

Nine-Dragon 61

Chapter 61: Killing With His Bare Hands

Du Yuntian's body flew backwards and landed on the floor outside the arena with a heavy thud.

Ding Qing looked over. Du Yuntian's arms were burned to smithereens—the ligaments were only connected by a layer of skin.

His chest was bloody, his beating heart barely visible. Every part of his body was covered in blood—his chest barely rose with breath, Du Yuntian's life was in danger!

Su Yu had nearly killed Du Yuntian with only one punch? Just how scary were Su Yu's abilities, now that he had broken through to the next level?

The expression of the thirteen inspectors changed. Their eyes flashed with caution. "Thunder Flare!"

The purple flames were not fire but residual heat created by concentrated thunderbolts—also known as thunder flares. Their power was even mightier than that of thunderbolts. What sort of Saint Level technique is able to harness thunder flares?

But it was not the time to admire the thunder flares.

Du Yuntian's life was in danger. He had been beaten within an inch of his life; the Fiery Minister would not be let this incident slide so easily.

As predicted, the Fiery Minister had a merciless look on his face. Flames of anger shot out of his eyes as he kept his murderous fury in check.

Even if Du Yuntian could be saved, he would be crippled. His arms would never regenerate, Du Yuntian was destined to be useless.

The Fiery Minister's majestic aura blanketed the surroundings. The boundless flames rippled in the air. Loud as angry thunderbolts, his aura struck the hearts of everyone present like a heavy hammer, "Insolence, murderer! To think you would deal such a sinister blow during the Holy Meet! I, as the Minister of the Sanctuary, remove your right to participate in the meet."

The declaration came just as Su Yu's victory was secured, making him the otherwise undisputed King of the Holy Meet. Anyone on his level, in his generation, could not contest him.

But, the cancellation of his right to participate by the Fiery Minister had caused his attainment of the crown to become moot.

While the audience was fearful, they were also angry—they understood a great injustice had just been done to Su Yu.

Du Yuntian had come at Su Yu with the intent to kill in every stroke, along with trying sneak attacks at every opportunity; why had the Fiery Minister not stopped him?

Only now, when Du Yuntian had been mortally wounded by Su Yu, did the Fiery Minister decide to punish Su Yu.

Where was the justice?

The clean, just image of the Sanctuary faded in the hearts of many martial artists.

Su Yu had not looked at the Fiery Minister. He slowly made his way down the arena without turning his head. His voice was hoarse, cold, and pitiful, "The duke is dead. The Holy Crown means nothing to me now."

The duke was already dead. What was the point of obtaining the Holy Crown?

There was only one thing left he needed to do.

Su Yu needed to kill the First Prince!

"Quick! Protect me!" The First Prince wore a look of fear as an unspeakable terror welled up within him.

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh——

Three guards of Level Three Lower Tier of the Martial Paths covered the First Prince as he hurriedly made his way down the arena, their expressions grave.

The First Prince felt regret. Had he known that he would agitate Su Yu to the point of a breakthrough, he would definitely not have attempted to execute the Duke of Xianyu.

To be honest, he had been wrong to target the Duke of Xianyu at all.

He had originally been in a good position to become a monarch and rule the land, he could have controlled a million acres. But, he had become overambitious and, in framing the duke, had destroyed everything.

Su Yu advanced slowly, his eyes blood red, as he stared straight at the First Prince—who was fearfully hiding behind the guards.

"Diabolic Sword! Kill!"

Ah——

The guard in front, who blocked the First Prince, shut his eyes—his body contorted as he died painfully.

A person of Level Six Lower Tier of the Martial Paths in the Holy Meet, such as that guard, was easily of equal power to a top ten demon student.

But, a gaze from Su Yu had killed such a person with ease.

"Quick, protect me!" The First Prince howled angrily, fearful for his life.

Scary—too scary! The Su Yu now was terrifying!

As long as the First Prince could escape back to the palace, he would assemble the empire's best and destroy Su Yu with every possible weapon and warrior at his disposal.

"No one can save you..." Su Yu's voice was hoarse. It was merciless and brought chills to those who heard it.

"Diabolic Sword! Kill!"

The second guard dropped dead.

"Diabolic Sword! Kill!"

The third guard dropped dead.

In the blink of an eye, three Level Six guards were brutally murdered.

All that was left was the First Prince, who fearfully retreated.

The scene was strikingly similar to their previous confrontation in the Xianyu prefecture.

Green robed guards fell one by one to Su Yu's Diabolic Sword, until even the Second Royal Prince was executed.

The influential First Prince now faced the same fate.

The Fiery Minister was livid. Su Yu had crippled his disciple, disregarded his punishment, and had now killed in his presence. Did he have no regard for the Minister of the Sanctuary?

"You all deserve death! Why have you all not attacked him yet?" The Fiery Minister angrily slammed his hand on the table, his expression merciless.

But the twelve inspectors hesitated. Some stroked their noses, others looked around—but, no one attacked.

It was clear that the Fiery Minister's actions had displeased the inspectors.

Did the Minister believe he had the right to disregard Du Yuntian's clearly murderous actions, simply because he was his disciple? Then, after ignoring such obvious offenses, suddenly punish Su Yu for a similar crime?

The twelve inspectors felt the angry stares of countless members of the audience; the reputation of the Sanctuary had been ruined by the Fiery Minister.

There was one inspector amongst them, however, who attacked without hesitation.

Whoosh——

Each of the inspectors were at least Level Seven, their abilities were no laughing matter.

The attacking inspector was fast as lightning.

In the blink of an eye, a tall figure appeared in front of the First Prince.

Fang Yun! Fang Yun of the Xianyu prefecture martial arts training institute!

His eyes sought justice. "Insolence, murderer. You killed in the presence of many. I, as an inspector, have to get rid of you." Fang Yun scolded. In truth, Fang Yun had other motives for killing Su Yu; he could not let the people of the Sanctuary know that it was him who had chased Su Yu out of the martial arts training institute—or he would definitely face punishment.

Also, it was not guaranteed that Su Yu would not seek revenge on him in the future. It was better to use this opportunity to kill him now, just as he had tried to in the arena of the Golden Assessment back in the martial arts training institute.

Pssh——

Fang Yun's strike was decisive. A stream of vital energy gathered at his fingertip, sharp and piercing, as he attempted to pierce a hole through Su Yu.

A Level Seven could kill a Level Five with a flick of his finger.

The power of the vital energy was immense. Under normal circumstances, even people at the peak of Level Six have simply accepted their fate.

But, Su Yu's blood red eyes were oddly calm.

He had remembered this attack, this image of Fang Yun; the Duke of Xianyu had saved him back then when Fang Yun had tried to kill him with his vital energy.

Su Yu was overcome with a sense of déjà vu. Today, that scene was reenacted—the Duke was dead, though, and Su Yu was much, much stronger.

"Those who block me shall die!" There was no light in Su Yu's eyes. Purple flames danced on his fists as he struck outward.

Rumble, crash——

Ah——

Thud, thud, thud——

Fang Yun let out a groan and retreated. His finger was in great pain. A purple flame burned on his fingertips.

Poof——

Hurriedly, Fang Yun transferred vital energy to extinguish the remnants of the thunder flare.

What a powerful thunder flare! The rest of the twelve inspectors were secretly shocked.

Fang Yun was utterly shocked. Since when had Su Yu been able to match his blows? In the past he was but an ant, a simple student.

"You stubbornly resist! A heavier crime!" Fang Yun let out an angry howl, a mixture of anger and shame. He had been bested by a youth in front of such a massive audience!

The First Prince's fear was allayed. With Fang Yun stopping Su Yu, he felt completely relieved. A show of hatred flashed in his eyes.

The only person who had made him feel so wretched in his entire life was Su Yu!

"Haha! What can you do against me, the First Prince?" The First Prince stood at the exit of the arena, turned his head, and coldly laughed. "I'll not stop at killing the Duke of Xianyu. I will exterminate Qin Xianer and the rest of your family!"

Su Yu's blood-red eyes were calm, his voice deep and hoarse, "You think you can live past today?"

"I told you. No one can save you, not even the heavens." Su Yu's words were composed—yet, they pierced the soul of the First Prince, and lingered in the air of the arena.

Fang Yun let out an angry laugh. "Die!"

"Space! Time! Manipulation!" The pupils in Su Yu's blood-red eyes flashed with previously unseen brilliance.

Time froze.

Fang Yun was furious; his palm slowly made its way toward Su Yu.

The audience's dazed expressions gradually changed.

The flow of air became slow and heavy.

Though accurately speaking, everyone had not slowed down—it was simply Su Yu, who had entered a faster spacetime.

With the cleansing of two drops of red spirit serum, he could cause time around him to double in speed, even when he was in a heated battle.

Whoosh——

He stepped forward and sprinted toward the First Prince.

Rumble——

Fang Yun struck with his palm but hit only air; he was lucky that he did not fall.

What happened? Su Yu... had vanished?

Fang Yun noticed the movement behind him and his expression immediately changed.

In that short moment, Su Yu... had moved in front of the First Prince!

The First Prince—still unaware—had that villainous smile on his face. He had only deciphered a blur, and suddenly another figure stood in front of him. A pair of blood-red eyes were but an inch away from him.

At such a close distance, every breath was audible.

"Ah!!! You're a ghost!" The First Prince was severely frightened, his face turned white as a sheet.

Whoosh——

The First Prince quickly felt for the jade pendant at his chest. If he crushed it, he could let out a blow equivalent to a peak of Level Seven.

But, his hand was quickly neutralized.

"No one can save you!" Su Yu's cold eyes harbored limitless hatred.

It was the First Prince who had destroyed Su Yu's family. He had caused Xianer to go into exile in a faraway place, unknown to Su Yu. The Duke was executed, the inhabitants of the manor depressed and defeated—all because of the First Prince.

"Stop!" The Fiery Minister was furious.

It did not matter if he killed anyone else—but to kill a member of the royal family in front of him, his reputation would surely be destroyed.

Su Yu disregarded the words and clasped onto the First Prince's neck with his palm.

The First Prince's eyes widened, his expression frightened. He felt a terror, unlike anything he had felt before.

"Su... Yu, release me, I was wrong..."

The Royal First Prince was at the mercy of Su Yu.

His heart was filled with regret. Framing the Duke of Xianyu had been the most unpardonable mistake of his life.

Su Yu's blood-red eyes possessed no pity. He mercilessly shook his head, his voice hoarse and sad. "It's too late, the duke is dead. You shall pay with your life!"

"No...." The First Prince let out a roar of injustice.

Rip——

At the next moment, Su Yu had ripped off the First Prince's head, and held it in his hand.

The crowd gasped, completely shocked.

Su Yu had ripped off the First Prince's head in front of the empire.

The crowd was absorbed in the scene.

Su Yu carried the head of the First Prince and walked to the head of the Duke of Xianyu. He placed the bloody head of the First Prince in front of the Duke's.

Whoosh——

Su Yu knelt. His action was felt by every member of the crowd.

He placed both hands on the ground and deeply kowtowed.

This kowtow caused many hearts to tremble. It was as if time stopped at this moment, and the heavens wept alongside Su Yu.

"Father, I have come too late!" The sad, trembling voice reverberated around the arena.

Su Yu had entered the Holy Meet, not for fame or shock, not for prestige and honor, but to seek revenge for his benefactor.

Countless people had respect for Su Yu.

Even the high and mighty twelve inspectors were silent and respectful.

The purple figure kneeling on the ground was imprinted in the minds of many.

Countless years later, they would still remember the frighteningly talented youth who had appeared at the Holy Meet and defeated everyone in the empire with nine straight victories—before abandoning all honor in order to kneel in front of his benefactor's corpse.

This prayer would forever be in the hearts of many.

Fang Yun was dazed for a moment, but his eyes regained a cold expression.

"Insolence, murderer! Killing a member of the royal family is a crime that warrants death! Hargh!"

Su Yu slowly lifted his head, and pitifully laughed. "Father! You have seen me defeat everyone in the martial arts training institute in the past. Today, please continue to witness my fight to the death!"

His great revenge was over. If the people of the Sanctuary did not want him alive, then he would kill. He would flip the Sanctuary over.

"Kill!" Su Yu suddenly stood up, purple thunder flares enveloped his fists.

His limitless killing intent pierced through the heavens and spread across the clouds.

Chapter 62: The Life and Death of the Duke

Rumble——

Su Yu was already dead inside, this battle could not hurt him. Each stroke of his was merciless and murderous.

"Diabolic Sword!"

"Purple Star Thunderbolt!"

In terms of ability, Fang Yun was obviously superior to Su Yu.

But, Su Yu was not afraid of death. Fang Yun was unable to use fear and intimidation to his advantage as a result, and it greatly impacted his ability to defeat Su Yu quickly and efficiently.

The expression on the Fiery Minister's face was grave. To think that an inspector would have such trouble with a candidate!

He slowly rose to his feet and a horrifying aura surrounded him.

The twelve inspectors' expression changed.

The Fiery Minister was going to take care of Su Yu himself?

Level Eight of the Martial Paths—the Minister lived a terrifying and brutal existence.

A powerful aura crashed in like waves, causing Su Yu's blood to curdle despite already being engaged in combat.

A mere release of his aura brought about such terrifying result—were he to truly strike Su Yu... There would be no possible defense.

Just before the Fiery Minister prepared to strike, a light chuckle spread through the arena.

Swoosh——

The figure of a young man strode in from the entrance of the arena.

He was dressed in a white robe, simple and clean.

He had thin eyebrows and charismatic, starlike eyes. His overall appearance was gentle and handsome, with a muscular frame. At that moment, he had a slight smile as he surveyed his surroundings.

The grave expression of the Fiery Minister changed after he noticed the young man.

Step, step, step——

The all-powerful Fiery Minister immediately stood up, visibly nervous. He fearfully walked towards the young man and knelt in respect. "I, the Fiery Minister, welcome Holy Disciple Qiu!"

The twelve inspectors' expressions changed drastically. Even Fang Yun shuddered—his eyes displayed a mixture of fear and respect.

Fang Yun shoved Su Yu back as he frantically ran over to the other twelve inspectors in order to pay his respects.

Everyone—Minister and inspectors included—were in deep shock, not daring to breathe.

Everyone in the arena was dead silent.

The Fiery Minister, the leader of the Nine Great Ministers, as well as the thirteen inspectors who rule over the empire's martial arts training institutes, were paying their respects to a youth?

Furthermore, the youth acted as if this was natural; his expression was calm as he stood in front of them with his hands behind his back.

Surveying the surroundings, he glanced over to the bloodied heads of the First Prince and the Duke of Xianyu. He then raised his eyebrows and asked, "Speak. What is this all about?"

This was the Holy Meet—had it ever been so unordered?!

Things had come to the point that an inspector was having a battle with a youth in the arena.

The eyes of the Fiery Minister trembled slightly and a shred of fear welled up within him. He chose his words carefully, "To reply Holy Disciple Qiu, There was a murderer in the meet, and he severely injured the other contestants as well as killed a member of the royal family. We are... We are in the midst of suppressing him."

"Is that the case?" The youth—surname, Qiu—shifted his gaze to the thirteen inspectors.

Of the thirteen inspectors, twelve were jittery and did not dare answer.

The Fiery Minister was in charge of the inspectors—their life and death depended on his whims. How could they expose his deeds? If the Fiery Minister was not appropriately punished they would be in a lot of trouble.

"In reply to Holy Disciple Qiu, this is exactly the case! This person is cruel and merciless. I am in the midst of capturing him." Fang Yun quickly supplied.

That was indeed the case!

The youth Qiu looked coldly at Su Yu, then lifted his finger in preparation to end Su Yu's life.

Swoosh——

At this moment, a slender figure flew down in front of Su Yu.

She was a petite and beautiful as a fairy. Within her lovely eyes was a boiling anger

"Sir, please do not believe the words of those two! The Fiery Minister intended to allow his disciple to commit murder, completely disregarding the rules of the Holy Meet. Du Yuntian was attempting to kill Su Yu in front of the audience—but he could not match up to Su Yu's skill, and was wounded.

"The Fiery Minister became furious and continuously picked on Su Yu. As for the First Prince, their dispute was the result of a personal grudge between him and Su Yu." Xia Jingyu mustered up her courage—she stood up for Su Yu when everyone else was afraid; Xia Jingyu spoke the truth.

The Fiery Minister was frantic. He looked back in anger, "Do not spout nonsense..."

"So you are Su Yu." The youth Qiu dropped his finger and interrupted the Fiery Minister as if suddenly coming to a realization.

Hm... Both the Fiery Minister and Fang Yun were surprised. Holy Disciple Qiu knew of Su Yu's existence?

"Come here." Holy Disciple Qiu motioned with his hands. Three figures strode in from the entrance of the arena.

It was the grandmaster, Bai Qixiong, and Guard Chen!

A murderous glare flashed in Su Yu's eyes. "Bai Qixiong! Guard Chen! It's you guys!"

"Indeed." Holy Disciple Qiu stroked his chin—everything was clear to him now.

Glancing over at Su Yu, Holy Disciple Qiu gently nodded his head. "Yes, since the First prince sent someone to assassinate you, he should, logically, be executed. You did a great job killing him—in fact, you saved me the trouble of doing it myself."

The entire arena exploded in commotion at his words.

The First Prince had sent someone to assassinate a Holy Seal bearer? Did the First Prince not learn from the former monarch's mistakes? His death was justified after committing such a crime! History had grown too far from the present—people had forgotten about the punishments at the hands at the Sanctuary.

"As for the two of you, Bai Qixiong and Guard Chen, I will let Su Yu decide your fate. Your life and death depend on his whims." Holy Disciple Qiu calmly glanced past Bai Qixiong and Guard Chen.

"As for you, grandmaster—you were not only aware of the First Prince's scheme, but you also aided him in his crime. Let your death be a lesson to all." Qiu flicked his fingers and a stream of terrifying vital energy pierced the air.

Ah——

The grandmaster, a Level Seven Peak, did not even have the chance to hide. The grandmaster dropped dead where he stood.

Fear seeped into the hearts of many. Holy Disciple Qiu had killed with the intent to teach a lesson, and he had achieved in spreading a potent warning to all.

The assassination of a Holy Seal bearer had not happened in many years—many had forgotten the lessons of the past, and they needed to be reminded through blood.

Holy Disciple Qiu swept his gaze to Du Yuntian, his killing intent apparent, "Disregarding the restrictions, killing people in front of others in the arena—you deserve death too!"

Crash——

A finger of vital energy ended Du Yuntian's life.

"Even though Su Yu committed the offense of severely wounding his opponent, it was Du Yuntian who struck first, and thus I shall not pursue the matter." Qiu was impartial.

Finally, he shot his gaze to the Fiery Minister and Fang Yun. "Fiery Minister, the Holy King let you govern the affairs of the Fenglin Empire—he put his trust in you. But, you manipulated the masses

and hid facts for personal gain. You completely disregarded the instructions of the Holy King, disrupted the Holy Meet, and impacted the reputation of the Sanctuary. Do you plead guilty?"

The Fiery Minister's body quivered, his heart felt as if it was dropped into a frozen chamber. A hatred for Xia Jingyu welled in his heart.

If not for her, there would be no one in the Fenglin empire who would dare to stand up to him—he would have been able to regain control of this situation.

"Hmph! Unrepentant!" Holy Disciple Qiu was incredibly perceptive—he detected the hatred in the Fiery Minister's heart in a matter of seconds.

"The Sanctuary does not need a failure like you!" Qiu's gaze was sharp and his voice was stern, "I, with the title Holy Disciple, announce that, from this day onwards, you will be relieved of your duties as Minister of the Sanctuary and be expelled from the Sanctuary.

"Furthermore, your actions were improper and evil. I will destroy your cultivation level so you cannot harm people." The youth of surname Qiu was merciless and left no time for the fiery Minister to react. He immediately struck with a strong vital energy, severing the Fiery Minister's internal energy source.

Ah ——

The Fiery Minister let out a howl of pain. His internal blood energy channel was severed—his vital energy was no longer able to circulate. He could no longer use any abilities and was destined to become an ordinary old man.

"As for you!" Qiu shot a cold gaze to Fang Yun, "You abused your influence and fabricated lies in an attempt to deceive the Sanctuary. You should be executed."

"Ah! No!" Fang Yun was immensely regretful.

But, in front of the Level Nine of Qiu Changjian, he could not even fight back. Fang Yun was killed on the spot with a mere finger.

The arena gasped.

Who exactly was this Holy Disciple Qiu?

He was merciless and decisive. Since he had appeared he had already killed three people and destroyed the cultivation level of the Fiery Minister.

It was truly gruesome—there had never been a scene so harsh before in history.

But, undoubtedly, the reputation of the Sanctuary had raised in the hearts of many once again. There was still justice in the Sanctuary. People like the Fiery Minister and Fang Yun were but black sheep.

After he executed Fang Yun, Holy Disciple Qiu scanned the ten people in the preparation area...Or, rather, the eight left—Su Yu had been stripped of his right to participate and Du Yuntian had been killed, and thus neither were considered Holy Talents.

"You people are this generation of the Holy Talents? Okay, follow me, accept the test." Holy Disciple Qiu calmly ordered the group, bringing them into a secret chamber.

Xia Jingyu was included among them. The group hurried over.

"Su Yu..." Walking past Su Yu, Xia Jingyu paused.

She gently bit her lip. Su Yu had lost his right to enter the Sanctuary—it was difficult for her to see him in the future.

After the massacre, Su Yu gradually slipped out of his murderous haze. The blood red color in his eyes receded like the tide.

As he looked at Xia Jingyu's face, a warmth overcame him. In the face of crisis, only Xia Jingyu had come forward to defend him.

"I'm fine. Make sure to train hard once you entered the Sanctuary." Su Yu knew that this would perhaps be the final meeting between Xia Jingyu and himself.

One would become a Holy Talent while the other would wander the mortal world—the gap between them would get larger and larger.

Xia Jingyu could not bear to part with Su Yu. She did not blink as she gazed at Su Yu.

If Su Yu had told her to stay, she would not have refused.

"Go." Su Yu smiled, his heart in agony.

Are you not asking me to stay? Xia Jingyu's eyes dulled, her heart felt empty.

At that moment, the people in the front hurried her along. She took a long look at Su Yu, then turned to leave.

With her leaving, Su Yu felt a sudden loneliness. He was all alone once again.

The Duke was dead. Xianer had gone to a faraway place. His only friend, Xia Jingyu, was entering the Sanctuary to further her training.

He was the only one left, entirely alone.

With that realization, Su Yu lowered his body and searched for a container to take the duke's head away in.

However, a pair of legs entered his field of vision.

He lifted his head. It was the Third Prince; his eyes were full of respect, and he wore a mysterious smile.

Lin Xiao was standing by his side, his eyes were also full of respect. He laughed, "Su Yu, let me give you a present."

Lin Xiao clapped his hands and at the entrance, under the support of two servants, a middle-aged man with a slender physique and weakened expression made his way into the arena.

Su Yu only caught a glimpse but felt as though he was shocked by lightning. He froze where he stood.

"Father?!"

Su Yu rubbed his eyes in disbelief. It was the Duke of Xianyu, albeit weakened and haggard. How had Su Yu mistaken him for another?!

Whose head was at his feet?!

Lin Xiao grimaced as he picked up the head and carefully peeled off a layer of skin to reveal the face of a stranger.

"He was a person the Third Prince had saved in the past, adept in the art of disguise. He volunteered to be sacrificed for the Third Prince. Originally, the plan was for him to die for the Third Prince when he was captured. The guards and warden of the jail are loyal to Third Prince and thus it would not be difficult for us to make the switch when necessary.

"When it became clear that your victory was uncertain, the Third Prince decided to transfer the plan to save his own life to the Duke of Xianyu. He was deeply moved by your act of gratitude and was willing to give up his wild card. You should thank him—without him, the Duke of Xianyu would truly be dead."

Chapter 63: The Heavenly and Mortal Sanctuary

The expression on Su Yu's face faltered as he paid his deep respects to the Third Prince.

The Third Prince had an empathetic look on his face. He sighed. "You, Su Yu, could give up your life in gratitude. I, as someone who was going to die anyway, should do something to help you. If you want to thank someone, thank the person in disguise. He was the one who gave up his life."

Su Yu paid a deep, heartfelt respect to the person in the disguise. Without him, the Duke of Xianyu would never have lived past today.

"Father!" Su Yu was reunited with the Duke of Xianyu. As he noticed the Duke's missing arm, Su Yu's heart turned sour. That limb had been the Duke's sacrifice for him and Xianer.

The Duke of Xianyu had tears in his eyes. He caressed Su Yu's forehead. "It's me who let you down..." The Duke choked on his words.

Su Yu shook his head. His cold gaze moving over to Bai Qixiong and Guard Chen, who were both trying to hide.

"Father, allow me to deal with these two first!" How could Su Yu forget the horrors Bai Qixiong had put the Duke of Xianyu through? How could he forget the merciless pursuit undertaken by Bai Qixiong and Guard Chen?

Bai Qixiong opened his mouth, but was mercilessly interrupted by Su Yu, "Now that it has come to this, do you think I'll really forgive you?"

Even though they were both only following orders, they had done their best to pursue Su Yu—their actions were inexcusable.

Guard Chen mourned for his life. He did not want to die, so he clenched his jaw and with a grunt severed his internal blood energy channel, destroying his cultivation level.

"Su Yu!" Guard Chen knelt, "I have a wife, parents, and my child. Please spare my life. I have destroyed my own cultivation level and will never again cause any harm to the mortal world anymore. Also, I'll confess—it was the Duke of Qin that sent me to kill you, and Miss Jiang is being imprisoned in the manor of the Duke of Qin."

Su Yu had been unaware of Guard Chen's personal life. He had only assumed that he was an accomplice of the First Prince.

To think that the Duke of Qin had a part to play in the assassination of a Holy Seal bearer!

"Hehe... The Duke of Qin, he truly is a poisonous tumor!" Su Yu walked past Guard Chen without dealing a killing blow. He coldly stared at Bai Qixiong, "What about you?"

Bai Qixiong had a look of unjust. He had spent much effort to raise his cultivation level to the peak of Level Six. How could he destroy his cultivation level now?

"Su Yu! I'll give you a manual of a Saint Level technique, spare me..." He was cautious of Qiu Changjian, but did not give much regard to Su Yu's abilities.

"Forget it, I guess I shall strike and destroy your cultivation level!" Su Yu interrupted him and boldly stepped forward. He did not believe that Bai Qixiong owned a Saint Level technique, and regarded his pleas as a means of delaying the inevitable.

Bai Qixiong laughed angrily. In the past, he had pursued Su Yu. Now that Su Yu was backed by Qiu Changjian, he was arrogant. Does he dare talk about destroying my cultivation level?

With a sparkle in his eyes, Bai Qixiong smirked, "What happens if you cannot beat me?"

"I'll spare you," Su Yu replied.

Bai Qixiong was overjoyed. He let out a long laugh. "Haha! Great! If you can beat me, I shall give you the Saint Level technique with both hands!"

"You have no chance of winning," Su Yu calmly said. He took a step forward and struck decisively.

"Purple Star Thunderbolt!"

Rumble——

Purple thunder flares burned harshly.

Su Yu's expression was cold and unfeeling.

Bai Qixiong tapped on the soft sword on his waist and the sword emanated a cold, soft glow.

"Song of the Breeze Sword!"

Clash——

Su Yu's fists and Bai Qixiong's sword explosively collided.

Thud, thud, thud——

Bai Qixiong's mouth became numb, his expression shocked.

He looked down at the soft sword he was holding and squinted his eyes. "What are those flames?"

He only observed that, during the short time his soft sword came into contact with Su Yu's fists, it showed some signs of melting.

Su Yu subtly nodded his head. The Purple Star Thunderbolt was able to severely wound people of Level Six Upper Tier but was not enough to defeat people at Level Six Peak.

Su Yu took a deep breath as his mind entered a wonderful rhythm.

In the eyes of an outsider, Su Yu became a portrait of himself, separate from the mortal realm.

His purple robe flowed and his black hair danced. His handsome face was picturesque.

Su Yu did not emulate the typical displays of the Heavenly Finger, but instead lightly pushed his palm up in front of him.

Rumble——

Ah——

Something interesting began. The area around Bai Quxiong displayed painting-like qualities as if Su Yu was dragging Bai Qixiong into another realm.

Su Yu's ordinary palm sent Bai Qixiong flying back ten meters.

Crash——

Bai Qixiong opened his mouth to spew a mouthful of blood as a devastating pain spread within his organs. His chest carried the imprint of a palm. Several of his ribs were broken.

"You!" Bai Qixiong was incredibly shocked. It was the same Holy Decree he had seen before—why was it so much more powerful?

Su Yu gradually awakened from the trance, his enlightenment now much more profound.

After his souls had fused, Su Yu had faintly discovered that blindly following examples of the Holy Decree was foolhardy.

Emulation was ultimately inferior.

Any form of emulation, no matter how successful, would ultimately just be similar to the original act—it would never surpass any limitations.

Thus, Su Yu had boldly tried to incorporate his own techniques when he was in the realm of the Holy Decree—no longer emulating anyone.

The effect was incredible. The technique's power had grown several times, exceeding Su Yu's expectations.

In his relaxed state, Su Yu coldly glared at the defeated Bai Qixiong.

In the past, Bai Qixiong had been an unsurpassable martial artist in his eyes.

Today, Bai Qixiong had been defeated by his palm.

Su Yu did not feel a large sense of accomplishment. He had seen the terrifying abilities of a Level Nine in Qiu Changjian—he no longer considered Level Six Peak to be as incredible as he once did.

His only regret was that he had no fate within the Sanctuary. Without this opportunity, it would be hard for him to learn more mysterious techniques, or find the chance to spar with even more powerful talents.

In the secret chamber, Qiu Changjian candidly sat down. Eight people stood in line in front of him.

"Out of all of you, according to your rankings in the sparring, which of you is the strongest?" Qiu Changjian asked directly.

The eight people looked at each other. The sparring had not come to a conclusion due to the incident with Su Yu, and thus a ranking had not been established.

As if he recognized this fact, Qiu Changjian let out a long sigh. "Alright then, each of you show me your most powerful technique."

"Sir, according to the rules, all eight of us have earned the right to enter the Sanctuary. What's the point in seeing who is stronger than the other?" Xia Jingyu asked.

"Good question." Qiu Changjian observed Xia Jingyu with a little admiration.

The Fiery Minister terrorized everyone, only she had the guts to say the truth. He could see that, while she seemed weak on the outside, she was strong on the inside.

Her question was straight to the point and showed her intelligence. "While all of you have the right to enter the Sanctuary, not all of you hold the right to become a Holy Disciple," Qiu Changjian answered.

Holy Disciple? The same as Qiu Changjian?

"The Sanctuary is divided into two sections, the Heavenly Sanctuary and the Mortal Sanctuary. The Mortal Sanctuary collects talents from all over the world and is governed by the Nine Great Ministers. They are responsible for the teaching of the cultivation techniques of the talents. From the first generation onward, there have been thousands of students within the Mortal Sanctuary. This is the Sanctuary that most people know of.

"As for the Heavenly Sanctuary, we only collect rare geniuses that are one in a million. They become disciples of the Holy King and gain the title of Holy Disciple. They receive the best resources, their status is higher than the disciples in the Mortal Sanctuary. They hold the right to punish disciples in the Mortal Sanctuary should they feel it is justified. Understand?"

The scene of Qiu Changjian punishing the Fiery Minister was still fresh in the mind of the eight people.

Even the esteemed Fiery Minister's fate was dictated by the whims of a disciple from the Heavenly Sanctuary.

The Heavenly Sanctuary was the true Sanctuary. Only by entering the heavenly Sanctuary could they consider themselves truly above regular mortals.

Zheng Yilin's eyes exuded passion, "Sir, how many people in each generation can enter the Heavenly Sanctuary?"

"How many?" Qiu Changjian was sarcastic, "You should have asked how many generations typically pass before anyone actually enters the Heavenly Sanctuary."

What? One person every few generations? The criteria for entry into the Heavenly Sanctuary was harsh beyond imagination.

"Alright, let's start, show me your most powerful technique," Qiu Changjian said.

The four demon students of the martial arts training institute went first. Each displayed their strengths.

Qiu Changjian remained impassive, his starlike eyes calm. He remained silent.

He remained silent until Dong Lin's turn. "Ordinarily, you would not be granted entry into the Mortal Sanctuary," Qiu Changjian commented.

Dong Lin nearly vomited blood. In the empire, he was ranked amongst the top four students and was highly regarded. But in the Mortal Sanctuary, he was below average!

Without a doubt, Dong Lin was not fated to enter the Heavenly Sanctuary—he was considered average in the Mortal Sanctuary.

After Dong Lin, Chong Nanfei displayed his abilities. The eyes of Qiu Changjian remained calm. "You're alright. Probably average in the Mortal Sanctuary."

Chong Nanfei grimaced, to be average even amongst the Mortal Sanctuary would mean that he was not fated to enter the Heavenly Sanctuary.

Xia Jingyu clenched her jaw. Among the eight contenders, her cultivation level was the lowest, and she was afraid that she would not impress Qiu Changjian.

After some thought, Xia Jingyu recalled the Holy Decree that Su Yu had taught her and decided to give it a try.

Xia Jingyu took a breath, then immersed herself in a peaceful place—she conjured a vision of a day beneath the moon and under pear tree flowers, quiet and harmonious. The mental image provided warmth—as if she lied in Su Yu's soft embrace. These thoughts in mind, Xia Jingyu used the Heavenly Finger.

Creak——

Her finger sliced the air and a unique rhythm was set. It made her feel like a celestial being from a painting.

Qiu Changjian's starlike eyes sparkled, his face showed the first traces of a smile, "Not bad, the Holy Decree is precise and refined, harboring the massive energy of the universe. The rhythm envelops miles of lakes and mountains, pretty and wondrous! It seems that this trip was not wasted, and I have found a person worthy of the Heavenly Sanctuary.

"What is your name?" Qiu Changjian was smiling, his tone friendly.

"Xia Jingyu." She was confused, she could enter the Heavenly Sanctuary?

"Alright, Junior Xia, you have a day to prepare and take care of your personal life in the mortal realm. Tomorrow you shall follow me to the Heavenly Sanctuary. We have one more member." Qiu Changjian was visibly joyful.

What? All eight people were shocked; Xia Jingyu was entering the Heavenly Sanctuary?

All because Xia Jingyu had displayed the Holy Decree?

The only one left, Zheng Yilin, was visibly excited. He cupped his hands and laughed, "Congratulations Jingyu, looks like we shall be spending much time together in the Heavenly Sanctuary. I hope that we can help each other out in the future."

He was elated. To think that the Holy Decree was what set apart the Heavenly Sanctuary and the Mortal Sanctuary. He, Zheng Yilin, had also gained insight into the Holy Decree and had the right to enter the Heavenly Sanctuary.

This meant that he could spend more time with Xia Jingyu in the future.

He thought about the Heavenly Sanctuary, faraway and mysterious—foreign to everyone. Xia Jingyu, being a lady, would naturally be uneasy. Xia Jingyu and him were from the same region and would naturally, as strangers in this new world, cling to each other and help each other when needed.

Amidst the constant interaction, feelings might develop and Xia Jingyu might fall for him. They could then get married.

At this thought, Zheng Yilin felt comfort and fiery emotions.

Su Yu, Su Yu, so what if you have defeated me? Xia Jingyu will ultimately be my woman. You can admire me from the mortal world!

Xia Jingyu creased her brows lightly and let out a sigh.

Qiu Changjian had a surprised look, naturally expectant. "So you have gained insight into the Holy Decree too? Quick, show us."

Zheng Yilin was arrogant, but he put on a show of humility as he gravely displayed his Holy Decree.

A cluster of light encircled his body. He unleashed ten fists, each complicated by the light, making it hard to distinguish illusion from reality.

He finished his display feeling satisfied. Zheng Yilin lifted his head to look at Qiu Changjian, his expression suddenly frozen.

Qiu Changjian's expectant face had vanished, his starlike eyes filled with disappointment, "Ordinary, below average in the Mortal Sanctuary."

This comment hit Zheng Yilin like lightning. He could not recover. "But... but I have also gained insight into the Holy Decree. Xia Jingyu could enter the Heavenly Sanctuary, why can I only qualify for the Mortal Sanctuary?" He stuttered.

Qiu Changjian's eyes grew dull. "The Holy Decree is split into different levels; basic, medium, and advanced. Junior Xia's Holy Decree was a medium level Holy Decree. As long as we cultivate it, there are high hopes that she could match up to the Holy King. You cannot compare to her."

There were levels of the Holy Decree?

Zheng Yilin was completely shocked, his heart felt as if it had shattered—dropped from heaven into hell. He bitterly moaned, "It turns out that the Holy Decree I have gained insight into is only of a basic level."

Hearing this, Qiu Changjian scolded Zheng Yilin without mercy, "Basic level? You overestimate your Holy Decree. Your Holy Decree has not even scratched the surface of the basic level. Anyone who trains for a year or two in the Mortal Sanctuary can achieve your level of Holy Decree."

What? Not even the surface of the basic level? Zheng Yilin felt as though he was splashed with a basin of ice water. He shivered at the thought.

Qiu Changjian waved his hand. "Alright, all of you go back for now. Junior Xia will enter the Heavenly Sanctuary with me tomorrow. The rest of you shall await instructions. Within ten days there would be a person from the Mortal Sanctuary to take you away."

After speaking, Qiu Changjian stood up.

"Senior Qiu, may I recommend a person. He is sure to satisfy you." Xia Jingyu flashed a wide smile, as beautiful as summer flowers.

Qiu Changjian raised his eyebrows, "Oh? Who is this person so highly recommended by Junior Xia?"

Chapter 64: Ridding of a mortal shell

"Senior Qiu, you have seen him before. He is the champion of the Holy Meet, Su Yu!" Xia Jingyu had a sparkle in her eyes, she was excited.

Him? Qiu Changjian raised his brows even higher.

Qiu Changjian was going by the book. Even though he had not pursued the matter, Su Yu did indeed disrupt the Holy Meet.

The Holy Meet represented the Sanctuary, and its honor would not be sullied. He acknowledged that the Fiery Minister's decision to strip Su Yu's right to participate was indeed effective as a warning to everybody else. It had reminded everybody that the order of the Holy Meet was not to be disrupted, no matter your potential and abilities.

"Why do you recommend him?" Qiu Changjian asked patiently. He did not want to embarrass Xia Jingyu in front of everyone.

In his heart, Qiu Changjian did not intend to give Su Yu a chance.

But, Xia Jingyu only said one sentence in response— A sentence which completely changed his mind!

"My Holy Decree was given to me by Su Yu!" Xia Jingyu was blushing like a red lily after a rain, shy and gentle.

"Take me to Su Yu! Immediately!" Qiu Changjian abruptly stood, exiting the secret chamber with big strides.

Qiu Changjian was utterly shocked.

Xia Jingyu's Holy Decree was of medium level. Just what level of Holy Decree did Su Yu, who had taught the Holy Decree to Xia Jingyu, achieve?

Qiu Changjian had nearly buried Su Yu in the dirt and he was secretly regretting his actions.

At the arena, Su Yu had destroyed Bai Qixiong's cultivation level and energy source with a single strike from his palm.

Bai Qixiong had been devastated. His cultivation level was completely destroyed. He could, at most, be a martial arts teacher in the future—teaching martial arts theories to beginning martial artists.

But, he was still alive. Perhaps he should count his blessings.

As the right-hand man of the First Prince, he was bound to be the target of the Third Prince's punishment. Su Yu, in destroying his cultivation level, had indirectly saved his life.

His thoughts and feelings were conflicted, but Bai Qixiong did not dare protest any further. He was lucky to have survived the royal battle for the crown.

"Thank you, Mister Su, for not taking my life. This is the Saint Level technique that the First Prince gave to me to learn, as well as my understanding of it over the years. I lost the bet, and now this is yours." Bai Qixiong delivered the manual, trying not to stutter.

A manual for a Saint Level technique was an extraordinary item; to take it out in public was inviting people to take his life.

Su Yu raised his brows, to think that there was really a Saint Level technique!

After Bai Qixiong dragged his heavily injured body away, Su Yu flipped open the manual.

As he analyzed the notes Bai Qixiong had made over the years, Su Yu started to understand the saint-level technique.

"Floating Light Shadow, a Saint Level technique; it is considered the best of the movement techniques. There are a total of three stages. At Stage One Top Class, you move like a shadow, present in a separate realm.

"At Stage Two Top Class, you can stride over water.

"At Stage Three Top Class, you can fly, ride light, and clutch shadows."

Su Yu was shocked, it was indeed a Saint Level technique! And, it was related to movement techniques.

His Cloud Shadow Trick was only a basic level technique, its potential was limited. It no longer proved useful to Su Yu.

This Saint Level technique was given to Su Yu at just the right time.

Cultivating Floating Light Shadow to Stage One Top Class allowed him to rival the speed of a Level Six Peak. Cultivating it to Stage Two Top Class would allow him to be as light as a feather and enable him to walk on water. He could do a short burst of flight as long as there was a point of support around him. Cultivating it to Stage Three Top Class would allow him to fly!

Thump, thump——

Su Yu's heart beat wildly, especially at the thought of Stage Three Top Class. Flight, this... This is a feat only doable by the fabled celestial beings. At least in this world, only the Holy King has achieved such a degree of movement techniques.

Unknowingly, Su Yu immersed himself in the technique as he attempted to gain insight into it.

He immediately accelerated time.

After the cleansing by the two drops of red liquid, Su Yu's manipulation of time was far more effective than it previously had been.

Previously, while he was active he had been able to accelerate time by five—but, now he could speed it up ten times. When he had been calm, he had been able to accelerate time thirty times faster than normal—now, he was capable of speeding it up fifty times.

Every minute Su Yu put into learning the technique was fifty minutes for another person, nearly an hour.

As he studied, Qiu Changjian and Xia Jingyu approached.

The Third Prince had a respectful expression as he attempted to awaken Su Yu.

Qiu Changjian attempted to break Su Yu's trance with a look of approval. Su Yu was learning a technique on the spot after a heated battle. This person did not waste any time when it came to cultivating techniques.

Su Yu would not awaken for a while yet. Qiu Changjian sat down and asked the Third Prince and Xia Jingyu about Su Yu's past.

Upon learning that Su Yu's journey to the capital was for the Duke of Xianyu's sake, Qiu Changjian was deeply touched. "To sacrifice his life in gratitude. Great!"

After understanding the entire situation, the impression Qiu Changjian had of Su Yu completely flipped. He now had an extremely positive opinion of Su Yu.

After half an hour, Su Yu gradually woke up. He wore a confused expression, with a slight wrinkle in his brows. He had many questions on his mind.

Manuel held tightly in his hand, Su Yu was doubtful that it was indeed a Saint Level technique. Not because it was too hard to comprehend, but rather... it was too simple!

He had been learning it for the past half an hour, equivalent to twenty-five hours in the outside world. It had only been a day, but Su Yu had already achieved Stage Two Lower Class!

Even with Bai Qixiong's comments and the cleansing of his soul, it should not have been this easy.

He had only reached Stage One Lower Class of the Purple Star Thunderbolt after multiple days of brainstorming—and that was also a Saint Level technique.

But, in just one day, he had already achieved Stage Two Lower Class of the Floating Light Shadow!

How could the difference in difficulty between understanding the two Saint Level techniques be this huge?

Whoosh——

A gust of wind hit Su Yu's face while he was still in deep thought.

Su Yu immediately stifled his confusion, subconsciously striking out with his palm.

At this point, he no longer needed to recall representations of the Holy Decree in use in order to enter the mental rhythm required.

From the point of view of an outsider, Su Yu was like a man in a painting, separate from the mortal realm—his palm reached out and threatened to drag people into the dissociated realm as well, where they would face his strikes.

Rumble——

What had mildly shocked Su Yu was that his palm disappeared as soon as he struck with his Holy Decree.

In surprise he looked up, only to see a face full of admiration.

"Holy Disciple Qiu?" Su Yu retracted his palm. He did not understand the situation. Qiu Chandjian displayed no killing intent, why did he strike?

At the Holy Disciple's side, Xia Jingyu was visibly excited. She seemed to have gained an understanding of the situation, as she recalled Su Yu's palm just now.

Su Yu's Holy Decree seemed to have evolved. It was now more complex and smoother, more natural and harmonious. Previously, his Holy Decree had been clumsy, with traces of other's interpretations.

Today, he had stripped off everything mortal surrounding his Holy Decree, returning the move to its most natural state—he had achieved true synchronization with nature.

"Advanced level Holy Decree! Great!" Qiu Changjian was utterly shocked!

Su Yu was completely clueless, he didn't understand Qiu Changjian.

"Junior Su! You have a day to prepare. Tomorrow, you and Junior Xia will enter the Heavenly Sanctuary with me!" Qiu Changjian was relieved as he walked off heartily.

Xia Jingyu smiled as innocently as a white lotus in fresh rain. She gave a detailed account of the events that had led her there to Su Yu.

"Ah? Only you and I may enter the Heavenly Sanctuary?" Su Yu was shocked. He had thought that he was not fated to enter the Sanctuary—he had never thought that Xia Jingyu would recommend him and allow him to enter the Heavenly Sanctuary, which was of an even higher tier than the regular Sanctuary.

"Thank you, Jingyu." Su Yu was filled with gratitude. Both twists of Su Yu's fate had been due to the efforts of Xia Jingyu.

Xia Jingyu smiled, her clear eyes flashing with light. "You imparted your Holy Decree to me; now, I can return the favor. We're even. Let's help each other in the future."

Su Yu was smiling. He looked at Xia Jingyu, his heart filled with gratitude.

If Xianer was the love of his life, Xia Jingyu was his lucky star. For Xianer, Su Yu felt only love—but for Jingyu, Su Yu was overwhelmed by gratitude.

Xia Jingyu blushed as prettily as a sunset as Su Yu stared at her with his starlike eyes.

Together, they were as beautiful as the setting sun and fresh snow—they were celestial.

Xia Linxuan was confused. He walked towards the side of the Duke of Xianyu and sighed. "My duke, let me have this son-in-law, lest you have to worry in the future."

The relieved expression on the Duke of Xianyu's face froze slightly. He glanced over at the back of Su Yu, feeling deeply apologetic and worried. His eyes gradually lit up and, shaking his head, he said, "In my life, I will only acknowledge one son-in-law, and that is Su Yu! Nobody should dare come in between him and Xianer!"

"...Have you ever thought of how powerful those are in Fenghuang Valley? If they found out that Xianer had a fiancée, could you guarantee Su Yu's safety?" Xia Linxuan sighed, looking at the back of Su Yu, full of pity.

If Xianer had stayed by the side of the Duke of Xianyu, she would have been happy with Su Yu, forever husband and wife, without anybody to disturb them.

But Xianer's appearance in the Fenghuang Valley had changed everything.

Considering Xianer's status in the Fenghuang Valley, Su Yu could never be with her. Those people in the Fenghuang valley would try everything to break off the engagement.

Of all the schemes they may attempt to break the engagement, one was obvious; they would attempt to assassinate Su Yu.

With the Fenghuang Valley's power and arrogance, Su Yu was but an ant in their eyes. His death would not be remembered.

Why not let Su Yu enter the Heavenly Sanctuary and allow him to break off the engagement before any attempt on his life could be made? This would solve their problems. It would resolve Su Yu's impending crisis, it would benefit Xia Jingyu, and it would curb the worry of the Duke of Xianyu. Three birds with one stone.

"Wait... let's wait. I don't think Su Yu will give in to anyone or nation. Give him some time. Su Yu will prove to those in Fenghuang valley that he is worthy of Xianer." The Duke of Xianyu was expectant and could not bear to cancel the engagement.

Su Yu had traveled great distances for him—he was even willing to give up his life. How could he cancel his engagement with Xianer?

Even though Xianer's mother had passed on, she had had much influence in the Fenghuang Valley when she was alive. As such, thanks to her mother's legacy, Xianer had been treated like a treasure during her time at the Fenghuang Valley. There was no telling how the people of the valley would react to finding out about her engagement.

Originally, the Duke of Xianyu's plan was to let Senior Qin send both Su Yu and Xianer to Fenghuang Valley. Senior Qin held a letter prepared by the Duke of Xianyu for someone to receive in the Fenghuang Valley.

The letter stated that the engagement may be broken only if Su Yu's life could be guaranteed, so that he may live in Fenghuang Valley.

But the situation had changed drastically. The Duke of Xianyu could no longer bring himself to cancel the engagement.

How could the duke be willing to let a benevolent son-in-law such as Su Yu down?

Thus, he had changed his mind. He would acknowledge only Su Yu as his son-in-law in this life. Even if the Fenghuang Valley were to interfere, he would never change his mind!

But, his conviction was not enough to preserve the engagement. Su Yu had to become stronger, strong enough that the Fenghuang Valley could not belittle him. They had to accept him, only then could he truly be together with Xianer. Otherwise, a mere engagement would not be able to hold the two together.

Xia Linxuan shook his head and deeply sighed. "You think that the people in Fenghuang Valley would give Su Yu time? That they would wait for Su Yu to grow?"

The Duke of Xianyu was startled as he processed this...

Lin Xiao suddenly walked in, whispering a report to the Third Prince.

"Hmph! This old fox's ears are pretty good!" The Third Prince's gaze was cold.

He thought for a moment, then strode towards Su Yu. "Brother Su, the Duke of Qin has heard of the defeat of the First Prince and has fled the capital with his family. I am bringing guards in pursuit. Do you want to come?"

The Duke of Qin had secretly ordered Guard Chen to assassinate the Holy Seal bearer, this was an unpardonable crime.

The Third Prince had finally, legitimately gotten rid of the First Prince's ardent follower, with the added effect of making his death a warning to others. Now that the First and Second Princes had lost their lives, their followers no longer had a leader. The Third Prince had stepped out to kill all followers of his deceased brothers as a warning to the world.

Those who do not follow the rules will end up like the Duke of Qin!

"The Duke of Qin?" Su Yu's gaze turned cold.

In the past, the Duke of Qin had forced him to give up his girlfriend, Jiang Xueqing. Qin Feng had ambushed him multiple times. The Duke of Qin had sent Guard Chen in pursuit of him. If Su Yu had not become more powerful, he would have been done in by the Duke of Qin long ago.

In the past, Su Yu had been cautious and shrewd. He knew of a saying, however; if you do not kill a snake with your first blow, expect it to bite back.

Chapter 65: Lovers since young

"Father, you should go rest in the manor of the Third Prince. Allow me to go deal with the Duke of Qin before coming back to discuss things with you," Su Yu bade goodbye to the Duke of Xianyu.

The Duke of Xianyu and Xia Linxuan's family went over to the manor of the Third Prince. They were not disturbed, as the manor was heavily guarded.

Su Yu and the Third Prince were hot in pursuit of the Duke of Qin. At the outskirts of the capital, an envoy reported, "Reporting to the Third Prince, the carriage of the Duke of Qin is escaping in the direction of the Fenghuang Empire!"

The Third Prince immediately ordered the soldiers to ready themselves for pursuit.

"Wait a moment!" Su Yu stood on his horse as he gazed far away. His crystalline pupils were worked to their limits.

After his cleansing, his eyes could see everything up to five miles—three more miles than he had previously been able to see.

Within a radius of five miles, small moments such as waving grass were all within his view.

"The envoy going towards the Fenghuang Empire is just a decoy—those carriages are steered by many juniors from the Qin family. The Duke of Qin and his dependents are escaping towards the Northwest, three miles away. They are steering a bull cart, disguised as farmers." Su Yu's gaze was harsh.

The Third prince showed no hesitation. "Northwest! Pursue them quickly!"

The envoy was shocked, deep in disbelief. How could the eyes of a mortal observe a situation as far as three miles away? Furthermore, Su Yu was even able to identify what the other party was wearing.

They were in disbelief. Nonetheless, the soldiers were fully convinced not an hour later.

The guards in pursuit did indeed stop a bull cart—but there were only elderly and sick people left in the cart.

The Duke of Qin, Qin Feng, and other important members of the family had boarded a large boat in the river.

The boat was traveling downstream and could travel a thousand miles in a day. Without ample preparation, it would be difficult for the guards to continue their pursuit.

"That old thief Qin is crafty, indeed. He prepared an escape route for himself ages ago." The Third Prince punched his own thigh, visibly frustrated.

The large boat had already left the shore and was a good three-hundred meters away from the shore. The water in the river was rapid and deep beyond imagination, making it hard for them to wade through it.

From three-hundred meters away, even the Third Prince could see the Duke of Qin and Qin Feng as they stood at the helm of the boat. While they looked haggard, they wore a relaxed look on their faces as they laughed at the Third Prince who could do nothing about their escape.

Su Yu wore a cold glare. He would never forget the smiles of the father and son.

"Spread my orders—block the river flowing past the prefecture. We will continue our pursuit through the night." The Third Prince was furious. He could not establish his dominance without killing the Duke of Qin. It would prove detrimental to his ascent to the throne.

Su Yu shook his head. "It's useless. They will definitely get to shore before we're able to catch up—they probably have a carriage waiting for them already, ready to escort them to safety."

Why hadn't the Third Prince thought of this? The Duke of Qin was a shrewd man; his escape plan must have been planned very thoroughly.

But the Third Prince was really not satisfied with just letting them escape so easily.

"Their thinking that their troubles are solved just by boarding a boat is very laughable indeed!" Su Yu slowly stood up atop his horse.

The Third Prince did not understand Su Yu, "Brother Su, what do you mean?"

"We capture them on the boat, of course!" Su Yu shot a cold stare towards the boat.

The Third Prince was shocked, "Unless, Brother Su—do you have a plan for us to cross the river? The waves of the river are rapid and the water is deep. Using a small boat will be impossible. Only by using a large boat can we continue chasing the Duke of Qin."

"Heh, there is no need for a plan. I alone will be enough!" Su Yu let out a long whistle before he gently stepped on the horse's head, flying towards the river.

"Brother Su, return quickly!" The Third Prince was shocked. The waters were treacherous; if Su Yu fell into the river and was not adept at swimming, he would lose his life.

But, what the Third Prince witnessed caused his pupils to contract.

At the moment Su Yu was about to plunge into the river, he tapped with his toes and stepped across the surface of the water. He was walking on the water by tapping his toes on the raging river!

Thud, thud, thud ——

The river was rapid—its waves were furious.

Su Yu's figure was agile, like an autumn swallow.

Everyone could see a purple figure as it floated above the river like a ball of light.

"This is the rumored walking on water skill?"

"Can... Can this be done by a mortal?"

The thousands of guards were all shocked.

A glow flashed in within the Third Prince's eyes. "Walking on water... Could this... be the secret manual from the royal palace, the Floating Light Shadow technique?"

Thinking back to the technique that Bai Qixiong had secretly passed to Su Yu, as well as how Su Yu had immediately tried to learn it, the shock on the Third Prince's face grew deeper. He let out a bitter smile. "This royal treasure has not been understood by anyone in a hundred years, but you managed to do it in just an hour. It looks like the technique has always been waiting for you."

The purple light was walking on water. It was magical and beautiful as if a figure of a purple robed deity.

Everyone on the large boat was shocked!

Both the expressions of the Duke of Qin and Qin Feng changed from ease to terror. "Protect us! Bowmen!"

But Su Yu's body was weightless. He dodged the attacks with ease and, once he was within thirty feet, he tapped the tips of his toes together, which conjured a small wave. Su Yu turned into a purple shadow, spiraling as he landed on the deck.

Clink, clank——

The surrounding guards pulled out their swords.

Su Yu stood with his hands behind his back. His purple robe flowed behind him. He conjured multiple small swords with his deep black eyes.

Ah, ah——

In the blink of an eye, two rows of guards dropped dead. The only people left were Qin Feng and the Duke of Qin.

Su Yu looked back at the captain in the cabin, "Go back! Or die."

Creak——

The large boat turned, making its way back to the shore.

The expression on the Duke of Qin's face turned bitter. He knew that he was cornered and had no chance of survival. He stared hard at Su Yu, his eyeballs bulging and making him look ferocious.

The Duke of Qin furiously clenched his jaw. "Su Yu! My Qin family has perished by your hand. We were supposed to help the First Prince ascend to the throne. We were supposed to be prosperous and have many offspring. Why must you eradicate us?"

As he listened to the sounds of the raging river, Su Yu wore a leisurely expression. "Don't blame me for driving you to the edge. If you need to blame something, blame the fact that you attempted to corner me in the past.

"I could tolerate your stealing my girlfriend, for I was incompetent, and I could tolerate your attempts to ambush me—as I had no status, not influence. But, sending someone to assassinate me? You pushed me to the brink, I couldn't overlook that."

Every sentence was like a strike to a gong—Su Yu's words caused the Duke of Qin's heart to tremble.

Who would have thought that the First Prince's massive influence would be destroyed in an instant, due to this small fry who had been so insignificant in the past?

Who would have thought that the Duke of Qin would have his entire family exterminated due to his son's insults towards a commoner's lust for a woman?

If he could turn back time, the Duke of Qin would definitely reprimand his sons.

But, it was too late!

Qin Feng's heart was filled with sadness and great grievances.

Su Yu now held the fate of his family within his hands.

"Su! Yu!" Qin Feng's eyes turned red, "You think you have won?" He bellowed. With a clap of his hand, two guards supporting a lady at the front of the boat stood at attention.

The lady's arms were tied to her back and a large rock was tied to her ankles. If she was pushed off the boat, she would definitely sink to the bottom of the river and drown.

The lady was about fourteen years of age and her appearance shockingly beautiful, like a fox deity from the ancient scrolls. Her beauty was unforgettable.

Beneath her beauty, the lady was haggard. Her bright eyes were filled with sadness.

Gazing at the raging river, she laughed in self-mockery, hinting that death would be a release from her misery.

Ever since she had come to the capital she had been imprisoned, unable to step out of her room. From that moment she had realized that, in the face of power and status, she was but a bargaining chip, a tool, a pawn. She had once naively thought that, by marrying into a noble family, she would be showered with luxury and privilege.

But today, she had received a rude awakening.

Hearing the commotion, she glanced to the side and Su Yu's purple figure entered her field of vision.

Her maiden heart skipped a beat. Jiang Xueqing showed a pained expression, her lips forming a smile of self-mockery. She lightly retracted her gaze as a bitter tear fell on her cheek.

As she recalled the past she shared with Su Yu, Jiang Xueqing let out a pathetic laugh.

For luxury and status, she had broken the feelings between Su Yu and herself. She had thought that breaking up had been the mature, adult thing to do.

Now, she finally understood that it had been a childish and naive thing to do.

She had given up on true love and chosen riches. How ignorant and wilful must one be to make such a decision?

She could not face Su Yu. In fact, in the last moments of her life, he was the last person she wished to see amid her guilt and regret.

"Su Yu! You will never have what I, Qin Feng, cannot have! Push her down!" Qin Feng laughed maniacally, as he felt high from the feeling of revenge. He let out a huge laugh.

Plosh——

Jiang Xueqing was pushed into the raging river.

Su Yu was calm. His purple figure flew. It floated on light and clutched onto shadows, gracefully cutting across the surface of the water.

He pulled Jiang Xueqing, who had already sunken deep into the water, up.

Whoosh——

They both returned to the boat. Su Yu was still dry, but Jiang Xueqing was drenched in the icy cold water of the river. It was the beginning of winter and the water of the river was cold. Jiang Xueqing's petite frame was shivering.

Whoosh——

He removed his purple robe and covered Jiang Xueqing before he released her from her restraints.

No longer looking at her, Su Yu flew towards the cabin and took care of the remaining guards.

In the end, the only ones left were Qin Feng and the Duke of Qin.

"Su Yu, do whatever you want with me! Kill me or disfigure me, do as you please!" The Duke of Qin knew that he was a dead man, and had accepted his fate.

Su Yu shook his head and glanced at the Third Prince on the shore, and he smiled. "There's no need! There will naturally be someone ready to deal with you."

The Third Prince had helped Su Yu on many occasions, and Su Yu had promised that, if he had obtained the crown, he would help the Third Prince ascend to the throne.

Today, handing the Duke of Qin over to the Third Prince would greatly help his ascent to the throne.

Suddenly, Su Yu felt a tightness at his waist.

A pair of jade-like hands hugged Su Yu from behind. A trembling, petite, ice-cold and drenched body was pressed fully against his back.

A silent cry came from behind him, as if a helpless person was clutching at her life's final straw. She was hugging Su Yu tightly, refusing to let go.

"What is the meaning of this?" Lightly raising his brow, Su Yu resisted the temptation to use force to separate himself from Jiang Xueqing.

"I'm cold," Jiang Xueqing's tone was pitiful as she stubbornly hugged Su Yu.

After some consideration, Su Yu sighed silently. He gathered his energy and released a stream of vital energy into Jiang Xueqing's body, forcing the cold away.

Until they reached the shore, Jiang Xueqing hugged onto Su Yu's arm, refusing to let go.

The Third Prince carefully observed Jiang Xueqing. If he remembered correctly, she was the lady who had abandoned Su Yu in the past for Qin Feng. The rumors said that she was once the person who held Su Yu's heart. Now she wanted to return to his side?

The Third Prince shook his head. Besides the fact that Su Yu, a righteous man, would never turn his back on Qin Xianer, the fact of the matter was that Jiang Xueqing no longer deserved a man such as Su Yu.

As a martial artist, Jiang Xueqing could not catch up to him in terms of cultivation level; they were not destined to be together.

"Fetch a horse for her." The Third Prince ordered.

Jiang Xueqing buried her head deep in Su Yu's chest and hugged his arm tightly. She vehemently shook her head. "There's no need. I am sticking with Su Yu."

Su Yu creased his brows. He was disgusted. After all this time, you think that simply clinging to me would make me accept you again?

As he began to push her away, Jiang Xueqing's voice spread to his ear, "I know I cannot face you—I am not seeking your forgiveness, and will definitely not cling onto you. But, can you allow me to be by your side for a little while longer? As young, former lovers?"

Young, former lovers?

Deep in Su Yu's soul came a slight throb. After the complete fusion of Su Yu's souls, minute feelings hidden deep in Su Yu's souls were gradually accepted by Su Yu.

Softening his heart, Su Yu sighed as he got on his horse. He pulled Jiang Xueqing up into his embrace.

Chapter 66: A laugh resolves all hatred

"Su Yu, do you still love me?" Jiang Xueqing had a smile on her face. She widened her eyes, staring into Su Yu's starlike gaze.

"I already have a fiancée." Su Yu replied directly. He did not want any feelings of affection to arise between Jiang Xueqing and himself; that would be letting down Xianer.

Jiang Xueqing kept her smile. Su Yu's answer was of no surprise to her. She was not disappointed, for she had not expected much. But, still, she involuntarily sighed. "It looks like I no longer exist in your eyes and your heart."

She once again leaned on Su Yu's shoulder. Jiang Xueqing felt a sense of closure, but also a sense of longing. A bitter tear dropped from her eyes, stopping at the corner of her lips. Her expression displayed a mixture of sadness and happiness. Her smile was pitiful, "Su Yu, I'm sorry... I regret everything..."

A word of apology and regret; these were Jiang Xueqing's heartfelt words.

A once proud and materialistic youth had learned life's true lessons and now felt grief and regret.

Su Yu's heart shuddered. He genuinely felt sorry for her after hearing such a pitiful voice. Jiang Xueqing was only fourteen, an age of cluelessness and ignorance. She had made a mistake—could he forgive her and give her a second chance?

An image of the adorable and playful Xianer crossed his mind. The lovable figure made Su Yu shake his head.

He could not let Xianer down.

"There are no opportunities to revisit mistakes made in life, but life can still continue. Qing-er, you have to look out for yourself..." Su Yu calmly lectured.

Jiang Xueqing's petite frame shuddered. Her final shred of hope had been extinguished.

She felt an intense pain pierce her soul. She hugged Su Yu tightly, unable to control her shuddering. She suddenly remembered what she thought she had lost the day Su Yu smashed their token of love on the ground. She finally understood that, what she had lost, was life's most treasured, sincere, and irreversible true love.

"Brother Su Yu..." Jiang Xueqing's petite body convulsed. She choked as she called out to Su Yu, as he had called out to her in the past when she had admired him.

But, she could never go back to the past.

At the manor of the Third Prince, Jiang Xueqing was brought to her room to rest.

Before getting off their horse, Jiang Xueqing had gazed once more at Su Yu.

Once he had returned to the hall, Su Yu immediately paid his respects to the Duke of Xianyu.

The two had survived many crises and had much to talk about.

"Father, if the opportunity arises, I will definitely help you find a medicine that can regenerate your lost arm." Su Yu had made up his mind.

The Duke of Xianyu had a benevolent smile as he rubbed Su Yu's forehead. "Silly child, the immortal elixir that can raise the dead is but a legend. Where are you going to start searching?"

Su Yu did not answer, but his gaze was resolute.

After some hesitation, the Duke of Xianyu stared deeply at Su Yu and solemnly ordered him, "Yu-er, I know that you are diligent in your cultivation. When you enter the Sanctuary, you must work even harder. Before that, do not attempt to search for Xianer."

Su Yu raised his eyebrows, "Father, why is that? Today you have cleared your innocence and once again stand at the helm of the Xianyu prefecture. We should naturally go to Fenghuang Valley to fetch Xianer back, so we may be reunited."

"Xianer's mother was the daughter of the head of the Fenghuang Valley. She escaped the valley to be with me and the valley still does not know of Xianer's existence." The Duke said bitterly.

"Now that Xianer's existence had been known by the Fenghuang Valley, as well as the fact that she carries her mother's blood, they will definitely nurture and protect her with everything they have. Why would they return her to me?"

"So Su Yu, if you wish to fetch Xianer back, you have to get stronger, fast. Otherwise, you can forget about getting Xianer back. Your life may even be in danger," The Duke of Xianyu spilled out the shocking truth.

Su Yu had a brief moment of shock but he quickly returned to his senses. "Father, what exactly is the Fenghuang Valley? Just how powerful are its fighters?"

The Duke of Xianyu shook his head, "I don't know. I only know that it is very mysterious, so mysterious that nobody in the Fenghuang empire dares say its name. Its existence is taboo."

Taboo? Su Yu's breathing sharpened.

Su Yu thought of Xianer's voice and appearance and made up his mind, "Xianer is my fiancée, no one can take her away from me. If they wish to deal with me they can bring it on! I, Su Yu, fear no one!"

Fenghuang Valley, a taboo existence!

His current abilities were not enough to face such a formidable foe!

"You live up to the reputation of my son-in-law, great! I, in my entire life, will only recognize you as my son-in-law. Anybody else can forget about gaining my recognition!" The Duke of Xianyu laughed heartily.

The two talked until late at night. Before they parted, the Duke gave Su Yu a final reminder, "Yu-er, practice hard. Do not try to find out about Fenghuang Valley, especially in the Sanctuary. Given the relationship between the two countries, getting information in the Sanctuary would do you more harm than good."

The Fenglin empire and the Fenghuang empire were far away from each other, and their relationship was neutral. The Sanctuary was also very foreign—reckless curiosity could bring Su Yu trouble.

Su Yu took his leave and returned to his room to rest. Tomorrow he had to leave with Qiu Changjian for the Heavenly Sanctuary. What kind of world was that?

As he entered his room, Su Yu smelled a fragrance.

He looked to his side. At the corner of the wall, there was a pink incense which spread a red glow.

Su Yu did not pay much attention to it. He knew that servants lit incense every day to purge the room of any weird smells. Though, this smell was slightly different than regular incense. But would any thieves dare infiltrate the manor of the Third Prince?

Su Yu took a deep whiff of the fragrance before he stripped out of his robes and went to sleep.

He dreamed of a female figure leaving a wet kiss on his cheek.

"Brother Su Yu, if time could rewind, I really wish I could be that innocent girl once again. I would always be by your side, laughing as we looked at the sunset, silently listening to the flute, watching the vast ocean and endless fields...

"But, I can only return to the places of the past—not the past itself. Brother Su Yu, this is goodbye."

The first rays of sunlight the following day were soft.

Su Yu opened his eyes in a daze; his mind felt heavy.

The previous night was hazy—his memory of it somewhere between a dream and reality.

He looked around. As he glanced at the bronze mirror, he saw remnants of a red lip print on his cheek.

"Jiang Xueqing..." Su Yu understood. He got dressed and searched for her in the manor.

But, she was gone. She had left the Third Prince's manor alone at dawn, her whereabouts unknown.

Su Yu had a bitter frown and felt a sense of emptiness. Goodbye, lover of the past.

The hour to leave for the Sanctuary had arrived.

Su Yu bade his farewells to the Third Prince, the Duke of Xianyu, and Xia Linxuan.

After saying their goodbyes, Su Yu and Xia Jingyu left for a new stage.

Back at the Third Prince's hall, Lin Xiao was confused, "Master, you sent someone to tail Jiang Xueqing and figure out her whereabouts. Why won't you tell Su Yu?"

The Third Prince fixed his gaze on the horizon and lightly sighed. "Jiang Xueqing had guilt in her heart and did not want Su Yu to find her. Su Yu also has someone else in his heart and cannot give Jiang Xueqing a future. Their fate together is over. They should not meet again in the future."

Chapter 67: Incomparable to a dog

A few days after Su Yu had left, a beautiful nun—as lovely as a fox deity—silently cleaned the fallen leaves from a yard at a nunnery in Qingshan Town, the birthplace of Su Yu and Jiang Xueqing.

As she looked up to the familiar plains, Jiang Xueqing was at peace. She had a smile on her face, "Brother Su Yu, bon voyage."

She continued to attentively clean the nunnery.

A few days passed uneventfully until one day several women entered the nunnery. Unbeknownst to all, they are all experts sent by the Third Prince to protect Jiang Xueqing, and to ward off those who coveted her beauty.

At times, beauty was a curse—even in the nunnery.

At the palace in the capital, the Third Prince was taking care of political affairs from atop his throne. His face was full of relief and he let out a long sigh; "Su Yu, the luckiest thing that has happened in my life was meeting you. You gave me this empire!

"Bon voyage, my only friend." The Third Prince laughed. He had the empire in his hands, but he was still indescribably lonely.

Far away in the Fenglin empire, three figures descended from the sky.

Whoosh——

Qiu Changjiang pointed in the air and a ripple appeared in the obviously desolate space before them. A black portal appeared from thin air and materialized into the shape of a door.

"Come in." Qiu Changjian entered.

Su Yu and Xia Jingyu walked through the door, their eyes shining.

They were struck by the scent of flowers and the songs of birds around them.

The passers-by were passionate and familiar as they walked between their farms. They were all farmers in their youth.

But each of their cultivation levels was at least at Level Six of the Martial Paths!

This kind of power in the mortal world would definitely be considered demon level.

But here, they were merely farmers!

On the far horizon stood a magnificent island suspended in the air, inspiring awe.

A massive series of steps descended from the island to facilitate transport.

The floating island itself exuded radiance and was surrounded by fog, it looked like a celestial scene compared to the mortal realm.

Without question, that was the Heavenly Sanctuary, and where they currently stood must have been the Mortal Sanctuary.

Heavenly and Mortal, the difference between the two was like heaven and earth.

"Oh, Junior Qiu brought back two Holy Disciples? Not bad, hurry back to the Hall of the Holy Disciples to rendezvous with the other Holy Disciples."

Whoosh——

Their appearance had alerted a black figure who stood at guard nearby.

This figure's ability level was terrifying, he was definitely not weaker than Holy Disciple Qiu.

Another Level Nine of the Martial Path? Su Yu's pupils contracted. The Sanctuary lives up to its reputation!

Level Nine in the mortal realm was considered invincible—but in the Sanctuary, they were only hidden guards!

"Heh, so it's your turn to be on guard today, Senior Zhang," Qiu Changjian was on good terms with Senior Zhang. He gave a warm laugh before he put on a stern expression, "Senior Zhang, please escort them to the Hall of the Holy Disciples. I have to report to teacher, for the situation is urgent."

Senior Zhang gravely nodded his head and did not ask further questions. He called for another person to take over his duty and personally brought Su Yu and Xia Jingyu to the Heavenly Sanctuary.

"Senior Zhang, is it not Senior Qiu's main duty to bring people into the Sanctuary?" Su Yu did not understand; it looked like Qiu Changjian had a mission to accomplish and was anxious to report back to his teacher.

Senior Zhang had an easygoing personality, obvious from the way he smiled. "Yes. He was on a mission in the capital. Bringing you back along the way was convenient for him."

Along the way? Su Yu and Xia Jingyu locked eyes. Without Qiu Changjian's sudden presence in the capital, Su Yu would have had been in grave danger.

Qiu Changjian's expression had been grave, forced, and anxious. Su Yu could not imagine how urgent the situation was to be able to make a Level Nine this anxious—but he did not dare ask.

In a matter of time, they had arrived at the Hall of the Holy Disciples.

There were three other youths in the empty hall.

Xia Jingyu froze for a moment, "Senior Zhang, are these people like us, new additions to the Holy Disciples? Why didn't I see them at the Holy Meet?"

Senior Zhang blinked, "Didn't Junior Qiu tell you? There are Holy Meets in every empire of the Alliance of the Nine Empires."

Alliance of the Nine Empires? Both Su Yu and Xia Jingyu were dazed. They faintly remembered hearing that the Fenglin empire was in an alliance with the surrounding eight other empires.

Xia Jingyu knew more about this whereas Su Yu, being an imposter citizen in the Shenyue Continent, was clueless. He only understood after he received a detailed explanation from Xia Jingyu.

The Alliance of the Nine Empires was to combat the Fenghuang empire. In terms of their influence, the Fenghuang empire had even more land than the Alliance of the Nine Empires had in total!

Thus the Alliance of the Nine Empires was formed to combat the huge Fenghuang Empire.

Su Yu's heart trembled as he imagined the world with ten empires.

The Fenglin empire's land was equivalent to historical China. Wouldn't nine united empires equal in size to the Fenglin Empire be about as big as China once was?

And then, add in a Fenghuang empire, which was bigger than those nine combined...

Just how large was the Shenyue continent?

Su Yu's heart dropped.

The Duke of Xianyu had once said that the Fenghuang empire was controlled by Fenghuang Valley and that Fenghuang Valley's existence was taboo—he had also said their influence was massive.

To see Xianer again would be even harder than Su Yu had previously imagined!

After a moment of shock, Su Yu regained his composure and listened to the explanation given by Senior Zhang.

The Sanctuary conducted a Holy Meet in each of the empires in the Alliance of the Nine Empires annually.

The Nine Great Ministers of the Sanctuary each were in charge of one empire. For example, the Fiery Minister was responsible for the Holy Meet in the Fenglin empire.

The Sanctuary protects the Alliance of the Nine Empires against outside attacks in exchange for the talents of the Alliance of the Nine Empires—who are recruited by the Sanctuary as students.

Thus, in the Hall of the Holy Disciples, there were talents from other empires who also had the right to enter the Holy Sanctuary.

Beyond the Holy Talents, there was another group who could earn entry.

Those who were first recruited into the Mortal Sanctuary then gained insight into the Holy Decree could also enter the Heavenly Sanctuary, though they were rare.

The appearance of Su Yu and Xia Jingyu had caught the attention of many.

More accurately, the beauty of Xia Jingyu had caught the attention of many.

Among martial artists, females were a minority—beautiful females were even rarer. Xia Jingyu was like a red lily among millions of green leaves, her beauty made it hard for her to blend in.

Of the three people in the hall, one was cold and the other was slow; neither stepped forward.

Beside them was a handsome youth, sixteen years of age. He stepped forward with a smile on his face and cupped his hands as he faced Su Yu and Xia Jingyu, "I am Feng Hao, from the Luori empire. Might I ask where you guys are from? We will be together in the future, I hope that we can help each other."

While he did say 'we,' his gaze was locked on the beautiful face of Xia Jingyu.

Xia Jingyu did not say a word. Instead, she took half a step back and looked at Su Yu.

"Fenglin empire, Su Yu. She is my friend, Xia Jingyu. Let's look out for each other in the future." Su Yu calmly replied.

Feng Hao creased his brow slightly. The lady seemed to appreciate Su Yu's presence... Could they be a couple?

Such a beauty would be wasted when paired with Su Yu. Feng Hao felt a little disgust toward Su Yu.

Feng Hao was Level Six Peak of the Martial Paths, while Su Yu was only Level Five Peak. Anybody could see that Feng Hao had more potential in the Martial Paths.

But there was no use being impatient. Feng Hao was patient and as time passed, Xia Jingyu would definitely see the differences between him and Su Yu.

"If everybody is here, follow me. We will assign you to your housing." A middle-aged man in black robes stepped forward. His expression was cold and was extremely stern. He was even stronger than Qiu Changjian and Senior Zhang.

Senior Zhang had a respectful expression. "Junior Su, Junior Xia, you must obey the orders of Senior Zhao. The rules in the Heavenly Sanctuary are strict and cannot be broken. He is the First Disciple of the Holy King and is in charge of miscellaneous stuff in the Heavenly Sanctuary. You must remember to not rebut him." He softly reminded them.

Su Yu and Xia Jingyu were filled with respect. The First Disciple of the Holy King! The exact limits of his abilities were hard to deduce.

Everyone followed Senior Zhao out of the Hall of the Holy Disciples, into the entry of their living quarters. There was four room in total, with their own yard. In the yard, there were many exotic plants, thick with spiritual energy. Cultivation of their techniques would be most effective here.

"This is the living quarters for the five of you. There are only four rooms, but we have an extra person. Two of you shall share a room, decide amongst yourselves who."

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh——

Su Yu, Feng Hao, and the other guys were fast and had each claimed a room.

Xia Jingyu was shy and did not dare throw herself into the race. Thus, she fell behind.

Feng Hao had a glint in his eyes. He smiled, "Miss Xia, if you do not mind, we can share the yard. There are two sections in the room, enough for the both of us."

Xia Jingyu arched her eyebrows, her heart filled with disgust. How could she share a house with a male stranger?

"Jingyu, do you want the left side or the right side?" Su Yu had inspected his chosen room. He stood at the door, asking for her opinion.

Xia Jingyu let out a smile and lifted the hem of her dress as she entered the room, she floated a fluttering butterfly. She smiled, "I want the right side."

She had no hesitation in living in the same room as Su Yu, as Su Yu had always given her a feeling of peace. She was not concerned about Su Yu having any poor intentions.

The colors of Feng Hao's face changed.

Xia Jingyu had been disgusted by his proposal but had readily accepted Su Yu.

Her ready acceptance of Su Yu infuriated Feng Hao. What made Su Yu better than him? Did she not understand that, in the Martial Paths, the stronger take priority? Even though she had met Su Yu before him, she should not have rejected Feng Hao like that.

"Great. Now we will go collect your food and water. There are set times for collection and latecomers will not be served," Senior Zhao advanced coldly.

In a matter of time, they had arrived at a wide hall. The dishes inside the hall were fragrant, just a sniff seemingly boosted their cultivation level.

"Every dish in the Heavenly Sanctuary is made from treasures of heaven and earth, and are beneficial for cultivation—if you would treasure the opportunity." Senior Zhao stated. He then turned to leave, leaving behind the five people.

Treasure the opportunity? What opportunity would there be while they ate?

As soon as he got his food, Su Yu was shocked.

What he got was a pickled carrot. Xia Jingyu got a dry bun, and Feng Hao only received leftovers.

This food was even worse than what a normal, mortal family would eat. This food was a beggar's meal.

Even more unbelievable was the dog which sat by the door; in its plate was a delicacy made from the finest ingredients.

Their own meals would be acceptable if the Heavenly Sanctuary had a shortage of food. But, to give a dog the finest delicacies instead of them, this...

Feng Hao was livid, "This is too much! We are newly inducted disciples, but our meals are worse than the dog's!"

"Why are you shouting? If you want better food, go get it!" A senior disciple walked by as they munched on a snack, as if this upset was normal in the Heavenly Sanctuary.

The delicacies made from the finest treasures found in heaven and earth were limited to eleven servings a day.

Ten of the servings were given to the top ten strongest prospective Holy Disciples, and one was reserved for the dog.

The meaning was clear; if you want good food, make it into the top ten. Otherwise, you would eat worse than the dog.

As humiliating as it was, it was very useful for motivating people.

How could they, an undefeated champion with their empire and now disciple within the Heavenly Sanctuary, admit to eating meals worse than the dog's meal?

In the Heavenly Sanctuary, killing or injuring another person was forbidden; but the rules did not apply to creatures that were not human.

It was obvious that, if you wanted to eat better than a dog, there was only one way—using your fists!

The top ten prospective Holy Disciples had mostly left the hall, leaving two of the prospective Holy Disciples to collect the last two servings of delicacies. Of those, the delicacies collected by the person ranked ninth out of the ten were more exquisite and harbored more energy than the food collected by the person ranked tenth.

Su Yu estimated that eating the delicacies ten times in a row would allow him to break through to Level Six of the Martial Paths!

This was unimaginable in the empire; to be able to achieve a breakthrough just by eating... Only the Sanctuary could come up with such a thing.

Feng Hao had a glimmer in his eyes. Taking a big step forward, he smiled, "Junior Xia, wait for a moment. Let your senior get a serving of those delicacies for you!"

Xia Jingyu creased her brow. She did not get the chance to reject him before Feng Hao stepped forward.

The lowest ranked Holy Disciple of the top ten was a young girl, her attitude peaceful. Her abilities were at Level Six Upper Tier, similar to Feng Hao.

She had just returned home and had to be on night watch for two days, followed by being on standby after the new year.

Chapter 68: The strongest enemy

"Junior Liu, it looks like we have an arrogant newcomer. How about I take your place?" Besides the female youth stood a male youth of Level Six Peak.

He was ranked ninth of the prospective Holy Disciples, Zhang Mingyi. His appearance was normal, but he glanced at Junior Liu with a shred of passion.

"No need," Junior Liu shook her head to refuse and sighed, "Perhaps I'm not suited for the heavy competition of the Sanctuary. I'll probably get eliminated in the Storm Competition in a month's time."

Storm Competition? Zhang Mingyi's gaze turned stern, visibly anxious.

With a look of worry on her face, Junior Liu exchanged moves with Feng Hao.

Feng Hao's specialty was movement techniques and fist techniques, powerful yet flexible.

"Mountain Crumbling Fist!" Feng Hao let out a low howl, his figure appeared to be floating.

His movement technique was fast and powerful; he was like a ferocious tiger, full of explosive power without any loss of agility.

His fists danced in the air, circled by a faint red aura.

It was as if a meteor fell from the sky, burning wildly and emanating radiance, destroying everything in its path.

Rumble——

The air choked and trembled!

Su Yu and Xia Jingyu were both surprised!

A Saint Level cultivation technique of the lower class!

In the Fenglin empire Du Yuntian, widely regarded as the top talent, had only achieved the top class level of an advanced level technique. Feng Hao from the Luori empire had managed to cultivate a Saint Level technique! Both were the top of their empire's demon students, but Feng Hao was overwhelmingly stronger than Du Yuntian!

Feng Hao may not be well liked, but his abilities were the real deal!

Junior Liu was calm as she extended a jade-like finger.

Her finger was crystalline and icy. A piercing cold encircled her finger.

Swoosh——

The air around her finger immediately filled with frost, it was hypnotic.

The air within a one-hundred feet radius around her became colder.

Even Su Yu and Xia Jingyu, who were not in the battle, felt the chill in the air.

A Saint Level technique at Stage Two Top Class!

Zhang Mingyi was filled with praise, "Junior Liu's perceptive ability is superb. A branch of the Deity Level Icy Heart Core, the Saint Level technique Nine Styles of Jade Unicorn, cultivated by her to Stage Two Top Class."

Su Yu, Xia Jingyu, and the multiple prospective Holy Disciples were all surprised!

How difficult was it to understand a Saint Level technique? Gaining insight into Stage One Lower Class would boost your abilities by a large amount. But, in the Heavenly Sanctuary, a Saint Level technique at Stage Two Top Tier only ranked tenth out of ten!

The massive difference in standards gave the audience a fear of the Holy Talents; the lowest ranked talent was already this powerful, what about the abilities of the top prospective Holy Disciples?

What about the abilities of full-fledged Holy Disciples?

Also, there were even more powerful techniques than Saint Level techniques, Deity Level techniques?

Feng Hao's look of confidence was replaced with fear. He was a wolf approaching a small rabbit, only to see the rabbit had been a ferocious tiger all along.

Rumble——

Ah——

Feng Hao flew back several meters and a metallic taste rose in his throat.

Junior Liu still stood in her original position. She peacefully retracted her finger without any visible joy from her victory.

In her eyes, Feng hao was not even worth mentioning. Her victory had no need for celebration. On the contrary, a deep feeling of anxiety and unrest shown in her eyes. "My level of abilities will surely get me eliminated in the Storm Competition," She pitifully whispered.

The Storm Competition. It was the second time Su Yu heard her mention it.

Just what was the Storm Competition? Junior Liu, despite being so powerful, was sure she would be eliminated?

Zhang Mingyi looked down at the defeated Feng Hao, the corner of his mouth pointed downward. "Newcomers, before eating proper food, you guys should learn how to eat dog food!"

With that, he swept his gaze past Su Yu and the other newcomers. Though, his gaze stopped at Xia Jingyu's petite body. Zhang Mingyi was obviously shocked by her fairy-like appearance.

Xia Jingyu was slightly disgusted. She did not like Zhang Mingyi's behavior and gaze.

"Hah, though, of course, if this little beauty wants it, your senior here would not mind sharing some of my food." Zhang Mingyi took in Xia Jingyu's appearance with his eyes. He did not bother to hide his lecherous intent.

He had some respect for Junior Liu, for the gap between their abilities was not large.

But Xia Jingyu was much weaker, so he did not bother to censor his words and gaze.

Whoosh——

A purple figure blocked the slender figure and shielded her from Zhang Mingyi's gaze.

"Jingyu, I'll take a serving of food for you," Su Yu turned his head. Xia Jingyu was obviously angered by Zhang Mingyi.

Power truly meant everything in the Heavenly Sanctuary. Bullying a newcomer was actually tolerated!

As she listened to Su Yu's words, Xia Jingyu was grateful—but smiled and shook her head.

"There's no need, I am not that spoilt, I can eat a bun. Furthermore, if I decide I want that food, I will use my own power to get it."

Su Yu shook his head, "I understand that you are strong and independent. But to bear humiliation and plan for the future is an important survival skill."

Seeing her worried face, Su Yu laughed casually, "Furthermore, considering our relationship, do you think to share food with me counts as humiliation?"

"Alright! I'll pay you back one day." Xia Jingyu had been convinced. She blinked her eyes, and her cheeks blushed as she wondered; what exactly is our relationship?

In the past, they had slept in the same bed. Su Yu had said that he would give her an explanation after dealing with the Duke of Xianyu's crisis as well as Xianer's engagement.

Today, only Xianer's engagement remained unresolved.

Xia Jingyu's maiden heart thumped wildly. She knew that she would have to face their engagement someday, but she was still afraid.

Feng Hao was humiliated.

Seeing Su Yu overestimate his own abilities, he smirked coldly, "I would advise you to not underestimate them. Even I was defeated, you have no chance."

"You were incompetent," Su Yu replied, cold and direct.

Feng Hao was furious and did not mask his belittlement of Su Yu. "You, with the surname Su—entering the Heavenly Sanctuary has made you arrogant. Do you really think you are invincible? You don't have the right to challenge Senior Liu."

Even though Feng Hao had been defeated, at least his skill had garnered him a chance—Su Yu meant even less in this world than him.

Su Yu took a big step forward without turning back. "I want to correct two points. First, you are the arrogant one. The one defeated by Senior Liu was you, not me! Second, who said that I was challenging Senior Liu?" He coldly asked.

Whoosh——

Su Yu turned and fixed his gaze on Zhang Mingyi!

"Your food, I want it. As for you, you can eat dog food." Su Yu took a big step toward Zhang Mingyi.

The other newcomers, as well as the senior disciples, were all dumbfounded. Feng Hao's Level Six Upper Tier abilities were defeated Senior Liu, ranked tenth. Su Yu, at Level Five Peak, now wanted to challenge Zhang Mingyi—a whole rank higher than Senior Liu?!

Su Yu was being emotional. He wanted to fight on behalf of Xia Jingyu, but he wasn't thinking straight.

"A lunatic without sense or fear!" Feng Hao said with disdain.

Zhang Mingyi was surprised. He obviously did not expect a newcomer to dare challenge him.

"Heh, junior—you are very confident. Let me, your senior, give you a headstart." Zhang Mingyi was relaxed, but hidden within him was a shred of disdain. Su Yu had upset him when he had blocked Xia Jungyu from his gaze.

Su Yu shook his head and stepped forward, "I would advise you, don't underestimate me."

Zhang Mingyi laughed darkly. He desperately wanted to teach Su Yu a lesson but did not want to bring judgment upon himself for mistreating a newcomer. Shockingly, Su Yu had justified a rough treatment—now Zhang Mingyi didn't have to hold back.

"Hah, fine. I won't hold back."

Zhang Mingyi's gaze turned cold as he lifted his fingers and a mysterious rhythm circled between them

It floated between realities; it was as if his finger was from another realm—an illusion.

Gradually, Zhang Mingyi's entire body slipped into another realm, dissociated from the mortal world.

"Medium Level Holy Decree!" Junior Liu's expression was composed of envy and admiration. When she glanced at Su Yu, she had a look of pity. It looked like Zhang Mingyi really wanted to teach Su Yu a lesson, going so far as to use his Holy Decree.

The Sanctuary was like that. Power meant everything.

If you did not want to be humiliated and be considered worse than a dog, then you must work hard on your cultivation!

"Finger From Another Realm!"

Whoosh——

His finger was as if it was from another realm and alternated between realities. It painted a scene that seemed far away and picturesque—it intoxicated all those who saw it, drawing them into its illusion.

Crash——

The attack could cause heaven and earth to rumble and rivers to boil.

It was as if the Finger From Another Realm would destroy galaxies.

Su Yu was calm.

Whoosh——

Suddenly, Su Yu entered the picturesque realm. He floated like a celestial being through the clouds, dissociated from the mortal world.

But, Su Yu did not deliberately use his Heavenly Finger. Instead, he flailed his hand and caused the mysterious scene to wrap around his body.

At that moment, Zhang Mingyi became a character in Su Yu's painting.

Thump——

Su Yu spread out an ordinary palm.

The finger and palm collided.

Rumble, crash——

Wah——

Zhang Mingyi's cold eyes filled with shock. He spat out a mouthful of blood, unable to control his body. Zhang Mingyi stepped back with a few thuds. Unstable, he fell down onto his back.

"Advanced Level Holy Decree?" Zhang Mingyi realized in shock; a look of respect and fear filled his eyes.

Senior Liu rubbed her lips in disbelief and shock.

The senior disciples broke out into chatter.

Ranked ninth of the top ten prospective Holy Disciples, Zhang Mingyi had been defeated with a single strike from a newly inducted prospective Holy Disciple!

Su Yu remained impassive. He took Zhang Mingyi's food and left with Xia Jingyu, back to their yard.

"Who is he?" Su Yu had become infamous after just one battle; the senior disciples wanted to find out more about him.

Finally, they heard from Feng Hao, whose face had turned pale as a sheet, that he was Su Yu, from the Fenglin empire!

Back in their room, Su Yu sat opposite Xia Jingyu. They opened up the food only to realize that it was all consumable treasures considered rare in the mortal world. For example, the Jade Fire Marrow that Su Yu had obtained was but a side ingredient in these rations.

The main ingredient held an incredible energy; they had never seen such an ingredient. A mere mouthful made Su Yu and Xia Jingyu feel their cultivation level rise.

There was a good amount of food. Coupled with Xia Jingyu's small appetite, there was just enough to share between the two of them.

Sigh—

After the meal, Su Yu stretched, his energy replenished. His cultivation level had obviously improved. Consuming the food for a few more days would allow him to break through into Level Six.

Xia Jingyu was already at Level Five Upper Tier. After the meal, she had immediately had a breakthrough to Level Five Peak! Her expression was surprised.

Her first day in the Sanctuary had allowed her stagnated cultivation level to achieve a breakthrough. Xia Jingyu was elated, her heart filled with gratitude. She looked at Su Yu and flashed an innocent and pure smile, "Su Yu, thank you."

Su Yu's heart was excited as he calmly waved a hand. "The Sanctuary has plenty of resources, much more than the mortal world. If we practice hard, we will definitely surpass our former selves!"

A single meal was already terrifyingly powerful—it was hard to imagine what other resources the Sanctuary may have.

Before their meal, Su Yu had been anxious—the idea of Fenghuang Valley had weighed heavily on his mind.

But, after he witnessed what an ordinary meal could do for him, he was filled with hope.

Fenghuang Valley, do not attempt to keep me from Xianer!

After a few years of practice in the Sanctuary, he would fear no one!

Xia Jingyu smiled. She really liked her days now, as she practiced together with Su Yu, as they improved together.

Su Yu felt the same. In his heart, Xia Jingyu was perfect. She had a mild temperament but was also steadfast. She was beautiful, too. No one could fault her in any way; every man would want such a wife.

But the thought passed through his mind in a flash, and Su Yu secretly shook his head. Xianer was alone in a faraway land, how could he think of another lady? Furthermore, his feelings towards Xia Jingyu were those of gratitude. He did not want to complicate things and sully her innocence and nobility.

Crash——

The sound of a huge impact came from the yard.

Su Yu lifted his brows and exited the room. A slender youth stood in the yard.

His eyes were cold.

Su Yu felt like he remembered him from somewhere.

"You are Su Yu?" The person called him out sternly.

Su Yu calmly nodded his head, "Is anything the matter?"

"I am Du Lin; I think, by now, you would know why I have come for you!" Between Du Lin's eyebrows was a dark energy—a subtle, murderous intent.

Du Lin?

Xia Jingyu's expression changed as she flew out from the room to stand beside Su Yu.

"The matter with Du Yuntian had been resolved by Senior Qiu. Are you not happy with the senior's decision?"

Du Lin was the one who had entered the Sanctuary before Du Yuntian. They were brothers!

According to his results last year, he should have been sent to the Mortal Sanctuary. But, unexpectedly, he had appeared here—in the Heavenly Sanctuary.

His cultivation level caused Su Yu and Xia Jingyu's expressions to turn grave.

Level Seven Upper Tier!

He was even more powerful than Fang Yun. Neither Su Yu nor Xia Jingyu could match him!

"Don't use Senior Qiu to frighten me! I came here today, not for revenge, but to learn from Su Yu. I heard that you are the strongest in the Feng Lin empire. I want to know exactly how strong you are!" While Du Lin said that he was here to learn, his tone made it clear that he was here for revenge!

He did not hate Qiu Changjian, for he did not know who Qiu Changjian was. But, he knew Su Yu, and he was stronger than Su Yu—so he hated him!

These events had attracted some attention; several disciples stopped to watch.

"Du Lin? That genius Mortal Sanctuary disciple?"

"When he came here, he was just a Mortal Sanctuary disciple. But, in just a year he was already ranked fifth of the prospective Holy Disciples. His abilities are terrifying."

Feng Hao was gloating. Su Yu had attracted too much attention, which attracted stronger bullies.

Power was everything in the Heavenly Sanctuary. As long as there was no killing nor maiming, a challenge could be made anywhere!

Xia Jingyu was furious, "Du Lin! Do not force everyone to do your will. You know very well why your brother was killed, why use this as an excuse for revenge?"

"Scram! I was not looking for you!" Du Lin spat.

Du Lin threatened Su Yu with an electrifying gaze, "Today you will accept my challenge—even if you do not wish to!"

The aura of a Level Seven Upper Tier blanketed the surroundings.

Du Lin was being forceful and barbaric, which angered Su Yu. Did he have to bear such humiliations just because he was weaker? If he just had a little time, he would surely catch up to Du Lin.

But, Su Yu had no time—he had to challenge Du Lin today, even with such an improbable victory.

Su Yu would rather die standing than live on his knees. He would earn his pride and respect himself.

"If you wish to battle, then we shall!" Su Yu's purple robe billowed and his black hair danced in the wind.

His starlike eyes showed no trace of fear—only a ferocious determination emanated from him.

Su Yu stepped forward, thunderbolts manifesting in his palm. He conjured a small black sword with his eyes and entered his picturesque realm.

Wind gathered under his feet. He was formless as he walked on light and clutched clouds.

Su Yu utilized everything he had learned as he made the first move—this would be the most powerful enemy he had ever faced!

You want to teach me a lesson? Prepare to lose some teeth!

Chapter 69: The Sanctuary Startling Upheaval

"You overestimate your abilities!" Du Lin frowned slightly, his eyes scornful.

Su Yu was certainly very strong; he utilized various kinds of martial arts and, just as the rumors said, he had exceeded Level Six Peak of the Martial Path. But in the eyes Du Lin, he wasn't strong enough to withstand a single blow.

His heart fueled by murderous intentions, Du Lin brazenly made a move!

Thump—

Suddenly the sound of a far-away bell boomed throughout the sky and land. Du Lin quivered, his face aghast as he looked back toward the center of the Sanctuary. There—the sound came from an ancient hall, suspended among the clouds. The senior disciples, who had gathered to watch the commotion, turned around in shock and profound reverence.

Thump—

The second bell sounded!

"What? The Holy King sounded the bell twice?" Du Lin was shocked. Without hesitation, he headed toward the Sanctuary; he even neglected Su Yu and his former challenge. The rest of the senior disciples, each in awe, urgently left in a flash.

Swish, swish, swish—

Numerous figures appeared from all over as they dashed toward the ancient hall among the floating clouds. Su Yu and Xia Jingyu looked at each other; what did that bell mean?

Swish—

A pale man swept past Su Yu and paused, "The Holy King has summoned us, why are you not hurrying there?" The man reprimanded him—it was Qiu Changjian!

The Holy King had summoned them? Su Yu's face was shocked. The Holy King—the legendary martial force of the Alliance of the Nine Empires—had summoned them? Without another word, Su Yu and Xia Jingyu left together with Qiu Changjian, in awe.

Qiu Changjian explained on the way, "Inside the hall of the Holy King, there is a Holy Bell. Only the Holy King has the ability to sound the bell.

"One strike is a regular summons by the Holy King. Two strikes mean it's an emergency summons!" Qiu Changjian's eyebrows tightened with worry, his heart ached.

Su Yu's eyes flashed, "Senior Brother Qiu, may I ask—how often do emergencies occur?"

Qiu Changjian shook his head and gravely replied, "Emergency summons? In the history of the Sanctuary, they have only occurred twice; the first time was when the Sanctuary was established. The bell summoned everyone to the Sanctuary Congregation.

"That was a hundred years ago. Today is the second emergency summons."

Su Yu's pupils contracted. There had only been one other emergency summons since the Sanctuary had been established? Now, unexpectedly, another had been raised! What did that mean? Should Su Yu be excited... Or worried?

Xia Jingyu's pretty face looked somber, "Senior Brother Qiu, you often have audiences with the Holy King, do you know what's happening?" She and Su Yu remembered that Qiu Changjian had hurried to the Holy King for his debriefing after they had all arrived—could that have been related?

How could she know? Qiu Changjian laughed to himself, "Often? Junior Sister Xia thinks too highly of Senior Brother Qiu. A Holy Disciple is just a nominal disciple, I have no real virtue nor ability, how could I meet him?

"I have been at the Sanctuary for fifteen years—I was lucky to have seen him when I was promoted to a Holy Disciple. I haven't seen him in fifteen years." Qiu Changjian's face full of admiration, "The Holy King is always in seclusion. He issues commands to the hall directly—his real face is almost never revealed in public.

"With this emergency summons, the Holy King is sure to have left isolation. You're lucky, you just arrived and now you get to see the Holy King in person. Senior disciples who have been here for ten years have never seen the Holy King's face." Qiu Changjian concluded enviously.

Lucky? Su Yu's expression was still grave.

Within moments, people had arrived at the hall of the Holy King amidst the floating clouds. Their heads were bowed in deference while they stood. The top great Holy Disciples, the ten great prospective Holy Disciples, and countless senior prospective Holy Disciples—together, more than a hundred people had gathered. No one dared breathe too loudly; the atmosphere was tense and strangely quiet.

Crunch—

An ancient stone door opened slowly. An unfortunate wind swept through. The stone door opened wide in a cloud of mist to reveal the ancient temple inside—the Holy King was nowhere to be found!

Su Yu tried to focus his eyes; he had the ability to see in the dark. But, when he tried to look, he was unable to decipher anything! There seemed to be a layer of divine power which blocked his view.

"Ah..." There was an aged sigh. Everyone was touched by a hint of apology.

"There is a single reason for why I have summoned you all here today." The Holy King's voice sounded distant and remote. Logic inferred that his voice came from somewhere inside the hall—but, to Su Yu and the others, the sound seemed to envelop them; it was everywhere at once.

After a moment, the Holy King's aged voice came again, "I wanted to say... that the Sanctuary will be dissolved from today onwards!"

Though his voice was soft, the words pierced the souls of all who heard them. Everyone was incredibly alarmed! The Sanctuary dissolved? The Sanctuary of the Alliance of the Nine Holy Empires, the martial arts holy land of millions, dissolved?!

No one remained calm as they faced the news. Even the senior disciples, such as Senior Brother Zhao, Senior Brother Zhang, and Qiu Changjian found it difficult to accept. More than a hundred people were instantly and indescribably shocked! They whispered among themselves; it felt as though the sky was falling.

"Master!"

Swish, swish, swish—

The ten great Holy Disciples simultaneously knelt.

"We beseech you Master, please revoke your edict!" Qiu Changjian was so shocked, it was hard to bear such an upheaval. The vast Sanctuary dissolved overnight?

"Please, Holy King, revoke your edict!"

Swish, swish, swish—

The ten great prospective disciples, followed on their knees, looks of horror in their eyes!

Swish, swish, swish—

Hundreds of disciples all knelt in succession as they looked toward the Holy King imploringly. If the Sanctuary were to be dissolved, where would they go, what would they do?

Inside the dark hall, the Holy King sighed at their fate, "If only... The matter has been decided. All martial artists aside from the ten great Holy Disciples are to prepare their things and leave the Sanctuary tomorrow."

"Holy King!" Hundreds of devastated voices rose in despair.

It was their Armageddon. The Sanctuary was the only place in the whole world where they could better their skills and progress along the Martial Path. Without the Sanctuary, they were just average men in a world they had not trained for.

Su Yu and Xia Jingyu were dazed and despondent! They had only arrived yesterday, and now the Sanctuary was being dissolved! Where would they go and what would they do!? Xia Jingyu could return to the martial arts training institute, but what about Su Yu? Without the Sanctuary, how could Su Yu train enough to be able to take on Fenghuang Valley?

An imposing force flowed from the hall. It evoked terror and determination in those who felt it—all the disciples were shocked to silence as cold sweat gathered on their brows. The Holy King was angry!

"This matter has already been decided!" The Holy King would not tolerate dissent.

This declaration would shock the Alliance of the Nine Empires. How could they dissolve the Sanctuary?

"No!" A young man stood in protest—he dared defy the Holy King!

"Back down!" Inside the dark hall came the indifferent old voice. It sounded as though it could order heaven to fall and hell to rise—but the boy still stood.

"Someone is depending on me, I must stay!" It was Su Yu! His powerful speech resonated in people's hearts.

"I beg the Holy King to please fulfill my wish!" Su Yu bowed in supplication.

He needed the Sanctuary to train. Xianer was his fiancée, he had to see her!

"Don't make me tell you twice!" An oppressive energy rumbled forward.

The Holy King was enraged! Su Yu's body trembled—he felt like he had a mountain on his shoulders. He was anxious and adrenaline flowed freely. Extreme pain spread all over his body as fresh blood spilled from his mouth.

But Su Yu still stood. His starlike eyes projected an unprecedented fierceness. "Please... Holy King... fulfill!" He struggled to speak around a mouthful of blood.

The crowd was in awe. Who was this boy? What did he need to do so badly? Who was this person who depended on him? The small boy seemed to grow in the hearts of all who saw him. Qiu Changjian's eyes quivered, his inner heart moved!

Su Yu had traveled a thousand miles to the imperial capital in order to fight in a death match for no personal gain—only to save the life of his friend. Now, he had publically disagreed with the Holy King, despite a hundred others who stayed silent!

Crash—

The dark hall suddenly glowed brilliantly, the inside clearly visible.

There was a white-haired bony old man with a beard, white like a crane's feathers and an innocently rosy colored face. An air of otherworldliness surrounded his celestial appearance. He seemed like a fictional deity pulled from an ancient text.

He sat cross-legged openly in front of all—but his appearance seemed blurred as if it was an illusion or projection.

This man was the legendary martial force of the Alliance of the Nine Empires, the Holy King!

His aged eyes, as placid as an ancient deep well, held no waves. He looked over Su Yu apathetically, "You think I would not dare to kill you where you stand?"

Everyone under heaven would clap and agree that defying the will of the Holy King was a capital offense. The Holy King was the legendary martial force—anyone who defied him deserved death!

Su Yu, mouth full of blood, tightly clenched his jaw, "No! You'll kill me!"

Su Yu realized how elitist the Holy King truly was; he viewed common people as insects—he would have no problem killing Su Yu!

"If I can't see the person who needs me, I'm as good as dead!" Su Yu articulated every word carefully, his deep eyes filled with unprecedented determination.

Without a Sanctuary to train in, Su Yu would surely be obliterated at Fenghuang Valley. Now or later, his death was inevitable.

As good as dead? What kind of heavy burden could he be shouldering with such a skinny body?

The audience's hearts were moved!

"You wish to tell me you're not afraid to die?" The Holy King was cold, murderous, and indifferent. He had lived for a century and seen countless determined individuals; Su Yu was no different than the rest.

"I'm afraid!" Su Yu spat out blood and words, "But, I'm most afraid of dying with regrets!"

Dying with regrets? The Holy King looked reminiscent.

After a long silence, the Holy King deeply sighed, "if I had your comprehension long ago, perhaps, this would be another type of encounter."

Everyone's hearts were shaken; Su Yu had unexpectedly touched the Holy King's heart! Would he be able to stay?

But, the Holy King's abruptly turned cold and resolutely shook his head. "But, I can't keep you! You are too weak, only the ten great Holy Disciples are adequate enough to follow me—barely."

Su Yu gritted his teeth, his body almost on the verge of collapse. His mouth was full of blood as he growled, "Then I will become a top ten ranked Holy Disciple!"

These words were a shock to the heart! The Sanctuary had existed for a century, but holy disciples were scarce. The only Holy Disciple from the past decade was Qiu Changjian! Countless prospective Holy Disciples had sadly withdrawn and left the Sanctuary. What made Su Yu think he could be a Holy Disciple?

Still, no one mocked him. Everyone dreamed of becoming a Holy Disciple when they arrived at the Sanctuary—Su Yu's boldness put him above the rest, his bravery in going against the Holy King shocking them all.

The harsh nature of reality had broken them all—but Su Yu's bold act had moved them; what could possibly motivate a man to act so brazenly? Who gave him the courage to rebel?

The Holy King glanced at Su Yu indifferently and slowly shook his head, "You won't do!"

His words were law. The Holy King's judgment was shrewd and ruthless—he knew, with a single glance and ninety-percent accuracy, the nature of a person's fate. The last ten-percent was left to chance.

"I can!" Su Yu roared. He had come from a poor background his girlfriend had been snatched by Qin Feng. He had started as the lowest silver student and now had he not worked his way up to the much-revered Sanctuary?

A single, determined phrase invoked fire in the hearts of many. Countless disciples secretly clenched their fists. Many of them suddenly understood that, perhaps, their years of halted progress was not due to lack of resources, but due to a lack of determination—similar to the determination Su Yu now showed so openly! The determination to die with no regrets!

Staring at that pair of dedicated eyes, the Holy King suddenly felt offended. Not only had Su Yu failed to move him, but he had actually angered him. The Holy King slowly rose, his expression ice-cold. His body language was tense, a moment away from breaking out into a destructive rage.

"Stand down or die!" The Holy King said.

That one sentence completely destroyed all hope!

Chapter 70: The Evil Forest

Su Yu was dismayed. Originally, he had thought that the Sanctuary would be a safe place for him to cultivate his abilities and, in time, when he was strong enough, he would be reunited with Xianer. He had not anticipated the dissolution of the Sanctuary—luck simply was not on his side. Furthermore, the Holy King—finally in front of him in person—had turned murderous!

Swish—

A beautiful shadow flew in front of Su Yu.

"Holy King! Please, give him a chance!" Xia Jingyu slightly lifted the hem of her clothes as she groveled before the Holy King.

She was touched by Su Yu's devotion, though she was still pained by his disregard for his own life for the sake of Xianer.

The killing intent in the eyes of the Holy King deepened. "Back down, or you too will die!"

"Please, Holy King, fulfill his wish!" Xia Jingyu begged and pleaded, her pretty eyes persistent.

"Humph! Such insolence!" The Holy King was completely enraged!

It was still tolerable with one person provoking his majesty, and now another person, where was his majesty in all this? Within one word, the Holy King would be able to determine both their lives and deaths!

It was not entirely absurd for one person to go against the Holy King—but now there were two! The Holy King could order their deaths with a single word—what would happen now?!

Just as the deaths of the two rebels seemed certain, another figure appeared.

"Master! Please give Su Yu a chance!" Qiu Changjian bowed as he appealed to the Holy King on his friend's behalf. His heart trembled; only through understanding Su Yu's past could one understand Su Yu's persistence. Su Yu fought for kindness and loyalty, whatever the cost may be. Would it not be a pity to destroy a person with such sentiments?

"Even you..." The Holy King was astonished for the first time.

His ten nominal disciples, ordinarily so subservient and obedient under his constant rule, had suddenly spoken out against him, all because of this young man—Su Yu!

"Holy King! Please give Su Yu a chance!"

Swish, swish, swish—

Countless older prospective Holy Disciples groveled on the ground simultaneously! The will of a hundred people, all joined together as they begged the highest of the nine heavens to reconsider—it was a pleading chorus! They were moved by Su Yu. Unlike countless other men, Su Yu had stood up against the Holy King, all for the sake of one person!

"You all..." The Holy King was furious; all his disciples were defying him, thanks to this Su Yu!

Mind over matter, as they say.

The Holy King could laugh off a single rebel, and two he would quell quickly. But three, he would at least hear their grievances. But a hundred people now stood in opposition.

The Holy King could not help but begin to doubt his decision. His resolve was shaken as he observed all the pleading faces, and he considered things for a moment before his stern, murderous gaze flipped back to Su Yu.

"Alright! I'll give you a chance, I'll give all of you a chance! You can all stay in the Sanctuary again for a month. Then, at the Storm Competition, if you can earn a spot in the top ten, I'll let you stay by my side!"

The Holy King had chosen to give them a chance, but the cost would be exceptionally brutal.

The Holy King focused on Su Yu. "But, Su Yu, in a month, if you fail to reach the ability of a Holy Disciple, what should be your punishment?"

Su Yu was apprehensive. The Holy King was such a legendary martial force, and Su Yu had compelled him to concede. Doing so diminished the Holy Kings' reputation. He had already displayed his generosity by not killing Su Yu where he stood. If Su Yu failed to achieve what he was determined to do within a month, it was obvious what the Holy King would do.

"I know; death!" Su Yu nodded deeply.

"That's right! Death!" the Holy King confirmed coldly. "But, not your death—hers!"

The Holy King's finger pointed outward, and a thread of strange holy power struck Xia Jingyu's body! Xia Jingyu lightly hummed as she felt a destructive power fill her body.

"If I do not take the holy power back she will be overcome and die in a month's time!" The Holy King's icy voice was veiled with anger.

Su Yu's expression changed. "I'm the one who defied you, why are you punishing her?"

Swoosh—

The Holy King stormed off. Though he was clearly in front of Su Yu one moment, the next moment he was deep inside the hall. Just a blink and the Holy King was gone! Even if Su Yu were to fully use the space-time manipulation technique, he could never catch up to the Holy King!

Bang—

The inside of the hall was plunged into darkness as the huge stone door slowly closed.

Before the door fully closed, the apathetic voice of the Holy King echoed outward, "For a man who disregards death, true pain is not their own demise, but that of a loved one..."

Staring at Xia Jingyu, Su Yu was stunned. He tried to express the remorse in his heart but was at a loss for words. He had been the one to bargain with death, but somehow, it had been determined that Xia Jingyu would pay the price.

"Jingyu, I..." Su Yu's guilt was indescribable.

Xia Jingyu looked placid as ever, as she smiled. "I'm fine."

Though she tried to restrain herself, she was unable to hide the slight waver in her voice which revealed her inner instinctive fear of death. Xia Jingyu comfortingly smiled still.

"Su Yu, if you can get Xianer back—even if it means I must die—then I will have no regrets."

Su Yu's heart quivered as he felt pangs of pain. He owed Xia Jingyu a lot and would never be able to repay her.

"Jingyu, I will not let you die!" Su Yu was silent for a long time. He was resolved; he would risk his life for Xianer, and he would save Xia Jingyu.

As she gazed into Su Yu's eyes, Xia Jingyu felt her heart pound. Her fears were appeased by a sense of peace and calm which reverberated in her heart. She smiled brightly, like a summer lotus—pure and beautiful.

"Brother Yu, come on." Xia Jingyu's lips pursed lightly and her pretty face slightly blushed with a sunset glow.

With that single phrase, their relationship had grown. Xia Jingyu was fourteen, as was Su Yu. He was only older than Xia Jingyu by a few months. Therefore, Xia Jingyu had never addressed him as "Brother Yu" before. Su Yu was flooded with warm feelings; he owed Jingyu too much! He had to protect her! Su Yu needed to reach the standards of a Holy Disciple, even with only a single month's time to prepare and cultivate his skills!

Swish—

Qiu Changjian came over. His eyes held a deep admiration. Before this, he'd only just barely appreciated Su Yu.

"Su Yu! You're a good person!" Qiu Changjian praised. His eyes glanced at Xia Jingyu; he was deeply moved and a bit jealous of Su Yu. How lucky he was to have such a loyal, beautiful girl in his life? What else could anyone want?

"Are you confident that you're capable of becoming a Holy Disciple?" Qiu Changjian asked.

"Honestly, I have no clue what those standards are," Su Yu replied bluntly.

Qiu Changjian's eyes flashed as he pronounced each word carefully, "Very simple, defeat me!"

Of the ten great Holy Disciples, Qiu Changjian was ranked tenth. He was the weakest Holy Disciple. In accordance with old rules, one qualified for the Holy Disciples by beating the weakest ranked disciple. Su Yu was shaken!

Qiu Changjian, a Level Nine Lower Tier, could wipe out Su Yu with a snap of his finger. Such a strong man set the lowest standard for becoming a Holy Disciple? Su Yu had to attain Level Nine Lower Tier in order to save Xia Jingyu?!

"I will ask you again; do you have a specific cultivation plan?" Qiu Changjian's eyes gleamed.

Su Yu shook his head. "Go into seclusion to cultivate, and then compare notes from actual combat."

"If you use such a common way of cultivation then you'll be doomed to look on helplessly as beautiful Junior Sister Xia dies a certain death," Qiu Changjian lightly chided him, before he fiercely added, "Master thinks you are incapable of becoming a Holy Disciple—his judgment is not invalid!"

Su Yu felt apprehensive. "I request Senior Brother Qiu to please advise!" he pleaded.

Qiu Changjian's eyes flashed. "Senior Brother can indeed direct you to a path of rapid breakthrough, but it is dangerous and unpredictable with a possible death at every turn. Are you willing to try?" he asked seriously.

Su Yu nodded with nearly no hesitation. "I have already disregarded my own life, but I need to protect Xia Jingyu's." He would rather die than implicate Xia Jingyu.

"Good! You, come with me!" Qiu Changjian said.

Xia Jingyu gracefully breezed over. "I'll go too. In a month I may die anyway, so I may as well."

Qiu Changjian slightly hesitated before he nodded in agreement.

After a long while, they descended from the Heavenly Sanctuary and arrived at the southeast corner of the Mortal Sanctuary. There lay a dense, primeval forest. The territory was vast—about a hundred miles wide. A cold and gloomy atmosphere engulfed the inside of the forest, which made one shudder with fear upon approach.

"That's the Evil Forest. There are countless heinous slayers banished inside; each of their abilities is extraordinary. They are fearsome and are otherwise known as slayers of the Alliance of the Nine Empires. They are cruel, violent, killer devils—they have raped and murdered countless innocent people. They are not only formidably strong but also savage and cunning. They are extremely difficult to capture."

"The Imperial Alliance asked the Sanctuary for help with collecting these criminals. They asked us to dispatch the Holy Disciples in order to undertake the mission to capture and banish all slayers to the Evil Forest, where they would be forbidden to leave on the threat of execution." How could any slayer truly dare to step out of the forest under the watch of the Holy King?

Xia Jingyu was puzzled. "If they are so vicious, why not bring them to justice? Wouldn't it be a disaster to leave them alive?"

"Very good question," Qiu Changjian complimented them, "Banishing them to the Evil Forest and not killing them gives Sanctuary disciples a good opportunity for true combat! It provides us the chance to struggle in true proximity with real slayers, which stimulates progression for cultivation.

"In a hundred years, many disciples have disappeared from the Sanctuary. Most of them left, but the rest found their eternal rest in the Evil Forest."

Su Yu shuddered; he couldn't help but ask, "So...what levels are these slayers at?"

Qiu Changjian looked solemn and deeply concerned. "The lowest level slayer is Level Seven of the Martial Path! The strongest is at Level Nine Lower Tier!"

The lowest level slayer was a Level Seven of the Martial Path? Su Yu and Xia Jingyu gasped! These were indeed the slayers who shook the Alliance of the Nine Empires. It went without saying that defeating each of them would be challenging.

Xia Jingyu found it all difficult to understand. "Senior Brother Qiu, do you mean for us to enter the Evil Forest and fight hand-to-hand with the slayers? We do see the dangers, but where is the opportunity for a breakthrough?"

Life and death combat could indeed advance the cultivation base, but learning from regular dueling was not much weaker. Xia Jingyu did not see how the benefits outweighed the risks.

Qiu Changjian praised her observations, "Very good, you've found the crux of the issue. Life and death combat is truly difficult and doesn't always make one's cultivation base advance by leaps and bounds. But, every slayer's body has a piece of saint grade spirit elixir!"

Su Yu was not unfamiliar with spirit elixirs; he'd ingested them many times. But what was saint grade spirit elixir? He glanced towards Xia Jingyu, but she looked equally puzzled.

"A saint grade spirit elixir was transmuted from the type of spirit elixirs ingested by martial artists of the mortal world; only the ingredients are refined differently. The difference in effect is like heaven and earth.

"In other words, the effect of a hundred top grade spirit elixirs is far inferior to one saint grade spirit elixir. For you two, both Level Five Peak cultivation bases, ingesting a saint grade spirit elixir will promote you to Level Six Upper Tier—it will boost you over two tiers!

"Of course, as your cultivation base advances, the spirit elixir's effect will weaken proportionally. It will be difficult to have another major breakthrough. But, to put it bluntly, this is the Sanctuary's fastest method to achieve a breakthrough," Qiu Changjian explained.

Su Yu's breath quickened and Xia Jingyu's eyes glittered. A single breakthrough to Level Six Upper Tier? This would be unimaginable in the mortal world.

"In addition, there are two pieces of divine grade spirit elixir on the bodies of Level Nine criminals! Their effect is even more amazing!" At the mention of divine grade spirit elixirs, Qiu Changjian exposed a brilliant concept.

There were also divine grade spirit elixirs? Saint grade was already so astonishing, how unbelievable would divine grade spirit elixirs be?!