

Y Master 1181

Chapter 1181: Exchange and Purchase

The auction concluded in great perfection, but the VIP room where Ye Fan was located was far from calm.

“You messed up, didn’t you? Nowadays, people are as cunning as monkeys. You’ve fooled them so many times; it’s no surprise if they retaliate!”

Jin Zhanfei teased Ye Fan with a smile, not realizing that Ye Fan’s previous actions were just to secure the Soul Summoning Lotus at a low bid.

“It’s okay, Brother Ye. At worst, the sect can provide the spirit stones. The sect can still afford these spirit stones.”

Tong Qianchen comforted Ye Fan, believing that he certainly couldn’t afford fifteen thousand one hundred high-grade spirit stones.

The sect will pay?

Hearing Tong Qianchen’s words, even Elder Shen Ximen fell silent. They knew what such a large amount of spirit stones meant for a sect.

If Ye Fan was bidding for the Thunder God's Fury, it would be different, but it was just a Soul Summoning Grass—a treasure medicine, but even then, this price seemed a bit of a loss to them.

If the chief auctioneer knew they considered this price a loss for the Soul Summoning Grass, he'd probably choke them. This was a massive gain for them.

Though Ye Fan had won a lot of spirit stones for the auction house, the benefits he gained from the auction house far surpassed that.

"Ye Fan, I believe the Great Elder also has some high-grade spirit stones. We can all chip in, and I'll ask my master for some support, which should be enough."

Zhang Taiyi was thorough in his considerations. Although he appeared aloof, he was actually very enthusiastic, just that most people couldn't reach his inner core.

"Don't worry, Elder Shen, Xiao Qian, Old Jin, Senior Brother Zhang, Senior Brother Shen. I have my ways." Ye Fan smiled slightly, then injected his True Yuan into the icy gemstone on the wall.

Very soon, a female cultivator wearing black gauze entered, humbly asking, "Do the esteemed guests have any requests?"

Ye Fan flipped his hand and took out a Thunderfire Grass from the space bag, instantly filling the entire room with a faint thunder power.

Thunderfire Grass?!

Seeing the Thunderfire Grass, Elder Shen Ximen and the others were stunned!

“This is a Thunderfire Grass, rich in thunder power. See how many high-grade spirit stones you can auction it for?”

Ye Fan’s voice was not loud, but in everyone’s ears, it was like being hit by a thunderbolt, leaving them all dumbfounded.

No one expected Ye Fan to have another Thunderfire Grass!

“Thunder... Thunderfire Grass? It’s really a Thunderfire Grass?!”

The female cultivator was also stunned. She could naturally feel the terrifying thunder power contained within the Thunderfire Grass, but such a matter couldn’t be decided by her.

“Respected guest, please wait a moment. I will invite Miss Yaling to take a look and estimate its value.”

The female cultivator quickly recovered from her shock and swiftly left the room.

Soon, a charming woman with an impressive figure and a captivating fragrance arrived at Ye Fan's VIP room.

The woman restrained her aura, appearing non-threatening, yet inadvertently gave off an immense oppressive feeling.

"Elder Shen, long time no see, you are as graceful as ever." The woman greeted Elder Shen Ximen with a smile upon entering, then straightforwardly asked, "I heard you have a Thunderfire Grass to auction?"

"Hmm."

Ye Fan nodded and handed the Thunderfire Grass to the woman.

Hmm?

Seeing that it was Ye Fan who produced the Thunderfire Grass rather than Elder Shen Ximen, Yaling's pupils slightly enlarged. Then she reached out, took it, placed the Thunderfire Grass in her palm, and closed her beautiful eyes to feel the thunder power contained within.

"This is indeed Thunderfire Grass, and of good quality."

After a moment, Yaling confirmed the Grass was real, and the thunder power it contained was extremely impressive, so much that its value could be described as immeasurable.

This somewhat moved her!

“Little brother, do you want to auction this Thunderfire Grass here, or sell it directly to our Treasure Pavilion?” Yaling’s eyes twinkled with allure, resembling a witch from hell, bewitching to the soul.

“Is there a difference between auctioning it here and selling it directly to you?”

Though Yaling’s looks and charisma were dazzling, Ye Fan’s expression remained calm as water, hitting the critical point with his question.

“If you choose to auction it in this venue, we will charge ten percent of the total revenue as a fee. If you sell it directly to us, we will appraise it and pay you the full amount in spirit stones, and the Thunderfire Grass will be ours.” Yaling explained.

Auctioning could possibly fetch a sky-high price, whereas selling directly to the auction house means giving up this potential sky-high price.

However, there are no absolutes.

Encountering someone like Wang Qingshan, who suffers from Profound Ice Cold Poison and is crucial to the sect, someone will pay any price no matter how high.

But it's also possible that it won't fetch the ideal price, just like the Soul Summoning Grass Ye Fan bought.

To avoid this situation, Ye Fan decided to sell the Thunderfire Grass to the Treasure Pavilion, making things easier, and the price quoted by the Treasure Pavilion should not be low.

"Alright, after the auction ends, please come with me to the back. We will arrange for the finest appraiser to evaluate your Thunderfire Grass."

After negotiating, Yaling went out to arrange for everyone to leave—any guests who bid on treasures were taken to a dark room to complete the handover procedures and pay Spirit Stones.

After being busy for a full hour, Ye Fan and six others were led to a room at the very back, a windowless room illuminated by a row of Luminous Pearls, not dark at all.

The Soul Summoning Grass was placed on the table in the center of the room. Chief Auctioneer Gu Xuanran was sitting nearby, sulking. He had never suffered such a setback; originally hoping the Soul Summoning Grass would cause a sensation, it unexpectedly ended up going cheap to a troublemaker.

If Yaling hadn't informed him that a Thunderfire Grass needed appraisal, he would have already gone to a tavern to buy a drink.

“Elder Gu, they are from the Xuanwu Sect, and are the winners of the Soul Summoning Grass this time. It’s one of their younger brothers who wants to sell the Thunderfire Grass, please take a look!” Yaling introduced.

“Who among you just called out the bid?”

Gu Xuanran swept his unpleasant gaze over everyone’s faces, finally landing on Ye Fan.

“Elder Gu, don’t be upset, your auction house didn’t lose out this time, did you? You’ve earned quite a few Spirit Stones!”

Ye Fan smiled as he took out the Thunderfire Grass and placed it on the table.

As soon as the Thunderfire Grass was placed on the table, its free-roaming Thunder Power burned a small hole into it, and an aura of thunder permeated the air.

“Humph, we’ll discuss the Soul Summoning Grass later!”

Upon seeing the Thunderfire Grass, Gu Xuanran could no longer bother to trouble Ye Fan, quickly picking it up and sensing it meticulously. He nodded with satisfaction, “Excellent, a top-grade Thunderfire Grass, not only brimming with masculine energy but rare for its intense Thunder Power.”

“Elder Gu, just tell us the value straightforward!” Jin Zhanfei, too impatient to wait for Ye Fan to speak, asked directly.

Gu Xuanran pondered for a moment, then said, “Twenty thousand pounds of High Grade Spirit Stones, one price take it or leave it!”

“Deal.”

Ye Fan smiled faintly and immediately chose to agree, believing Gu Xuanran might have lowered the price a bit, but wouldn’t have reduced it by much.

More importantly, although the Thunderfire Grass was precious, he had plenty of it, and naturally, he wouldn’t refuse to sell it, otherwise, he wouldn’t even have enough Spirit Stones to pay for the Soul Summoning Grass.

With the price settled, the remaining matters were easy to handle. Ye Fan essentially exchanged the Thunderfire Grass for the Soul Summoning Grass plus four thousand nine hundred pounds of High Grade Spirit Stones.

After the exchange was completed, Ye Fan put the Soul Summoning Grass and Spirit Stones into his Space Bag, then slowly walked toward the auction house’s entrance with Elder Shen Ximen and others, accompanied by Yaling.

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Meanwhile, not far from the auction house entrance, the Qingxuan Sect Elder strolled with Qingxuan and other disciples.

As soon as Ye Fan and his group stepped out of the auction house, they saw Qingxuan, the top core disciple of Qingxuan Sect, ahead in the distance.

“Wait, I just remembered, this Soul Summoning Grass is an extremely precious treasure medicine specifically for honing and nurturing the Divine Sense! I saw it mentioned in an ancient text but didn’t think of it just now and missed the treasure!” The Qingxuan Sect Elder suddenly thought of something and slapped his forehead, cursing himself as foolish.

“Elder, is what you said true?”

Qingxuan first expressed surprise, then became tremendously excited.

In his youth, Qingxuan had an extraordinary encounter where he acquired a cultivation technique for Divine Soul Attack, similar to magic but stronger and more targeted.

This technique demanded very high Divine Soul, but without corresponding Heavenly Materials and Earthly Treasures, he could not hone and strengthen the Divine Sense.

Even now, his capability for Divine Soul Attack remained weak, not because he hadn’t worked hard enough, but because his Soul Power was too feeble.

Upon hearing the Qingxuan Sect Elder's words in such circumstances, how could he not be excited?

"It's true, such a pity!" The Qingxuan Sect Elder confirmed emphatically, followed by continuous head shaking.

"Although Ye Fan bought the Soul Summoning Grass, he didn't genuinely intend to acquire it, but got carried away raising trouble and unwittingly brought misfortune upon himself—the Xuanwu Sect spent so many Spirit Stones, they must be in pain!"

Qingxuan's eyes flashed sharply, "In my view, if I were to buy it from him, he'd certainly turn it over immediately!"

"Senior Brother Qingxuan, Ye Fan is coming out!"

As Qingxuan spoke, a Qingxuan Sect disciple keenly noticed Ye Fan and his group exiting the auction house accompanied by Yaling.

Seeing this, Qingxuan's heart stirred, he quickened his steps, approached Ye Fan, and straightforwardly said, "Brother Ye, I'd like to buy the Soul Summoning Grass you bid on, I'll offer an additional five hundred pounds of High Grade Spirit Stones on top of your original bidding price, what do you say, willing to part with it?"

"Sorry, the Soul Summoning Grass is not for sale!"

Ye Fan shook his head, his attitude extremely firm.

Chapter 1182: Another Enemy

“Why?”

Ye Fan’s words echoed in his ear, and Qingxuan was initially slightly startled. Then, sensing that Ye Fan knew his intentions, Qingxuan felt he was intentionally using refusal as an excuse, aiming to demand an exorbitant price.

Thus, Qingxuan patiently said, “Brother Ye, to be honest, I really want to acquire this Soul Summoning Grass, so I came here abruptly. The price is negotiable; name your price. As long as I can bear it, I will have no complaints.”

“This kid is going to get fleeced!”

Jin Zhanfei and Shen Tu exchanged glances, both believing Ye Fan would certainly demand an exorbitant price and ruthlessly fleece Qingxuan.

From the beginning, Qingxuan expressed his determination to obtain this Soul Summoning Grass. Ye Fan was no fool; how could he not ruthlessly fleece him?

“Brother Qingxuan, to be honest, I also very much need this Soul Summoning Grass, so it’s impossible for me to transfer it!”

Ye Fan decisively rejected Qingxuan's proposal. The Soul Summoning Grass is one of the main ingredients for refining the Soul Gathering Pill and represents a hope to save Su Liuli. How could he sell it to others?

Hmm?

Shen Ximen and others, unaware of the significance of the Soul Summoning Grass to Ye Fan, thought Ye Fan was trying to raise the price. Now, seeing Ye Fan had turned him down outright, they couldn't help but secretly signal each other.

Because, in their view, Qingxuan, as the first core disciple of the Qing Xuan Sect and possibly the future successor to the Sect Leader position, could give up a Soul Summoning Grass, which holds little use for them, not only to fleece him but also to forge a good relationship with the Xuanwu Sect, which would be beneficial in numerous ways.

"Brother Ye, is there really no room for negotiation?"

Qingxuan, not giving up, continued, "I could exchange other Treasure Medicines with Brother Ye—Treasure Medicines, Elixir Pills, martial arts—any you choose for exchange. I absolutely guarantee you won't feel shortchanged."

"Brother Qingxuan, truly sorry, I must keep this Soul Summoning Grass myself. Even if you wanted to exchange it for the Qingxuan Divine Technique, I wouldn't swap it. Better give up on this notion!"

What Ye Fan referred to as the Qingxuan Divine Technique is the cultivation technique of Qing Xuan Sect, its unique treasure.

“Hiss~”

Hearing this, the corner of Qingxuan’s mouth twitched uncontrollably.

Having reached this point, he knew that obtaining the Soul Summoning Grass from Ye Fan was impossible, nor would he ever trade the mental method of the Qingxuan Divine Technique for this Treasure Medicine.

“Fine, since Brother Ye insists, then forget it.” Though he said this, a trace of malice flashed in Qingxuan’s eyes.

He had lowered his stance and spoken kindly, but Ye Fan showed him no regard at all, which infuriated him.

Hmm?

Shen Ximen thoughtfully glanced at Qingxuan, then shifted his gaze to Ye Fan.

At this moment, he vaguely guessed that Ye Fan's real initial target had always been the Soul Summoning Grass, and everything done earlier was simply to make others think he was brought in as a stooge by the auction house.

Shen Tu and Jin Zhanfei hadn't considered this yet; they just felt Ye Fan was peculiar. Qingxuan had expressed that no matter how exorbitant Ye Fan named his price, as long as he could afford it, he would buy it, but Ye Fan flatly refused without even naming a price. What was going on? Did he really need the Soul Summoning Grass?

Tong Qianchen and Zhang Taiyi also considered that Ye Fan might indeed be determined to acquire the Soul Summoning Grass but didn't know its purpose.

At this point, however, they couldn't ask publicly in front of Qingxuan what Ye Fan needed the Soul Summoning Grass for, so they simply stayed silent.

Meanwhile, Qingxuan did not immediately leave but suddenly asked, "By the way, Brother Ye, I've heard you've offended the Tianyuan Sect Leader, Helian Chang, and also crippled the genius of the Chu Family, Chu Feng. Is this true?"

"Yes."

Ye Fan nodded. These matters were impossible to conceal, and he didn't care if Qingxuan knew. Moreover, he vaguely felt there was an underlying message in Qingxuan's words, so he admitted openly.

As expected, Qingxuan's eyes flashed coldly as he said, "Brother Ye, although you obtained the Soul Summoning Grass at an exceptionally low price at this auction, you also offended all the strong people who participated in the bidding. This is very unwise."

"Don't trouble yourself, Brother Qingxuan. I believe that not many truly know my identity, and even if they find out, what can they do? If they bet and conceded willingly, it's not my fault."

Ye Fan's voice grew cold as he clearly sensed the hostility emanating from Qingxuan. This smooth and tactful person had finally revealed his true nature.

Qingxuan initially brought up Ye Fan offending the Tianyuan Sect and the Chu Family, then mentioned Ye Fan offending people at the auction, with the sole aim of threatening Ye Fan to give up the Soul Summoning Grass!

"Though your words are reasonable, you must be aware that everyone qualified to participate in this auction is no ordinary person, and many are connected to high heavens. You can't hide from them for long; soon, they will realize it. Then won't they come back to trouble Brother Ye?"

Qingxuan's words are ruthless but also rational. There are Wu Shang Sect people at this auction; if they find out Ye Fan tricked them, how could they let it rest?

At this moment, even Shen Ximen was silent, feeling that Qingxuan's words had some truth. Although Ye Fan used certain means to obtain the Soul Summoning Grass at a lower price, it was hard to guarantee those Wu Shang Sect members wouldn't discover the Soul Summoning Grass's value and see through Ye Fan's trick.

Ye Fan faintly smiled and said, "I believe the Wu Shang Sect members will not act rashly over a Soul Summoning Grass, disregarding their identity to attack someone as insignificant as me. Moreover, they will absolutely never admit to not knowing the Soul Summoning Grass's value! They can't afford to lose face, so your assumption will not come to pass."

"Is that so?"

Qingxuan raised his eyebrows, silently commending Ye Fan's skill. Although Ye Fan's words were composed, they inadvertently defused Qingxuan's threat. It seemed stronger tactics were needed now.

"Even if, as Brother Ye said, those from the Wu Shang Sect won't trouble him, Brother Ye himself has no shortage of enemies either!

I think, although Brother Ye is very strong, it's not wise to make too many enemies. Otherwise, during the tournament, if you keep clashing, it'll be very hard to make it to the end. What does Brother Ye think?"

Speaking again, Qingxuan was blatantly threatening now, implying that Ye Fan had already made enemies of the Tianyuan Sect and the Chu Family, and offending the Qing Xuan Sect would be a path to self-destruction!

How could Ye Fan not hear the underlying meaning? Raising an eyebrow, he coldly said, "Are you threatening me?"

"It's not a threat, just a friendly reminder." Qingxuan looked Ye Fan straight in the eyes, speaking slowly.

Hmm?

Hearing Qingxuan's words, and seeing his expression, Shen Ximen and others frowned.

They all knew that Qingxuan usually had the image of a nice old man and was rarely seen taking action. Yet, in the Qing Xuan Sect, not a single core disciple dared to challenge him, his strength immeasurable.

As Qingxuan said, Ye Fan had already offended the Chu Family and the Tianyuan Sect. If he also made an enemy of Qingxuan, during the genius tournament, he would likely face continuous fierce battles, making it hard to say if he could reach the end.

But... they also knew that Ye Fan wouldn't succumb to threats. Otherwise, he wouldn't have humiliated Helian Chang in front of everyone from the Tianxuan Sect and the Xuanwu Sect that day!

As anticipated by Shen Ximen, after hearing Qingxuan's words, Ye Fan's eyes narrowed immediately, speaking coldly, "If it's a friendly reminder, I thank you. If it's a threat, unfortunately, you'll be disappointed. I dislike being threatened the most."

"In that case, I look forward to seeing your good performance in the tournament—we'll meet on the battlefield!" Seeing that threatening to get the Soul Summoning Grass was futile, Qingxuan stopped his verbose words, bowed, and bid farewell to Shen Ximen and others, never losing face.

However—

In the instant he turned around, Qingxuan's entire face twisted, murderous intent flickering in his eyes.

At the same time.

Other members of the Qing Xuan Sect were chatting idly in a private room at the best restaurant in Tianyuan City.

Earlier, after Ye Fan and others appeared, the elders of the Qing Xuan Sect only sent Qingxuan alone to purchase the Soul Summoning Grass.

Because, in his view, Ye Fan had purely played a losing hand and had no choice but to buy the Soul Summoning Grass. Qingxuan's proactive attempt would have no difficulty.

"Calculate the time, the senior brother should be back soon, right? I wonder how many spirit stones he spent to purchase the Soul Summoning Grass from the Xuanwu Sect?"

One of the Qing Xuan Sect's disciples asked jokingly while eating the complimentary snacks from the restaurant.

"How much? As long as it doesn't incur a loss for them, they'll definitely resell it at the first moment!"

“With the Soul Summoning Grass refining the Divine Soul, the senior brother will certainly make a remarkable showing in this tournament.”

“Creak!”

While a few Qing Xuan Sect disciples were chatting, the door was pushed open, and Qingxuan walked in with a sullen face.

“Qingxuan, you don’t look too good. Did the Xuanwu Sect jack up the price and rip you off?”

Noticing Qingxuan’s look, the Qing Xuan Sect disciples put away their smiles, and the Qing Xuan Sect elder frowned and asked.

“The Soul Summoning Grass was bought by Ye Fan of the Xuanwu Sect. He refused to sell it, no matter how high a price I offered. He even said that even if I used the Qingxuan Divine Technique cultivation technique, he’d never exchange his Soul Summoning Grass... This Ye Fan, simply unreceptive to reason!” Qingxuan said, frustrated and angry, recounting the events to them.

“What? This guy is too ungrateful, dare to speak such arrogance, truly outrageous!”

“No doubt about it, senior brother, during the genius tournament, we must teach him a lesson!”

“Yes, we must give him a harsh lesson, let him understand there are people he cannot offend!”

After hearing Qingxuan’s story, the Qing Xuan Sect disciples were all furious, believing Ye Fan didn’t know gratitude.

“If it’s going to rain, mother wants to marry, there’s no stopping someone from seeking death! I guarantee, he’ll regret his decision tonight!”

Qingxuan sneered, his whole body exuding a chilling murderous aura.

Chapter 1183: Chu Family Genius

When the sun rose, and the wild grass by the roadside still carried sparkling dewdrops, the city gates of Tianyuan City had already opened.

The people living near Tianyuan City were buying and selling, flocking into the city, while some residents were going outside to visit friends and relatives, making the city gate a lively scene.

“Boom~”

Suddenly, in the sky not far from Tianyuan City, an ancient bronze chariot appeared, its body mottled, swiftly flying through the clouds.

About five miles from Tianyuan City, the bronze chariot descended, and six young people along with an elderly man with grizzled hair stepped down from the chariot.

Swish!

After getting off the chariot, the elderly man pointed a finger, and the bronze chariot instantly shrunk to palm size, which he tucked into his sleeve.

Around them were people coming and going, but these people, although ordinary, were used to such scenes and were not surprised.

They did not know that the elder and four younger ones who got off were the Chu Family Master and the finest disciples of the Chu Family.

Of course, even if they knew, they wouldn't care; the life of cultivators was too far removed from theirs—they were just ordinary people at the bottom of society.

Besides, recently even people from the Wu Shang Sect and the Three Great Sects had appeared, the Chu Family compared to them was like the chasm between themselves and the Chu Family, an insurmountable gap.

The elderly man leading the group was the current master of the Chu Family, and also Chu Feng's father, Chu Yuankong.

Originally, each family had only three spots, but he brought four people, among them, Chu Feng.

After a period of recuperation, Chu Feng's external injuries were mostly healed, but his cultivation was completely destroyed, now no different than an ordinary person, even weaker than a robust commoner.

The reason he came this time was to witness the peerless genius Chu Hong from the Chu Family kill Ye Fan, to unleash the hatred in his heart!

Additionally, Chu Yuankong agreed to bring Chu Feng along also with his own thoughts.

This competition gathered geniuses not only from Tianyuan State but also strong people from other states; perhaps he could find someone to repair Chu Feng's dantian?

Even if he couldn't restore his cultivation, as long as there was hope to cultivate again, it was worthwhile!

However, he did not tell Chu Feng any of this.

Because he wasn't confident he could find such a person, it was purely a gamble.

The Chu Family's peerless genius Chu Hong was always cold, similar to Zhang Taiyi, they were the same kind of people, but with some differences; Zhang Taiyi was cold outside but warm inside, while Chu Hong was inherently indifferent.

Chu Yuankong led Chu Hong and Chu Feng along with four others into the city at a slow pace; the two soldiers guarding the gate dared not stop them as they bore the distinct mark of the Chu Family.

Many dared to swagger into the city, many with the surname Chu, but only the Chu Family from Tianyuan State dared to enter in such a manner.

As a soldier guarding the city, one needed considerable insight and skill; otherwise, offending someone from the Wu Shang Sect could result in a mysterious death.

“You all go to Tianyuan Pavillion and wait for me, I will visit the City Lord,”

After entering the city, Chu Yuankong separated from Chu Feng and the group, and walked towards the City Lord Mansion alone.

Tianyuan Pavillion was the best inn in Tianyuan City, where the sects and families participating in the competition generally stayed.

Unlike the high-profile lifestyle of these people, those from the Wu Shang Sect didn't stay in such conspicuous places, instead choosing less noticeable inns and quiet places.

After walking through the streets for a while, Chu Feng and the group had heard from people chatting that a grand auction was held last night.

Currently, whether in the streets or tea houses, people talked mostly about the auction last night where someone consistently raised the price by one hundred catties of Spirit Stones, or even ten catties.

Though the identity was unknown, it didn't hinder the gossip from flying, with various speculations that either the auctioneers planted a shill, or someone received inside information saying it was Ye Fan from the Xuanwu Sect.

In any case, all sorts of information were rampant; Ye Fan had become a household name in Tianyuan City even before the competition.

Describing the chaos he caused at the auction, people spoke animatedly as if they had witnessed it firsthand.

Hmm?

Learning that the competition hadn't begun and Ye Fan had already stirred up a storm in Tianyuan City, Chu Feng's face turned fiercely blue.

"Brother Feng, don't be upset over someone about to die, it's not worth it." Chu Hong saw Chu Feng's displeasure, smiled slightly, and advised.

"Yes, Brother Feng, there's nothing much happening anyway; the auction has ended, we might as well wander around to relax," suggested another disciple to Chu Feng.

Chu Feng nodded; it was his first time in Tianyuan City; even though he had become powerless, he wanted to explore and see the sights.

After all, after this, he likely wouldn't have another chance to come to Tianyuan City again in his lifetime!

...

Meanwhile, Ye Fan and others had gotten up early, breakfasting in the hotel lobby.

After breakfast, the waiter prepared a cup of fragrant tea for each of them, Shen Ximen sipped his, saying, "Xiao Fan, later, I plan to visit the City Lord Mansion, want to come with me?"

Visit the City Lord?

On hearing this, Ye Fan was initially stunned, then realized Shen Ximen wanted to introduce the City Lord to him.

Understanding this, Ye Fan was about to agree when Tong Qianchen suddenly tugged at his clothes under the table and subtly shook her head.

Hmm?

Ye Fan was puzzled, unclear why Tong Qianchen didn't want him to go, but respecting her opinion, he shook his head and said, "I'll stay here, Elder Shen, you go ahead."

With sharp insight, Shen Ximen detected Tong Qianchen's small gesture easily, but chose not to expose her little thought. He laughed and said, "Alright then, you all enjoy, I'll meet that old fellow."

Saying this, Shen Ximen gulped down his tea, placed the cup down, and left.

Shen Ximen saw Tong Qianchen's intent to be alone with Ye Fan, and Zhang Taiyi and the others naturally noticed it too.

They indulged Tong Qianchen deeply, so since she wanted to be alone with Ye Fan, they sensibly found various reasons to leave.

"Xiao Qian, why did you stop me from going with Elder Shen to the City Lord Mansion?" Ye Fan asked his confusion.

"I want to take Brother Ye around..."

Tong Qianchen lowered her head, murmuring, “And besides, the City Lord is an old man, what’s there to see? No matter how he meets you, he won’t make things easier for you in the competition. It’s better to explore.”

“Uh...”

Ye Fan was speechless, he thought Tong Qianchen stopping him from visiting the City Lord had hidden reasons, never expecting she wanted to take him shopping instead.

Feeling helpless, Ye Fan realized Shen Ximen had left, so discussing anything further was pointless, agreeing to Tong Qianchen’s request for a stroll.

Soon, the two immersed themselves in the bustling street crowd, wandering aimlessly with everyone else.

“Take a look, don’t miss out...”

While walking, Ye Fan suddenly heard a familiar vendor call, freezing up as the phrase was so similar to what Earth’s street vendors shouted, almost as if taught by the same mentor.

The two found interest, moved closer, discovering a mountain farmer selling Spiritual Medicine; the stall had Spiritual Medicine and various other miscellaneous items, all appearing rather ordinary.

There were many mountains nearby, with Spiritual Medicine growing sparsely, and only experienced Medicine Farmers could gather them.

Examining the items, they found these spiritual medicines were merely decades old, containing too little plant essence and hardly worth their attention.

“Look, these spiritual medicines are great, I can tell you two are cultivators; buy them, they’ll surely boost your power,”

The farmer hadn’t noticed their disappointed expressions, continuing to advertise his Spiritual Medicine actively.

“These spiritual medicines are too young, the plant essence is pitifully inadequate, hardly useful for us.” Ye Fan smiled, preparing to continue forward with Tong Qianchen.

“Young man, quick, buy that bronze fragment!”

Suddenly, Elder Xuan exclaimed in an unprecedentedly excited tone!

Chapter 1184: Bronze Fragments

Hmm?!

Ye Fan was taken aback; his steps halted, and shock appeared on his face.

What kind of person is Elder Xuan?

He is the artifact spirit of the Emperor Weapon, what major scenes hasn't he witnessed? What treasures hasn't he seen?

Ye Fan had never seen Elder Xuan so out of character!

No matter what precious items Ye Fan obtained before, Elder Xuan always remained unimpressed, even scoffing at spiritual medicine Ye Fan thought was valuable, considering it trash.

Yet today, Elder Xuan actually exclaimed for a seemingly unimpressive bronze fragment, how could Ye Fan not be shocked?

“Could this seemingly green copper-rusted broken fragment have an extraordinary origin?”

Ye Fan felt somewhat excited but mostly puzzled.

The stall owner didn't notice Ye Fan's surprise and continued to babble on about selling other items.

“It’s okay if you don’t fancy the spiritual medicine, I have many good things here, you can choose at will, prices are negotiable...”

“Alright then, let’s take another look!”

Ye Fan gave Tong Qianchen a look and then squatted in front of the stall, sifting through everything on it.

As for the bronze fragment, Ye Fan had already seen it, but initially didn’t pay it any mind, thinking it was just something to weigh down a piece of cloth on the ground to prevent it from being blown away by the wind.

After several looks, Ye Fan couldn’t discern anything special about the bronze fragment, only that it seemed to have fragmented from some kind of vessel, its shape irregular.

While examining the items at the stall, Ye Fan conversed with Elder Xuan in his mind, asking what was so special about this unimpressive bronze fragment.

“Kid, this is because your cultivation isn’t sufficient and your discernment is lacking, that’s why you can’t see this item’s preciousness.”

Elder Xuan said solemnly, “Although this fragment looks no different from ordinary bronze fragments, it is actually a part of a Supreme-level spiritual artifact, unfortunately shattered, leaving only this tiny piece. If it were a complete Supreme-level spiritual artifact, it could easily exchange for the entire Tianyuan State.”

“A Supreme weapon?”

Ye Fan gasped, no wonder Elder Xuan cared so much, it's a Supreme weapon fragment, its background indeed daunting.

But Ye Fan was still puzzled, if it was part of a Supreme weapon, how could it look so ordinary? It seemed no different from standard bronze fragments.

“You just don't understand.”

Elder Xuan explained, “If you weren't aware of the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown's mystical properties, would you mistake it for an ordinary golden crown from your world? In other words, if the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown was shattered and you only found a fragment, would you immediately guess it was an Emperor Weapon fragment?”

Ye Fan shook his head, that definitely wouldn't be the case, because if an Emperor Weapon didn't want to be discovered, no one could perceive the strong power contained within it.

“Exactly, Supremes are only a level below Great Emperors, and can even contend with Quasi-Emperors. Their weapons engrave complex formations, which hide the inherent divinity of spiritual artifacts. Not even you, and not even a Divine Power Realm cultivator holding it, would necessarily discern its secrets, thankfully I discovered it, or else a grand opportunity would have slipped away.”

After Elder Xuan's explanation, Ye Fan realized, the less noticeable an item, the more likely it is a treasure, only such chances are incredibly rare, nearly negligible.

"Kid, you must buy this bronze fragment, and when we're back, let the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown devour and absorb the divine energy within the fragment."

Elder Xuan was filled with emotions, never expecting this trip to Tianyuan City would yield such a treasure. If the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown absorbs the divine energy from the fragment, it may not regain its peak, but at least some energy can be restored.

On Earth, the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown was able to absorb spiritual energy or divine energy from treasures, but those on Earth were simply beneath Elder Xuan's notice, forcing the crown into a sealed state, slowly repairing itself by its own power.

Now that a Supreme-level artifact fragment is found, the possibility of restoring the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown has greatly increased. Ye Fan now has an additional task, which is to find some high-quality spiritual artifacts for the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown to devour, in order to repair itself.

"It's said the Tianyuan Secret Realm is different from other Secret Realms; it not only has Xuan Beasts, spiritual medicine, cultivation techniques and martial arts, but also damaged weapons. These weapons are left by extremely powerful cultivators inside.

If he could find some fragments of spiritual artifacts in the Tianyuan Secret Realm, maybe the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown could be restored bit by bit."

Thinking of this, Ye Fan felt a surge of heat, itching to delve into the Tianyuan Secret Realm for exploration.

He really wanted to know what kind of power the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown could unleash in its complete peak state, at least sealing the space passage between Earth and the Xuan Realm would be no problem.

“Hey, hey, hey, are you going to buy or not? If not, stop rummaging, look at what you’ve turned my things into.”

The stall owner saw Ye Fan idly picking up items, looking at them briefly before putting them down, showing no intent to buy, and immediately got displeased.

The stall owner was nothing more than an ordinary person with a bit more muscle, normally wouldn’t dare talk back to a cultivator like Ye Fan.

But Tianyuan City has a regulation specifically protecting ordinary people, which states cultivators cannot attack ordinary people as long as their behavior isn’t excessive.

Moreover, even if the fault lies with ordinary people, cultivators are not allowed to take their lives, otherwise they would face capital punishment.

Protected by such policies, these ordinary people dare to trade with cultivators, otherwise, upon encountering unscrupulous cultivators, they would directly snatch and leave, and these ordinary people could do nothing but admit to their bad luck.

Embarrassed by what the vendor said, Tong Qianchen quickly helped set the items on his stall right, then looked at Ye Fan with a questioning gaze, asking whether he had his eyes on something.

Ye Fan's communication with Elder Xuan was purely on a conscious level, so even if a Divine Power Realm cultivator stood next to him, they wouldn't notice anything unusual. Tong Qianchen was unaware of what Ye Fan had just communicated with Elder Xuan.

Ye Fan chuckled awkwardly and casually picked up the bronze fragment, saying, "How much for this piece?"

"Ah, you've got a keen eye! This piece I picked up from the mountains; nearly broke my back getting it. I knew it was a treasure! You have no idea, the lengths I went to for it..."

Seeing Ye Fan ignore so many good things and only inquire about this unassuming bronze fragment, the vendor instantly sensed this item might not be ordinary. He promptly made up a tragic story about the arduous journey he undertook to acquire the bronze fragment, describing it as a tale of intrigue and survival.

"Alright, alright, boss. Just tell me how much for this thing. With your persuasion skills, even if you don't farm medicine, you wouldn't starve. You're almost like a storyteller!"

Ye Fan was rather speechless; this guy was a talker, and it seemed that if he continued, who knew what more he might say.

The longer the night, the greater the risk. Although Ye Fan was determined to get this bronze fragment, he didn't show any particular interest and impatiently waved his hand to interrupt the vendor.

"Well..."

The vendor sized up Ye Fan and Tong Qianchen, feeling they must be wealthy, especially Tong Qianchen, who seemed like someone from a rich family and was obviously a cultivator. He decided he had to ask for a high price.

"Considering the effort it took me to get it, and it is indeed a treasure, just give me ten Spirit Stones!"

The vendor bit down hard on his back molars, looking as if he was enduring a huge loss, as though ten Spirit Stones were already a massive bargain for Ye Fan.

Little did he know, if this bronze fragment were in the hands of someone knowledgeable, forget ten Spirit Stones, they'd break their heads to fight for hundreds.

Ye Fan naturally wouldn't show he was determined to get the bronze fragment but decided to bargain. After all, the vendor was just a regular person; having ten Spirit Stones suddenly might not be good.

After all, one Spirit Stone was already enough for a three-member household's monthly expenses, which meant the cost was pretty high.

Feigning surprise, Ye Fan said, “Ten Spirit Stones? Why not just rob someone? You really dare ask for that much! It’s merely scrap copper; tell me, where is it worth ten Spirit Stones?”

“Uh...”

The vendor was dumbfounded, and before he could speak, Ye Fan continued, “I’m just trying to help you out by buying something so you can open your stall. Yet, you don’t appreciate it; fine, keep it to press your stall then. Xiao Qian, we’re leaving!”

Saying so, Ye Fan took Tong Qianchen’s hand, ready to leave.

Now the vendor was truly anxious; he quickly grabbed Ye Fan, saying, “Don’t rush! They say ask sky-high and settle on earth. Just tell me how much you intend to pay; I’m not refusing to sell. We can negotiate the price...”

Ye Fan’s earlier words exactly hit the vendor’s spot. From setting up the stall till now, he hadn’t sold a single item, a typical of having no sales. If Ye Fan left as well, who knew when he could finally make a sale!

In business, the worst thing is having no customers. If no one comes, how to earn money?

Therefore, the vendor quickly agreed; whatever offered, just something is better than nothing. This thing was indeed picked from the mountains, but if not used to weigh down the stall cover, he would have thrown it away long ago. Whatever Ye Fan gave would be a bonus, so he definitely wouldn’t refuse.

“At most, I’ll give you one Low Grade Spirit Stone. Take it or leave it!”

Saying this, Ye Fan took out a pea-sized, poor quality Spirit Stone and placed it in front of the vendor.

Just this one poor-quality Low Grade Spirit Stone was enough for a regular three-member household to live half a month quite comfortably.

“Alright...”

The vendor hesitated for a moment and nodded in agreement.

To him, the bronze fragment was essentially scrap, so getting one Spirit Stone was already a pleasant surprise. Earlier, he was just hoping Ye Fan’s interest would let him hike the price.

“I’ll give two Spirit Stones, sell it to me!”

Just as Ye Fan was about to pick up the bronze fragment, an unharmonious voice came from behind, attempting to compete with Ye Fan for the bronze fragment.

Chu Feng!

Ye Fan didn't need to turn around to know the owner of the voice was Chu Feng.

He was too familiar with Chu Feng's voice!

Chapter 1185: Toying With Them

Not only Ye Fan recognized the troublemaker behind him as Chu Feng, but Tong Qianchen also recognized Chu Feng's voice.

The two turned around, and they saw not only Chu Feng behind them but also a few unfamiliar people standing with him. They seemed to be from the Chu Family's direct lineage, and one of them emitted an aura at the Peak of True Yuan Realm, even more powerful than Chu Feng before he was crippled.

Feeling that person's aura, Ye Fan and Tong Qianchen understood that he was most likely the Chu Family's genius.

After some time, Ye Fan had a certain understanding of Tianyuan State and knew that aside from Xuanwu Sect, Tianyuan Sect, and Qing Xuan Sect, there were also the Five Great Families and some other small sects and families.

Ye Fan had heard of the Chu Family's genius, but he hadn't seen him before. Now, among the four opposing them, Ye Fan immediately recognized him.

As for Chu Feng deliberately causing trouble, Ye Fan merely frowned and said nothing. Chu Feng was now a cripple, and there was no need to bother with a cripple.

He could tolerate it, but Tong Qianchen couldn't.

Tong Qianchen stepped forward with a face full of disgust and said, "Chu Feng, Brother Ye has already discussed the price with the seller, and the Spirit Stones have been given. This item is ours now. What do you mean by this?"

"Hmph! Junior Sister Tong, don't put it like that."

Chu Feng snorted coldly and said, "Discussing the price is one thing, the transaction is another. Since they haven't officially traded, I can still negotiate with the stall owner. I'm willing to offer a higher price to buy it. I'm sure the stall owner won't refuse a higher price, right?"

"Chu Feng, don't be too excessive. Brother Ye has already given the Spirit Stones to the stall owner, and the transaction is completed. You raising the price means you're causing trouble. If you keep this up, I'll explain this matter to my father and have you expelled from Xuanwu Sect!"

Tong Qianchen never thought Chu Feng would be so shameless and couldn't help but angrily rebuke him.

Ye Fan sighed inwardly, thinking Tong Qianchen was still too naïve. Chu Feng's cultivation had been crippled; being expelled from the sect meant nothing to him. This threat could not affect him at all.

Chu Feng burst into rage, pointed at Tong Qianchen's nose, and shouted, "Tong Qianchen, think with your conscience. Did I ever wrong you? All these years, since I joined your Xuanwu Sect, how have I treated you? And you? How have you treated me?"

Speaking, Chu Feng pointed to Ye Fan and continued, "Ever since he arrived, you've changed like a different person. I'm puzzled, what is so good about him? In terms of cultivation, family background, looks, how am I inferior to him? You blind dog, falling for such a wild boy from the mountains!"

"Indeed, Tong Qianchen, think about it. How has our Brother Feng ever wronged you? Not only are you ungrateful, but you've also caused him to lose all his cultivation. I think you're just a vixen, a typical shameless flirt."

"You... Chu Feng, you're shameless. Your cultivation was crippled because you weren't skilled enough; you deserved it. I like Brother Ye, so what? I just don't like you! Chu Feng, I, Tong Qianchen, am solemnly telling you now that I never liked you. That was all your wishful thinking!"

Tong Qianchen was truly furious, and she blurted out her true feelings, equivalent to confessing indirectly, feeling much relieved at once.

But she didn't dare look at Ye Fan, fearing how he might think and whether he would accept her confession.

The argument caused people on the street to scatter immediately. They were all ordinary people, and seeing both parties were cultivators, they dared not stay for the spectacle. If the two sides began fighting, they'd be unfortunate if they were too close.

“Shut up! You’re just a flirt. Our Brother Feng liking you brings disgrace to his identity. I truly can’t believe Xuanwu Sect’s Sect Leader, so capable, birthed such a daughter, tarnishing the sect’s reputation.”

The Chu Family’s direct lineage beside Chu Feng had already learned everything about his cultivation being crippled, and the cause was Tong Qianchen. They had no patience for her, speaking nastily without holding back.

Chu Feng coldly said, “None of this matters now, but he crippled my cultivation and ended my future. I will never let him have it easy!”

Speaking this, Chu Feng deliberately paused, looking at Ye Fan and said, “Though he has only a few days to live, even in those few days, I won’t let him have it easy. Whatever he fancies, I will snatch away. If you don’t agree, just bite me!”

Tong Qianchen was furious, a flash of murderous intent surged, and she was about to act, but Ye Fan caught her, saying, “Don’t act impulsively. Have you forgotten? Tianyuan City forbids private dueling.”

With Ye Fan’s reminder, Tong Qianchen finally realized, glaring at Chu Feng fiercely, and remained silent.

Ye Fan gave Chu Feng a deep look, turned to the stall owner, and said, “Will you sell it to me or to him?”

The stall owner watched a lively melodramatic drama for free and was secretly delighted. Upon hearing Ye Fan's inquiry, his eyes darted, and he said, "Since both of you want this bronze fragment, I can't miss the chance to earn, and whoever offers the highest price will get it."

No doubt, the stall owner was thoroughly unscrupulous, abandoning his basic integrity for profit. Just now, he had been begging Ye Fan to buy it, but seeing competition, he'd changed his mind instantly, choosing to sit back and watch the fight.

Ye Fan frowned slightly, feeling a bit displeased. The price had been discussed, yet this guy turned back on his word.

However, for the sake of repairing the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown quickly, Ye Fan wouldn't give up, especially since he wasn't lacking Spirit Stones.

Besides, Chu Feng's party had spoken rudely, making him quite unhappy.

For the sake of a temporary dispute, the Chu Family would never allow Chu Feng to use Spirit Stones indefinitely. Currently, Chu Feng holds little importance to the entire Chu Family.

Just as Ye Fan decided to spare no expense to acquire the bronze fragment, the voice of Elder Xuan suddenly echoed in his mind again.

"Kid, there's no need to fight them to the end. Save your Spirit Stones for future cultivation. I have a way to absorb the divine energy from the bronze fragment while tricking those kids. Are you in?"

“Absolutely, I’m in!”

Being able to absorb the divine energy from the bronze fragment and discreetly play Chu Feng for a fool was an opportunity Ye Fan wouldn’t refuse.

“You hillbilly, if you have no Spirit Stones, get lost! Don’t block me from buying things. Also, go back and clean your neck, waiting for my brother Hong to butcher you!” Seeing Ye Fan stay silent, Chu Feng assumed he didn’t dare to compete financially and sneered.

“Brother Chu, it’s the first time seeing you since our last parting. How have you been? Hmm, it seems you’ve recovered well with all this time.”

Ye Fan responded with a smile, his words barbed, intentionally provoking Chu Feng.

He had already conspired with Elder Xuan to have him secretly use the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown to absorb the divine energy from the bronze fragment without revealing the aura of the Emperor Weapon, turning it into a worthless piece for Chu Feng.

“You won’t last a few days here! Also, if you can’t match the higher price, drop it and get far away!” As expected, Chu Feng’s sore spot was hit by Ye Fan, his voice cold with a desire to tear Ye Fan apart right there.

“How do you know I can’t outbid you? Isn’t it just two Spirit Stones? I’ll bid twenty Spirit Stones, I must have it!”

Ye Fan presented a determined stance, holding onto the bronze fragment tightly.

At this moment, Elder Xuan activated the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown within Ye Fan's sea of consciousness, concealing the Emperor Weapon's aura with a secret technique, and rapidly absorbing the divine energy from the bronze fragment through Ye Fan's hand.

Twenty Spirit Stones, that was not a small amount, enough to buy the entire stall.

Chu Feng never expected Ye Fan to really butt heads with him, raising the price tenfold, causing his face to turn fierce as he said, "Isn't it just twenty Spirit Stones? I'll bid twenty-five!"

There are always those who court death at any time. Most dare not stay to watch the commotion, but some reckless ones watched from a safe distance, eager to witness the outcome and have a tale to boast about later.

At this moment, hearing that Chu Feng had bid twenty-five Spirit Stones for a bronze fragment covered in copper rust, everyone thought he was insane. How else could someone be so foolish?

The stall owner was utterly stunned, yet thrilled, thinking that twenty-five Spirit Stones, if converted into money, would be enough for a long time!

"Did I mention Low Grade Spirit Stones? No, I meant High Grade Spirit Stones, so make sure you heard correctly."

Ye Fan spoke again, his tone nonchalant, but his words were like a thunderclap to the crowd.

Spirit Stones are categorized into Low Grade, Mid-Grade, High Grade, and Top Grade.

One Mid-Grade Spirit Stone can be exchanged for ten Low Grade Spirit Stones.

Thus, when Ye Fan mentioned twenty High Grade Spirit Stones, it equated to two thousand Low Grade Spirit Stones, a substantial sum.

“High... High Grade Spirit Stones?!”

The stall owner, hearing this, was first taken aback, then trembled with excitement, as if overwhelmed by the pie that had fallen from the sky.

Whoosh!

Chu Feng’s expression changed drastically, as twenty High Grade Spirit Stones were beyond his current decision-making power, forcing him to look toward his cousin, Chu Hong.

Chu Hong nodded silently.

“High Grade Spirit Stones it is, I bid twenty-one High Grade Spirit Stones.”

Seeing this, Chu Feng sneered, unaware he had fallen into Ye Fan’s trap.

Chapter 1186: Public Enemy and the Gamble

“You really have a way of making progress, buying something and still needing to consult your younger brother.”

Ye Fan glanced mockingly at Chu Feng, meanwhile realizing that Elder Xuan had nearly absorbed all the divine energy from the bronze fragments using the Nine Heavens Mysterious Crown. He tossed the bronze fragment onto the stall with a clang and said, “Forget it, since you want it so much, gentlemen take pleasure in helping others, I won’t fight with you for this. It’s yours.”

“Brother Ye, why did you give up on it?”

Tong Qianchen was also puzzled. Ye Fan carried at least thousands of jin of high grade spirit stones; why did he back down?

“It’s not worth the price, it’s just scrap to begin with, but I felt some affinity with it, and this fellow has had it tough, so I thought about helping him a bit. Since someone wants to pay a higher price for it, let him have it. I hope he won’t regret it!” Ye Fan said.

The divine energy within the bronze fragments had already been completely absorbed, and now it was just an ordinary bronze fragment, practically worthless.

“Hmph, if you don’t have that many spirit stones, don’t pretend, lest you get struck by lightning. You’re just a wild brat, even if the Xuanwu Sect favors you, you can’t compare with our Chu Family. This is just the beginning, whatever you set your eyes on, I’ll snatch it from you, letting you get nothing!”

Chu Feng’s tone was exceptionally vicious. He had torn apart all pretense now, so he had nothing more to worry about, moreover devising to strike Ye Fan mentally as he felt Ye Fan wouldn’t live much longer.

After speaking, Chu Feng took out more than ten high grade spirit stones from his space bag and borrowed some from other direct lineage of the Chu Family, finally pooling together twenty-one high grade spirit stones to give to the stall owner.

Having done all this, Chu Feng picked up the bronze fragment Ye Fan had tossed onto the stall and held it in his hand to carefully perceive it, yet sensed nothing unusual.

“Brother Feng, let me see!”

The exceptional genius of the Chu Family, Chu Hong, asked Chu Feng for the bronze fragment, then cautiously pressed it to his forehead, sensing with concentration.

At this moment, everyone from the Chu Family, including Chu Feng, held their breath, fearful it was truly a worthless piece of scrap copper.

Chu Hong's brows knitted tighter and tighter, while Ye Fan coldly watched on the side.

Tong Qianchen blinked her large eyes, seeing Ye Fan's nonchalant smile, feeling that Chu Feng definitely got played by Ye Fan, and enthusiastically anticipated the commotion.

Soon, Chu Hong took the bronze fragment from his forehead, his face darkened as he said, "There's nothing special about it, it should just be scrap copper."

"What? Impossible, Brother Hong, check again, could there be a mistake?"

Chu Feng couldn't believe this outcome but also knew that Chu Hong had a special talent for sensing divine energy. If there were any anomalies, he wouldn't have missed sensing them.

If it was truly as Chu Hong claimed, then he fell into Ye Fan's trap, losing twenty-one high grade spirit stones and making a fool of himself in public!

Chu Hong shook his head and said, "Brother Feng, you know my ability, I wouldn't sense wrongly, this indeed is just scrap copper, worth nothing."

Now it was the stall owner's turn to be happy, never expecting that it was really an utterly worthless piece of scrap copper, but despite this scrap copper, it sold for a whopping price of twenty-one high grade spirit stones, a true windfall.

Some rejoice while others grieve, and the stall owner was delighted, but Chu Feng was not.

Suffering such a loss made his anger burn through the nine heavens!

In his anger, Chu Feng suddenly turned, glaring at Ye Fan furiously, "You deliberately tricked me?"

"It's your own foolishness, a brain kicked by a Xuan Beast is required to believe such was a treasure, what trickery are you talking about?"

Ye Fan squinted his eyes, coldly saying, "Moreover, even if I did trick you, so what? Wasn't the previous lesson still not enough?"

"You... you..."

Chu Feng trembled with rage, overwhelmed with fury, wishing to tear Ye Fan apart, slice him to pieces and grind him to dust to ease his hatred.

"Brother Feng, no need to be so agitated, at the Genius Tournament, I shall twist his head off to serve as your chamber pot!" said Chu Hong, his eyes as sharp as daggers fixed on Ye Fan, as Chu Feng being played made him lose face.

“Twist off my head?”

Ye Fan also squinted his eyes, an air of death spreading from him, coldly saying, “If that’s so, then I look forward to that day coming soon!”

“Heh!”

Chu Hong chuckled coldly, his gaze filled with murderous intent, “Enjoy the few days you have left well!”

“Xiao Qian, let’s go.”

Making quick jibes wasn’t Ye Fan’s style, so he said no more, instead turning and leaving with Tong Qianchen.

...

Not long after Ye Fan and Tong Qianchen left, the story of Ye Fan’s prank on Chu Feng spread like wildfire.

In just a few days, nearly everyone in Tianyuan City knew about it.

This incident made Ye Fan the center of attention once again.

At this time, someone also dredged up Ye Fan's past insults towards the Tianyuan Sect and his refusal of the Qing Xuan Sect's high offer for his Soul Summoning Grass.

Gossip is forever the best topic at tea time and after meals.

For a time, no matter where you went in Tianyuan City, people were always talking about Ye Fan's illustrious deeds, quickly making him one of the most popular contestants, even overshadowing Chu Hong, who was hailed as the number one genius in Tianyuan State.

Different people had varying opinions on Ye Fan's unmatched popularity. Ordinary loose cultivators and people from small factions were merely watching for entertainment and had no firm opinions.

However, the major factions unanimously believed that Ye Fan was unlikely to make it to the final round of the competition, because he had made too many enemies. It was easy for him to encounter strong opponents, and he might even die in the competition.

Of course, the premise is that it involves a life-and-death battle.

The so-called life-and-death battle is a part of this genius competition and also a means to resolve conflicts between major factions.

Both parties need to sign on the life-and-death agreement to agree to the life-and-death battle. Once signed, there will be no judges, and only one person can walk out alive, and the faction of the deceased cannot seek revenge.

In such an atmosphere, merchants often have the keenest sense of smell. They sharply sensed the business opportunities and high stakes contained in this competition, and all came up with clever ideas to make a profit during the competition.

As a super-major faction, and a commercial entity, the Treasure Pavilion naturally would not miss the chance presented by this competition.

Just before the competition began, the Treasure Pavilion introduced a foolproof way to make money in its auction house—betting!

They opened a betting pool, listing the odds for several contestants with the highest hopes of winning the championship, attracting people who were born gamblers to participate in the betting.

This caused a sensation throughout Tianyuan City. Whether or not they were gamblers, people wanted to see the odds set by the Treasure Pavilion and see who had the best chance of winning the championship.

The people from Treasure Pavilion didn't hide anything and instead aggressively publicized the odds of each contestant with hopes of winning the championship.

Ye Fan knew about this without even stepping outside and learned that his odds were the highest, ten to one.

The lowest odds belonged to Chu Hong, the peerless talent of the Chu Family with whom Ye Fan had crossed paths, followed by Luo Xiaolin from the Tianyuan Sect, and Qingxuan from the Qing Xuan Sect was third—the odds for Ye Fan were the highest among the four.

This indicates that the people from Treasure Pavilion did not favor him to win the championship—the higher the odds, the lower the chances of winning, that's the pattern.

"This is outrageous, Brother Ye, they are bullying you too much. Why are your odds so high? They are questioning your strength!"

Tong Qianchen voiced her indignation on Ye Fan's behalf, believing that Ye Fan was the most likely to win the championship, and setting such odds was simply underestimating Ye Fan.

"This is a good thing, why get angry? They're basically sending Spirit Stones to us, wouldn't refusing them be too disrespectful?"

Ye Fan laughed, comforting Tong Qianchen, and then looked at Jin Zhanfei, Shen Tu, and the others who were obviously aggrieved, and said, "Do you trust me?"

"Isn't that a silly question? Of course, we trust you." Jin Zhanfei punched Ye Fan and said, "What sort of tricky plan do you have now? Hurry and tell us."

“I want to help you all make a fortune, those brave enough can give me all your Spirit Stones, and I’ll place the bets for you.”

“Are you planning to bet everything on yourself?”

Shen Tu’s eyelids twitched wildly; it takes a tremendous amount of confidence to do that!

However, he also felt Ye Fan might be able to do it because Ye Fan had created so many miracles; even such powerful Thunder Power in the Thunder Primordial Secret Realm couldn’t kill him, and he even walked out with the Thunderfire Grass alive and kicking.

This time, he believed Ye Fan could definitely create another miracle!

“Exactly, I’ll bet my entire fortune on myself, what about you? Do you trust me?” Ye Fan spoke again, deciding to fight to the end, determined to win the championship no matter what.

“I am willing to bet with you!”

Tong Qianchen was the first to express her position, taking out all her possessions and handing them to Ye Fan.

“Even Junior Sister Tong has such courage, what are we afraid of? Let’s do it!” Shen Tu also took out all his Spirit Stones and handed them to Ye Fan.

“This is my entire fortune, my brother’s future is in your hands.” Jin Zhanfei was the most straightforward, directly throwing his Space Bag to Ye Fan.

“Take it and place the bet!”

Zhang Taiyi, usually sparing in words, was no exception this time, directly throwing his Space Bag to Ye Fan as well.

“Thank you all for your trust, I won’t let you down!”

Ye Fan took the four’s Space Bags, feeling that the burden on his shoulders had grown heavier, but his confidence surged.

First place in the competition, he was determined to achieve it!

Chapter 1187: The Genius Tournament Begins!

On the eve of the competition, Ye Fan became the most popular contestant due to conflicts with several forces, and at the same time, he was regarded as a public enemy!

This made his odds as high as ten times!

Upon learning the odds, Ye Fan made a decisive decision to make a big bet and let Tong Qianchen and others join in.

Ye Fan took all of his four friends' belongings and went alone to the Treasure Pavilion auction house at dusk. He revealed his identity and said to the gatekeepers, "Please report that I'd like to see Miss Yaling."

The two gatekeepers who already knew Ye Fan said, "Miss Yaling is in the Xuan numbered room on the second underground level; you can go directly to her."

"Thank you."

Ye Fan thanked them and directly entered the auction house, proceeding down the staircase to the second underground level. Soon, a female cultivator in black gauze approached.

After understanding Ye Fan's purpose, the female cultivator led him to Yaling's room door, gently knocked twice, and said, "Master Yaling, Ye Fan is here."

"Let him in."

Inside the room came Yaling's enticing voice, soft and tender, filled with a languid and gentle allure.

Ye Fan entered the room and was surprised to see Yaling sitting behind a huge table, busy with something unknown.

Seeing Ye Fan come in, Yaling smiled lightly, stretched, and the fullness of her chest almost burst out of her clothes, making Ye Fan feel a peculiar stir in his mind.

“Little brother, would you like something to drink?”

Yaling stood up, poured Ye Fan a cup of tea, placed it on the table, and said in a teasing tone, “So, what brings you to your sister?”

“Miss Yaling, I’ve heard that you have opened a betting book, and the bet is on who will ultimately win the championship, right?” Ye Fan asked calmly.

“Yes, indeed. Is little brother planning to place a bet?” Yaling sat opposite Ye Fan, her beautiful eyes constantly surveying him, and asked.

“Yes, my four friends and I all want to wager.”

Saying this, Ye Fan took out the space bags of Tong Qianchen and the others and placed them on the side table.

“Oh?”

Yaling glanced at the four space bags on the table and asked with a smile, “Young brother, who do you and your four good friends plan to bet on?”

As her words fell, Yaling picked up the teacup and sipped tea.

“I’ll bet on myself, all of it!”

Saying this, Ye Fan took out ten Thunderfire Grass from his own space bag and lined them one by one in front of Yaling.

“Pft—”

Witnessing this, Yaling directly spat out the tea she was drinking.

Though she was knowledgeable, she was still astonished by Ye Fan’s grand gesture!

Indeed...

She was shocked!

Thunderfire Grass is an extremely rare Supreme Yang Treasure Medicine containing Thunder Power, which can improve the body and is invaluable.

Previously, when Ye Fan took out one Thunderfire Grass, she was already very surprised, and now, Ye Fan suddenly brought out ten...

The shock this brought her is imaginable?!

“Sorry, I lost my composure. Little brother, you really surprise me. I’ll get someone to appraise it immediately.”

After a brief shock, Yaling wiped the tea at the corner of her mouth, looked at Ye Fan strangely, and pressed a button on the desk: “Get Elder Gu over here, there’s something that needs his appraisal.”

“Uh...”

Soon, Gu Xuanran arrived in the room, and upon seeing a row of ten Thunderfire Grasses, his eyes almost popped out!

Although shocked, Gu Xuanran knew the rules well and did not ask Ye Fan where he got so many Thunderfire Grasses but quickly went over to carefully check the quality of the Thunderfire Grasses.

Every time he inspected one, he would report a price.

After inspecting all ten Thunderfire Grasses, Gu Xuanran also checked the Spirit Stones in the space bags of Tong Qianchen and the others.

“You... you want to bet all this on yourself, to win the genius competition championship?!”

Even though Gu Xuanran is a famous auctioneer at the Treasure Pavilion, having seen countless treasures and Spirit Stones, he was still somewhat disbelief upon hearing Ye Fan’s purpose.

To him, this was simply too crazy!

“All of it!”

Ye Fan responded again, simply and firmly.

“Hiss~”

Yaling drew a sharp breath, still shocked inside, but more curious—where did he get such confidence?

Without answers, Yaling stared at Ye Fan for a few seconds, then suddenly smiled charmingly: “Little brother really has a large-scale deal, but our Treasure Pavilion always likes grand bets—this bet we accept!”

Though the words were spoken casually, Yaling was actually deeply thoughtful.

On one hand, both she and Gu Xuanran could see that Ye Fan’s cultivation was only at the mid True Essence Realm.

Although she didn’t know how Ye Fan became the number one core disciple of the Xuanwu Sect with mid True Essence Realm cultivation, she didn’t believe Ye Fan could win!

Firstly, she believed that Chu Hong from the Chu Family, Luo Xiaolin from the Tianyuan Sect, and Qingxuan from the Qing Xuan Sect were all not inferior to Ye Fan, especially Chu Hong who had almost perfected his True Essence Realm cultivation and could break through to the Holy Embryo Realm at any moment!

Furthermore, Ye Fan simultaneously offended three people and became a public enemy. Even if his strength is comparable to that of the three, it is absolutely impossible for him to break through the encirclement and win the championship!

“Miss Yaling truly has great courage.”

Ye Fan smiled slightly, then said to Yaling and Gu Xuanran, "Sister Yaling, Elder Gu, I want to ask you for a favor, I wonder if it's possible?"

"What is it? Just say it. As long as we can do it, we will definitely help."

For some reason, when she saw Ye Fan's calm demeanor, Yaling felt a bit uneasy, but she didn't think much of it and just asked.

"I hope you can keep it a secret for me. I don't want anyone to know that I've bet on myself," Ye Fan said.

"No problem, keeping customer confidentiality is our duty. Do you have any other requests?" Yaling didn't expect that Ye Fan would only have such a small request, so she asked if he had any other requirements.

"That's it, Sister Yaling, Elder Gu, until we meet again." Ye Fan smiled slightly and then walked out of the room without looking back.

"Such a large and extravagant bet, yet he can remain so calm and collected, where does his confidence come from?" Watching Ye Fan's distant figure, Yaling couldn't help but ask herself in her heart.

She could see that the calmness Ye Fan displayed was due to self-confidence.

But no matter how hard she thought, she couldn't figure out where Ye Fan's confidence came from!

...

Time flew by like a shuttle, and under everyone's anticipation, the start day of the Tianyuan City Genius Competition finally arrived. The venue was an ancient arena in the center of the large square in front of the city lord's mansion.

This ancient arena has existed for endless ages. It is said that when Tianyuan City was first built, this ancient arena already existed.

The arena is inscribed with mysterious and complex array patterns. Even a strong person in the Divine Power Realm would be unable to destroy it in the slightest while fighting on it, making it the perfect competition venue.

At dawn, the square was already a sea of people. Almost everyone in Tianyuan City, whether cultivators or ordinary people, had come. The dense crowd was too vast to see the end at a glance.

Even the roofs of the buildings near the square were crowded with people, and the surrounding trees were no exception, all occupied by people.

From afar, it looked like a large tree was bearing oversized ginsengfruits.

Due to the special and rare nature of this competition, not only locals from Tianyuan State but also cultivators and wealthy ordinary people from surrounding states rushed over to participate in this once-every-ten-years grand event.

At the third quarter of the Chen hour, the sun was already shining on the earth, the sky was clear without a cloud, and all the contestants had arrived at the waiting area.

At this moment, from the Taishi Chair in the center of the platform stood an elder in a dignified purple python robe with a Gu Liang crown on his head, looking noble and grand, clearly someone who held high office for a long time and wielded great power.

This elder came to the edge of the platform, glanced at everyone below, and said in a deep voice, "My name is Lei Bikuan, temporarily serving as the city lord of Tianyuan City. I am very honored to be able to preside over this competition."

"As the saying goes, 'there is no shape without rules,' so there are naturally rules for the competition. Below, I will read the rules of this competition.

First, as is well known, the entire Tianyuan State has three major sects and five ancient families, each with one most outstanding genius disciple.

Being able to stand out in a large sect or ancient family to become the acknowledged number one, these disciples' strengths are naturally indisputable.

Therefore, these eight genius disciples who have emerged as the top in their respective sects or clans will be treated as seed players.

According to the strength, the eight will be divided into eight groups under the divisions of The heavens and the earth are mysterious and yellow, the universe is vast and desolate. Each seed player will appear first in their group.

Besides the eight seed players, the remaining seventy-two contestants will be decided by drawing lots to determine which group they belong to.

The group matches will use a round-robin system, where each group member must face every other member in their group in one match.

Regarding the promotion method, a points system will be used, which is also a commonly used method in the genius competitions held in Tianyuan City in the past generations.

In each match, the winner gets three points, the loser gets zero, and if it's a draw with no victory, each side gets one point.

The one with the most points in the group stage advances to the top eight.

After reaching the top eight, the format will change from round-robin to elimination, still using drawing lots to decide opponents. The winners advance to the final four, and the losers are eliminated.

Then the final four will enter the semifinals and finals to finally determine the champion.

You are all the elites carefully selected from various sects and clans, so I won't say more. The champion of this competition will receive a mysterious prize, provided by the special envoy Senior Zuo Fengshan from His Majesty the King of Jueluo Country.

Senior Zuo is a prominent figure in the Southern Domain of the Tianxuan Continent and represents His Majesty the King. What he can offer as a reward is definitely beyond your imagination. For the championship, for the mysterious prize, ignite your war intent and burn your blood!"

The quiet square was filled with the voice of Lei Bikuan, who read out the rules and details of the competition one by one.

It must be said, City Lord Lei Bikuan is indeed a master at stirring people's hearts, igniting the fighting spirit of all the contestants with just a few words.

According to the distribution of strength, Chu Hong was undoubtedly placed in the Heaven Group, while Luo Xiaolin, the number one core disciple of the Tianyuan Sect, was in the Earth Group, Qingxuan was in the Xuan Character Group, and Ye Fan was listed fourth, in the Yellow Group.

The remaining Universe and Vastness, Desolation groups were taken by the first talents from Ma Family, Liu Family, Yuan Family, and Yun Family.

After a round of drawing lots, the remaining seventy-two contestants also chose the groups they belonged to.

After the group divisions were completed, Ye Fan was surprised to find that, besides six other local small sects or clan talents in his group, there were actually also people from the Chu Family, Tianyuan Sect, and Qing Xuan Sect!

Chapter 1188: Utter Arrogance

After the group divisions ended, the elders of the sects and strong representatives of the clans, each accompanied their participants to the waiting area, waiting for the official start of the competition.

On the platform, besides City Lord Lei Bikuan himself, there were also representatives from various places who sat down according to the pre-arranged positions.

“Just like in previous competitions, we are fortunate to have invited some representatives to witness this grand event. First, I’d like to introduce Mr. Xuan Zi, representing Xuanling Villa, the largest Spirit Stone Villa on the entire Tianxuan Continent, with its own Spirit Stone Manors in every major state across the continent. I’m sure everyone is familiar with them. Let’s give a warm round of applause to welcome the representative of Xuanling Villa stationed in Tianyuan City, Senior Xuan Zi!”

As everyone took their seats, Lei Bikuan spoke once again.

As he concluded his speech, a slightly plump, rosy-faced middle-aged man stood up.

He was none other than Xuan Zi mentioned by Lei Bikuan!

He walked to the edge of the platform, gave a cupped fist salute to the crowd below, and said with a smile, "City Lord, you've got it wrong. It's not that you were fortunate to invite me; rather, I'm lucky to participate in this grand event. On behalf of Xuanling Villa, I wish this tournament great success! May all participants achieve great results and see their strength soar! Lastly, a reminder to everyone to frequent our Xuanling Villa for transactions, either withdrawing or depositing Spirit Stones as needed!"

Wow!

Xuan Zi's words instantly drew hearty laughter from the crowd. The first part of his speech was trivial, but the last sentence was the key point.

Nonetheless, Xuanling Villa's ability to stand tall on the entire Tianxuan Continent for so many years without falling is a testament to its formidable strength; otherwise, they would not dare to establish a villa for the storage and withdrawal of Spirit Stones.

Xuan Zi's statement invisibly bridged the gap with those present, making them feel that Xuanling Villa was indeed impressive, with very personable service. Some, realizing the inconvenience of carrying large amounts of Spirit Stones, thought of depositing them in Daoxuanling Manor.

Xuanling Villa has virtually blossomed all over the continent, with branches in every state, and you can withdraw your stored Spirit Stones from any branch of Xuanling Villa throughout the continent with a Spirit Ticket issued by them, making it extremely convenient.

After introducing Xuan Zi, Lei Bikuan proceeded to introduce the identities and backgrounds of several other representatives.

Among them was a familiar face to Ye Fan, Miss Yaling, who was in charge of the local auction house of Treasure Pavilion.

Huh?

Ye Fan did not expect Yaling to be among the invited representatives and was somewhat surprised. However, upon contemplation, it made sense. Treasure Pavilion, like Xuanling Villa, is a major power spread across the entire Tianxuan Continent. Even the Holy Lands and Di Clans would show them some respect.

The status of someone in charge of such a vast power in the Tianyuan City branch could be considered even higher and more aloof than City Lord Lei Bikuan.

After all, City Lord Lei Bikuan is merely a strong figure of the Jueluo Country in the Southern Domain of the Tianxuan Continent, incomparable to a power like Treasure Pavilion that is spread across the entire continent.

“Next, let’s give a warm round of applause to welcome the provider of the mysterious prize for this competition, the representative of Jueluo Country, Senior Zuo Fengshan!”

Having introduced everyone on the platform, Lei Bikuan now presented the final major character, the representative from Jueluo Country, Zuo Fengshan.

Through Lei Bikuan’s introduction, Ye Fan learned that Zuo Fengshan, besides being a representative of Jueluo Country, was also a prominent figure throughout the Southern Domain of the Tianxuan Continent, known by all. His cultivation was profound and mystical.

His participation in this Tianyuan City Genius Tournament could be seen as a generous gesture towards Lei Bikuan; otherwise, Lei Bikuan alone could not invite him.

Zuo Fengshan appeared about forty years old, yet Ye Fan knew this was definitely not his true age, as Zuo Fengshan had already made a great name for himself in the Southern Domain of the Tianxuan Continent forty years ago, even some major forces would hesitate to provoke him.

For such an eminent figure, the crowd naturally gave ample respect, with applause reverberating endlessly. Zuo Fengshan frequently waved his hand in acknowledgment, gradually bringing the applause to a calm.

After the applause completely subsided, Lei Bikuan proceeded to explain some rules and important notes regarding the competition.

The first point was obviously that friendship comes first, competition second, prohibiting any deadly acts during the matches, as each participant is raised with full dedication by their clan or sect, and losing any one of them would be a significant pain for the respective clan or sect.

Secondly, Lei Bikuan would serve as the judge for this Genius Tournament, stepping in to rescue participants timely during matches to prevent accidental deaths, which could affect subsequent matches.

Moreover, after intervening, he had the authority to declare the match results. If a participant had objections, they could opt for a deathmatch.

If a participant filed a life-and-death certificate before the match to conduct a deathmatch, he would not intervene unless one participant voluntarily surrendered or died, upon which the match would end.

This method of competition is a culmination of numerous competitions, deemed very reasonable, with elders from various major sects or families well aware of these rules; hence, there were no objections.

New participants unfamiliar with these norms gradually learned through Lei Bikuan's introduction.

If there were any unclear points, elders from their respective sects would help clarify, so quickly all participants grasped the competition rules.

Lei Bikuan, being a strong figure in the Divine Power Realm, ensures absolute fairness and justice in the competition as a judge, as he belongs to Jueluo Country, without bias or unfair judgments.

Swish!

Upon concluding the explanations of rules and notes, Lei Bikuan flew directly from the platform onto the ancient arena.

At this moment, mysterious array patterns on the ancient arena had been fully activated to prevent accidental injuries to ordinary spectators below during the matches.

The first match was for the Heaven Group. Chu Hong gracefully ascended the ancient arena, his gaze like a hawk directed at someone in the waiting area, that person's heart was startled, reaching the arena with trepidation.

This participant was a genius from a small sect, with strength reaching the late-stage True Yuan Realm, just a half-step away from advancing to the Peak of True Yuan Realm, his prowess not to be underestimated.

But he also knew that he was absolutely no match for Chu Hong!

Because, geniuses are also divided into different levels, and compared to Chu Hong, Chu Hong is a first-rate genius, while he can only be considered fifth or sixth-rate. The difference in strength between the two is immense.

Although he knew he was not an opponent, since they were in the same group, he had to face it head-on!

Because this tournament not only relates to his personal achievement but also the honor of his sect.

For the honor of the sect, he must muster his spirit, even if defeated, to showcase the spirit of his sect on the arena.

"Both sides, state your names and prepare for the match."

Lei Bikuan slowly rose into the air, watching the two of them, and said in a deep voice.

“Chu Family, Chu Hong!”

Chu Hong’s self-introduction was very simple. In fact, he didn’t need to introduce himself at all. Among the competitors, almost no one didn’t know him, known as the top genius of Tianyuan State, with immeasurable strength.

“Xuan Feng Sect, He Liang!”

The last disciple to step on stage took a deep breath, suppressed his fear of Chu Hong, gradually calmed down, and reported the name of his sect and his own name.

“Both sides ready, let the match begin!”

Lei Bikuan saw most clearly from the air. Seeing He Liang from Xuan Feng Sect in this state already knew things were bad. This He Liang was inherently weaker than Chu Hong, and now his spirit had also been stolen, so he’s surely bound to lose. It was just a matter of how long he could hold out.

Thinking of this, Lei Bikuan got ready to assist, under any circumstance, he must not let He Liang be killed by Chu Hong right on his entrance, or else it would cast a psychological shadow on the subsequent participants.

“Brother Chu, please go easy on me!”

He Liang was also very tactful, knowing he couldn't be Chu Hong's opponent, so first, he put in a precaution, in case Chu Hong attacked him with overwhelming force right from the start.

Chu Hong coldly said, “A match is a match, I will not hold back, you'd better fend for yourself!”

Seeing Chu Hong so arrogant, He Liang too steeled his resolve, threw away his fear of Chu Hong, and coldly said, “If that's the case, please show me your skill, Brother Chu!”

“Good!”

Chu Hong didn't hold back at all; in his view, this round-robin was a complete waste of his time, and if he could defeat someone with one move, he certainly wouldn't use a second one.

Whoosh!

The moment he spoke, he arrived. He Liang only felt a blur before his eyes, and then Chu Hong's fist was already before him.

“Danger!”

He Liang was in utter terror, never expecting Chu Hong to be this fast, and attacking suddenly, without giving him a moment to prepare.

Originally, he thought, with such fame, Chu Hong would definitely not attack him first, and would surely wait for him to strike before retaliating. That would be the demeanor befitting an extraordinary genius. Unexpectedly, Chu Hong didn't even give a hint, attacking directly.

Bam!

He Liang was instantly punched into the air by Chu Hong, his body trembled violently, his inner energy and blood surged, and even a trace of blood appeared at the corner of his mouth.

At the same time, Lei Bikuan had already intervened, dissolving most of Chu Hong's fist force.

Despite this, He Liang still got injured. If it weren't for Lei Bikuan's constant vigilance and timely action, he would've undoubtedly died.

"Defeated the opponent in one move, Chu Hong is too strong!"

"Not defeat, but lethal strike—without City Lord Lei's timely intervention, He Liang would've definitely died!"

All at once, discussions erupted, participants and spectators alike exclaimed at Chu Hong's might.

"Round-robin group match, first round, Chu Hong wins, accumulating three points! He Liang is defeated, zero points!"

Lei Bikuan announced the match results and sighed secretly, as Chu Hong was too arrogant.

"In the future, there's no need for this kind of riffraff to compete against me, it's a waste of time!"

As if to confirm Lei Bikuan's suspicions, Chu Hong glanced at He Liang lying on the ground and said coldly.

Chapter 1189: Each Shines in Their Own Way

Chu Hong took the lead in the fight, almost killing his opponent in one move, not showing any mercy, and left behind arrogant remarks.

This made Chu Hong appear extremely arrogant in the eyes of everyone, with a sense of looking down on heroes from all over the world, disregarding anyone.

However, this did not reduce the enthusiasm of the audience in the slightest; the stronger the contestants performed, the more they were cheered for—only powerful contestants can make the subsequent matches more exciting.

Worshiping strong people is a traditional part of this world, and although Chu Hong was a bit arrogant, he demonstrated with his strength that he has every reason to be.

Arrogance based on strength isn't arrogance; it's confidence.

After the match, Chu Hong slowly walked down from the ancient arena. At the moment of stepping down, he intentionally or unintentionally glanced at Ye Fan in the contestants' area, his eyes filled with intense hostility and disdain.

"Did you see that? When Chu Hong stepped down, it looked like he glanced at Ye Fan, the new top core disciple of the Xuanwu Sect, as if provoking him!"

"What do you mean 'as if'? It clearly was! Haven't you heard? Ye Fan crippled Chu Hong's cousin, the Chu Family's second genius, Chu Feng. The hatred between them is deep and irreconcilable, so provoking is normal."

"It seems that the previous rumors are true, that the Chu Family's genius intends to kill Ye Fan in the competition to avenge his cousin!"

"That's right, judging from Chu Hong's performance this time, it seems he's already the presumed champion of this competition!"

"Unless Ye Fan doesn't advance to the top eight in the group stage, they will inevitably face off. It looks like Ye Fan is in trouble!"

“Indeed, the realm disparity is too great. That Ye Fan is only at the Mid True Essence Realm, while Chu Hong is already halfway into the Holy Embryo Realm. There’s no suspense in their battle.”

While people were discussing, Ye Fan remained very calm. Even when Chu Hong looked his way, he completely ignored it, staying quietly and patiently for his own match.

“Earth Character Group, the first pair of contestants take the stage!”

After a struggle for survival, Lei Bikuan finally dragged He Liang back from the Ghost Sect, but He Liang couldn’t participate in the competition for the time being.

This indirectly proved how ruthless Chu Hong’s previous strike was!

After the first group match ended, Lei Bikuan immediately announced the start of the second group match.

With his voice, the seed contestant of the Earth Character Group, Luo Xiaolin, stepped out from the contestants’ area and onto the ancient arena, waiting for his opponent to come on stage.

Like He Liang, Luo Xiaolin’s opponent was also hesitant to step on stage—He Liang’s fate had already scared him. If Lei Bikuan hadn’t rescued He Liang in time, He Liang would have been a cold corpse by now.

He seemed to see his own fate.

But as it was about the sect's honor, he couldn't afford not to brace himself and step up, forcing down the fear in his heart to climb onto the ancient arena.

"Both parties state your names, and prepare for the match."

Lei Bikuan got serious; Chu Hong's fierce attack made him realize the strength of these seed contestants, so he couldn't be careless, or there could be fatal accidents directly under his nose.

"Tianyuan Sect, Luo Xiaolin!"

Luo Xiaolin's voice was cold, like ice that couldn't melt for millennia, showing no emotion, looking at his opponent as if he were a lifeless stone; such a gaze was nerve-wracking.

"Cai Family, Cai Wen Yuan!"

Luo Xiaolin's opponent was a genius from an unknown little clan, appearing a bit flustered under Luo Xiaolin's icy gaze but still loud in announcing his family and name.

"Both parties ready, start the match!"

Lei Bikuan didn't fly too high this time, just above the two contestants; with the ancient arena's mysterious array patterns protecting it, he wasn't afraid of the contestants' attacks hitting the innocent audience below.

What he needed to do now was to intervene timely and make accurate judgments when one party used assassination moves.

"Don't say I didn't give you a chance, you strike first!"

Luo Xiaolin was very confident, coldly telling Cai Wen Yuan after Lei Bikuan announced the start of the match.

"Alright, I hope Brother Luo goes easy on me!"

Cai Wen Yuan knew that no matter what, he wouldn't be a match for Luo Xiaolin, but even if defeated, he wanted to lose like a man.

"Slash!"

Cai Wen Yuan shouted loudly, slashing his palm towards Luo Xiaolin, True Yuan coursing within, his palm like a heavenly blade striking downwards.

“Tricks!”

Luo Xiaolin smiled faintly, his right hand waved, True Yuan shot out, transforming into a Gray Dragon, clasping Cai Wen Yuan’s wrist, locking his pulse point, then brutally ramming into Cai Wen Yuan with his shoulder.

“Stop!”

Lei Bikuan’s expression changed slightly, Cai Wen Yuan was caught by his pulse, which meant his entire cultivation was locked, unable to exert any, only passively withstanding blows.

Under these circumstances, Cai Wen Yuan had almost no chance of survival, forcing Lei Bikuan to terminate the match.

The difference in strength was too great!

Upon hearing Lei Bikuan’s stop, Luo Xiaolin didn’t halt; he just withdrew most of his strength, ramming Cai Wen Yuan with his shoulder, sending him flying, his chest bone fractured, the chest caved in.

Puff!

Cai Wen Yuan spit out a mouthful of blood, his chest felt like it had been struck by lightning. If Luo Xiaolin hadn't held back most of his power at the last moment, Cai Wen Yuan would have died for sure.

Lei Bikuan was rather speechless. These seed candidates were simply too strong. Unless they were pitted against each other, otherwise their opponents were doomed to lose, with no other possibility.

Upon landing, Lei Bikuan stuffed a healing Holy Pill into Cai Wen Yuan's mouth and asked the elder of the Cai family to take him away.

"Luo Xiaolin from Tianyuan Sect wins this round, earning three points, while Cai Wen Yuan is defeated with zero points!" The outcome was clear to everyone, but Lei Bikuan still announced the results.

With the results announced, Luo Xiaolin did not leave the stage immediately but turned to the Chu family's top genius, Chu Hong, and said, "Chu Hong, that scum named Ye from the Xuanwu Sect insulted my master. I must be the one to kill him. Don't fight me for this!"

"We'll see who faces him first. If you encounter him first and kill him, I have no objections. But if I meet him first, I won't leave you the chance to kill him!" Chu Hong replied coldly.

"Uh..."

Hearing the exchange between Luo Xiaolin and Chu Hong, everyone was left speechless. It seemed that, in their eyes, Ye Fan was already a dead man; the only question was whose hands he would die by.

Faced with all this, Ye Fan merely frowned slightly before returning to normal.

“Damned bastards, what do they take Ye Zi for? Kill him as they please?”

Jin Zhanfei stood up for Ye Fan in protest. He was straightforward and said whatever came to mind, not caring at all.

Swoosh!

Since the waiting area was close together, with only a few people from each force present, and the Chu family and Xuanwu Sect were quite distant, every word Jin Zhanfei said was clearly heard by them, making them glare angrily at this side.

“Eat and drink as you please but don’t speak recklessly, or watch out during the competition!”

A direct lineage member of the Chu family happened to be in the same group as Jin Zhanfei. Since it was a round-robin tournament, they would eventually face each other, so he left a harsh warning.

“You’d better worry about yourself. I won’t hold back either. Don’t end up like that unlucky guy next to you, with your cultivation ruined.”

Jin Zhanfei coldly retorted, taking the chance to insult Chu Feng, who was also sitting in the waiting area, infuriating Chu Feng but leaving him helpless.

After Luo Xiaolin defeated his opponent, the next to appear was the seed candidate of the Xuan Character Group, Qingxuan, and his opponent.

Unfortunately, almost all these seed candidates initially faced opponents who weren't very strong.

This time, Qingxuan's opponent was also a genius from a small sect, with his strength at the late-stage True Yuan Realm, on the verge of breaking through to the peak of the True Essence Realm.

"Both parties, introduce yourselves and prepare for battle!"

Lei Bikuan routinely announced, and after both sides exchanged names, he announced the start of the match, then watched the battle between them from the air.

"Brother Qingxuan, I hope you will be merciful."

Qingxuan's opponent knew that he was no match for Qingxuan. Qingxuan was likely as strong as Chu Hong and Luo Xiaolin, who had previously appeared on stage.

"Sure, please go ahead."

With that, Qingxuan's eyes emitted two streaks of strange light, his gaze became sharp like a blade, and he launched a Divine Soul attack, directly targeting his opponent's soul.

Qingxuan's opponent was instantly overwhelmed with fear. He hadn't expected Qingxuan to speak politely while dealing such a vicious blow. A Divine Soul attack is extremely dangerous; one careless move could result in soul annihilation.

"I resign, please Brother Qingxuan have mercy!"

The Divine Soul attack was intangible and invisible, and from others' perspectives, it seemed like neither side had made a move, yet Qingxuan's opponent suddenly admitted defeat during their exchange of words, causing an uproar among the spectators.

"What happened? Why did the Huayang Sect disciple admit defeat without even trying an exploratory attack?"

"What's going on? Could there be some dirty dealings involved? Has Huayang Sect allied with Qingxuan Sect?"

Some weaker disciples and ordinary spectators couldn't discern the mystery, assuming the two had made a deal beforehand, sparking discontent with the match results.

In their view, since it was a competition, the two sides should at least engage before deciding the winner. Even if it ended in one move like the previous matches, it would be understandable. But now, without a single move exchanged, one party had directly conceded, making them particularly dissatisfied.

However, those strong disciples were puzzled, suspecting Qingxuan had used some form of Divine Soul attack, causing his opponent to panic and concede.

“Being able to make an opponent concede using a Divine Soul attack, the Qingxuan Divine Soul cultivation isn’t weak, not beneath the geniuses of the Chu family and Tianyuan Sect!”

At this moment, Zuo Fengshan suddenly spoke on the platform, revealing the truth of Qingxuan’s victory, causing a wave of astonishment.

Zuo Fengshan also cultivated the Divine Soul, and his Divine Soul attack skills were unmatched in the Southern Domain of the Tianxuan Continent. Since he said this, it must be true—Qingxuan used a Divine Soul attack to force his opponent to concede!

Chapter 1190: Ye Fan Takes the Stage

“I’ve always heard that Qingxuan’s divine soul attack method is what firmly secures his position as the first core disciple of the Qing Xuan Sect. Now it seems the rumors are true.”

“Divine soul attacks are the most mysterious. If one possesses Soul Summoning Grass, it can strengthen the divine soul, making his divine soul attacks all the more terrifying!”

“Even now, being acknowledged by Senior Zuo is something he can be proud of. No wonder he’s one of the favorites to win the championship.”

After hearing Zuo Fengshan's words, the participating disciples and audience finally understood, looking at Qingxuan with awe. Even some loose cultivators who came to watch the match reminded themselves to be cautious of this young man's divine soul attacks in the future.

"Thank you, Brother Qingxuan, for showing mercy. I am very grateful."

Hua Feng expressed his gratitude, knowing well that if Qingxuan hadn't held back, his outcome wouldn't have been any better than the previous two, or perhaps even worse—divine soul injuries are harder to recover from than physical ones.

"No need to be so formal!"

Qingxuan smiled and nodded at Hua Feng, then turned to Senior Zuo Fengshan on the platform and said, "Senior Zuo is the number one in divine soul cultivation in the Southern Domain. To be recognized by you is my honor, and it would be my fortune to receive your guidance in the future!"

It must be said, Qingxuan is indeed smooth in social situations, managing to subtly flatter Senior Zuo and make him feel very pleased.

"Hahaha..."

Zuo Fengshan laughed heartily, saying, "Very well! I promise you, if you can become the champion of this tournament, I will guide you in your divine soul cultivation!"

“Thank you, Senior Zuo. I will do my utmost!”

Qingxuan was secretly excited. Although his divine soul cultivation was decent, it was always self-taught. If he could receive guidance from Zuo Fengshan, it would greatly benefit his divine soul cultivation.

Hearing Zuo Fengshan’s words, everyone couldn’t help but admire Qingxuan’s people skills. In just a few words, he earned the favor of Senior Zuo and a promise of guidance in cultivation.

“Brother Ye, Chu Hong and Luo Xiaolin are determined to clash with you, so be careful!” Qingxuan said to Ye Fan in the Qualifier Zone with a smile while others were secretly admiring him.

“Thanks!”

Ye Fan responded indifferently, without taking Qingxuan’s words to heart.

He knew well that Qingxuan was intentionally trying to sow discord, hoping to see him and Chu Hong, Luo Xiaolin fight to the death, wounding each other.

Even though Ye Fan knew Qingxuan’s intentions, he didn’t expose them; instead, he thanked him.

This scene left everyone puzzled!

Because... everyone knew that Ye Fan and Qingxuan also had conflicts. Qingxuan seemed to be giving a reminder, but in fact, had ill intentions.

Under such circumstances, Ye Fan's composure was indeed surprising!

"Why is he so calm?"

"Could it be that Ye Fan is truly unfathomable?"

Everyone was very curious, secretly looking forward to Ye Fan's appearance in the next match.

"In this match, Qing Xuan Sect, Qingxuan prevails, earning three points, Hua Feng defeated, zero points!"

The City Lord of Tianyuan City, Lei Bikuan, announced the result of the match and then announced the start of the next match.

Next up was the Yellow Group, which Ye Fan belonged to. As a seed contestant, Ye Fan naturally was the first to appear.

Under the expectant gazes of everyone, Ye Fan stood up calmly, cupped his hands toward Elder Shen Ximen and Tong Qianchen, and then proceeded to the Ancient Arena.

“Ye Zi, go for it. I believe you can achieve what others can do.”

Jin Zhanfei believed Ye Fan would, like Qingxuan, Chu Hong, and others, defeat his opponent with a single move, ending the match, and everyone cheered for him.

“Brother Ye, be careful!”

Tong Qianchen stood up and reminded Ye Fan. She knew that being chosen as a genius contest participant meant all these people had their own trump cards, not to be underestimated.

Ye Fan nodded and firmly stepped onto the arena.

Meanwhile, Ye Fan’s opponent also stepped onto the arena from the other side.

“Greetings to Senior Lei!”

Ye Fan slightly saluted Lei Bikuan, then stood calmly to the side, waiting for the match to begin.

This young man is good, quite well-mannered!

Lei Bikuan secretly developed a good impression of Ye Fan. It's rare nowadays to see such polite young people. These geniuses, whether in clans or sects, are often held in high regard and tend to be arrogant and disrespectful.

"State your names and prepare for the match!"

Suppressing his fondness for Ye Fan, Lei Bikuan remembered that a match is a match, without room for sympathy unless one is defeated.

"Xuanwu Sect, Ye Fan!"

Ye Fan followed protocol, stating his sect and name.

"Fengyun Sect, Wang Yuntian."

Ye Fan's opponent spoke. Like Qingxuan's previous opponents, he too was from a small sect.

"Prepare both sides, let the match begin!"

Lei Bikuan slowly rose into the air, shouting to announce the start of the match between the two.

“Brother Ye, I am inexperienced and my skills are lacking, I ask for your mercy!”

Wang Yuntian knew that although Ye Fan’s realm was only at the Mid True Essence Realm, he was still a seed contestant. Having emerged from such fierce competition in the Xuanwu Sect, his strength must be formidable.

“Brother Wang, you are too humble. We are here to learn from each other and to progress together!”

Ye Fan did not show any arrogance or a sense of superiority despite facing a weaker opponent. Instead, he presented himself humbly.

This humble attitude immediately won the unanimous favor of the audience. Being powerful yet not bullying the weak is truly the demeanor of a strong person.

Hmm?

This humility from Ye Fan also surprised his opponent, Wang Yuntian.

Originally, he thought that Ye Fan, as a seed contestant, would be as arrogant and domineering as the previous three, determined to decide the outcome in one move.

“Please guide me, Brother Ye!”

Wang Yuntian said as he took the initiative to strike.

Whoosh!

As he threw a punch, the sound of the wind rose, the intense punch ray tore through the void, striking swiftly towards Ye Fan’s chest, yet intentionally avoiding the vital left chest.

In Ye Fan’s eyes flashed a hint of appreciation. This Wang Yuntian, although not very powerful, had a kind heart, which is rare in the brutal competition of the Cultivation World.

It is precisely because of this that Ye Fan decided to be a good sparring partner for him, allowing him to fully showcase his strength.

From the strength of Wang Yuntian’s attack, Ye Fan instantly judged his real combat power and deliberately suppressed his own strength to be on par with him, throwing a punch to counter.

Boom!

The punch rays of the two collided, the energy wave swept around, yet neither side was harmed.

After the first level, the two swiftly engaged in battle again, with Ye Fan entirely on the defensive, occasionally counterattacking, fighting almost evenly.

“Hah!”

Wang Yuntian grew more and more excited as the fight went on, and his fear of Ye Fan diminished little by little, finally showcasing his peak strength perfectly.

However—

What surprised him was that no matter how fierce his attacks were, Ye Fan could always defend flawlessly. Moreover, as his attack power increased, Ye Fan’s defense also gradually strengthened, always matching him in battle.

“What is going on? How could the first core disciple of the Xuanwu Sect have only this level of strength?”

“Indeed! If that is all his strength, he is not qualified to be an opponent of the Chu family geniuses, or even to be a seed contestant!”

On the arena stage, Ye Fan and Wang Yuntian fought evenly, almost inseparable. However, some of the audience below became dissatisfied and began to discuss.

Most of those discussing were the weaker loose cultivators and participating disciples.

“What on earth is the first core disciple of the Xuanwu Sect doing? Ending the fight with one move is enough; why waste time? This is purely acting as a sparring partner for that Wang Yuntian!”

The powerful contestant participants, however, didn’t think that Ye Fan was weak; they had long seen Ye Fan’s formidable strength. Being on par with Chu Hong, Luo Xiaolin, and Qing Xuan could hardly be someone easy to contend with.

In the audience, besides a few representatives from powerful forces whose eyes gleamed brightly, others were also puzzled, not understanding the situation.

“Instantly judging the opponent’s strength, deliberately suppressing his strength to match the opponent, not only showing mercy to the opponent, allowing the opponent to fully display their strength, but also using the competition to practice, honing combat skills, and gaining combat experience. Xuanwu Sect’s disciple, Ye Fan, is truly outstanding!”

While everyone was baffled, Tianyuan City Lord Lei Bikuan suddenly spoke up, pointing out Ye Fan’s intentions, and praised him profusely.

“So that’s it, no wonder he, as a seed contestant, did not show the strength a seed contestant should have; it turns out he deliberately suppressed his strength!”

“Indeed, this Ye Fan from the Xuanwu Sect has the style of a great person. Although his strength is powerful, he is very humble and without a trace of arrogance, truly a model for the younger generation!”

Lei Bikuan’s words immediately sparked a heated discussion among the audience, and they all praised Ye Fan’s kind-hearted nature.

At this time, on the stage, Wang Yuntian also knew that continuing to fight would not lead to his victory, only consuming Ye Fan’s True Yuan, making his future matches more difficult.

Thinking of this, Wang Yuntian suddenly distanced himself from Ye Fan, then stopped attacking, deeply bowed to Ye Fan, and said, “Thank you, Brother Ye, this fight has taught me a lot. To not delay the following matches, I concede.”

Wang Yuntian’s voluntary concession further validated Lei Bikuan’s judgment, and the other contestants and the crowd below were enlightened and expressed admiration.

On the platform, representatives from various forces also nodded secretly, not only surprised by Ye Fan’s strong power and keen insight but, more importantly, Ye Fan’s control over his strength had reached a perfect level, which was indeed rare.

“Hmph! It’s just for show!”

Chu Hong from the Chu family snorted coldly, not approving of Ye Fan's actions.

Luo Xiaolin from the Tianyuan Sect and Qing Xuan from the Qingxuan Sect, although saying nothing, also showed through their expressions that they did not agree with Ye Fan's approach.

They believed it was completely unnecessary, as many more matches remained, where even a bit of True Yuan saved would hugely impact the final matches. Ye Fan was wasting his True Yuan.

"It seems, we may have underestimated him..."

On the platform, Yaling looked at Ye Fan's proud stance, vaguely feeling uneasy, and quietly frowned.