed solely from earning silver badges through arduous missions one after another. Their accomplishments stood in stark contrast to Hui Yue's group, whose badges were unrelated to such efforts. Hui Yue stayed motionless until the leader of the opposing team almost reached them. Then, he activated Velocity Flow—a skill from advanced martial arts accessible even to cultivators with lower-ranked Dantians.

As Hui Yue activated Velocity Flow, a faint aura emerged from his body, no longer concealed by the cloak. However, the exposed aura merely matched that of a practitioner-ranked expert.

With Velocity Flow activated, Hui Yue's movements possessed such experience and finesse that only the meticulously trained eyes of arena veterans could discern them. Hui Yue ultimately appeared behind the opposition's leader, his dagger laced with black blood pressing gently against the man's throat, drawing

a single drop of blood. The middle-aged man halted in his tracks, paralyzed with fear, scarcely daring to move a muscle.

"Surrender," Hui Yue said coldly. An internal struggle raged within him. His body screamed for him to press the blade against the vulnerable flesh, while his mind urged restraint. Kill intent surged forth from Hui Yue.

Although the young man with white hair managed to suppress his bloodlust, he couldn't entirely control the red fog emanating from his body, spreading across the stage and subtly drifting toward the audience.

The mercenaries present immediately recognized this killing intent as something entirely different from anything they had ever experienced. Even the host was deeply shocked. Such intense kill intent could only be forged after a lifetime of slaughter. However, no matter how he tried to rationalize it, the voice of the individual who earlier singled out their targets had clearly sounded young. For someone so young to exude kill intent of this magnitude was inconceivable.

The audience members trembled with fear but also wore expressions of exhilaration, seemingly unaware of how tightly they held their breaths. The mercenaries responded with smiles. Some grins teetered on the edge of madness, their sanity strained, while others radiated excitement, eager to confront this level of killing intent.

Hui Yue's opponents abruptly stopped attacking. None of them wished to see their leader die. One after another, they stepped off the stage, refusing to continue the fight.

Holding their leader hostage, Hui Yue felt the overwhelming presence of kill intent gradually taking over his body. Using his final shred of rationality, he unleashed a tranquil cloud, spreading it throughout his form. Slowly, he retracted the red fog, forcing it back into the Qi Cave.

As the killing intent was engulfed once again, everyone in the audience suddenly felt the air grow lighter, their breathing no longer labored.

A few experienced dizziness, while others displayed varying degrees of nausea. Meanwhile, the mercenaries in the arena started discreetly discussing among themselves, debating whether they could manage to face such a formidable opponent.

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#### Chapter 414 -Demon Beast

On the stage, Hui Yue stood alone with his blade resting against the throat of the opposing team's leader, his piercing gaze flashing past the other man's eyes. It was a world painted crimson, where beasts and humans alike lay dead, their corpses forming a macabre mountain beneath the feet of an enormous beast.

This beast was nothing more than a shadow, its entire body dripping with blood, eyes glowing a misty red.

The images flickered in Hui Yue's eyes for a mere moment, but their allure was so intense that he inadvertently pressed the blade slightly deeper into the hostage's throat.

Regaining control over himself, Hui Yue was deeply shaken, but he refused to let it show. With a smooth motion, he retracted the black blood blade into his storage stone and flung the hostage off the stage, forcing the entire opposing team to retreat from the platform, leaving only Hui Yue and his comrades behind in silence.

Although much information had been gleaned from this battle, only three members had truly participated, and among those three, only one truly understood the events.

Wang Julong's flowers did most of the work for her. Despite her vines' stage attacks being something she couldn't use more than once, they ensured no one uncovered her true strength. People speculated she aligned with Wood due to her tenacious flora, but could she harbor other affinities as well?

Deng Wu had prepared his inscriptions, yet none were activated, leaving everyone puzzled about this enigmatic man.

Xie Lan, on the other hand, did nothing; she merely stood at the back, strategizing how to best confront her opponents.

Sha Yun, however, displayed her power. Everyone had come to understand that she was either a hybrid of a Demon Beast and a human or an actual Demon Beast.

Although Sha Yun didn't utilize any form of spiritual energy, her sheer movement alone was enough to overwhelm any master-level cultivator, proving she was at least a master, or perhaps even stronger.

Then there was Hui Yue. The leader of this mysterious group was a young man whose killing intent shook every onlooker, leaving them to wonder who hid beneath that cloak.

In truth, this young man had only harnessed his inner energy for his martial arts attacks. Even spiritual arts couldn't discern his true level. While some clues about this enigmatic group could be pieced together, far more remained unknown, sparking further questions.

Hui Yue ignored everyone else entirely, lifting his hidden head slightly to glance at the referee, who hastily pulled himself together. With a shameless smile, Hui Yue spoke in a calm voice as he stepped onto the stage. "The victors are Group 117—the Mysterious Ones!"

"We will now begin the second battle. Group 117 will not be participating again today. If you wish to see more of their fights, be sure to buy tickets for tomorrow!"

Hearing that they wouldn't fight again, the audience immediately left the stage, departing from the arena rather than staying for the remaining matches. Hui Yue had already calculated the challenges they faced in resolving their issues. Now, his only focus was discussing with Lan Feng how to control his killing intent and decipher the visions he had seen.

"Well done!" As Hui Yue led the group back to their courtyard, he heard a voice he instantly recognized as Xu Biao's. The Mercenary Guild's Guild Master stood patiently in the courtyard, awaiting Hui Yue and his companions' return.

Although he hadn't witnessed the battle firsthand, Xu Biao always stayed fully informed about every victory and defeat, and the moment Hui Yue's win was announced, he rushed to their courtyard to congratulate them.

Hui Yue gave Xu Biao a polite nod, but instead of stopping, he muttered briefly, "I apologize, Guild Master, but I've experienced enlightenment, so I must enter seclusion until the next battle."

With that, Hui Yue ignored everyone around him. He entered his quarters and sat down within his own room.

Sitting cross-legged on the floor, Hui Yue closed his eyes and allowed his consciousness to enter the Dantian Cave where Lan Feng resided.

It had been a long time since Hui Yue last visited the Phoenix, and upon seeing that Lan Feng no longer bore the form of a ten-year-old child but rather of a mature young man, Hui Yue was instantly stunned. Lan Feng's eyes were closed as his soul quietly meditated, golden energy swirling around him, imbuing his azure feathers with a luminous golden sheen.

Sitting beside Lan Feng, Hui Yue also began cultivating, allowing the tranquil clouds within the Dantian Cave to expand and envelop his entire being. This clarity of thought brought immense comfort, and a soothing sensation spread through his body. The residual killing intent dissipated entirely, drowned out by the serenity that overwhelmed Hui Yue's senses.

Within the Dantian Cave, as the tranquil mist washed over his body, Hui Yue sank deeper into contemplation. His body slowly started melding with the earth and metal around him. This natural phenomenon occurred as Hui Yue's physique instinctively sought to become one with his surroundings' energy, though lamentably, he had yet to fully achieve this.

Small specks of golden light appeared in the air surrounding Hui Yue. With every deep breath he took, the golden particles entered his system and flowed toward the Qi Cave, as Lan Feng absorbed each spectrum of light.

Immersed in meditation, Hui Yue remained oblivious to the changes happening around him. Unlike Hui Yue, the Phoenix's sharp senses caught every detail. As the light flecks fused with his essence, Lan Feng opened his eyes, looking toward Hui Yue with a blend of astonishment and admiration. A faint smile graced his face as he approached Hui Yue, gently striking the meditating boy on the head.

Chapter 415 Demon Beast\_2

"What do you need my help with?" Lan Feng spoke aloud, seemingly enjoying the fact that Hui Yue needed his assistance. The white-haired boy could only sigh as he smiled wryly and said nothing.

"This killing intent," Hui Yue quickly replied, hoping Phoenix wouldn't suddenly change his opinion. "When I fought in the arena today, I saw another world. There was a beast. Did you see it?"

The question itself could be considered foolish since the two of them shared everything—the sensations they felt, the food they tasted, and the world they saw. But despite this bond, Hui Yue felt this particular vision was something Lan Feng had never encountered before. Phoenix's solemn expression confirmed Hui Yue's suspicion; he was the only one who had noticed that shocking scene.

"I believe this is something from your past life," Lan Feng said hesitantly. "The stronger the mist, the more you'll remember, and the greater its influence will be on your current existence."

Hui Yue slowly nodded, recalling how Lan Feng had previously theorized that these caves were tied to his past lives. Considering this now, Hui Yue felt it might be the most viable explanation.

"Will I become as blood-crazed and feral as that red beast we've seen before?" Hui Yue trembled as he spoke. Although he relished the benefits of his killing intent, it carried some less desirable side effects. One of which was the overwhelming urge to rip his friends apart—a bloodlust he could never suppress.

"Well, you've stored more than one life in these caves," Lan Feng said with a laugh, gesturing with his hands for Hui Yue to look at the many caves—some opening, others remaining shut. "If I were you, I'd focus on the serene cloud. Perhaps it can help you control your killing intent."

Reflecting on Lan Feng's words, Hui Yue nodded faintly before completely immersing himself in the tranquil blue cloud, gradually sinking into meditation. His body refocused on absorbing the essence of heaven and earth.

The cultivation aided the growth of the calming cloud within his Dantian Cave, expanding its size. Cultivation and nurturing, Hui Yue felt, were what he currently needed most—a way to clear his mind, cleanse his senses, and slowly accumulate strength.

Outside in the courtyard, Sha Yun quickly departed toward Hui Yue's room, where she sat by the door as a guardian, ensuring her master's critical training session would not be interrupted by anyone.

Deng Wu and Wang Julong both nodded politely at Xu Biao before disappearing into the house, preparing themselves to cultivate as soon as the opportunity arose. They were eager to strengthen their abilities and ensure they wouldn't become burdens in battle, particularly to Hui Yue.

As Deng Wu and Wang Julong entered the house, an aura of serene Qi floated out from somewhere deep within. Xu Biao felt deeply shocked, though not as much as Xie Lan.

Xu Biao, having been with Xie Lan for a long time, could immediately pick up on her unease. He gently grabbed her hand, only to feel her subtle trembling.

"Let's go back to the office," Xu Biao said with a sigh. "You need to explain everything you saw today."

The journey back to the office was completed in silence, as Xie Lan and Xu Biao had already realized they were being followed by mercenaries eager to sell any information they might obtain about a hidden group.

Inside the Guild Master's office, Xie Lan finally felt her guard lower. As she collapsed into a chair, a long sigh escaped her lips. She pinched the bridge of her nose as she closed her eyes and counted to ten.

"I heard you didn't participate in the fight at all," Xu Biao asked curiously, perched on the edge of the desk, his inquisitiveness mirroring that of a child eagerly awaiting a surprise.

Seeing her superior look like this, Xie Lan couldn't help but smile silently. Straightening herself, her expression transformed into one resembling an official ready to deliver critical information.

"This group is far more dangerous than we imagined," Xie Lan began, delivering her initial evaluation. "A woman dressed as a man managed to use some kind of plant to entirely negate the opposing team's therapist. However, such an attack won't occur twice. This time, it worked, allowing her to conceal all her information. No one knows anything about her—not her rank, not her true abilities. Even I am uncertain about her."

"Secondly, the man with black hair," Xie Lan continued, now referring to Deng Wu, "He stood throughout the battle as though he knew he didn't need to act, as though he understood precisely how it would end from the moment it began. He never revealed the kind of cultivator he was, making it even

harder for his opponents—and us—to grasp him. The only thing I saw as a team member was him using inscriptions. As to which kind, I couldn't tell."

"The beast almost exposed herself," Xie Lan said, shifting her attention to Sha Yun and attempting to wrap up her analysis of the team's performance swiftly and without error. "She unleashed some of her power, but she didn't use spiritual energy or elemental affinity—just raw, primal strength. Her power and speed were sufficient for her to go toe-to-toe with a Master-level cultivator, making it clear to everyone she is ranked at least as a Master."

"Finally, there's the white-haired boy." Xie Lan paused before continuing, her body covered in goosebumps as the memory of the scene made her heart race wildly. "He used his cultivation base within his Lower Dantian to position himself behind the opposing team's leader."

She paused again, fear creeping through her veins. Could she even tell him this? Would he get angry and come after her?

Although Xie Lan was far stronger than Hui Yue, there was something about the boy that frightened her to an extent she never believed possible. Even now, she hesitated to discuss him, worried he might take offense and return to exact revenge.

"He possesses a power no one else does," Xie Lan finally continued after a notably long pause. "There's a dangerous aura around him. He managed to release a killing intent so oppressive the spectators seated furthest away struggled to breathe. To have such killing intent... he's someone we cannot afford to offend."

Xie Lan narrowed her eyes but simultaneously recalled the young man's innocent demeanor, one that seemed kind enough to fit the image of a naive child—especially when he unleashed a serene atmosphere just as they were about to leave.

"Hmm," Xu Biao hummed, without voicing either agreement or disagreement, excitement flashing in his eyes as he relived the events of the fight in his mind.

Seeing the expression on her superior's face, Xie Lan sighed again, her beautiful lips curving downward. She fished out a small stone from within her cloak and handed it to him. It was a recording of the entire battle. Even so, it captured only the visuals; it could never truly convey the icy, terrifying killing intent

Hui Yue had displayed earlier, nor replicate the white-haired boy's whispered words to his opponent as he pressed the dagger against his throat.

Nevertheless, even without the sensation of killing intent or sound, Xu Biao was ecstatic to receive the stone. As soon as he closed his eyes and immersed himself in the re-played scenes, he instantly pressed the stone to his forehead.

The battle did not last long, mere moments, yet Xu Biao replayed those moments over and over. With each repetition of the 'film,' his smile grew visibly wider.

While Xie Lan hadn't noticed certain things during the recording, Xu Biao—used to scrutinizing every detail—managed to see them after multiple replays. His smile widened even further, his gaze honed in on the figure clad in a black cloak.

As Hui Yue activated the Velocity Flow skill, his speed increased rapidly, positioning him behind his target while the motion caused his cloak to reveal glimpses of his lower body.

It wasn't Hui Yue's face that captivated Xu Biao—it was the details that caught his attention: long fangs protruding from Hui Yue's teeth.

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Chapter 416 The Beast Beyond the Sacred

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Xu Biao chuckled foolishly, finally taking the Memory Stone from his forehead. Returning it to Xie Lan, he dismissed her but did not return to his seat behind the desk. Instead, he walked toward the bookshelf behind the chair.

Xu Biao pulled out one book after another, shaking his head in frustration, until he finally found what he was looking for. He flipped through the book, searching for the passage he needed.

With one finger tracing the text below, he muttered in a low voice, "Demon Beasts can transform into human forms as they truly comprehend the universe, allowing them to surpass divine beasts. To become a divine beast, one is often a Holy Name Expert."

Lifting his head from the book, Xu Biao's face revealed a trace of excitement. Because of his foresight, he appreciated the importance of these four friends deeply. Who knew? Perhaps more people were holy ranking experts.

After reading the book, Xu Biao tore out the passage from its original place, placed it in his pocket, and smiled gleefully. Returning to clean up what he deemed as errors among the many books he had discarded earlier.

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Xie Lan felt perplexed about why her master acted the way he did. She couldn't fathom why he felt such an impulsive need to replay the scenario multiple times, but even if that were the case, why would he smile in this manner?

Through deduction, Xie Lan quickly concluded that Xu Biao had noticed something she hadn't. But no matter how much she searched, she could not perceive what Xu Biao had seen.

The woman grumbled lightly and returned to the courtyard, the place currently serving as the residence for Yan Xiaobao and his team. Since Xie Lan had become part of the team, she also received a room in the house. However, approaching the area, she was greatly shocked.

The first thing she felt was the breeze, a fleeting touch brushing her cheek. The closer she got, the sensation transformed into the embrace of a loving mother—a gentleness only felt from one's own kin.

It was evident that the aura initially exposed by Yan Xiaobao had undergone refinement, transforming from sheer tranquility into the long-lost memories of life.

The immense change within such a short period was enough to stun Xie Lan. She rushed to his room, only to find Sha Yun standing guard. Though Xie Lan could easily dismiss Snake Woman, she chose to

step back. Yan Xiaobao had already far exceeded her expectations, and even her master trusted him. How could she question someone trusted by her master?

To calm herself, Xie Lan retreated to her room, where she sat down to cultivate. She quickly noticed that the peaceful atmosphere had significantly enhanced the amount of Heaven and Earth Essence present; it seemed the atmosphere created by this young man worked like a magnet.

It wasn't just Xie Lan who noticed this peculiar phenomenon of Yan Xiaobao's. No, even outside on the streets, numerous lights could be seen moving one after another toward the realm of the blue cloud. They allowed themselves to be entirely consumed by it, merging with the serene essence emanating from Yan Xiaobao. As a result, the young man's strength suddenly surged.

One cultivator after another sat down, greedily absorbing the abundant essence floating skyward. All their energy focused on becoming empowered beings. None of them noticed, however, that their cultivation bases had started spinning at an uncontrollable pace.

It was evident that this involuntary movement within their cultivation bases was uncalled for, as they were all in deep meditation. But as Ye Ye sat at the center of it all, the expression on his face brimmed with satisfaction. He felt he could control anyone who was currently attempting to abuse the serene cloud to enhance their own cultivation bases.

More and more mercenaries arrived at the house where Yan Xiaobao was cultivating. The sudden atmospheric shift enticed them inside. Once enveloped by the tranquil cloud, they too sensed the richness of Heaven and Earth Essence surrounding them.

This essence seemed to be emanating directly from the tranquil clouds, as if it had absorbed the essence of Heaven and Earth—a phenomenon that astounded Yan Xiaobao.

Although the entire courtyard and surrounding streets were thick with essence, as long as Yan Xiaobao stayed in deep meditation, it seemed inexhaustible.

Curiosity led Yan Xiaobao to separate his consciousness from his body, allowing it to float among the clouds. Observing the numerous cultivators outside the courtyard, all engrossed in deep meditation, he noticed he might have the ability to control their cultivation bases, just like his own.

He could use their cultivation bases to activate various techniques. Watching how the cultivators he experimented on suddenly acted involuntarily, without consent, brought a burst of laughter from him.

Testing the limits of his abilities, his consciousness entered the body of one cultivator. However, the moment danger surged, he instinctively withdrew, only to sense that the second he entered another's body, his own stopped responding entirely.

Never daring to enter another body again, Yan Xiaobao heaved a sigh of relief. He had narrowly avoided making a permanent mistake. "Had I truly tried, I might have died," he reflected anxiously.

#### Chapter 417 The Beast Beyond the Sacred\_2

Even so, considering he could control others from his Dantian Cave without fusing with his own body, Yan Xiaobao was quite satisfied. He returned to his body, planning to continue his deep meditation and focus on his cultivation.

As soon as he sat down, he noticed a resounding noise—one breath felt like a hundred. Whether it was Sha Yun or the strangers outside, everyone was enveloped in the tranquil clouds, and they were all breathing in unison. Amid this haze, everyone seemed to be acting under Yan Xiaobao's command.

Yan Xiaobao issued a simple command, instructing the cultivation base to rotate. Suddenly, a surge of power rushed toward Yan Xiaobao's body. This wasn't the essence of heaven and earth; it was refined Qi and spiritual energy. All of it entered Yan Xiaobao's body, manually elevating himself to a level akin to his own quality. The young man was astounded, realizing just how quickly he was approaching the Master Level Seventh Star. It was a speed beyond his imagination.

After a while, Yan Xiaobao ordered everything to halt, stopping the cultivators imbued within the tranquil clouds from funneling their cultivation energy into his body.

Though it was highly possible for Yan Xiaobao to let this process continue, he understood that if cultivators within his cloud were exhausted, including his friends and their cultivation bases, they would be just as drained as anyone else. Yan Xiaobao was mindful of this as he continued on.

This wasn't a devouring ability. It felt as though the tranquil clouds were a fundamental part of cultivation itself. It seemed no cultivation base could resist the beckoning call emitted from the clouds.

With such thoughts in mind, Yan Xiaobao slowly withdrew the tranquil clouds back into his Dantian Cave, where they patiently awaited another summoning. To his surprise, Yan Xiaobao discovered the size of the clouds had drastically increased due to so many cultivators fostering their energies within its atmosphere. Currently, the mist was even larger than the red fog, which filled Hui Yu's heart with immense joy.

Hui Yue cast a glance at the green pearl and snorted lightly. He understood the blue cloud and the red fog; one expanded through murder while the other grew through cultivation. However, as long as the green pearl seemed to assist Yan Xiaobao in healing his injuries, it would also grow. Yet, this wasn't something Hui Yue could explain—how the pearl expanded precisely from injuries—or predict when it would grow next. This element of uncertainty led Yan Xiaobao to completely disregard the pearl, pretending it didn't exist unless he gazed directly at it, which left him inexplicably enraged afterwards.

Leaving the Qi Cave, Yan Xiaobao slowly opened his eyes and stood up, his body brimming with surging energy—a power he had never possessed before. Though he had absorbed the energy of all the cultivators in a brief span of time, it crashed over him like ocean waves hitting the shore, leaving behind the purest energy for Yan Xiaobao to refine and sustain within his own being.

The amount of spiritual energy and Qi he absorbed far surpassed anything he could have cultivated over several months. As Yan Xiaobao clenched and released his fists, feeling the newfound strength coursing through him, happiness washed over his face.

The smile on his face transformed into a resolute expression as he moved toward the courtyard. He stood beneath a tree and closed his eyes, activating the Qi within his body.

Initially, he resumed his routine training, utilizing black blood and the Qi dagger. Then he shifted into various stances, his entire focus fixated on the two daggers in his hands.

Yan Xiaobao stood with his tense muscles unmoving, not budging an inch. Anyone observing him would assume he was meditating while standing still, but what he truly intended was to envision all the different attacks he could perform using the black blood daggers in his hands.

The daggers had long since become an extension of Yan Xiaobao's body, akin to the limbs of his arms. Mere thought was enough for Yan Xiaobao to train.

With a gentle motion, the Qi dagger shot forward. It drew a curved slashing line, yet when viewed from another angle, the strike appeared straight. The variation in the attack depended on the observer's perspective.

Although Yan Xiaobao had mastered numerous Martial Arts Skills and spiritual art techniques, he still leaned toward strengthening his muscles, body, and mind. Lan Feng had taught him long ago to never neglect the fundamentals, a lesson Yan Xiaobao wholeheartedly embraced. He already understood how much of a difference it made, fueling his unwavering determination and an insatiable thirst for improvement.

Xie Lan stood inside, watching the young man rigorously training in the enclosed courtyard, her gaze laden with complex emotions. She too had been enveloped by the tranquility that spread earlier, but unlike others, she was acutely aware that he had absorbed some of her cultivation base.

Now, observing the young man, Xie Lan noticed his body teeming with an even greater degree of strength than earlier. She felt a deep unease, uncertain how to handle the knowledge she had uncovered. The young man before her was like no one she had ever encountered, which terrified her. Yet, what frightened her even more was how obsessed her master was with this enigmatic boy.

In Xie Lan's eyes, Xu Biao was the most important person, ensuring his safety became her life's mission. To see him so enraptured by a stranger was something she couldn't fully comprehend, leaving her with a lingering sense of danger.

Though Xie Lan sensed the peril, Xu Biao's direct orders bound her hands. Working alongside Yan Xiaobao, assisting him in winning the competition, and protecting him in case of danger were commands she couldn't defy. Under these circumstances, even if Xie Lan wished to sever ties with the boy, she had no choice but to accept the impossibility of doing so. Turning away from the window, she let out a sharp breath before retreating to her room, where she resumed cultivating.

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"What do you mean, you still haven't found him?" Zhong Hui questioned, his gaze piercing the seven Crusaders quivering before him in fear as they delivered this news.

Seeing their trembling forms, Zhong Hui couldn't help but sigh. He knew these Crusaders wouldn't dare lie to him, but he also understood that no one could vanish completely from the face of the earth.

Weighing his options, Zhong Hui suddenly chuckled. With a wave of his hand, he dismissed the seven quaking Crusaders who remained on their knees.

"There's one option," he murmured quietly to himself, then called out, "Xiao Min!" His voice carried across the room, summoning a dazzling figure into appearance. The newcomer's hair and skin were as white as freshly fallen snow, adorned with frost-dappled blossoms at the crown of his head. His eyes shone icy blue, veiled by faint mist.

"Milod," the frozen figure addressed as he bowed respectfully to the handsome man seated on the frozen throne.

"Reach out to the Dragon Army," Zhong Hui commanded with a sly smile. "Have them keep an eye out for a boy with white hair. If they find him, instruct them to treat him cautiously and ensure that he's not out of sight until they notify me, so I can capture him myself."

"Yes, Milod," Xiao Min replied. Bowing deeply, he retreated from the room, never once turning his back to his master.

"I look forward to seeing the young, white-haired boy's reaction when he realizes all that has changed during his absence over these past few months," a voice suddenly echoed as another frozen figure emerged.

Unlike the former figure, this newcomer exhibited none of the expected reverence toward Zhong Hui. Surprisingly, the striking man atop the throne didn't seem annoyed by this lack of regard; instead, his face brimmed with smiles and delight.

"I'm curious how he'll respond," Zhong Hui agreed, gazing into an unseen horizon. "Not just him," he continued thoughtfully, "but as I understand it, our charming little boy is traveling with the Wang Family daughter and the Deng Family son. When they hear about what happened while they were gone, they'll undoubtedly be shocked."

The two men fell silent momentarily before an eruption of laughter burst forth within the throne room. Zhong Hui's face lit up with immense amusement.

"What do you think their reaction will be?" Zhong Hui asked the frozen figure beside him, who merely shrugged. "How could they even act?" the figure answered enigmatically. "Whatever they do—what's done is done—they can't change anything."

Upon hearing this, Zhong Hui reclined on his throne, his expression tinged with a slight disappointment as he nodded in agreement. The frozen man's logic rang true.

"I think the boy you're hunting won't even be aware of all the shifts here," he remarked with a chuckle. "My guess is, before he has the chance to react, you'll turn him into a member of the Frozen Corps."

Zhong Hui didn't respond to this comment. Instead, he slowly waved his hand, allowing the frozen man to bow slightly before exiting the throne room.

"The Frozen Corps, huh?" Zhong Hui mused to himself with a smile, leaning back on the frozen throne as his gaze drifted once more into the distance.

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Chapter 418 Entering the Finals

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Yan Xiaobao sat in the center of his group in the arena, waiting for their turn in the next round of the competition. The match currently underway featured a team of five shielded fighters, among whom five powerful men were selected as victors.

Unfortunately for the opposing team, the masked fighters were not intimidated by their sheer size. After initiating the attack, Yan Xiaobao quickly discerned that most of the masked fighters were at the Master Level. Their cultivation base surely belonged to the high-end of Master Level.

Watching them, Yan Xiaobao knew that they might face each other later. Although he thought winning would be as easy as a walk in the park, he suddenly realized that even though these underground

cultivators were only operating from the second cave, they were clearly far superior to surface cultivators.

Xu Hui reminded himself to later gather some information about these men from Xu Biao. Sitting in his chair, Yan Xiaobao's gaze fell upon their leader. As if sensing this, the leader lifted his face and stared directly back at Yan Xiaobao.

No one else in the arena noticed this exchange. A hushed silence fell across the seats, with every spectator holding their breath in anticipation of what might happen between the two masked men. But just as the tension reached its zenith, the masked man looked away, raised his hand, and shouted something—words that Yueyue did not understand.

The moment he issued the command, the entire opposing team was beheaded within seconds. Blood sprayed onto the stage, causing Yan Xiaobao's mouth to twitch as red fog churned within his body.

No one outside noticed any change. To them, Yan Xiaobao seemed as cold as ever. But on the inside, Yan Xiaobao was struggling to suppress the red fog, his expression growing increasingly alarmed.

The arena was stunned into silence by the brutality and suddenness of the slaughter, a quiet that lasted for a long moment before erupting into loud cheers. The crowd reveled in the bloodshed they had just witnessed.

At this stage, there were still four active teams left in the competition. Yan Xiaobao and his group would face off in the final match of this round.

Originally, nine teams were selected as the strongest from Mercenary Town, but four had already lost the previous day. Today, another team had fallen, leaving only four remaining. One of these teams had been granted a pass to the next day's finals.

The tournament structure was as follows: all mercenary groups were divided into three tiers—weakest, average, and strongest. Each tier identified a winner within its group. Among the strongest tier, nine mercenary teams qualified to enter. Due to the odd number, one team would randomly skip each round of battles when teams faced off against each other.

The masked fighters had just been selected for the finals, leaving the last team to vie for the final spot in the ultimate match.

The final match of this round promised to be bloodier than any match before it, as it involved three teams facing off simultaneously. The team left standing would claim the championship. Such a fight all but guaranteed mass casualties, and even survivors would likely lose teammates.

The only reason Yan Xiaobao still wished to participate was his belief in his ability to protect his friends. If it amounted to a life-or-death situation, Yan Xiaobao felt assured of his strength due to the turbulence within his Dantian Cave, not to mention Xie Lan's powers and his own Speed Flow techniques, which should be enough to ensure the safety of his friends.

Given how mercenaries around the city targeted him, opting out of the finals would be pointless in many ways. Now was the time to prove their strength and secure passage to the next tunnel system leading to the next city.

Today's match was far simpler than those they'd faced before. It was single combat, with the first team to win three matches earning entry to the finals.

Knowing the battle's nature, Yan Xiaobao decided he would start. His hope was to deal with all opponents himself, preserving his friends' strength for the next day's finals.

As the host announced their leader, who was fixated on Yan Xiaobao, the masked man swiftly left the stage, his eyes gleaming beneath his mask.

Yan Xiaobao showed no reaction to what he witnessed and instead focused on the stage of chaos flooded with dead mercenaries. Heads lay disconnected from their bodies, with blood splattered everywhere.

Whimpering sounds filled the air as women stepped onto the stage, crying as they gathered the heads of their loved ones.

Yan Xiaobao was struck by the resilience of those women. They had been watching from the start, yet they never screamed or attempted to rush the stage to stop the slaughter. Not once did they direct hatred or sorrow toward the victors.

In some ways, Yan Xiaobao could not comprehend how anyone could stand by and accept the death of their loved ones. On the other hand, he could see that their strength was insufficient to save their loved ones or protect their families if they intervened. The only option left was the spiritual power that enabled them to endure their loved ones' fate.

A brief intermission began where the stage, made of concrete but layered with sand to absorb blood and prevent slipping, was cleaned. Most of the blood-soaked sand was gathered and removed, replaced with a pristine new layer. The bodies were collected and returned to the fallen mercenaries' homes.

Chapter 419: Entering the Finals\_2

In just a moment, a bloody scene seemed to decorate the stage. As he stepped onto it, Yan Xiaobao felt uneasy, knowing that beneath him lay the blood of countless lives sacrificed in the battles. Like this one.

This feeling of unease didn't stem from a dislike of death but rather from the ferocity of the red mist swirling so violently that he almost lost control of it again. With the faint aid of the tranquil clouds, the crimson rain was subdued once more, and Yan Xiaobao exhaled a sigh of relief. The notion of harboring an intense will within his body, one he couldn't entirely control, was what troubled him most.

As Yan Xiaobao ascended the stage, his friends stood behind him. A thunderous cheer erupted throughout the arena as everyone celebrated the leader stepping up from the very start.

The Yan Xiaobao faction fiercely laughed in defiance. Yan Xiaobao's initial assertion—that he fully trusted his own strength to win without injury—was enough to allow him to participate in the next day's matches as well.

Glaring at Yan Xiaobao, the audience members' eyes seethed with anger and dissatisfaction. They all felt that he was looking down on them. Each individual there was fighting for the chance to prove they were capable of defeating this newcomer.

Yan Xiaobao glanced at them pityingly. He would rather not kill his opponents. If given the chance to neutralize them by alternatives means, he would gladly accept it. However, he refused to let softness make him weak.

Examining his opponents, who were all cultivators of Master-level skill, Yan Xiaobao concluded that, despite one of them being a nine stars Master, none posed any genuine threat in his eyes. To be honest, the only group he considered truly dangerous was the masked troupe that had just exited the stage.

As Yan Xiaobao observed the battle between the masked team and their adversaries, the masked figures now sat in the front row, ready to watch Yan Xiaobao's combat prowess.

Yan Xiaobao ignored the masked cultivators entirely, standing still on the stage like a statue, patiently waiting for the first opponent to face him.

"Don't worry, big brother," boomed the largest of the opposing group, his loud voice paired with an uninspiring appearance. Gazing at Yan Xiaobao with great hostility, he clapped his hands together. "Let me take on this scrawny little mutt," he sneered as he stepped onto the stage, his towering bulk being at least twice Yan Xiaobao's size.

Peering at this giant, Yan Xiaobao tilted his neck forward, his brows raising in surprise, but hidden concern flickered for what lay beneath the cloak.

"Let the fight begin!" the host declared with urgency, swiftly vacating the stage to signal the start of the battle.

As before, Yan Xiaobao remained completely motionless, letting his opponent make the first move. While this was all the audience observed, Yan Xiaobao had already begun channeling Qi through his meridians, activating Speed Flow, and allowing the cultivation base of a Lower Dantian Expert to emanate.

Once more, gasps swept across the crowd. It was unthinkable that the one deemed most challenging among all the newcomers would only utilize a Lower Dantian cultivation base. Some spectators who had witnessed this the previous day were aware of his prior use of the Lower Dantian, but most were not, leading many to jeer, mock, and ridicule him.

Taking a deep breath, Yueyue drowned out the noise outside the stage. She summoned the black blood, activating Speed Clone as it materialized beside Yan Xiaobao, silencing everyone instantly.

For the first time, everyone witnessed Yan Xiaobao's true capabilities. The ability to replicate oneself is typically impossible unless one holds the rank of King or higher. Seeing someone perform such an advanced technique while only activating the Lower Dantian was enough to silence all who had been speaking mere moments prior.

The arena's loud jeers didn't just go quiet; even the masked cultivators and the group slated to face Yan Xiaobao the following day stared, profoundly shocked at the sight before them. Could it be that he truly was an Upper Dantian-level Expert, somehow managing to disguise himself as merely a Lower Dantian cultivator?

Yan Xiaobao did not linger long. As the astonishment gripped the man before him, Yan Xiaobao and his clone moved in unison, charging toward the giant with raised black blood.

Leaping from the ground, Yan Xiaobao landed on the giant's back as the clone closed in beside him. With the black blood axis, both Yan Xiaobao and the clone struck the back of his neck, forcing the giant to collapse instantly.

The fight was over in a blink. The silence swept across the arena as everyone stared, stunned at how the brief and decisive exchange unfolded in mere moments.

Yan Xiaobao's victory against the giant was owed entirely to the latter's size. Small and nimble, Yan Xiaobao had trained in Velocity Flow since he was five years old—a martial arts technique that drastically enhanced speed. Evolving the clone into a true duplicate equally capable of inflicting damage allowed Yan Xiaobao to leverage his power and swiftness to defeat a larger, slower opponent.

The man lay on the ground, still alive. Yan Xiaobao did nothing further, merely striking him with the blunt end of the black blood. Once the giant fell, Yan Xiaobao sheathed his dagger back into his Memory Stone.

The opposing team was filled with rage and hatred, their eyes acknowledging the torment Yan Xiaobao had inflicted as their comrade left the stage in agony. Yet, none dared to attack.

Feeling unsettled by their gaze, Yan Xiaobao became slightly on edge as his next opponent stepped forward.

This man was much smaller than the giant before him, though still taller than Yan Xiaobao. Slender to the point of frailty, he seemed as though a gust of wind could blow him away. Yet, there was something about him Yan Xiaobao couldn't quite put his finger on.

Narrowing his eyes, Yan Xiaobao studied the man now before him. No matter what he saw, everything felt insignificant, offering no sense of danger. Watching him closely, Yan Xiaobao grew more convinced that this man, like him, was concealing his true power. But unlike Yan Xiaobao, this man didn't use a cloak to hide, drawing additional caution from the white-haired boy. To mask one's cultivation base with no cover requires immense strength.

Observing the two men, the host seemed to sense the sharp rise in tension, and a smile crept onto his face. Though he enjoyed watching one fighter overpower another with sheer dominance, he preferred a battle between equally matched adversaries.

Though this opponent wasn't as overtly powerful as Yan Xiaobao, it was evident that Yan Xiaobao wouldn't defeat him as easily as his previous foe. This meant that Yan Xiaobao would have to reveal some of his true abilities.

"Let the fight begin!" the host grinned widely as he swiftly retreated, allowing Yan Xiaobao and his opponent to commence.

Yan Xiaobao decided to test this newcomer by unsheathing black blood, activating Speed Flow, and charging at the target—only to feel his dagger deflected by a hand that felt as hard as steel.

Hui Yue furrowed his brows, retreating within less than a second as Yan Xiaobao noticed an iron-like hand slicing through his residual image, cutting it cleanly into two halves.

Surprise flashed in his opponent's eyes. Clearly, he hadn't expected Yan Xiaobao to be so fast. However, he wasn't alone in his astonishment—Yan Xiaobao, too, was shaken, as his attack had been deflected. He began to seriously analyze this slender foe's every move.

The man's physical stature was the complete opposite of his previous challenger. This opponent focused on speed, his skill in this domain even surpassing Yan Xiaobao's own prowess. Despite this advantage, Yan Xiaobao did not despair—speed was merely one facet of his expertise.

This man, well-aware of his forte in speed, wasted no time waiting for Yan Xiaobao to attack. He immediately rushed toward him, brandishing his hands like weapons. A golden hue shimmered from them, making Yan Xiaobao realize they were fused with the Metal Element.

Understanding this, Yan Xiaobao finally began to unleash some spiritual energy. Immediately, an earth shield formed around him.

Seeing the shield materialize, the slender man sneered and slammed his fist heavily against it. The shield collapsed before Yan Xiaobao. A smile of excitement sprang to his lips as he delighted in being able to deal with Yan Xiaobao effectively, only to find the young man was no longer behind the shield.

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Chapter 420 Spiritual Art

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Shock filled his eyes. The shield was circular, and the only way out was to dig through the stage or fly into the sky.

Flight was something everyone hoped to achieve, but only if they were gods or creators of very rare arts that taught them to fly.

Glancing at the stage, nothing disturbed it, making it seem like Yan Xiaobao hadn't escaped to the ground, astonishingly watching Yan Xiaobao floating in the air above Qi Fan.

The entire arena was silent. Yan Xiaobao had only just released the power of his Lower Dantian, yet here he was, floating on a small fan created by Qi's pearly white light.

Seeing him fly was shocking enough, but relying on Qi — which most cultivators wouldn't use once they entered the Middle Dantian due to their preference for spiritual energy — was truly incomprehensible.

Did this young man not have Spiritual Art? Or was he just showing off by flying around? The audience couldn't tell, but some started booing because they wanted the fight to continue, while others cheered, shocked at the sight of someone genuinely floating.

The masked men didn't, but the leader squinted his eyes, never taking his attention off Yan Xiaobao during the battle.

Yan Xiaobao slowly returned to the stage, and once his feet touched the ground, a metallic hand reached Yan Xiaobao's chest. The white-haired boy didn't have enough time to fully avoid it, grazing his chest, black cloak, and the clothes underneath, leaving a small cut on his pale skin.

Yan Xiaobao didn't underestimate his opponent, but he finally understood the previous feeling of danger. Speed was not only his specialty, but he was also skilled in attack. As mentioned before, the opponent's body was tall and thin, with limbs longer than usual. The extra limb length made Yan Xiaobao more alert as he needed to remember his opponent's long-range reach.

Jumping back, Yan Xiaobao glanced at the wound, filled with thrilling emotions. Although the wound wasn't deep, it still bled, and his black cloak was now torn, causing his cultivation base to start leaking.

Knowing he must reveal his ultimate talent to gain the Dragon Army's attention and be permitted into the next tunnel, a deep sigh escaped his lips while he continued to jump back, away from his opponent, simultaneously placing the black cloak into his storage stone.

The whole audience leaned forward, all excited to see who the cloaked man was, even the masked group leaned forward, all shocked to see the blue-eyed, fair-skinned white-haired boy.

He looked like an angel descended from the heavens into their world. Since everyone in the Underworld had either black or at least brown hair, it shocked them all. The shock of seeing someone so different was evident in everyone's eyes.

Yan Xiaobao saw his opponent was even shocked by his different features, and not waiting for a second, Yan Xiaobao activated the transforming weapon, a staff style, sweeping the tall man behind him with the staff in Qi's hand, hitting him at the back of the knees. This brief moment of inattention allowed Yan Xiaobao to sweep him off his feet, knocking him to the ground.

Once he hit the ground, Yan Xiaobao merged with the earth, the stage and he becoming one and very gentle, Yan Xiaobao moved the stage, transporting the opponent from the stage to underground.

Witnessing this, the judge was stunned, completely unsure who to declare the winner. The rules stated that when a contestant left the stage, he was disqualified, but the stage itself was moving.

"The winner is no longer a hidden member of the Invisible Mercenaries!" The judge finally sighed, but no one paid him any attention.

Once Yan Xiaobao made the earth move on his behalf, everyone began to talk, because many of the spectators were mercenaries or citizens, all users of the Middle Dantian, fully aware of the significance of merging with elements. Moving the elements without spells or barriers.

Wang Julong heard the judge announce the next person and hurried to the stage to heal Yan Xiaobao's wound, only to see the white-haired boy shake his head, gently smiling at her, kindly patting her head.

"They wounded me, let them have this advantage," Yan Xiaobao said gently, his voice sounding low but still resonating through the entire stage, allowing everyone to hear him. Haii

While some thought this was his pride and morals towards the fight, others believed it was foolish overestimation of his power. After all, now that the cloak had disappeared, everyone understood he was nothing more than a master-level expert.

The only ones who saw the situation for what it was were the masked cultivators, who did not look at Yan Xiaobao but at Wang Julong. Their gaze was filled with killing intent. Unfortunately, another killing intent suddenly subdued them, dissipating it, as if it was a small puppy next to a grown wolf.

The leader glanced away from Wang Julong, seeing Yan Xiaobao glaring at them, the intent to kill roaring and burning, entirely focused on him and his team, ready to tear them apart. Though fear suddenly burst from the core of his soul's deepest part, excitement erupted, causing him to smile under the mask, and he apologized to Yan Xiaobao.