

Prodigies 241

Chapter 241 A Sudden Challenge

The blade seemed to cry as if it had a life of its own, filled with spirituality that surpassed the norm.

Xue Jin, Granny Feng, and Chu Feng were individuals with rich experiences and could instantly identify that an aeth treasure had been born!

Ommomm~~

Colorful clouds suddenly appeared in the sky and emitted rays of light that coalesced into the shape of a blade.

The trio's gazes were inevitably drawn towards the sight, their faces filled with astonishment.

However, the phenomenon disappeared a split second later as if all of it had never happened.

Xue Jin, Granny Fang, and Chu Feng found themselves a little shaken.

"It's said that when aeth tools reach a certain level of perfection they would obtain the heavens' blessings and be bestowed a spark of spirituality. They are called aeth treasures. Although I've seen many of these aeth treasures over the years, I never imagined that I would personally witness the birth of one today!"

Xue Jin's rugged face was filled with emotion. Although he seemed relaxed, huge waves were rising in his heart.

If his guess was correct, the aeth treasure born today was Lin Xun's work. Who could imagine that he was merely a fourteen-year-old rune master?

Who could imagine that the aeth treasure had only taken three days to make?

If the old fogeys from the empire's Divine Workshop found out about this, they would probably die of embarrassment.

"Is this Great Master Xun's ability? He is indeed superbly skilled beyond my imagination. Just the fact that he could craft an aeth treasure is already more than enough to convince this old bag of bones of his skill."

Granny Feng had a complicated expression filled with shock and emotion. She had never heard of Great Master Xun's name before and had subconsciously regarded him lightly.

Although Lin Xun's declaration that Great Master Xun could repair the ancient law ocarina had made Granny Feng feel a sliver of interest, she was still very skeptical and doubtful if Great Master Xun would live up to Lin Xun's claims.

However, after personally witnessing the birth of an aeth treasure, Granny Feng was now fully convinced of Great Master Xun's skill.

"Crafting an aeth treasure means Great Master Xun possesses the ability to craft rune armaments. If there's a chance, I will personally pay a visit to this mysterious master."

Granny Feng sighed.

Xue Jin's heart shuddered as he also recalled a certain rumor in the empire: once a rune master could craft an aeth treasure, he would gain the qualifications to craft rune armaments!

If that was true, wouldn't it mean that Lin Xun's skills were also sufficient now?

Neither Xue Jin nor Granny Feng noticed Chu Feng's slack-jawed and dumbstruck appearance.

He knew better than anyone that Great Master Xun was merely a cover and Lin Xun was his true identity!

However, Chu Feng had never imagined that Lin Xun was already capable of making an aeth treasure!

It was far too shocking to hear that a young teenage rune master was capable of such a feat. How many people could even achieve this in the history of the empire?

While various emotions were churning in the hearts of the three individuals, the main doors of the residence were pushed open and Lin Xun walked out.

At the sight of him, Xue Jin and Chu Feng immediately returned to their senses. However, their expressions had become a little strange as if they were getting to know Lin Xun again for the first time.

When Granny Feng saw Lin Xun, she seemed to lose all her previous interest in punishing him. However, she found it strange that his complexion was pale and his steps were unsteady. He looked extremely weak and this was clearly abnormal.

"It turns out that Granny Feng has graced us with her presence. Please forgive me for failing to come and receive you."

Lin Xun cupped his hands together and smiled. His voice had become somewhat hoarse and weak.

Granny Feng frowned and snorted. "Little boy, you weren't the one crafting just now so stop acting pitiful. Do you think this old lady doesn't dare to personally teach you a lesson?"

Xue Jin and Chu Feng had likewise discovered Lin Xun's condition. They were originally fretting inside but their expression immediately turned strange after hearing Granny Feng's words.

Granny Feng said, "Never mind, I can't be bothered to argue with you. However, there's one thing you need to promise me."

Lin Xun was taken aback. "May I enquire what elder is referring to?"

Granny Feng frostily answered, "It's naturally regarding Huang Jianxiong, whose cultivation was crippled by you. Do you think this matter can be resolved so easily?"

Xue Jin frowned. "Crazy old woman, stop beating about the bush."

Granny Feng glared at Xue Jin before she said to Lin Xun, "It's very simple. Those noble disciples will send out someone to have a duel with you to resolve this grudge. If you win, they will have nothing else to say but if you lose, you will have to pay the price."

"A battle to resolve their grudge?"

Xue Jin laughed. "After so many years, these noble disciples are still using the same old tricks. They've not improved at all."

Chu Feng, however, worriedly asked, "Since the other party dares to make such a request, they will definitely send their most formidable expert. If that happens, how will Lin Xun possibly put up a fight?"

Granny Feng frostily said, "You think I'll allow unfairness in this battle?"

Xue Jin seemed to realize something. "In other words, the opponent will also be at the Human Dipper stage?"

Granny Feng nodded. "Naturally. Otherwise, this brat will lose after a single move from Xie Yutang."

As she spoke, she looked toward Lin Xun. "I'm the one who made this suggestion and it is also the simplest way to resolve your grudge. What do you think?"

Lin Xun shrugged. "Do I have a choice?"

Granny Feng shook her head. "No!"

Lin Xun helplessly said, "I knew it would be like this."

Granny Feng seemed to become very frank at this moment. She displayed an icy smile as she looked at Lin Xun and said, "On account of your master, Great Master Xun, I won't argue with someone from the younger generation like you. However, a devious and loathsome person like you should be taught a lesson and taste some suffering. You will learn that there is always a taller mountain and someone more talented out there."

Lin Xun smiled and said, "Elder's teachings are right. When will this battle be? Let me tell you now that I won't be free for a while."

Granny Feng acted as if she already knew Lin Xun would say this. "In four days, Xie Yutang will send the materials and payment to repair the ancient law ocarina on my behalf. At that time, he will tell you the time and venue of the duel."

A chilling light flashed deep in Lin Xun's eyes. "Xie Yutang has also decided to get involved in this matter?"

Granny Feng revealed a knowing smile. "They're all from noble factions. Do you think he will just sit by and watch?"

Lin Xun immediately fell silent. After a long time, he said, "Alright, I agree. However, let Xie Yutang find me at the Rune Master Association instead. This is my master's hidden residence and should not be disturbed by outsiders."

Granny Feng was taken aback. She nodded and said, "Naturally."

Following that, she turned around and left.

Xue Jin clearly relaxed upon seeing her leave. "I'm honestly surprised that crazy old lady was so easy to appease this time."

Chu Feng grinned as he looked at Lin Xun. "The reason is quite simple. Our Great Master Xun here made an aeth treasure and intimidated that old woman which then deterred her from causing trouble."

Xue Jin icily glanced at Chu Feng. "Careful with your words. If that old woman decides to go crazy, even the heavens will not be able to save you."

Chu Feng's entire body shuddered as embarrassment filled his face.

Lin Xun could not help but chuckle at this sight. "I feel that Granny Feng can still be reasoned with. I'm more afraid of encountering people who can't be reasoned with."

"Stop jabbering. Hurry up and show me that newly crafted blade!"

Xue Jin had clearly waited more than enough and could no longer hold back his curiosity.

"I...may I also be permitted to observe that peerless aeth treasure?"

Chu Feng hopefully looked at Lin Xun.

"Everyone can come along."

Lin Xun turned around and walked into the residence.

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Moments later, a two-feet-seven-inches long, four fingers wide pitch-black battle blade appeared on Lin Xun's palm.

Xue Jin frowned. The completed aeth treasure seemed to be no different from its initial state.

When he picked it up, however, the blade suddenly began to shake as if resisting and a terrifying and ferocious aura surged out from its pitch-black body.

Ch!

Xue Jin felt pain from his fingertip and immediately circulated his cultivation. His hand tightly gripped the blade to steady it. It felt as if he was holding an object with a soul that was clearly trying to resist him.

This made Xue Jin's eyes brighten and he praised, "An excellent treasure! To think that it has such spirituality. As expected of an aeth treasure that has been bestowed a spark of spirituality by the heavens!"

Although there was only a word of difference between aeth tools and aeth treasures, their spirituality was on completely different levels!

Chu Feng also grew excited as he watched. He also approached to personally feel the blade but before he could touch it, the blade suddenly buzzed and shot a strand of sharp aura at him, leaving a small wound on his fingertip.

If he did not avoid it in time, his finger would have been chopped off!

Chu Feng's heart trembled. He was both shocked and embarrassed as he said, "This treasure is definitely a ferocious weapon!"

It was also the first time Lin Xun had properly experienced the blade's spirituality and he could not help but grab at it as well.

With a shiing, the pitch-black blade turned into a flash of black and voluntarily flew into Lin Xun's hands as if it wanted to be held by him. The sight made Xue Jin's and Chu Feng's eyes widen in shock.

Lin Xun felt the blade becoming an irreplaceable part of his body. It seemed to connect with his flesh and blood, pulsing together in perfect harmony.

It felt as if he could also feel all of the blade's feelings while his will would also immediately be known to it.

It was the first time Lin Xun had felt such a sensation. Without using any cultivation, he flicked his wrist and casually swung the blade.

The air parted like cloth, producing a piercing whistle as a strand of ravenously ferocious light flashed on the surface of the blade.

What an excellent blade!

Xue Jin's and Chu Feng's eyes brightened and shone in envy.

Chapter 242 Arriving as Scheduled

Xue Jin was a powerful expert with overwhelming battle power while Chu Feng was an experienced top-tier rune master. Hence, they could tell in a single glance that Lin Xun's blade was extraordinary!

Even without using any cultivation, the blade itself could tear apart the air and produce an intimidating and fearful aura. This was something other blades did not possess.

Itching to see more of its power, Chu Feng took out a Black Spirit battle blade. His eyes burned with excitement as he said, "Come, cut it!"

Lin Xun said in surprise, "I don't think there's a need to? That Black Spirit blade is very pricey, what if it gets damaged..."

Xue Jin impatiently interjected, "If he asked you to cut it just cut it, why so much nonsense?!"

Lin Xun glanced at Chu Feng, who was also itching to get it on. As such, Lin Xun cast aside his hesitation and slashed.

Once more, no cultivation was used, but even so, the human-grade mid-tier Black Spirit blade was easily sliced in half.

Xue Jin's and Chu Feng's pupils shrunk.

What frightening sharpness!

Even Lin Xun was surprised. Although he was extremely confident in his newly crafted blade, the fact that it was capable of this had surpassed his expectations

Omm!

Lin Xun poured his last remaining bit of dipper power into the blade and it began to emit a strange noise as if a ferocious beast was awakening.

Countless brightly glowing runes suddenly surged out on the blade's two-foot-seven-inch long and four fingers wide body like ocean waves. They swirled around the blade, appearing mysterious and dazzling.

However, this was soon replaced by an almost material ominous light. It dyed the entire blade black like the eternal night, causing the surrounding air to wail and tremble.

Xue Jin was stunned. How is this a human-grade aeth weapon? It's almost no different from an earth-grade aeth weapon!

Cling!

Lin Xun withdrew his cultivation and the blade instantly returned to normal, its pitch-black body giving off a faint mysterious and fierce aura.

"Who would think that this is only a human-grade high-tier aeth weapon? Even a human-grade peak-tier aeth weapon wouldn't be able to match its power and it could probably contend with earth-grade aeth weapons. So this is an aeth treasure! An object with superior spirituality that was born through the blessings of the heavens!"

There was an almost fanatical look in Chu Feng's eyes. As an experienced rune master, he was naturally able to gauge the blade's value at a glance and felt that it was already an unrivaled treasure.

There was a change in his eyes when he looked at Lin Xun again. It was as if at any moment he was about to prostrate himself at Lin Xun's feet.

A fourteen-year-old had successfully crafted a completely new aeth treasure. Who in the empire could possibly rival such an individual?

Xue Jin said, "You should give it a name."

"Right! A blade this amazing should be recorded into the history of rune masters. How can it not have an impressive-sounding name?"

Chu Feng nodded repeatedly, expressing his strong agreement.

Lin Xun pondered for a moment and said, "I shall call it Flowing Light."

The successful craft of the blade had ultimately drawn inspiration from the Flowing Light Rune. It was also a name that held a lot of meaning for Lin Xun.

This was the origin of the Flowing Light Blade. Years later, this blade, along with Lin Xun, would grow famous in the empire and leave its unique mark in history!

The Flowing Light Blade had completely subdued Chu Feng. If it was said that he had previously befriended Lin Xun because of the potential he saw, Chu Feng now genuinely regarded Lin Xun as a friend.

At the same time, the Flowing Light Blade also made Xue Jin grow increasingly excited about the day Lin Xun would make a rune armament for him.

Xue Jin wondered if he would be pleasantly surprised again when that day came.

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Three days later.

Lin Xun awoke from his meditation, feeling refreshed and full of energy.

However, the fact that it had taken him three full days to recover after crafting a single blade for himself made him sigh deeply.

If he had not suddenly recalled the Flowing Light Rune at that critical moment, the blade would have not been born.

If he had not obtained the Omega Secret-Realm, he would not have had the chance to learn the unique and amazing Flowing Light Rune.

This was destiny, a life filled with chance and fateful encounters.

When Lin Xun walked out of the room, he found Xue Jin trying to tempt Jiujiu into a liquor chugging contest. The sight of an old man trying to corrupt a naïve little creature made Lin Xun speechless and reinforced his constant worry that Xue Jin would teach Jiujiu some bad habits.

"Xie Yutang will be sending the challenge letter tomorrow. Are you prepared?" Xue Jin casually asked as he grinned and playfully clinked cups with Jiujiu.

"I'm only missing that final step."

Lin Xun walked over, picked up Jiujiu, and seized the cup it was holding in its mouth. Alcohol wasn't a good habit to pick up.

Jiujiu threw a little tantrum in an attempt to take back the cup but was heartlessly denied by Lin Xun. Left with no choice, the little guy could only sulk in a corner.

"What final step?"

Xue Jin was stunned.

With a shiing, Lin Xun drew the Flowing Light Blade and looked at Xue Jin. "I need to get used to Flowing Light's power as soon as I can."

Xue Jin seemed to understand and chuckled. "You want me to spar with you?"

Lin Xun displayed a dazzling smile. "It would be far too wasteful to not use a great expert like you."

Xue Jin's smile turned increasingly evil. "Sure. However, I won't be showing any mercy. Are you certain you want this?"

Lin Xun's expression remained unchanged. "I believe that someone of your cultivation and status will definitely be able to help me achieve what I want in the fastest time possible. As for showing

mercy...that will depend on whether you intend to bully a younger generation guy like me. After all, I'm only fourteen this year, and it won't sound nice if others hear that you're bullying me. On the other hand, if you treat me kindly, you'll probably gain a good reputation, isn't that right?"

Xue Jin spat and said, "Fourteen? I've never seen a fourteen-year-old who is as devious and crafty as you!"

Lin Xun merely grinned.

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That night, Lin Xun lay on the bed grimacing as he painfully gasped for air.

That damn Xue Jin is far too vicious!

Lin Xun's entire body was in pain, with several bruised and swelling spots feeling especially tender. Of course, Xue Jin had made sure to properly adjust his strength. The injuries might appear serious but they would recover after a night's sleep. The only downside was that they hurt a lot.

Xue Jin had clearly done this on purpose.

"I'll let you experience the same suffering when I help you craft a rune armament in the future..."

Lin Xun angrily promised.

Despite these grievances, sparring with Xue Jin for a day had indeed benefitted Lin Xun. He had not only grown accustomed to Flowing Light's power but had also managed to further polish the Six Word Blade Art.

Xue Jin was undoubtedly a powerful cultivator. Under his tutelage, Lin Xun deepened his understanding of the Six Word Blade Art and was now very close to achieving perfect mastery.

More importantly, Xue Jin had discovered through sparring that the range of Lin Xun's techniques was too narrow. Thus, Xue Jin advised Lin Xun to learn more techniques such as fist and palm arts to guard himself in close combat.

According to Xue Jin, weapons were ultimately an external power and although they could be used, a cultivator should not rely on such things. The fundamentals should still be to dig out one's own potential.

Lin Xun deeply agreed with this ideology. The Marching Army Fist he used to practice was a basic fist technique and had already reached the limit of its power. Hence, the current Lin Xun found it rather lacking.

Lin Xun firmly committed Xue Jin's advice to heart and decided that he would find a fitting fist art when he had the chance.

Of course, it would be even better to obtain a unique secret art that could not be bought on the market. However, the odds of something like that happening were pretty low.

Such secret arts were almost always kept within the noble factions and would never reach public markets.

Lin Xun tried to ask Xue Jin for some fist arts but he rejected saying his techniques were not suitable for Lin Xun.

Hence, Lin Xun could only wait for the opportunity to find an appropriate fist art for himself.

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Early the next morning, Lin Xun woke up and immediately went out.

He had agreed to meet Xie Yutang at the Rune Master Association today.

When Lin Xun arrived at the association, he was surprised to find many people gathered there. The streets were packed, making it almost impossible to get through. The crowd was mostly composed of cultivators and there were several girls who displayed clearly excited expressions as they expectantly looked at the entrance of the Rune Master Association.

"So that's the Little Sword Lord, Xie Yutang. As expected of one of our empire's influential younger generation members. His presence alone makes me feel shameful in comparison."

"The Little Sword Lord is so handsome! I want to have his children!"

"Humph, stop deluding yourself. I heard that many women in the Forbidden City already have their eye on him and they could even fill up an entire street if they were to line up. There is also no lack of young noble ladies among them, do you really think you can match up?"

From the various conversations and the young ladies whose eyes were nearly popping from their sockets in adoration, Lin Xun realized just how famous this Xie Yutang was.

Lin Xun also looked over and found Xie Yutang standing alone in front of the Rune Master Association. He wore a blue jade robe with his hair rolled up in a bun and an azure sword on his back. Although he was merely standing there, he felt like a dragon among men and gave off an unrivaled aura.

To think he arrived so early and made no effort to hide. No wonder he caused such a commotion.

Lin Xun secretly speculated: Xie Yutang is clearly not someone who likes to show off but he's now acting as if he's afraid others won't recognize him. There's something fishy going on.

However, Lin Xun could not figure out the reason. Hence, he shook his head and gave no further thought to the matter.

At this moment, a sharp gaze suddenly locked onto him, causing his eyes to narrow. He raised his head and saw Xie Yutang looking at him from afar.

Lin Xun no longer hesitated and began squeezing through the crowd.

Xie Yutang did not waste any time and tossed Lin Xun a storage bag when he neared. "The materials and payment Granny Feng tasked me to deliver are inside."

Lin Xun acknowledged and kept the bag.

By this time, the surrounding crowd realized that Xie Yutang was waiting for someone.

Numerous people could not help but look toward Lin Xun. They were curious about the person who was worthy enough for Xie Yutang to personally come and wait.

Chapter 243 Informing the Entire City

“Who is he? Why is the Little Sword Lord being so polite with him?”

“He looks like he’s in his early teens. Could he be a famous and amazing younger generation member like the Little Sword Lord?”

“Something is off. Even if he’s the Little Sword Lord’s friend, there should be no need for them to meet in such a place. It’s like they want everyone to know about their meeting.”

The crowd wildly speculated but failed to identify Lin Xun’s origins. Some of the sharper individuals had already begun to sense that something was amiss.

Lin Xun and Xie Yutang seemed to ignore everything around them and appeared rather calm. It was because they both knew what they were here for.

“This is the challenge letter. The duel will be three days later at 11:45 am. The venue is the Haze City Battle Arena and Huang Jianxiong’s senior brother disciple, Huang Jianchen, will be waiting there for you.”

Xie Yutang presented a gorgeous wax-sealed letter to Lin Xun before he turned around and left.

He did not utter a single extra word from start to end and maintained a cool attitude while not displaying any personal emotion.

However, Lin Xun knew that this was the attitude Xie Yutang was displaying—complete disregard!

Lin Xun likewise did not reveal any emotion as he watched Xie Yutang leave. He gently opened the challenge letter with a finger and saw a single sentence written within: Let everything be settled by this duel!

The words seemed to flow like swords and gave off a peerlessly sharp and fierce aura as if they were about to fly off the paper.

As the saying went, a person’s writing embodied their character. The challenge letter was clearly written by Xie Yutang. The unrivaled fierce aura from the words blended just perfectly with his aura.

Lin Xun narrowed his eyes for a moment before keeping the challenge letter. After which, he noticed that the nearby crowd was whispering and looking at him strangely.

“A challenge letter! So the Little Sword Lord was here to issue a challenge letter and is not friends with that young man.”

“I’m curious about who he offended to have made Xie Yutang personally come out. This is very abnormal.”

“Didn’t you hear? Three days later, the battle arena, Huang Jianchen!”

“Huang Jianchen? Who’s that?”

“He’s definitely no simple person. Otherwise, why would the Little Sword Lord personally issue a challenge letter on his behalf?”

“Interesting! This is too interesting! I’m definitely going to the battle arena in three days.”

The discussions were filled with an air of excitement. A famous and influential younger generation member, Xie Yutang, had suddenly appeared in Haze City and issued a challenge letter to an unknown youngster in public!

It was a matter that would make anyone think wildly and would draw much attention.

Lin Xun frowned. He had already guessed the intentions behind Xie Yutang’s actions.

“Young Master, President Chu Feng is waiting inside.”

A servant girl emerged from the Rune Master Association and led Lin Xun to the second floor.

When Chu Feng saw Lin Xun, he angrily said, “Brother, that Xie Yutang is quite vicious.”

Lin Xun smiled and asked, “Big Brother has also realized this?”

“Anyone who’s not blind can easily see what he’s doing. Xie Yutang was only supposed to send a challenge letter but he made such a scene today as if he was afraid no one would know about it. It’s clear that he seeks to tell the entire Haze City and let everyone know that you will be fighting in the battle arena in three days.”

Chu Feng sneered. “He’s setting you up! He wants to make you the talk of the city so that your fall will be even more painful when you’re defeated on the day of the duel.”

Lin Xun said, “But this also tells me that he is very confident in Huang Jianchen and believes he is more than capable of defeating me in battle.”

Chu Feng slapped his thighs. “Exactly! Think about it, the duel will be held in the battle arena. That’s a first-class facility in Haze City that can hold several tens of thousands of spectators. If you lose, everyone in Haze City will know in less than a day. Xie Yutang is clearly harboring evil intentions, he is taking this too far!”

However, Lin Xun merely chuckled. “If he wants the whole city to know, I’ll happily play along. I’m only curious about what kind of opponent Huang Jianchen will be.”

Chu Feng was stunned. He frowned in thought for a long time and ultimately shook his head. “I’ve never heard of him but I’m guessing he’s a formidable individual in the Forbidden City.”

Lin Xun frowned. “Big Brother, help me find out about this Huang Jianchen. Only by knowing the opponent will one be able to win all his battles.”

Chu Feng immediately nodded and agreed to take on the task.

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It turned out exactly as Chu Feng had predicted. Huge waves soon rose in Haze City.

The famous Little Sword Lord, Xie Yutang, had issued a challenge letter to a youngster in public!

This was sensational news. One must know that Xie Yutang was not merely a talented and powerful cultivator. He was also a direct descendent of the Xie Clan which was one of the empire's seven high clans!

This status alone would draw the attention of all Haze City's powerful factions. It was unthinkable that such a dazzling and peerless individual would disregard his dignity and act as an intermediary today by personally sending a challenge letter. Hence, it was difficult for this matter to not draw any attention.

New information soon spread that Lin Xun's identity had been uncovered. However, most people only knew that he was a youngster that had qualified for the provincial exam and had created quite a commotion a few days ago in front of Haze Academy where he had defeated Qi Yunxiao and Yuan Shi.

Only the Haze City noble factions knew that Lin Xun had killed many cultivators on a certain rainy night. He not only boasted overwhelming battle power but also had rather mysterious origins and was not someone you should provoke.

Upon learning that Xie Yutang had brought a challenge letter to Lin Xun, the noble factions' attention was immediately roused. No one would treat this as a small matter.

Lin Xun's opponent, Huang Jianchen, was a descendent of one of the Forbidden City's noble clans, the Huang Clan. Besides this, there was very little information about him.

However, this only made the matter appear more interesting. Neither Lin Xun nor Huang Jianchen were as famous as Little Sword Lord Xie Yutang to the people of Haze City. And yet, he somehow had a hand in the matter. The abnormality made many people feel that there was something more to the entire affair.

All in all, the news spread to the entire Haze City and received unprecedented attention. The interest of numerous people was piqued and several of them immediately went to snatch up tickets for the battle arena, hoping to personally witness the unusual duel.

In less than an hour, all of the tickets for the battle arena seating in three days were sold out. From this, it could be seen just how much interest the duel was garnering.

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A high-class room in a restaurant.

Wen Mingxiu, Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shu, and the other Haze City nobles were gathered together with excited expressions.

"I immediately called everyone over the moment I heard the news. I want to ask if you guys will be going to watch the duel."

Qi Yunxiao looked very happy as he looked at everyone.

"Is there even a need to ask? Of course we'll be going."

"We might not dare to offend Lin Xun but who can miss seeing him lose and be made a fool of in public?"

"I wonder how formidable Huang Jiancheng is. However, since the Little Sword Lord Xie Yutang dared to step forward and create such an atmosphere, he must believe that Lin Xun is not Huang Jianchen's match!"

"Haha, Lin Xun is in trouble this time."

The others excitedly responded. Their factions had secretly suffered at Lin Xun's hands but had no choice but to swallow their grievances instead of taking revenge due to his identity.

If there was a chance to personally watch him be crushed, they were, of course, more than happy to watch.

Only Wen Mingxiu appeared calm and collected. "It's not so easy to bully Lin Xun. I'm curious to see how the Little Sword Lord will respond if Lin Xun somehow wins the duel."

These words stunned the others.

"Regardless, all we can do is wait. We aren't the only ones who are interested in the duel. Even the elders in our factions are unable to sit still any longer and will be personally going down to see the show."

Qi Yunxiao's eyes shone brightly as he continued, "I heard that even Governor Liu Wudiao, Great Cultivator Yao Tuohai, Haze Academy Principal Wei Lingzhen, and General Du Dongtu have also shown interest in this matter. However, no one knows if they will show up on the day itself."

The others laughed. They knew that it was already no longer possible to buy tickets for the event through official means and the black market prices had reached a dumbfoundingly astronomical price!

It was easy to imagine what a spectacular sight the battle arena would be on the day of the duel.

Wen Mingxiu said, "The most pressing matter now is to find out more about Huang Jianchen. He is not well-known in the Forbidden City and appears to be mysterious and low-key. However, since Xie Yutang issued a challenge letter on his behalf, he's definitely an extremely terrifying individual.

The others nodded in agreement. They had met Huang Jianxiong before and although his cultivation had been crippled, the original battle power he possessed was considered first-class in the Human Dipper stage.

As his senior brother, Huang Jianchen was definitely no ordinary person.

Similar discussions and conversations occurred in almost every corner of Haze City. Regardless of each person's focus, Lin Xun's name soon became known in every household.

Of course, if he were to lose in the duel, his reputation would take a drastic hit and he would become known as a failure to everyone in Haze City.

This was Xie Yutang's 'ploy'. It was no secret to anyone who could see it and thus would not affect his reputation even if people were to realize it.

Jade Leaf Pavilion.

When Liu Qingyan heard the news from Granny Feng, she could not help but bite her lip as a sliver of unexplainable anger surged in her heart. “Young Master Xie has gone a little too far this time.”

Chapter 244 Black Prison Chain

Who was Huang Jianchan?

Others might not know but Liu Qingyan was well-aware. The year before, she had received an invitation to a banquet held by the Forbidden City noble disciples.

Only the most outstanding noble disciples had been invited to the banquet and Huang Jianchen was one of them.

His appearance was extremely ordinary and unremarkable. He had spent the entire time sitting by his lonesome drinking liquor and did not draw anyone’s attention.

A certain event that happened later, however, left a very deep impression on Liu Qingyan.

To create some excitement, one of the noble disciples had suggested selecting a few people to spar as entertainment.

However, Huang Jianchan shook his head in disapproval and rose from his seat to declare that he was leaving. His actions immediately drew the ire of many people.

Despite this, Huang Jianchen seemed completely unconcerned. He turned and walked off, completely triggering a certain famous noble disciple.

The famous noble disciple was called Lu Guanxing and was from the Lu Clan, which was a mid-level noble clan. Due to his outstanding cultivation talent, Lu Guanxing was rather famous in the noble disciple circles.

Upon seeing that Huang Jianchen was being disrespectful, Lu Guanxing immediately rose to stop him. However, Lu Guanxing never imagined that a superb and powerful genius like him would be seriously injured by Huang Jianchen in a single move. Everyone present was utterly shocked by the outcome and the place instantly became deathly silent.

Huang Jianchen merely sneered and shook his head, leaving behind a single remark, “Fancy moves but useless.”

Due to how humiliating it was, the noble disciples did not dare to mention it for fear of offending Lu Guanxing. As a result, only a small handful came to know of this affair.

As one of the people who had been there on the day itself, Liu Qingyan naturally knew it like the back of her hand and understood how frightening Huang Jianchan was. He was not someone ordinary noble disciples could ever hope to match.

Under his seemingly ordinary appearance hid a heart belonging to a ferocious beast. When he entered battle, he would transform into a bloodthirsty incarnation of violence that gave off an exceptionally terrifying aura.

After hearing that Lin Xun's opponent was Huang Jianchen and Xie Yutang had used certain means to tell the entire city, the intent was clearly to crush Lin Xun and destroy his reputation!

This made Liu Qingyan feel rather uncomfortable. Without Lin Xun, she would still be searching for someone to help repair her ancient law ocarina!

With Lin Xun now facing hostility and bullying from the noble disciples that followed her, what should Liu Qingyan think?

Granny Feng could not help but frown when she saw this. "Indeed. Although it's a battle to resolve their grudge, it is a little overboard to make it such a big affair."

Liu Qingyan suddenly asked, "Granny, from what I know, although Huang Jianchen is Huang Jianxiong's senior brother, his status should be insufficient to move his senior brother, right?"

"Xie Yutang was the one who made the request."

Granny Feng said, "Huang Jianchen can choose to ignore a cripple but he has no choice but to give Xie Yutang face."

Liu Qingyan scrunched her eyebrows in thought for a long time. In the end, she helplessly sighed and said, "There's not much that can be salvaged since it already happened. I only hope that Huang Jianchen will not go too far, otherwise..."

Granny Feng immediately said, "Don't worry Young Mistress, I will not sit by and watch that brat Lin Xun be killed."

Liu Qingyan's heart felt a little heavy. She hoped that Lin Xun would win so such things would not happen again.

.....

When Lin Xun returned him, he asked Xue Jin, "Old Jin, do you know someone called Huang Jianchen?"

Xue Jin curiously asked, "Why are you suddenly bringing up that kid?"

Lin Xun was surprised. It had merely been an offhanded question and he had not expected someone like Xue Jin to have heard of Huang Jianchen.

Lin Xun quickly explained about the duel in three days.

"He's your opponent?"

Xue Jin immediately frowned. "It seems that Xie Yutang intends to crush you."

Lin Xun asked, "Is he very formidable?"

Xue Jin explained, "Three years ago, Huang Jianchen advanced to the Human Dipper stage at the age of thirteen. A rare second-grade aeth power reservoir, Black Prison Chain, was established in his body. Although it is a little inferior to first-grade aeth power reservoirs, certain aeth power reservoirs will allow its owner to cultivate some special secret arts."

"I know about this kid because his aeth power reservoir just so happens to be capable of learning a certain secret art in Black Glory Sacred Hall. As a result, Black Glory Sacred Hall once reached out to him in an attempt to recruit him."

Lin Xun nodded. "What happened next?"

A strange look flashed in Xue Jin's eyes. "He turned them down."

"Turned them down?"

Lin Xun could not help but feel surprised. Black Glory Sacred Hall was an extremely mysterious and powerful faction, and yet, Huang Jianchen had turned down the chance to join them. It was a rather incomprehensible decision.

"That's right. The kid's reason for turning them down was simple. He wanted to walk a path that was completely different from other cultivators. Although it is a bold thing to declare, this aspiration of his is indeed rather amazing; he is not someone who is only all talk."

By this point, Lin Xun had already drawn a rough picture of Huang Jianchen.

Lin Xun knew that someone who could receive the attention of Black Glory Sacred Hall was definitely no ordinary person!

"Looks like Xie Yutang had found a strong opponent for me..."

Lin Xun mused.

Xue Jin asked, "Are you afraid?"

"Do you think I'll be scared?"

Lin Xun grinned, rose to his feet, and walked toward the room.

"You're too cunning and are always full of tricks, who knows if you're afraid."

Xue Jin rolled his eyes although he thought rather differently inside. From his observations over the past few days, the battle power Lin Xun possessed was sufficient to face Huang Jianchen.

The only thing that worried Xue Jin was that Huang Jianchen was from a powerful noble clan. If he had learned some of their powerful secret arts and channeled them with the Black Prison Chain aeth power reservoir, the power he could potentially output would surpass the imagination!

Xue Jin muttered inwardly, Kid, you can only rely on yourself this time. It will naturally be best if you win but it might also be a good lesson as well if you lose...

.....

Savage roars and soul-shaking howls could be heard from a tightly shut private room, causing the two servants standing guard outside to shiver as their faces turned pale.

However, the beast roars soon turned into pitiful wailing before ultimately falling silent.

Bang!

The room's doors opened and a young man walked out. His bare torso was covered in sinister-looking blood and he gave off a ferocious and savage aura. It was as if he was a god of slaughter walking out from hell.

When they saw the young man, the two servants' expressions turned even more fearful. Terror flowed out in their eyes as if the young man was far more terrifying than the roars they had heard earlier.

The young man expressionlessly received a white towel from one of the servants and wiped off the blood on his body. After which, he indifferently said, "Go clean up."

He then put on his clothes and walked outside.

The two servants immediately sighed in relief and looked at each other, seeing the fear in the other party's eyes.

They walked into the room, finding the ground covered in blood, and three savage beast corpses: a wind blade snow wolf, an ice armor giant python, and a giant magma violence bear!

Three savage beasts that were comparable in strength to Earth Dipper stage experts had been killed in less than fifteen minutes in this small room!

From the remnant fear still visible in their eyes, the two servants could not help but recall the bloody young man that had walked out of the room just moments ago, causing another wave of trembles to wash over their bodies.

When the young man walked away, the torrential ferocious qi around him receded and disappeared like the tide.

The sun's rays shone upon him. He was neither tall nor short, neither fat nor thin, and neither handsome nor ugly. He looked ordinary and unremarkable as if he was a completely different person from earlier.

He silently walked into a hall where someone was already waiting.

"Jianchen, you're here." The person was dressed in an azure jade robe and his hair was tied up into a bun on his head. It was the Little Sword Lord, Xie Yutang.

The ordinary-looking young man was Huang Jianchen!

Huang Jianchen nodded and sat down by the side without saying anything. This was his character: rarely speaking and often silent when he was not in battle.

Xie Yutang clearly understood Huang Jianchen's character well and casually initiated the conversation, "Everything has already been arranged. Lin Xun will fight you at the battle arena in three days."

Huang Jianchen was silent for a moment before he said, "Killing him is the most effective method to resolve this."

Xie Yutang shook his head. "No, he cannot die. Miss Yan'er still needs to borrow his master's expertise to repair a musical instrument."

There was an uncompromisable tone in his calm voice.

Huang Jianchan was silent again for a long time. In the end, he nodded. "I will do my best."

Xie Yutang frowned as if he was unsatisfied with this answer. He stared at Huang Jianchen for a long time before he said, "I will come to pick you up in three days."

After saying this, Xie Yutang rose to leave.

Huang Jianchen called out to stop him, "Wait."

Xie Yutang's foot paused. "Is there anything else?"

Huang Jianchen said, "The savage beasts you sent were too weak. Send stronger ones tomorrow."

Xie Yutang raised his brow. "As you wish."

.....

Three days soon passed. Early in the morning, Lin Xun woke up from his meditation as usual.

He washed up, ate breakfast, and began to practice his martial arts. There was no deviation from his everyday routine.

"Oh, you're pretty composed."

Xue Jin teased.

Lin Xun tidied up himself and smiled. "It's just a fight. Is there any need to worry and fret?"

Xue Jin laughed heartily. "No more of your nonsense, hurry up and go."

Lin Xun asked, "Are you coming? I heard it will be very lively this time."

"Humph, I can't be bothered to go watch two little kids duke it out. It's so meaningless. I might as well sleep and drink at home."

Xue Jin displayed a look of complete nonchalance.

Lin Xun made a noise of acknowledgement and walked out of the residence with a carefree chuckle.

When he arrived at the bustling streets of Haze City, he found that everyone was wildly discussing the duel. Numerous people were converging toward the battle arena.

There was even news about today's duel being broadcasted on the news screens at the city center.

All of this made Lin Xun sigh as a single thought rose within him: If I lost, Xie Yutang is definitely going to feel very happy, right?

Chapter 245 Duel of the Apex Part One

The battle arena was located in Haze City's east district. It encompassed an area of 2.5 acres and had a seating capacity that numbered in the tens of thousands.

Although it was still early and long before the appointed time of 11:45 am, the arena was already packed to the brim with people. The noise generated formed waves that soared into the clouds and the bustling atmosphere was practically unrivaled.

They were all here for the highly anticipated duel that would soon begin today. On one side was Lin Xun, who possessed the qualifications to participate in the provincial exam. On the other side was a disciple of one of the Forbidden City's noble clans, Huang Jianchen.

Most importantly, it was a duel that had been personally arranged by the Little Sword Lord, Xie Yutang!

For the past few days, news of the duel had stirred up the entire Haze City into a frenzy. Everyone knew about it, resulting in the current lively atmosphere of the arena.

There were two types of seats in the battle arena. One was the ordinary seating found all over the arena while the other option was private viewing rooms specially designed for important guests.

Wen Mingxiu, Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shi, and the other noble disciples were currently seated in one of these private rooms.

On one side of the room was a viewing window that boasted an excellent view of the stage at the center of the arena.

Yuan Shi grumbled, "Have you heard? Miss Liu Qingyan is here as well. I don't understand what's so great about Lin Xun that a mere duel involving him would even draw someone like her."

Qi Yunxiao softly chuckled, "Heh heh, you won't be feeling so envious when he's being pummelled in front of thousands of people later."

"The Little Sword Lord has amazing influence. To think that a duel arranged by him would draw out all of Haze City's top dogs. I asked around earlier and found out that every private room today is very possibly being occupied by a bigwig that could shake the entire city!"

"That's right. I also noticed that earlier. I'm dying to know what thoughts these bigwigs will have when they see Lin Xun being crushed later."

"Haha, I don't know what the bigwigs will think but I know that when Lin Xun is defeated, he will also lose all credibility and will never be able to raise his head in this city again."

Wen Mingxiu could not help but frown at the sight of them excitedly discussing the future after Lin Xun's defeat. It filled her with disgust.

Since they couldn't do anything to Lin Xun they were placing their hopes on someone else to defeat and humiliate him. What difference was there between them and clowns?

In another private room, Liu Qingyan was silently seated in front of the viewing window. She could see everything on the outside from here but no one could look into the private room.

Liu Qingyan saw many faces filled with anticipation and heard excited discussions about Lin Xun's and Huang Jiangchen's imminent duel. However, none of it was able to erase the slight worry in her heart.

By her side, Granny Feng advised, "Young Mistress, please take it as a bit of entertainment. You shouldn't think too much about this affair."

Liu Qingyan murmured, "I only hope that Lin Xun will not lose. Otherwise, I would have committed too great of a crime..."

Won't lose? Is that possible?

Granny Feng did not believe that the crafty, imp-like Lin Xun would be Huang Jianchen's match.

Similar discussions were occurring in every corner of the arena as the bigwigs arrived one after another in the private rooms.

There were not only influential figures from the various noble clans but also famous great cultivators like Haze Academy Principal Wei Lingzhen and Violet Plume Army Commander Du Dongtu.

In fact, even the newly appointed Stone Cauldron Alms Chief Manager, Mu Wansu, the great cultivator who could stand shoulder to shoulder with Governor Liu Wudiao, Yao Tuohao, and the Rune Master Association President, Chu Feng, had come.

Of course, the Little Sword Lord, Xie Yutang, and the other Forbidden City noble disciples were naturally not going to miss the entertainment they had personally prepared.

As time passed, more and more figures appeared in the battle arena, making the atmosphere increasingly lively. At a glance, all anyone could see was a black mass of bobbing human heads.

Citizens of the Ziyao Empire naturally had an admiration for martial arts, making them naturally passionate about fighting.

The imminent duel was filled with far too many points of interest and was an unprecedentedly grand event for the entire Haze City.

This was why the atmosphere was already charged with so much excitement even though the duel had yet to begin.

Dong!

A sky-shaking thump of a battle drum boomed, officially declaring the start of the event. The excitement immediately soared to a new peak

Under countless gazes, a dazzling rune screen emerged above the stage at the center of the arena.

It was a rune array that surrounded the stage to prevent the audience from being harmed by the battle.

Lin Xun's figure soon appeared on the stage and immediately drew everyone's attention.

"That's Lin Xun? He looks like he's only in his early teens. I heard that he not only possesses the qualifications to participate in the provincial exam but also extremely overwhelming battle power, making him one of the top experts of his generation."

"That's the guy! I wonder what he did to offend Huang Jianchen and make Xie Yutang personally issue a challenge letter. This is no simple matter."

"Heh, I think disaster is going to befall Lin Xun in this battle."

"Agreed, no matter how amazing Lin Xun is, how can he possibly compare to Huang Jianchen, who comes from a noble clan?"

The arena erupted into discussion again, buzzing endlessly like flies. Most were not optimistic about Lin Xun's chances, especially Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shi, and the others, who displayed excited expressions and were itching to see Lin Xun's crushing defeat.

"He's finished this time!"

In one of the private rooms, a group of disciples from noble clans laughed gleefully. They had felt humiliated when Lin Xun crippled Huang Jianxiong's cultivation in front of them and were now finally able to get some payback through Huang Jianchen.

Only Xie Yutang remained expressionless. He was not interested in the duel because he was certain that Lin Xun was not Huang Jianchen's match.

To Xie Yutang, it was merely a passing affair and there was nothing to be happy about.

A commotion suddenly erupted in the arena.

"What? That's Huang Jianchen? Impossible, how can a noble disciple like him look so ordinary. He displays no hint of being a genius that is the pride of heaven. This is far too disappointing!"

"I thought he would look like a fierce and imposing god of war. Who could have expected that he would look so ordinary instead? Is he really a formidable expert?"

"What do you guys know? This is called 'don't judge a book by its cover.' So what if he looks ordinary? The fact that the Little Sword Lord personally arranged this duel is already more than proof of Huang Jianchen's strength."

On the stage, Huan Jianchen appeared dressed in black. There was nothing that stood out about him. He was so ordinary that even his presence seemed a little inferior to Lin Xun's.

However, some of the sharper individuals felt their hearts shiver when they saw him. They could detect a hint of something different in his aura that was silent and solemn like a mountain.

The more unremarkable an expert, the more terrifying he was!

"As expected, it's him."

In one of the private rooms, Liu Qingyan's eyes widened.

"This kid is not to be underestimated."

"As expected of a noble clan disciple. Huang Jianchen might seem silent like a mountain but his foundations are strong and solid. Anyone who underestimates him will suffer."

"Not bad, this fight might be a little interesting."

"There is no lack of outstanding geniuses in the Human Dipper stage and Huang Jianchen is undoubtedly one of the most unique among them. Perhaps, it is because he appears too ordinary that instead lets him leave a deeper impression."

The bigwigs in some of the other private rooms were evidently able to discern a little more about Huang Jianchen. Although they gave different evaluations, their thoughts were shockingly similar in that they all regarded him very highly.

Lin Xun was also observing his opponent. To be frank, the other party's ordinary appearance and aura also surprised him somewhat.

However, Lin Xun's eyes soon narrowed when he sensed a dangerous sensation from the other party. It was difficult to describe and it was as if there was a fatal power concealed under that ordinary appearance.

Huang Jianchen raised his eyes and also looked at his opponent. His gaze was calm and indifferent like stagnant water, completely devoid of all emotion.

When the drum was hit to signify the start of the duel, a chilling, savage light suddenly shot out from the eyes of the originally calm and emotionless Huang Jianchen.

At the same time, wisps of almost material killing intent spread from his thin body.

In the blink of an eye, the crowd felt Huang Jianchen transform into a completely different person. Killing intent pulsed from his body, saturating the surrounding air, making him look like a god of slaughter that had emerged from a sea of blood and a mountain of corpses!

The entire arena fell silent. Everyone's eyes were wide open and there were horrified looks on their faces. They had just realized that this seemingly unremarkable person could give off a terrifying and intimidating aura when he was ready to do battle!

His almost material bloody killing intent was clearly honed from countless fights. It was hard for anyone to imagine how much blood Huang Jianchen had spilled.

"Amazing!"

"Who could have imagined that a Human Dipper stage youngster would possess such an aura?"

"Lin Xun is in trouble this time!"

Numerous people sighed in amazement.

Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shi, and the other noble disciples were extremely excited. Huang Jianchen's performance was absolutely breathtaking to them.

On the other hand, those supporting Lin Xun like Chu Feng, Liu Qingyan, and Mu Wansu felt their hearts sink. Lin Xun had encountered a truly formidable foe this time.

Compared to his opponent, Lin Xun had strangely become the ordinary and unremarkable one instead.

He remained composed as power slowly rippled around his body.

No one knew that Storm Grinder had already begun to circulate at full power in his body. Pure and boundless dipper power surged about like an ocean, suffused with a mysterious and illusory sky-blue glow.

Swish!

Before the thump of the drum could fade, a fifty-foot-long whip appeared in Huang Jianchen's hand and lashed out without wasting any time!

Chapter 246 Battle of the Apex Part Two

Woowoo~

The fifty-foot-long whip turned into a black blur as it whizzed through the air, releasing a ghost-like howl that reached into the depths of the soul.

The whip was called Moon Spirit and was an ancient aeth weapon that had been passed down in the Huang Clan. Although it was merely a high-tier human-grade aeth weapon, its power was strange and unpredictable, making it far superior to ordinary weapons available on the market.

Pa!

The air exploded as the Moon Spirit Whip rose upwards. Huang Jianchen's presence grew increasingly oppressive and chilling like a god of slaughter, causing the watching crowd to gasp.

The power he displayed was horrifying and was not the norm for a Human Dipper stage youngster!

Compared to him, most Human Dipper stage cultivators would look dull and unremarkable

Lin Xun's eyes narrowed, realizing the opponent this time was different from the others. The battle power he displayed was more intimidating than some Earth Dipper experts.

Shing!

When Huang Jianchen made his move, Lin Xun did the same. He lightly swung an almost three-foot blade made of metal that was as black as the eternal night.

Swish!

Blade-light suddenly tore through the darkness like a stream of white light and emerged in the world.

"Eh!"

Several cries of bewilderment rang out from a few different locations in the arena as if some of the audience had sensed something special from Lin Xun's attack.

For most of the audience, however, although Lin Xun's attack was powerful, it was nowhere near as impressive as Huang Jianchen's attack.

Bang!

Whip and blade collided, producing a hair-raising sound. Gusts of wind swept outwards, creating ripples on the protective rune array around the stage.

Despite the crazy clash of power, Huang Jianchen's figure remained unmoved from the spot.

Opposite him, Lin Xun stood unharmed as well.

It appeared that they were equally matched.

“Not bad.”

A chilling smile rose from the corners of Huang Jianchen’s lips as a faint bloodthirsty light sparked in his eyes.

Woowoo~~

He brandished his whip as he explosively dashed forth like a phantom. His aura was akin to a ferocious beast that sought to crush all enemies in its path.

Lin Xun’s figure was instantly engulfed by thousands of whip-shadows. All that could be heard from the stage was the piercing snap of the whip that made a person’s scalp turn numb.

“Huang Jianchen is as ferocious as a tiger. He is strong enough to stand at the pinnacle of the Human Dipper stage.”

Numerous people sighed in amazement, thoroughly impressed by Huang Jianchen’s performance.

“Lin Xun is not bad as well. He’s surrounded on all sides and has nowhere to move but he still hasn’t shown a single opening.”

Others also discovered that although Lin Xun’s figure had been swallowed by whip-shadows, he was not instantly suppressed. Instead, he stood there like an unmovable boulder, blocking the attacks that came at him from every direction.

“Excellent! Your ability to defend against my attacks at the same cultivation level greatly excites me. Only an opponent like you is worthy of my true power!”

On the stage, Huang Jianchen displayed a crazed bloodthirsty look as if he was very satisfied with Lin Xun’s performance.

Numerous people felt frightened by his appearance.

Out of combat, Huang Jianchen was silent and unremarkable like a rock. However, he was a completely different person in battle. A baleful aura surged around him, his eyes gleamed ominously, and his expression was filled with crazed bloodthirstiness

He also became much more chatty and his tone was now filled with endless arrogance and disdain.

The strong contrast baffled everyone, making them wonder who was the true Huang Jianchen.

“Should I feel happy to receive such praise from you?”

Lin Xun revealed a carefree smile.

“I wouldn’t go that far but I hope you don’t lose too quickly. If you do, I won’t feel happy at all!”

Huang Jianchen raised his face to the sky and laughed, his long hair dancing around him as a maniacal look spread from between his brows. His figure seemed to rapidly flicker as his battle lust grew increasingly terrifying. Torrential killing intent converged toward the whip in his hand as he charged at Lin Xun once more.

The stage was instantly swarmed by countless whip-shadows that oppressively lashed at Lin Xun.

Every strike pulsed with power that could break mountains and split rock. Their combined might was overwhelming and terrifying to the extreme.

Lin Xun was not slow to react. His blade danced like a lightning bolt, producing simple, precise, and swift blade-lights that neutralized each incoming whip-shadow. Although it did not look as impressive as Huang Jianchen's assault, Lin Xun made it seem easy and effortless.

This shocked several fellow Human Dipper experts. They knew that if they were the ones on the stage instead, they would not be able to block any of Lin Xun's or Huang Jianchen's attacks.

From this, it was clear that the duel was an incomparable clash between two youths at the apex of the Human Dipper stage!

The atmosphere was set ablaze as the level of excitement was amped to the next level. Numerous people had already stood up and were loudly cheering and shouting.

"Fight!"

"Fight!"

"Fight!"

Chants surged forth in waves, rippling the air of the arena.

"Kill! Kill! Quickly destroy Lin Xun so he'll never be able to raise his head ever again!"

In one of the private rooms, Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shi, and the other noble disciples chanted in excitement.

The power Huang Jianchen displayed shocked them and made them see hope in subduing Lin Xun. It made them feel a surge of excitement and exhilaration.

"If it's so easy, he won't be Lin Xun."

A sneer rose on Wen Mingxiu's lips. Huang Jianchen might seem unstoppable now but she knew that Lin Xun's friendly appearance also hid a terrifying power.

If not, Lin Xun would not have lasted until the end in the abnormally cruel Blood Kill Camp.

If not, the rainy night assassination operation several days ago would not have ended in a crushing defeat for the many noble factions that had participated.

Wen Mingxiu had a feeling that Lin Xun had yet to use his true power and seemed to still be probing Huang Jianchen.

If this was true, it would mean that Huang Jianchen's current attacks were of no threat to Lin Xun!

Was it true?

Wen Mingxiu did not know.

.....

“Hahaha, Lin Xun can only defend and has no opportunity to counterattack. His defeat is already certain!”

“What a pity that Seventh Young Master Huang is unable to come since he is still recuperating. He would have been very happy to see this, right?”

“If possible, I hope that Huang Jianchen will also cripple Lin Xun’s cultivation to prevent any potential problems in the future.”

In one of the private rooms, the noble disciples from the Forbidden City grinned in delight and excitement.

Only Xie Yutang’s brows were slightly furrowed. He was far sharper than any of them and could tell in a single glance that something was wrong because Huang Jianchen was still unable to suppress Lin Xun.

However, Xie Yutang was not worried about Lin Xun turning the tables. The Little Sword Lord knew that Huang Jianchen still had a powerful secret art he inherited that he had yet to reveal!

.....

“Granny, how’s the battle going? Does Young Master Lin Xun have any hope of winning?”

Liu Qingyan stared at the stage, unable to dispel the sliver of worry in her heart.

“Young Mistress, you’ve already asked this question many times.”

Granny Feng helplessly said, “From what I can see, Huang Jianchen’s chances look better. However, it will be very difficult for him to subdue Lin Xun any time soon.”

“Granny, even someone like you can’t tell who will be the final victor?”

Liu Qingyan was clearly unsatisfied with Granny Feng’s evaluation.

Granny Feng thoughtfully said, “It’s hard to say. These two youths are both apex experts in the Human Dipper stage. No one can say for certain who will win until the end because neither of them has yet to show their true power.”

Liu Qingyan frowned, feeling strangely irritated. However, she also understood that battles were filled with variables and no one could give a clear prediction of the outcome.

.....

“It’s only been a year since we last met but the kid has already become a renowned ‘Great Master Xun’. His battle power has also risen to an impressive level...”

Mu Wansu was stunned and found herself unable to properly describe her emotions. Since Huang Jianchen was a stranger, she naturally hoped that Lin Xun would triumph.

However, although Lin Xun was doing pretty well, there seemed to be a slight but clear gap between him and Huang Jianchen.

.....

Similar discussions occurred in every private room. The powerful occupants in the rooms were naturally able to discern all the intricacies of the battle.

Some were surprised by Huang Jianchen's torrential ferocity while others took notice of Lin Xun's tenacity and composure.

All of them arrived at the same conclusion: it would be almost impossible to find any Human Dipper expert in Haze City who could match Lin Xun or Huang Jianchen.

Even in the entire empire, Lin Xun and Huang Jianchen were considered top-tier experts at the Human Dipper stage. It would not be an exaggeration to call them youths that were the pride of the heavens.

After all, both of them were still young teenagers! It was very rare for anyone to achieve such a level of mastery over their cultivation at this young age.

Of course, the bigwigs that hated Lin Xun naturally refused to acknowledge him and sorely wished that Huang Jianchen would defeat Lin Xun, crush his spirits, and completely cripple his future!

Such thoughts were shared by people such as great cultivator Yao Tuohai and the many noble factions that had participated in the assassination operation several nights ago.

Amidst the various thoughts and discussions, an earth-shaking commotion suddenly erupted in the arena, immediately drawing everyone's gazes.

Huang Jianchen floated in the air as eerie green flames ferociously surged out from his body.

The flames were like will-o'-the-wisp: strange and eerie as they hovered in the air. They bathed the surrounding area in a creepy green glow.

The crowd felt Huang Jianchen's aura change again, becoming the king of ghosts that presided over the evil ghosts of hell. It made their hairs stand on ends as their bones shivered in their bodies.

"You are stronger than I expected. However, this only makes me happier. Do you know how difficult it is to meet a worthy opponent in the same generation? You should be proud that you have come this far."

Huang Jianchen's sinister voice sent chills down the crowd's spines as spooky green flames danced in his eyes as if he was a bloodthirsty ghost god. "However, you no longer have any hope for a comeback!"

Chapter 247 Duel of the Apex Part Three

Huang Jianchen's transformation astonished the crowd. None of them had expected him to still have an unused hidden trump card at this juncture.

However, many people soon grew excited over this turn of events. The duel was genuinely brilliant and filled with surprises that surpassed the imagination. It felt impossible to look away.

Huang Jianchen's second transformation and the revelation of his new trump card were undoubtedly akin to casting fire onto the oil, setting ablaze a new wave of excitement in the arena.

Wen Mingxiu, Mu Wansu, Liu Qingyan, Chu Feng, and the others felt their hearts tighten and could not help but worry for Lin Xun.

In contrast, Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shi, and the other noble disciples were desperately resisting the impulse to charge out of the room and join the crowd loudly cheering for Huang Jianchen outside.

They could already tell that Lin Xun would soon face defeat if nothing else changed!

Everyone present could see that Lin Xun had been forced into the defensive since the start of the duel. Huang Jianchen clearly had no intentions of giving his opponent any chances either and was now preparing to use his trump card to finish Lin Xun. Under these circumstances, things did not look good for Lin Xun at all.

However, he seemed completely unconcerned about his predicament. Not a single hint of change could be observed in his aura or expression.

In response to his opponent's words, Lin Xun gave Huang Jianchen a strange look and said, "Brother, did you eat the wrong medicine? What made you so excited that you became like this?"

Huang Jianchen was stunned but quickly assumed that Lin Xun was mocking him. He immediately retorted in a chilling voice, "When you lose to me, I will ask again what you mean by those words!"

The spooky green flames surging around him abruptly brightened and began to maniacally dance in the air like will-o'-wisps.

Pah!

With a jerk of the wrist, his whip soared into the air. Wisps of green flames converged toward the whip as it seemed to violently shudder in the sky.

Woowoowoo~

Chilly gusts of wind howled across the stage as phosphorus green flames spread and burned, turning the arena into a sinister ghost city.

Everyone seemed to see the whip commanding sinister and terrifying evil ghosts to charge out of the ghost city and wreak havoc upon the mortal realm!

The spooky and frightening scene startled everyone, silencing the originally noisy arena as they shivered in fear.

"Hundred Ghosts Night Procession!"

In the private rooms, numerous bigwigs seemed to recognize the technique, causing their expressions to change. They were no longer able to maintain their composure.

"Granny Feng, what is this technique?"

Liu Qingyang was also greatly shaken.

"The Mother-Son Yin Ghost Scripture, an ancient secret art that was supposedly lost many years ago. Its requirements are extremely strict and, from what I know, only those who possess rare darkness aeth power reservoirs like Black Prison Chain and Dark Night Sword have the qualifications to inherit and practice this powerful secret art."

There was a complicated expression in Granny Feng's eyes. She had not expected Huang Jianchen's trump card to be the Mother-Son Yin Ghost Scripture. Lin Xun was now in danger. Even if he managed to survive, he would sustain grave injuries that he would likely never be able to recover from!

She did not tell any of this to Liu Qingyan, afraid that she would worry.

However, Liu Qingyan was highly intelligent and could immediately tell from Granny Feng's expression that the Mother-Son Yin Ghost Scripture was a terrifying secret art.

Liu Qingyan mumbled in a low voice, "If something happens to Lin Xun, I...I will never forgive myself..."

Granny Feng's heart ached, suddenly regretting that she might have taken things too far. She had only intended to teach Lin Xun a little lesson but Xie Yutang's clear viciousness was now beginning to appear overboard.

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In one of the private rooms, Xie Yutang pondered with an expressionless face.

As expected, he rejected Black Glory Sacred Hall because he already possessed the Mother-Son Yin Ghost Scripture. Lin Xun is in trouble now...

.....

The stage had already been enveloped in a dark and sinister aura. Green ghastly flames danced in the air, nearly about to fully swallow Lin Xun's figure.

The sight was strange and horrifying and caused several people's hairs to stand on end.

This was the Hundred Ghosts Night Procession, one of the finishing moves in the Mother-Son Yin Ghost Scripture. When used, it produced an oppressive power akin to a hundred evil ghosts surging out from hell.

Everyone shared the same thought at this moment: Lin Xun was finished!

Even Huang Jianchen believed so. This was the first time he had brought out the Mother-Son Yin Ghost Scripture in public and he was convinced that this attack would crush Lin Xun.

"I will use your defeat to spread my name to the world. You should have no regrets losing to me."

A proud smile rose from the corners of Huang Jianchen's lips.

At his moment, however, Lin Xun suddenly revealed an amused smile amidst the ghastly flames that were about to engulf him.

This made Huang Jianchen frown but his expression soon changed slightly when he suddenly heard a peculiar buzzing noise.

It started small but suddenly swept across the entire arena like a storm in the blink of an eye.

No!

Huang Jianchen's pupils shrank when he saw a wind vortex rise from Lin Xun's body. It soared into the air, frantically spinning as it produced a torrential force that sought to swallow the eight regions and disrupt yin and yang!

"What is that?"

"What a terrifying power!"

The crowd gasped in shock. They had been convinced mere moments ago that Lin Xun was facing certain defeat. Who could have anticipated that he would suddenly reveal such an inconceivable power?

Had he been hiding his true power like Huang Jianchen?

Many bigwigs could no longer sit still as their expressions changed slightly, dumbfounded that they had misjudged earlier! Something like this rarely happened to people like them. From this, it could be seen just how well Lin Xun had concealed his power. Suddenly revealing it at this moment was undoubtedly akin to a slap on everyone's faces!

The situation on the stage changed drastically before anyone could react. Under the wind vortex's power, all the ghastly flames and wind were swept away and swallowed completely.

The scene perfectly described what it meant for nothing to be left behind in a tornado's path!

Rumble~~

Huang Jianchen was caught completely off guard by this sudden turn of events. A blast of wind slammed into his body, sending him hurtling into the air. He crashed into the ground several hundred feet away, his blood churning so unbearably in his body that he nearly coughed up blood.

His expression changed drastically, and the ghastly fire in his eyes burned brighter than ever before as if he could not believe what was happening. His Hundred Ghost Night Procession had been destroyed just like this?

It was an outcome he could not accept!

Most importantly, he had been so confident that he had accurately gauged all of Lin Xun's abilities and believed that bringing out his trump card would finally subdue Lin Xun. Who could have imagined that Lin Xun would suddenly give everyone such a big surprise?!

Wouldn't this mean that Lin Xun had not used his true power all along?

An uproar swept across the entire arena. Everyone was utterly stupefied by this scene. They were finally certain that Lin Xun had been holding back all this time. How else could he have suddenly turned the tables?

In a private room, the excited expressions on Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shi, and the others turned rigid as their eyes widened at this new bombshell, unable to believe what was happening.

"What a scheming person!"

Xie Yutang's expression finally changed. The other noble disciples in the room were dazed like ducks that were being held by the neck.

“The storm’s fury turns the tables!”

Chu Feng rubbed his hands and laughed loudly. All of his anxiety, worry, and nervousness had been washed away.

“Young Master Lin Xun is so patient. Choosing this moment to reveal his true power must have been deliberate,” said Liu Qingyan. A smile had appeared on her pretty face.

“Hmph! I knew that imp was full of trickery. He was clearly up to no good and wanted to embarrass everyone who looked down on him.”

Granny Feng icily snorted, but she was a little surprised. The power of Lin Xun’s attack was terrifying indeed and it was difficult to imagine how his thin body could possess such power.

“It’s been more than a year but he’s still as cheeky as usual.”

Mu Wansu smiled to herself as she recalled several past events.

“I knew this would happen...”

Wen Mingxiu could not help but feel conflicted. Lin Xun was growing so strong that he now seemed a little unreachable.

To think that they had once been fellow students in the same camp...

.....

On the stage, strands of hazy azure light swirled around Lin Xun, making him appear increasingly otherworldly. Combined with the humble demeanor he showed, it added an aura of mystery to the crowd’s image of him.

In contrast, Huang Jianchen had displayed relentless ferocity from the start, his momentum peaking when he brought out the terrifying Hundred Ghost Night Procession.

Despite all that, he had been defeated by Lin Xun. The contrast between them made Lin Xun seem even more extraordinary, making him seem akin to an unshakable mountain and an unfathomable abyss.

The flabbergasted cries and gazes of the crowd were akin to knives that repeatedly stabbed Huang Jianchen’s heart.

He could not accept this!

He had kept a low profile for a long time and had originally intended to use this battle to create a reputation for himself. How could he possibly accept this turn of events?

“I admit that I underestimated you previously but I will not give you a second chance!”

Huang Jianchen crawled to his feet with a chillingly cold expression as he murderously spat out each word.

Lin Xun earnestly said, “You’ve been saying such things since the start of the battle. I advise you to change your ways. For real, if you lose it will be akin to slapping your own face. That’s really embarrassing.”

Several audience members were stunned by his words. However, they soon realized that it was true that Huang Jianchen had been arrogant earlier and had not treated Lin Xun seriously.

It was, however, a strange time to say such things.

Of course, there would be nothing wrong with saying such things at any other time. However, choosing this moment to say them made them feel rather mocking.

And yet, Lin Xun had seemed so earnest when he said this, causing others to not know whether to laugh or cry.

In a private room, Liu Qingyan could no longer hold back her laughter. For the first time, she realized that Lin Xun was not nervous even at this juncture and instead still full of cheeky wit.

Granny Feng felt her heart tighten. The Young Mistress had started to change after meeting Lin Xun...what if...

Granny Feng immediately shook her head, not daring to continue this train of thought. If something did happen, he would have to first get past her!

On the stage, Huang Jianchen felt a strong urge to punch Lin Xun in the face after hearing his little speech and seeing his earnest expression.

How abominable!

Huang Jianchen's expression turned ugly as he clenched his jaw so hard that his teeth nearly shattered. Does he think that I can't deal with him?

Chapter 248 Thousand Ghost Hell

In a fit of extreme rage, Huang Jianchen suddenly released a savage howl. It sounded like a ghostly scream from a feral ghost in hell and rippled across the arena in a deafening manner.

The audience became terrified, realizing that Huang Jianchen had finally snapped and was going to do everything in his power to destroy his opponent.

Sure enough, sinister green flames began to burn around Huang Jianchen's body like the flames of hell, releasing an oppressive pressure that made several people's expressions change.

Kacha~~

His Moon Spirit Whip flew into the air and terrifying green light began to ripple from it. Thousands of evil ghost phantasms rapidly appeared on the stage, brandishing their teeth and claws as a ghostly aura filled the sky.

The entire arena was shocked and horrified. This was more than twice as powerful as the Hundred Ghost Night Procession!

Was this Huang Jianchen's true finishing move?

The expressions of Chu Feng, Liu Qingyan, Mu Wansu, and the others, who were still rejoicing over Lin Xun's reversal, changed at this moment. The situation was changing far too rapidly and had caught them unprepared.

Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shi, and the other noble disciples grew excited again. As expected of Huang Jianchen. How could he possibly be defeated so easily?

This was a duel of the apex that was filled with many variables and unexpected surprises. However, these factors also made the duel unpredictable and exciting, keeping everyone on the edge of their seats.

On the stage, Huang Jianchen gave off an overwhelming sinister aura like the ruler of the ghost domain as he slowly spat out words filled with ice-cold killing intent, "Through my aeth power, a thousand ghosts transform into hell!"

His words boomed like thunder, causing one's soul to shiver. Towards the end, Huang Jianchen's face abruptly paled and he violently coughed out a mouthful of blood.

The technique was clearly far too powerful and he was struggling to activate it.

Rumble~~

Thousands of evil ghost phantasms danced wildly on the stage as sinister green flames burned around them. The stage seemed to have transformed into the entrance to hell, seeking to drag Lin Xun in and trap him there for eternity!

It was terrifying.

Who would dare to believe that a Human Dipper stage youngster was capable of wielding such a godly technique?

Even several Earth Dipper cultivators were shivering in terror at this scene, let alone the rest of the crowd.

Lin Xun was being attacked on all sides by thousands of evil ghosts and surrounded by layers of green flames, making it nearly impossible to see his figure.

The entire arena was shocked, speechless, and terrified, resulting in a deathly silent atmosphere. It was a stark contrast to the earlier excitement, making the silence feel even more oppressive than it should.

Everyone could tell the battle would be decided at this very moment. They made sure to keep their eyes wide open, not daring to blink so that they would not miss anything. Many people also subconsciously clenched their fists in anticipation.

Even the bigwigs in the private rooms were pursing their lips in silence, their full attention focused on the stage.

Huang Jianchen relished this feeling. The emotions and atmosphere of the entire arena had changed because of him. The sensation of having all eyes on him swept away all of the anger in his heart.

Lin Xun do you still have anything to face me with this time?

You are destined to become my stepping stone and a sacrifice for me to rise to fame. You shall forever live in my shadow!

Huang Jianchen's eyes were filled with sinister excitement.

A gasp of surprise suddenly sounded from the audience, causing Huang Jianchen to frown and grow unhappy.

Curses, who's the piece of trash that disrupted the perfect atmosphere?

Before Huang Jianchen could investigate the source of the disturbance, a commotion arose in the arena, containing hints of shock, astonishment, and disbelief.

The commotion grew bigger and bigger, sweeping away the originally deathly silent atmosphere.

Only then did Huang Jianchen return to his senses. He raised his head and looked toward the arena, causing his expression to change drastically.

What he had thought to be a sure-win scenario had changed again in the blink of an eye!

A stream of pitch-black light streaked amidst thousands of evil ghost phantasms like a shooting star from the heavens, easily cleaving an evil ghost phantasm with every strike!

In the face of its power, the sinister green flames and evil ghost phantasms seemed as frail as paper.

The shooting-star-like light was produced by Lin Xun. The Flowing Light Blade in his hand seemed to emit a cheerful buzz as he rushed around the stage, releasing a surge of terrifying light with each slash.

The ferocity of the light slashes was impossible to describe!

This scene was the cause of the commotion in the arena.

No one had expected Lin Xun to be so overwhelming and unstoppable in the face of Huang Jianchen's full power.

The crowd burst into noise. Lin Xun had once again proven his strength. In fact, the unstoppable power he displayed made numerous girls shriek in excitement.

Lin Xun had pulled off another beautiful reversal despite looking like the underdog. The strong contrast in reversing expectations created tremendous shock value in the crowd.

In the private rooms, numerous bigwigs' expressions changed as they tried to guess the technique he was using. However, even knowledgeable and experienced people like them were unable to discern any clues!

This made them increasingly bewildered.

Rumble~~

In the span of a few breaths, the evil ghost hell was swept away, leaving behind Lin Xun and the still dazed Huang Jianchen.

Huang Jianchen was not the only one who was stunned. Qi Yunxiao, Yuan Shi, and the other noble disciples were also in similar states.

Lin Xun had crushed Huang Jianchen's trump cards twice in succession and, to them, it felt akin to being viciously clubbed on the head twice. They were emotionally damaged by this outcome and found themselves unable to string any thoughts together for the time being.

Was it...impossible to defeat Lin Xun?

"Why, why is this happening..."

On the stage, Huang Jianchen was still struggling to accept the result. His face was deathly pale and his eyes were wide open, displaying a look of defeat.

"Is it time for my counterattack?"

In contrast, Lin Xun was calm and composed. He brandished his blade as he walked forward, causing the audience's hearts to jump at every step.

Because Huang Jianchen had always been on the offensive, everyone seemed to have forgotten that Lin Xun had never been on the attack since the start of the battle!

Could it be that he had not been forced into the defensive but instead had been waiting for Huang Jianchen to use his full power?

If so, that would be far too terrifying!

At the very least, it proved that all of Huang Jianchen's attacks had been unable to threaten Lin Xun since the start!

Huang Jianchen also realized this, causing his expression to change. His gaze was filled with bewilderment, anger, and frustration when he looked at Lin Xun.

Enduring until now before beginning his counterattack, what kind of opponent was this?

Shiing!

Lin Xun naturally did not care about such things. The Flowing Light Blade in his hand buzzed as it slashed.

Before the blade could land, however, Huang Jianchen suddenly released a shrill and anxious shout, "I don't want to fight anymore. I admit defeat!"

Lin Xun was stunned. He's giving up? Isn't this a little too early?

The crowd exploded into an uproar upon hearing Huang Jianchen voluntarily admit defeat. They had already anticipated that he would be hard pressed to make a comeback at this juncture but they never imagined that he would voluntarily admit defeat!

It was too unexpected for a genius disciple from one of the Forbidden City's noble clans to do something so degrading in public!

"Victory is decided."

Granny Feng sighed. She could tell that Lin Xun's blade art contained a completely different power, a power that seemed faint but was actually incomparably terrifying!

However, Granny Feng could not identify the power's origins, which rather astonished her. It made her feel that she had underestimated Lin Xun far too much.

Liu Qingyan patted her chest and let out a sigh of relief. She could not help but blush a little in shame as she recalled her earlier anxious appearance.

Chu Feng was ecstatic. He loudly cheered in the private room as if he was unable to fully express his excitement.

Wen Mingxiu glanced at the others beside her. Qi Yunxiao and the others looked as if they had been struck by lightning and were frozen like statues. She could not help but sigh.

Who else can you blame but yourselves? Lin Xun is not as simple as you guys think.

A dark look surfaced between Xie Yutang's brows as he frowned. He could not help but feel angered by Huang Jianchen's actions.

In Xie Yutang's view, it was fine for Huang Jianchen to be defeated but he should never have lost so disgracefully!

At the same time, the strength Lin Xun showed surprised Xie Yutang. It was hard to imagine that a boy he had once saved deep in the mountains would eventually achieve such accomplishments.

Regardless of the result, the duel's outcome did not affect Xie Yutang. To him, Lin Xun would only be regarded seriously when he possessed sufficient strength to challenge Xie Yutang.

Before this happened, Xie Yutang would not change his view of Lin Xun.

As for the other noble clan disciples, they sported looks of defeat and frustration. However, the duel was already decided and they could only sigh helplessly.

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A din erupted in the battle arena as everyone's feelings were released. Numerous people cheered at Lin Xun's victory as it was the glory he deserved.

No matter how noble Huang Jianchen's background was or how amazing he had performed, he was now the loser and could only receive regretful sighs of pity.

Lin Xun did not allow victory to get to his head. As he watched Huang Jianchen silently depart, a surge of killing intent suddenly rose in Lin Xun's heart.

He knew that unimaginable courage was required to voluntarily admit defeat in such circumstances. The majority of experts put their dignity first and would often rather be killed than make such a humiliating decision.

However, Huang Jianchen had immediately admitted defeat the moment he realized he could not win and had not displayed even a sliver of hesitation.

This was undoubtedly one of the most frightening enemies anyone could make!

Chapter 249 Rising Fame

In the end, Lin Xun sighed inwardly and restrained his killing intent. It was ultimately not a duel to the death or a real battle.

He had no chance to kill Huang Jianchen at this moment anyways.

After the battle was over, Lin Xun also left the stage and walked out of the battle arena. As he walked along Haze City's bustling streets, he suddenly thought of Xie Yutang.

The duel personally arranged by Xie Yutang had ended in an outcome he would never have expected, right?

Lin Xun wondered what expression Xie Yutang had displayed when Huang Jianchen voluntarily gave up.

However, Lin Xun soon shook his head in a carefree manner.

No matter Xie Yutang's thoughts, the duel was already over. The moment Huang Jianchen admitted defeat was the end of Huang Jianxiong's grudge.

This had all been decided before the duel.

However, Lin Xun was sure that it was impossible for those noble clan disciples to let everything go because of the duel.

Anyone who believed so was an idiot!

However, he also knew that Xie Yutang and the others would not cause trouble in Haze City anymore. After all, they would have to first get past the hurdle that was Granny Feng.

This was sufficient for Lin Xun.

When he returned home, he found Xue Jin drinking alcohol as usual. He looked at Lin Xun and offhandedly asked, "It's over?"

Lin Xun replied with a 'yeah'.

There was no need to ask about the result. From Lin Xun's composed appearance, Xue Jin could tell that Lin Xun had won.

Xue Jin grinned. "Since your problems have been temporarily resolved, how about you join me for a drink?"

Lin Xun sat down opposite Xue Jin and smiled. "It will be my fortune to do so."

The night breeze blew as stars twinkled in the sky above, making the little courtyard appear exceptionally tranquil.

The two engaged in casual conversation as they enjoyed the alcohol, not once mentioning anything about the duel. They appeared very content.

Jiujiu lay to the side, displaying a pitiful appearance as it watched the two down bowl after bowl of alcohol.

However, Lin Xun did not allow his heart to soften and ignored Jiujiu's pitiful looks. He was absolutely not going to let Jiujiu become an alcoholic.

It was not long before the serene atmosphere was broken by a series of rapid knocks on the door. Chu Feng excitedly burst in, smiling radiantly as he gushed, "Awesome! So damn awesome! Brother, you were like the god of war reborn in today's battle. Your might is practically immeasurable!"

He picked up a wine bowl and downed it in a single gulp.

However, Chu Feng was soon stunned because Xue Jin and Lin Xun looked completely indifferent as if the matter did not concern them. Even the slightest trace of happiness after that victory could not be seen.

"You guys...how are you guys so composed?"

Chu Feng could not understand.

"Is such a small matter worth getting worked up over? Come, join us," said Xue Jin as he bumped his wine bowl against Lin Xun's.

Lin Xun gave Chu Feng a strange look. "Is it really worth getting so happy over?"

Chu Feng suddenly began to feel a little sullen and panicky. "Is it not worth celebrating over? Brother, this duel had the attention of the entire Haze City! Didn't you know how many bigwigs came to the arena today?! I dare say that they were all dumbstruck at the moment of your victory..."

As he rambled on, Chu Feng grew excited again. "To be the focus of the crowd and that moment of glory after victory all belongs to you alone, Brother!"

"In fact, I can even guarantee that starting today, the entire Haze City will be shaken by the duel and your name will become the focus of countless cultivators!"

"Think about it, how glorious would that be?"

"Hey hey, have either of you heard a single word I said? Can't you guys at least show a little reaction?"

Chu Feng felt defeated upon seeing that Lin Xun and Xue Jin remained unconcerned even after all that.

Chu Feng even began to doubt himself, wondering if he was being too excited instead.

The truth was that Lin Xun wasn't being too composed but instead feared becoming famous. As the saying went, the nail that stuck out was sure to be hammered. Hence, he did not wish to draw much attention.

For Lin Xun, glory and fame were troublesome things that should be avoided as much as possible.

Otherwise, he would not have used 'Great Master Xun' to hide his true identity.

For Xue Jin, a duel between two Human Dipper youths was no different from a squabble between children. Otherwise, he would not have stayed here instead of going to watch the duel.

Due to their differences in opinion, their reactions toward the same matter were naturally different.

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However, no matter how fearful Lin Xun was or how unconcerned Xue Jin felt, the repercussions of the duel could not be concealed nor removed.

It was exactly as Chu Feng predicted. On that very night, news of the apex duel in the battle arena swept across the city like a storm, causing many uproars in the streets and alleyways.

Numerous people sighed in amazement. There was a new genius cultivator in the Southwest Province whose rise could no longer be stopped.

There were also people who felt envious and jealous. Although the battle had made Lin Xun famous, he also offended the noble clan disciples in the process and would certainly encounter numerous troubles in the future.

Several of the cultivators that had registered for the provincial exam began to stress and worry when they realized Lin Xun was also participating.

Even the Forbidden City noble clan disciples had lost to him, who could possibly match him in the exam?

Overall, there were various discussions and differing opinions about the topic.

However, the impact of the duel went far beyond this because it left a huge impression on the audience and was a rare fight between experts of the younger generation.

It was not long before news of the duel spread out of Haze City to other places in the empire.

Even the news screens in the empire's various provinces began to broadcast information about the duel, selecting several experts with rich combat experience to review the battle in detail. In the end, all of them concluded that it was an excellent fight between top Human Dipper experts and was great learning material for other Human Dipper cultivators.

News screens could be found in all thirty-four of the empire's provinces. Hence, it immediately caused quite a commotion in the empire. Although the reactions were not as huge as in Haze City, it did make Lin Xun's name become somewhat known in the empire.

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The empire's west border, the campground of the Steel-Blood Army.

Loud laughter suddenly sounded from a large tent. "Damn, Lin Xun is so devious. I can't believe he endured until the final moment to play his trump card. As expected of my brother!"

Ning Meng was seated in a leather chair with a viewing device in front of him. The device was projecting the scene of Lin Xun defeating Huang Jianchen.

Ning Meng grinned excitedly while devouring his meal as if he was even happier than Lin Xun, who had won the duel.

A guard soon rushed in and reported, "Young Master, we've investigated and found that the duel resulted because Young Master Lin Xun crippled one of Huang Jianchen's clan brothers."

Ning Meng's eyes narrowed as he coldly chuckled. "So that's why. I was wondering when my brother became so high-key. Turns out that he's being bullied!"

The guard said, "Young Master, Young Master Lin Xun was the one who crippled the guy's clan brother. That's not being bullied."

Ning Meng rolled his eyes and scolded, "Stop talking nonsense. Do you think I don't know what kind of people those noble clan disciples are? If they didn't provoke my brother first, how could such a thing have happened?"

He suddenly sneered as he continued, "Anyways, even if we step back and say my brother was the one who bullied them, so what?"

The guard smiled bitterly. Only their young master dared to confidently say something so unreasonable.

Ning Meng threateningly declared, "Just wait, when I return to the Forbidden City next year, the first thing I will do is pay a visit to the Huang Clan. If I don't beat Huang Jianchen till he cries for his parents, I shall revoke my surname!"

The guard immediately felt a headache coming on. Their young master had grown increasingly unreasonable ever since he had returned from Blood Kill Camp. Who knows how much trouble he will cause when he returns to the Forbidden City?

.....

The Forbidden City, Stone Cauldron Alms Headquarters.

In a hall so lavish it would make anyone dumbstruck, a dozen girls in the prime of their youth were giving various services to Shi Yu such as massaging his shoulders and head, rubbing his feet, offering him tea, preparing him fruit...

Only a son of Fortune God Shi could enjoy such a pampered lifestyle.

Shi Yu lay comfortably on a lap pillow as he said, "Huang Jianchen is not much. He's just a disciple from one of those lower noble clans and can't stir up much trouble. On the other hand, Xie Yutang, who had arranged the duel, is somewhat problematic. It will be troublesome if Lin Xun has offended him..."

One of the girls stared at him with her large limpid eyes and curiously asked, "Young Master, who is this Lin Xun?"

"An interesting fellow."

A smile rose from the corners of Shi Yu's lips as he unhurriedly said, "You guys better properly service him when he comes to the Forbidden City. Hmm, I believe he's still a virgin. That won't do. Is a man who doesn't understand women still a man?"

The girls could not help but giggle, each displaying a unique charm.

Shi Yu suddenly became serious. "I recall that the Haze City branch's hundred-year celebration should begin soon, right?"

One of the girls quickly said, "Yes, it will be held in roughly a month."

Shi Yu pondered and said, "Tell the Haze City branch chief manager to invite Lin Xun to the event. Yes, make sure they invite him as the key guest. I will not permit any negligence in this matter!"

The girls were taken aback. Only then did they realize that Young Master Lin Xun had a rather special relationship with their young master.

Chapter 250 Invitation

Woowoowoo~

A long rune shuttle traveled through the air in Haze City like a dragon, releasing a bold whistling noise.

It was early morning and there were already many people up and about. The carriage was full, leaving Lin Xun no choice but to stand as he listened to the various conversations around him.

More than ten days had passed since the duel. Over this period, the duel had been broadcasted all over Haze City and its popularity showed no signs of receding even until today.

For Lin Xun, however, this period was very peaceful. Everything had returned to normal. Besides doing his daily cultivation, Lin Xun would head to the Rune Master Association to accept requests and earn money. When he was free, he would sometimes have a drink with Xue Jin.

Evidently, Lin Xun's earlier prediction was correct. After the duel, the noble clan disciples did not dare to openly target him in Haze City.

This undoubtedly allowed Lin Xun to relax. Since there were no longer any troubles coming his way, he only needed to focus on his training and wait for the provincial exam to begin.

"Ah Mei, what's so good about Lin Xun? Can he give you pocket money? Can he accompany you like me? Can he love you so single-mindedly like me?"

"Tch, you're too tacky. Lin Xun is my role model. Don't you know that all my friends have begun to idolize Lin Xun? I can't get left behind."

"Ah Mei, role models won't fill your stomach. Have you seen Lin Xun before? Do you know what he looks like? What if he's a swindler?"

"Enough! I will ignore you if you keep trying to lecture me."

Lin Xun suddenly noticed a boy and girl mention his name amidst their bickering.

He could not help but laugh. Since when had he become a figure to be idolized?

Who could have imagined that his actions would catch the eye of the girl? She immediately shot him a vicious glare. "What are you laughing at? Did you hear something funny? Is it a problem that I like and idolize Lin Xun?"

Lin Xun was taken aback, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. Fortunately, the rune shuttle had arrived at the Rune Master Association and he quickly turned around to get off.

Before he left, he heard the girl angrily say, "That guy doesn't even have the courage to answer me. He has no backbone at all. Such a man can't even compare to a thousandth of Lin Xun..."

Lin Xun did not know whether he should feel happy or angry. It was a rather strange sensation.

Is this the feeling of becoming famous?

Lin Xun pondered as he walked into the association.

Despite being one of the hottest topics in Haze City, no one recognized him along the way. No one would link a boy who took the rune shuttle every day with the radiant star, Lin Xun.

After all, Haze City was far too big and only a small portion of the population had seen Lin Xun before.

Rune shuttles were the most common form of public transport in the city and most of its users were ordinary folk. Cultivators would rather travel in artifact carriages or ride aeth mounts as they were unwilling to queue up with the common people. Due to these circumstances, the chances of Lin Xun being recognized were infinitesimally small.

However, he was thankful for this. If he was recognized everywhere he went, it would undoubtedly be a huge pain in the ass.

Lin Xun entered the private room on the second floor of the association. Just as he was about to select one of the requests, he saw Chu Feng approach in a friendly manner as he mysteriously said, "Brother, the Haze City Stone Cauldron Alms branch will be holding their hundred-year celebration in a month. Miss Liu Qingyan will be personally appearing at the event to perform one of her amazing pieces. Do you not have any thoughts about this?"

Lin Xun was stunned. "What does that have to do with me?"

Chu Feng nearly rolled his eyes in response. "Brother, do you know how difficult it is to obtain an invitation from Stone Cauldron Alms? You can't even buy one no matter how much you offer on the black market! Can you imagine how grand of an event it will be? It'll definitely be a gathering of bigwigs and VIPs!"

Annoyed, Lin Xun retorted, "Why should we care when we didn't receive any invitations? Moreover, I have no interest in such events."

Chu Feng naturally was not going to give up. "Brother, you're friends with Miss Liu Qingyan and will be helping her repair her ocarina. Can't you obtain an invitation from her?"

Lin Xun raised his brow. He stared at Chu Feng for a moment and said, "Brother, you're the one who wants to go, right? If so, I can try to help."

Chu Feng was overjoyed. These were the very words he had been waiting for. He took a deep breath to suppress his excitement and said, "Then I'll have to trouble you Brother."

Lin Xun said, "I can't guarantee that I'll be able to obtain an invitation so don't celebrate too early."

Chu Feng grinned and said, "I'm sure you can. If she doesn't give face to you, who will help her repair her ocarina?"

Lin Xun forced a smile. Looks like he's pretty insistent on taking advantage of me.

Chu Feng could not help but ask, "Are you really not going? A performance by Miss Liu Qingyan is a rare treat. It will be such a pity to miss out on it."

"Nope."

Lin Xun shook his head. In another month, it would be about time to attempt the third trial of the Omega Secret-Realm's Great Azure Cloud Path. How could he possibly have time to think about other things?

Chu Feng did not push any further. He soon bid farewell and left.

Lin Xun returned to selecting crafting requests.

Unlike in the past, he no longer selected only human-grade mid-tier requests. Instead, he chose to take on crafting requests he had never tried that also seemed interesting.

For example, crafting peculiar weapons such as the thunder-fire ball, water-splitting needle, nine-bend whip, or equipment such as the mind-guard mirror, capes, boots, and armors.

There were even specialized tools such as hoes, array discs, beast summoning seals, rune puppets, and other similar items. These were important equipment used by horticulturists, beast summoners, puppet masters, and other unique professions.

Lin Xun did this to improve his proficiency in the rune arts. A true master needed to practice crafting various aeth tools in order to deepen their understanding of runes through exposure.

Most importantly, the experience would be hugely beneficial when he eventually crafted rune armaments in the future!

Rune armaments were ultimate treasures that all Heaven Ascension experts in the empire would do almost anything to get their hands on!

If he could craft rune armaments, Lin Xun would never need to worry about money because people would desperately try to shove it into his hands.

Of course, such ultimate treasures were naturally difficult to make.

At the very least, Lin Xun was still far from being able to make one. Everything he currently did was for the sake of shortening this distance as soon as possible.

However, rune art was not something that could be rushed and required a steady accumulation of practice and study. Even geniuses with superb comprehension abilities would find it difficult to progress on this path.

The reason why rune masters enjoyed superior status in the empire was that far too few cultivators could become rune masters!

Those who could craft rune armaments were even fewer!

.....

After accepting two crafting requests, Lin Xun rose and prepared to leave. Who could have expected that Chu Feng would appear again with a strange look on his face?

Lin Xun could not help but ask, "What is it?"

"Stone Cauldron Alms sent an invitation specially for you."

Chu Feng's expression was a mix of disbelief and worry.

Lin Xun sensed that there was something amiss about Chu Feng's tone. "Is it for Great Master Xun or me?"

Chu Feng looked straight at Lin Xun and answered, "You!"

Soon after, he hurriedly tried to explain, "Brother, I've never divulged your identity. Could Miss Liu Qingyan have sent you an invitation through them?"

Lin Xun shook his head. "I haven't visited her for the past few days. There should be no reason for such a good thing to happen. Hmm, did the sender say anything else?"

Chu Feng slapped his forehead and exclaimed, "Right! The sender specially told me that the invitation was from their Chief Manager."

Lin Xun was shocked. "Who is their Chief Manager? I don't believe I know such a person."

Chu Feng also found this very strange. "The Haze City branch had a change of Chief Manager a month ago, I believe she's called Mu Wansu and was transferred from Donglin City..."

Before he could finish, Lin Xun chuckled and said, "So it's her. It all adds up now. Only she would know who Great Master Xun is."

Chu Feng was taken aback. "You're acquainted?"

Lin Xun nodded but did not explain. "Don't worry, Brother, she will not expose my identity."

Chu Feng breathed a sigh of relief. "That's good to hear."

He was honestly still somewhat shocked. Lin Xun had given him far too many surprises. Chu Feng never imagined that Lin Xun would even be acquainted with a Stone Cauldron Alms Chief Manager. This made him increasingly unfathomable in Chu Feng's eyes.

How many more secrets did Lin Xun have?

Lin Xun patted Chu Feng's shoulder. "Brother, this is perfect. I got an invitation without needing to visit Liu Qingyan. Here, take it."

Chu Feng hurriedly said, "It's for you, how can I?"

Lin Xun smiled. "Can't you take it as going as my representative? Relax, I'm sure they won't think too much about it."

With these words, he turned around and left.

Chu Feng stood there for a moment. In the end, he decided to accept.

Meanwhile, inside an elegant hall in the Stone Cauldron Alms Haze City branch.

Mu Wansu offhandedly asked, "Has the matter been settled?"

An attendant hurriedly answered, "It's been done according to your instructions. We've sent the invitation to the Rune Master Association's Young Master Lin Xun."

Mu Wansu acknowledged, still feeling somewhat dazed inside. She had received news from the Forbidden City headquarters several days ago that Third Young Master Shi Yu wanted to invite Lin Xun to the upcoming celebrations and even requested a VIP seat for him. Mu Wansu could not help but feel astonished.

It might have made some sense to her if it had been instructions from First Young Master Shi Xuan. After all, he had displayed some admiration toward Lin Xun back then.

However, it was not First Young Master Shi Xuan this time but Third Young Master Shi Yu!

From what Mu Wansu knew, Third Young Master Shi Yu was a pampered son who was fond of indulgence and showed no interest in power. Although he was First Young Master Shi Xuan's brother, they were not close at all.

However, Third Young Master Shi Yu was now also showing high regard for Lin Xun. This was rather inconceivable to Mu Wansu. Since when had that little bastard Lin Xun managed to curry favor with the Third Young Master as well?