

Y Master 1441

Chapter 1441: Advancing to the Final Four

In the world of Martial Arts, only speed is invincible.

After Ye Fan successfully broke the move, he chose to win with speed. With just a shoulder strike, he sent Prince Jueluo flying.

This result shocked everyone!

Even some older cultivators frowned slightly.

Ye Fan's speed was too fast, almost breaking the limits of space.

At such extreme speed, Prince Jueluo didn't even have a chance to react.

"Did Prince Jueluo actually lose?!"

"That Ye must have cheated; otherwise, there's no way he could have beaten Prince Jueluo!"

After the shock, the spectators outside the arena began to discuss heatedly. Many couldn't believe that Prince Jueluo would lose to Ye Fan in such a short time.

In their view, Prince Jueluo's attack power was unrivaled in the world. Even at the same realm, Ye Fan would not have been a match!

Yaling raised her eyebrows as well.

Although she thought that Prince Jueluo had almost no chance of winning against Ye Fan in the same realm, she didn't expect Ye Fan to win so easily.

"Everyone, please calm down!"

The deputy dean of the Imperial Academy stood out, pressing his hands down as his steady voice reached everyone's ears, seemingly possessing a special magic that gradually calmed the crowd's excitement.

At this moment, everyone focused their attention on him.

"The match between Prince Jueluo and Ye Fan was fair and just—under the supervision of both Old Monster Lu and myself, there was absolutely no possibility of cheating."

The deputy dean of the Imperial Academy spoke convincingly and rationally, as if to suggest that cheating under their watchful eyes was impossible, not even Ye Fan, a little cultivator, let alone the heroic lords from all quarters.

Upon hearing this, everyone fell silent, especially those from the Jueluo Empire, feeling as if they had swallowed something bitter yet unable to utter a single word.

A sharp glint flashed across Qing Zi's eyes, his killing intent unabated.

Qing Zi had already experienced Ye Fan's speed—back then, Ye Fan had escaped from his hands just by relying on speed!

In his view, although Ye Fan was fast, the competition and outside battles were different—a limited space on the competition field meant that the advantage of speed wouldn't have much impact on the final result!

However, the Ancient Saint and Feng Feiyang, who had already advanced, showed heavy expressions.

To them, if they went all out, they naturally had confidence in defeating Ye Fan, but in a battle of the same realm, they had no assurance at all!

"I lost, I wish you a bright future!"

Prince Jueluo sighed deeply, looking at Ye Fan with bright eyes and a bitter smile.

As a prince, he possessed his own dignity and demeanor.

Since he couldn't defeat Ye Fan in a battle of the same realm, he straightforwardly conceded, accepting the reality of defeat.

"Prince Jueluo was too arrogant; he shouldn't have fought Ye of the same realm!" A young cultivator shook his head and sighed, feeling it was unworthy for Prince Jueluo.

In his opinion, if Prince Jueluo hadn't sealed his own cultivation, Ye Fan wouldn't have been able to injure him at all, let alone win.

"That's right, Prince Jueluo's real strength is definitely above Ye Fan's, but he was too careless!"

This opinion was agreed upon by many, who unanimously believed Prince Jueluo lost because he suppressed his own cultivation; otherwise, Ye Fan would not have had the slightest chance!

"What do you know?"

An old cultivator snorted coldly.

“You, an old master, must understand, so is it true? Does Ye Fan have a chance if Prince Jueluo hadn’t sealed his cultivation?” a young cultivator asked unconvinced.

“A summer insect cannot speak of ice!”

The old cultivator turned his head away, clearly too lazy to talk to him, leaving the young cultivator utterly deflated!

“Old Master, is there more to this matter?” a stable young cultivator respectfully asked the elder.

“You’re a polite child, so I’ll tell you!”

The old cultivator glanced at these people and slowly said, “Prince Jueluo has the ambition to become a Great Emperor, and every Ancient Emperor was undefeated in their era. It’s not just about fighting at the same level—they could slay opponents even across one Xiao realm. If Prince Jueluo wants to walk the Great Emperor’s path, he must battle Ye Fan at the same realm to prove his qualification, unlike some who only bully the weak making themselves strong!”

Saying this, the elder’s sharp gaze swept over the young cultivator who had spoken earlier, shaming him into silence, blushing with embarrassment.

The match concluded, Ye Fan successfully advanced to the top four, while Prince Jueluo was defeated and eliminated.

However, Prince Jueluo's name already appeared in the hands of the deputy deans of the two major academies. A young genius with such a promising future would not be overlooked by these two great institutions!

The Imperial Academy and the Immortal Academy never participated in the conflicts between any Holy Lands and Sects, nor did they concern themselves with the fierce bandits and marauding thieves rampant in the Northern Domain.

Their absolute neutrality earned the respect of all cultivators throughout the Xuan Realm, and even the Demon Clan had a certain reverence for the two academies!

Their immense reputation was not only due to their cultivation of extraordinary talents for the major Saint Heirs and Wu Shang Sect, Di Clans, etc., but more importantly, they played a role in quelling several dark upheavals, making indelible contributions to the Human Race and the stability of this world.

After a short rest, the last match of the eighth to the final four was about to begin, with Qing Zi and the Lingzhuang Saint both ready.

Even before taking the stage, a spark had already ignited between their gazes, promising an exciting dragon-against-tiger match.

Undoubtedly, Qing Zi had a higher chance of winning. After all, he was the only contestant who had broken through to the Divine Power Realm, possessing a certain mysterious divine skill.

Divine skills, generally, are understood to arise from mastering the elemental power of the five basic elements of the universe, thereby wielding the power of the universe beyond one's own capabilities.

Nevertheless, the Lingzhuang Saint was not to be underestimated. Although he hadn't broken through to the Divine Power Realm, he had one foot in and could break through at any moment during battle!

Martial Artist cultivation begins with honing the body, and once in entry, what is needed is the Heaven and Earth Primordial Qi. The denser it is, the faster the cultivation.

Upon reaching the True Essence Realm, the importance of Spirit Stones becomes evident. The Primordial Qi of Heaven and Earth is no longer sufficient to sustain their quick cultivation, making Spirit Stones an irreplaceable necessity to speed up cultivation.

All cultivators know that the quantity of Spirit Stones directly affects one's cultivation speed. With sufficient Spirit Stones, a cultivator can continue to cultivate without worrying about the scarcity of Primordial Qi.

As the distribution center of Spirit Stones, Spirit Manor lacked nothing in terms of Spirit Stones, and naturally, the Lingzhuang Saint was also well-supplied.

In the Cultivation World, Spirit Stones were essentially hard currency. Apart from some priceless Immortal Treasures and secret cultivation techniques, there was nothing that couldn't be bought with Spirit Stones.

Thus, the Lingzhuang Saint had an innate advantage in cultivation over all the other Saint Heirs. No one knew how powerful they were.

After hearing these rumors, Ye Fan couldn't help but sigh. Even though they were both human, the Lingzhuang Saint never worried about Spirit Stones, while he had to constantly fret over the lack of them. This gap was immeasurable.

If Ye Fan had an ample supply of Spirit Stones for cultivation, he felt he could quickly catch up in realm to those so-called Saint Heirs.

In the contest of the same realm, Ye Fan confidently feared no opponent, even if they were an Emperor's disciple or Holy Land Saint Heir!

Chapter 1442: Dark Horse and Championship Favorite

The final match in the quarter-finals, Qing Zi versus Lingzhuang Saint, is about to begin, keenly anticipated by all.

On the arena, Qing Zi, in azure attire, embodying an ethereal aura, was particularly calm, as if victory was within his grasp.

Lingzhuang Saint was equally composed, displaying no hint of emotional fluctuation, seemingly indifferent to the upcoming match.

Their calm demeanor won the admiration of the spectators, even prompting some veteran cultivators to nod in discreet approval.

"State your names, prepare for the match!"

The Vice Dean of the Immortal Academy glanced at both of them, speaking in a deep tone.

“Qing Family, Qing Zi!”

“Spirit Manor, Ling Tianxiang!”

Only at this moment did Ye Fan learn that the Saint from Spirit Manor was named Ling Tianxiang; he hadn’t known his name until now.

After revealing their names, the match officially began. Qing Zi remained stationary, showing no intention to be the first to strike, adopting a sense of superiority.

Whoosh!

Ling Tianxiang remained unfazed, decisively launching a probing attack. A Punch Ray sliced through the air, aiming for Qing Zi.

“Rice grain pearls, do they emit brilliance?”

Qing Zi casually waved his hand, a green light shot out, instantly shattering Ling Tianxiang's Punch Ray and simultaneously pushing towards his chest!

"Hmph!"

Ling Tianxiang coldly snorted, his eyes firing two beams of light that collided with Qing Zi's green light, both beams were obliterated, leaving a pitch-black hole in between.

"You're nothing special!"

With a sneer, Ling Tianxiang transformed his hands into tiger claws, letting out a mighty roar like a tiger descending the mountain. His ten fingers shot out rays of light to envelop Qing Zi's vital points!

Whoosh!

The noise of Finger Beams slicing through the air was sharp and piercing, showcasing formidable power; they seemed capable of shredding even a mountain!

Whoosh!

Qing Zi's expression turned solemn, though he showed no fear. He waved his hand again, forming a massive green palm that slapped towards Ling Tianxiang, akin to a Divine Mountain descending, its sheer presence making it hard to breathe.

“Tiger Breaking the Sky!”

At this moment, a giant white tiger appeared behind Ling Tianxiang, roaring and shredding the green palm into pieces with its claws.

In this brief exchange, both displayed powerful attacks, vastly different from the carefree demeanor during the round-robin. Qing Zi revealed a portion of his capabilities!

Both being Saint Heirs, Qing Zi might have the upper hand due to his higher realm, yet dared not be careless, for Ling Tianxiang was equally formidable.

Within moments, they exchanged dozens of moves, all offensive with no defense, strength versus strength, thrilling the audience.

Stunning rays of light continuously dazzled the spectators’ eyes, thunderous collisions echoing in their ears.

Ye Fan’s eyes radiated Divine Light, intently observing all on the arena, even Prince Jueluo focused on the combatants.

“Qing Zi is truly powerful, worthy of being the top contender for the championship. I am indeed inferior!”

Halfway through, Prince Jueluo sighed softly, his eyes filled with endless melancholy.

Even though he was defeated by Ye Fan, he still harbored great ambitions.

Witnessing Qing Zi and Ling Tianxiang's match, he realized the vast gap between himself and them!

Despite being at the Peak of Holy Embryo Realm, Prince Jueluo felt that even if he unleashed the Emperor's Extreme Sword, his strongest attack, he might not defeat Ling Tianxiang, let alone Qing Zi at the Early-stage Divine Power Realm.

Even if he could defeat Ye Fan, he would undoubtedly lose in the semi-finals, a realization that left Prince Jueluo dejected.

His original intent was to stand out among countless geniuses, to vie for the supreme glory, laying a solid foundation for the path of a Great Emperor!

"So strong!"

At the same time, as Prince Jueluo faced his setbacks, other spectators erupted in shock.

Even some veteran strong people displayed solemn expressions!

They were deeply astounded by the strength of Qing Zi and Ling Tianxiang.

Though one was at the Peak of Holy Embryo Realm and the other at the Early-stage Divine Realm, they felt that even veteran Mid-stage Divine Power Realm cultivators might not win against them.

“Kill!”

Ling Tianxiang shouted, his Holy Power swiftly igniting, Combat Power soaring, and with one punch, the skies changed color, vitality surged like a Barbarian Dragon, Iron Fist cutting through all barriers.

Ling Tianxiang gradually fought with True Fire, realizing that without showcasing his strongest Combat Power, it would be impossible to defeat Qing Zi, thus directly igniting Holy Power.

“Hmph!”

Qing Zi coldly snorted, exhaling a stream of Innate Divine Power Essence, akin to a hanging galaxy, its fearsome Divine Power instantly extinguishing Ling Tianxiang’s Punch Ray.

Next, the Innate Divine Power Essence, carrying supreme might, fiercely crashed towards Ling Tianxiang’s chest.

“From Saint to Deity, display my Divine Skills!”

Ling Tianxiang murmured, his body spinning like a top, effortlessly deflecting Qing Zi’s Innate Divine Power Essence. Though it struck him, it caused no harm.

“This is...”

“Breakthrough during battle?”

“Is he about to break through to the Divine Realm?”

This sight astounded many, for it was clear Ling Tianxiang had long been capable of breaking through to the Divine Realm, but had continually suppressed his realm.

Now, due to the gap between Divine Power and Holy Power, he had no choice but to break through, or face certain defeat!

Bang!

A powerful aura erupted from Ling Tianxiang, and his whole body's Holy Power retracted, then exploded again, transformed into Divine Power.

"Heavenly Blade!"

After successfully breaking through to the Divine Power realm, Ling Tianxiang immediately wielded his Divine Skill. He made a gripping motion with his hands, and a long blade with a cold gleam appeared in his hands, slashing fiercely at Qing Zi!

Woo!

The long blade with a cold gleam shattered the void, broke through the spatial barrier, and appeared above Qing Zi's head in an instant!

"Azure Wood Treasure Seal!"

With a soft shout, an Azure-hued luminous Treasure Seal appeared in Qing Zi's hand and smashed fiercely toward the Heavenly Blade!

Boom!

With a loud crash, the entire arena shook violently, and various patterns on the ground lit up together, as if there was a danger of exploding.

The Azure Wood Seal and the Heavenly Blade slowly disappeared in the air; this strike did not give an advantage to either side.

However, it was very clear that Qing Zi had slightly more proficiency in mastering Divine Skills compared to Ling Tianxiang, and his reaction was a bit faster. He immediately condensed another Treasure Seal.

Swoosh!

The Treasure Seal soared into the sky, emitting a powerful aura, and mysterious patterns flickered below it, transforming into the size of a small mountain, smashing fiercely toward Ling Tianxiang!

“Is this Divine Skills?”

Ye Fan watched the two in the arena, his heart moved, and he vaguely understood some secrets of the Divine Power realm.

“Kid, you can’t possibly not know what Divine Skills are, right?” Bai Yan wolf glanced at Ye Fan.

“Get lost!”

Ye Fan rolled his eyes, feeling a sense of inspiration. Although Qing Zi had already stepped into the Divine Power Realm and possessed Divine Skills, they were somewhat different from the Divine Skills of other cultivators he had encountered before.

However, no matter what type of Divine Skill it was, the essence remained the same. As long as one grasped the essence, using Holy Power to break the Divine Skills was also doable.

A flash of inspiration struck Ye Fan, and he no longer focused all his attention on the match, but instead secretly pondered over the insight he had just gained.

Subsequently, Qing Zi and Ling Tianxiang exhibited their Divine Skills, battling fiercely, drawing rounds of thunderous applause!

Hmm?

Qing Zi was very shocked. Despite using his trump cards frequently, he could not defeat his opponent in a short time; Ling Tianxiang possessed tenacity and his Divine Power was like an endless ocean, never exhausting!

Little did he know, Ling Tianxiang was even more shocked. He had thought that by breaking through to the Divine Power Realm, he could regain any disadvantage, but he was still defending more than attacking. If this continued, it was certain that he would lose.

“Roar...”

After a prolonged unfavorable battle, Ling Tianxiang roared and displayed his strongest martial art, the Sky Splitting Technique. He launched a punch, aiming to destroy everything, and the violent energy instantly enveloped the entire arena.

Qing Zi felt a shiver in his heart, knowing that Ling Tianxiang was going all out. If he could withstand this move, Ling Tianxiang would have no choice but to concede defeat.

The Qing Family and Spirit Manor had no animosity, and he couldn't afford to provoke them, so Qing Zi didn't dare to go for the kill. Otherwise, even if he won the match, he might anger the massive force of Spirit Manor.

Swoosh!

At a critical moment, an ancient tree appeared suddenly behind Qing Zi, its species unknown, radiating a shimmering treasure light, casting a misty glow that enveloped Qing Zi.

Boom!

With an explosive sound, the heavens and the earth shook. Even at a considerable distance, many low-strength cultivators were directly knocked unconscious, and ordinary people lay sprawling on the ground as if a natural disaster had struck.

With the light disappearing, Qing Zi's face turned pale, and blood seeping from his seven orifices, looking extremely frightful. The ancient tree behind him also vanished.

But regardless, Qing Zi endured this strike and did not lose, while Ling Tianxiang fainted directly on the ground, his body drained of Divine Power. Though he wouldn't die, he certainly couldn't recover in a short time.

Swoosh!

Seeing this, Qing Zi quickly took out a Jade Bottle and swallowed all its contents. His complexion improved a bit, and he bowed to the two deans and stood aside to wait for the announcement of the match result!

"It's truly fate!"

The two associate deans looked at the fainted Ling Tianxiang, shaking their heads in sigh.

In their eyes, if Ling Tianxiang hadn't encountered Qing Zi, he should have had no problem making it to the semifinals.

"In this match, the heir of the Qing Family from Qing Province, Qing Zi wins!"

The vice dean of the Immortal Academy announced the match result, also stating that the next semifinal would take place three days later, giving all contestants time to recover and prepare.

With his voice, the quarterfinals concluded, but the ripple effects were far from over.

During the next three days, people talked almost endlessly about the various situations that occurred in these four matches.

Ye Fan and Qing Zi were the most discussed individuals.

Ye Fan was deemed the biggest dark horse of the competition!

While Qing Zi was considered the strongest contender for the championship!

“If Ye Fan were to face Qing Zi, he would surely be defeated!”

“Defeat is certain, and if that Ye Fan dares to fight to the death with Qing Zi, he will undoubtedly perish!”

For three days, such rhetoric filled all of Fire Spirit City!

Chapter 1443: Semifinal Division

Ye Fan was hailed as the biggest black horse in the Southern Domain genius competition, becoming the subject of much discussion along with Qing Zi, once again pushed into the spotlight.

Ye Fan didn't care at all about any of these.

In the past three days, Ye Fan hadn't taken a single step out of Bao Shi Pavilion, quietly in seclusion, finding Martial Enlightenment, seeking Inspiration, contemplating the method to breakthrough Divine Skills with Holy Power.

Not only him, during these three days, not a single person from the Xuanwu Sect left the palace, this competition gave them substantial inspiration, Zhang Taiyi, Shen Tu, and others all had considerable gains, remaining in seclusion, digesting some inspiration from the competition.

It could be said that for them, this was a qualitative rebirth, being able to compete and exchange experiences with geniuses from various domains was a gain in itself.

Three days passed in the blink of an eye, on the fourth day in the morning, Ye Fan walked out of his room, his spirit restrained, seemingly like an ordinary person, which made Shen Ximen and Wang Qingshan's eyes flash with brilliance.

They were both surprised by Ye Fan's transformation, although there wasn't any obvious breakthrough, it gave them a different feeling, seemingly as though Ye Fan had already undergone a rebirth-like transformation.

"Elder Wang, Elder Shen."

Ye Fan smiled as he greeted the two, his expression relaxed and composed, as if he didn't care about the impending brutal competition at all.

"Let's go!"

Wang Qingshan and Shen Ximen said nothing, directly leading Ye Fan and others towards the stadium.

Even though only Ye Fan was competing, members from Xuanwu Sect and Treasure Pavilion all went along, to witness this important match, while cheering for Ye Fan.

Early in the morning, the entire square was already packed with a sea of people, cultivators from various domains arriving, including some ordinary small vendors.

At a glance, the entire square was filled with a dense crowd.

Today was the semi-finals, although there were only two matches, they were definitely more exciting than any previous ones, people were eager to see who would ultimately make it to the finals.

Qing Zi had the highest support!

In the previous match, Lingzhuang Saint made a last-minute breakthrough, yet ultimately lost to Qing Zi.

Qing Zi demonstrated the elegance to suppress cultivators of the same realm.

The one least favored, naturally, was Ye Fan, his realm was simply too low.

In many people's eyes, in the quarter-finals, if it weren't for Prince Jueluo insisting on a match with Ye Fan in the same realm, he would have already won, making it impossible for Ye Fan to luckily make it into the top four!

Outside the crowd, Qing Zi was surrounded like a star by members of Qing Family as they arrived at the waiting area, everyone automatically made way for him.

Despite Qing Zi's youth, he already exhibited the demeanor of a king, many felt an intangible pressure when he passed by!

The emergence of such a genius in the Southern Domain made geniuses from other domains who came to watch the competition vaguely anxious, undoubtedly, in the near future, they would definitely clash, and such formidable opponents were ones everyone wished to avoid.

At this moment, Ye Fan also arrived, even from afar, his gaze locked onto Qing Zi, bursting forth with intense killing intent, making those around feel the temperature drop suddenly.

Instinctively, people made way for Ye Fan, allowing him to enter the waiting area to await the competition.

Everyone anticipated whether Ye Fan would face Qing Zi in this match.

Once they faced off, it would be a fierce battle, Qing Zi would certainly use the most ruthless methods to kill Ye Fan.

“Heh!”

Qing Zi sneered coldly, full of killing intent, then stopped looking at Ye Fan, as if Ye Fan was already meat on the chopping block, ready for slaughter.

He focused his attention on Ancient Saint and Feng Feiyang.

The four kings and one sovereign, although just a title, it was the highest honor for any young genius, showcasing one’s strength and status among the young generation in the Southern Domain.

Qing Zi’s ambition was very heavy, even though Ye Fan and he had a vendetta for killing his father and wife, he didn’t want to lose the chance to stabilize his position as a sovereign because of killing Ye Fan.

Even though Qing Zi ignored Ye Fan, other Qing Family members were each furious, their eyes virtually spewing fire.

Soon, the Xuanzhou Feng Family also crowded around Feng Feiyang, who wore Cold Iron Battle Armor and a ghostly mask, as they arrived in the waiting area.

After three days of recuperation, Feng Feiyang had fully recovered, showing no signs of past severe injuries, appearing exceptionally mysterious.

Feng Family's Saint Master accompanied, many strong people from Feng Family also came, closely following the match, although being among the four kings was a certainty, they still wanted to strive and see how far Feng Feiyang could go!

Following Feng Feiyang's arrival, members from Ancient Sacred Land also entered the waiting area along with Ancient Saint Gu Hao!

"Who do you think that Ye-guy will face this time?" In a loud voice, a cultivator near Ye Fan asked everyone.

"Well, who knows? It's all randomly drawn, until the final announcement, no one can say for sure!"

"Exactly, asking like that, no one can answer you!"

The cultivator was left deflated, awkwardly shutting his mouth, originally intending to spark a topic for everyone to discuss, only to end up embarrassed.

Ye Fan chuckled, everywhere there are always nosy individuals like this, obviously unrelated to themselves, yet they show such enthusiasm.

These people, to put it nicely, are warm-hearted, to put it bluntly, they're just looking for trouble.

Clang!

With the resounding toll of a bell, the two vice deans strutted onto the tournament field, brimming with energy as they observed the vast crowd filling the square. They nodded in satisfaction at the grand spectacle.

After all, a competition needs onlookers to be lively; the more spectators, the more meaningful the contest, otherwise what's the point of competing with no one to watch?

After saying a few words, the two vice deans promptly began the group division. With only two matches in the semifinals, the opportunities were equal, determined by drawing lots to see who would compete against whom.

Soon, the groupings were announced, Feng Feiyang, the strongest heir of the Feng Family, would face Qing Zi; Ancient Saint Gu Hao would face Ye Fan!

The first match was between Ancient Saint Gu Hao and Ye Fan, immediately igniting the crowd's emotions, with everyone speculating on how long Ye Fan could withstand the Ancient Saint.

“Place your bets from one move to thirty minutes, you can wager on anything! Come test your predictions!”

Even before the matches began, someone started organizing bets, clearly intending to challenge the Treasure Pavilion.

Just three days prior, after the final eight to four matches concluded, Yaling had adjusted Ye Fan’s odds to be second only to Qing Zi, even lower than Ancient Saint Gu Hao, leaving everyone astonished.

The bookmaker was a shrewd-looking middle-aged cultivator, sharp-faced, fervently shouting his rules.

Judging by the odds, he wasn’t optimistic about Ye Fan either, thinking Ye Fan couldn’t last more than thirty minutes.

“Heh, this old fellow is asking for trouble!”

Bai Yan wolf’s eyes flickered, quietly approaching Tong Qianchen and Shen Tu, whispering, “You two should bet, just bet on Ye winning, I guarantee you’ll make a fortune, dare to try?”

Shen Tu glanced at Bai Yan wolf with suspicion, feeling tempted but hesitant since the suggestion came from Bai Yan wolf, unsure whether to trust him or not.

He was very familiar with how unreliable Bai Yan wolf could be, realizing that if deceived, he wouldn't find any consolation.

"I'll do it!"

While Shen Tu hesitated, Tong Qianchen stood up decisively, heading straight for the sharp-faced middle-aged man.

"Kid, you really have no spine. I intended to help you out, but that little girl beat you to it. But you can still make it, hurry and place your bet!" Bai Yan wolf exclaimed in surprise at Tong Qianchen, urging Shen Tu to bet quickly.

"Alright, I'll trust you this time, but if you trick me, we're not done!" Shen Tu said as he chased after Tong Qianchen.

"Ha, not done with me? You better beat me first before saying that!"

Bai Yan wolf smirked; wasn't it always him who bit Shen Tu to the brink, requiring a treasure to smooth things over?

Soon, Tong Qianchen reached the middle-aged cultivator, asking, "What are the odds if I bet on Ye Fan winning?"

“What? Someone’s betting on him to win?”

“Are they just throwing away spirit stones?”

“Young lady, don’t act rashly, if you throw the spirit stones into the water, you’ll at least hear a splash, betting on Ye to win won’t even yield that.”

Upon hearing someone intended to bet on Ye Fan winning, bystanders were dumbfounded and quickly advised Tong Qianchen to rethink and not act impulsively.

“Young lady, are you really betting on Ye to win?”

The sharp-faced middle-aged man looked at Tong Qianchen suspiciously to confirm.

“Yes, what’s the odds?” Tong Qianchen said expressionlessly.

“Ten to one!”

The sharp-faced middle-aged man gritted his teeth and reported the odds for Ye Fan winning.

Whoosh!

Tong Qianchen shook her hand, pouring out near a hundred pounds of spirit stones from her space bag, of mixed quality, roughly equivalent to ten pounds of top-grade spirit stones. This was quite a substantial amount.

“These are my stakes. Converted to top-grade spirit stones, it’s about eleven or twelve pounds. I’ll consider it ten pounds; I’m betting it all on Ye Fan’s victory!”

Tong Qianchen said firmly, her tone resolute and unwavering!

Chapter 1444: Victory or Defeat in Five Moves

“Uh...”

Upon hearing Tong Qianchen’s adamant words and seeing the spirit stones she presented, the crowd around her was incredulous.

“I remember now, she’s the daughter of the Sect Leader of the Xuanwu Sect!”

After the initial surprise, someone quickly recognized Tong Qianchen’s identity.

“Could it be that the one named Ye has some sort of trump card?”

With the exposure of Tong Qianchen's identity, many began to wonder this in their hearts.

Ye Fan and the Ancient Saint Gu Hao's previous match, everyone saw it, judging from the strength shown by both sides, Ye Fan stood nearly no chance.

Even in such circumstances, Tong Qianchen still wagered everything she had on Ye Fan, which left them bewildered after the initial shock.

"Even if Ye Fan has a trump card, he definitely is no match for the Ancient Saint!"

After the doubts passed, everyone made this judgment.

They believed even the Saint of Treasure Pavilion was ultimately outmatched by the Ancient Saint — Ye Fan couldn't possibly be stronger than Jin Changgeng!

After all, Xuanwu Sect is an auxiliary force to Treasure Pavilion, and Jin Changgeng is the Saint of Treasure Pavilion!

Regarding the Ancient Saint...

He is the strongest successor from a grand Holy Land, passed down from ancient times, destined to become the leader of that Holy Land; what gives Ye Fan the right to defeat him?

“I’ll bet on Ye Fan to win as well!”

Just as people around were making judgments, Shen Tu also stepped forward, though he was very cautious, betting only a pound of top-grade spirit stone.

This was his most precious asset; he once had some savings, but they were extorted by the Bai Yan wolf. Up to now, this pound of top-grade spirit stone was carefully saved in secret.

“Crazy, this world is truly mad! How can so many people have spirit stones to waste, knowing they’ll lose yet daring to bet like this!”

The onlooking crowd was in an uproar; Tong Qianchen betting on Ye Fan could be understood, as they’re from the same sect, and perhaps there might be some stories unknown to others, but another person betting on Ye Fan winning seemed quite unbelievable.

“I remember now, he is also from Xuanwu Sect, which explains why he would support Ye Fan!”

Soon enough, Shen Tu’s identity was also recognized, which wasn’t a secret; although Shen Tu wasn’t in the same group as Ye Fan, he was from Xuanwu State as well, naturally attracting attention.

Coming from the same sect, even knowing Ye Fan would surely lose, they would still cheer him on—that's human nature.

The middle-aged cultivator with a sharp chin and monkey-like cheek was so delighted he couldn't close his mouth—he never expected to receive such free spirit stones from these suckers!

"Maybe the one named Ye can really win the match!" a young female cultivator exclaimed upon seeing this.

"Why do you say that?" The middle-aged cultivator with the sharp chin and monkey-like cheeks asked, intrigued.

"Do you remember during a previous match someone set up a bet pool and ended up losing everything, while the one who won was betting on Ye Fan ultimately emerging victorious!"

Ignoring the sharp chin and monkey-like cheek cultivator, the young female cultivator addressed the crowd.

"Indeed, I remember such an instance."

"That guy turned green with envy; I was right beside him back then!"

"I heard the winner was from Treasure Pavilion, but who knows if that's true."

As this was mentioned, many cultivators suddenly dawned on the realization, engaging in discussions about that unlucky person's "glorious deeds" from before!

But there were skeptics who argued that the previous competition wasn't too difficult, that it was reasonable for Ye Fan to win by chance, but this time facing a Saint-level strong opponent, a genuine Ancient Saint, who had shown remarkable cultivation in prior matches, could Ye Fan still win?

Although the outcome between Ancient Saint and Jin Changgeng was decided in just one move, it was clear both were going all out.

Judging from the strongest strike of Ancient Saint, one can roughly estimate his true strength, definitely ranking among the top Saints.

"Ladies and gentlemen, today we've long-awaited the semi-final match. Well adhering to principles of fairness and transparency, we'll present two extraordinary matches. Without further ado, let's invite the two contestants on stage!"

Vice President Old Monster Lu from the Immortal Academy spoke with a loud voice, suppressing the crowd's noisy discussion, steadily reaching every corner.

Hearing Old Monster Lu's words, the audience immediately quieted down, focusing their attention on the arena.

Ye Fan and the Ancient Saint proceeded onto the stage from left and right, bowing to the two vice presidents, an essential courtesy.

“Both of you are outstanding talents from the Southern Domain. To be honest, I don’t wish to see a winner or loser, but a match is a match; there’s no first in literature, but there’s no second in martial arts, so a result must be determined. Prepare yourselves, announce your names to each other, and be ready for the match!”

Vice President Old Monster Zhou from the Imperial Academy smiled at both, perceiving Ye Fan’s vigorous vitality, akin to a dormant Barbarian Dragon within, once unleashed, it would be terrifying.

Similarly, the Ancient Saint was very powerful, superior to Ye Fan by at least two minor realms; winning for Ye Fan would be very challenging.

“Mr. Gu, I think there’s no need for us to exchange names, right?” Ye Fan stood still, smiling as he addressed the Ancient Saint Gu Hao.

“Naturally, like Old Jin, should we decide the winner in one move, or rely on our abilities to settle the bout?”

Gu Hao laughed heartily, fully aware of Ye Fan’s actions; even though they had been together for only a few days, they were already old friends.

“How about we set the victory within five moves?”

Ye Fan proposed, as deciding in one move was unfair to both, likely missing the chance for advancement due to a poor performance.

Five moves are just right, allowing for a display of true strength, with no regrets while also keeping the camaraderie intact!

“Very much to my liking, just like with Old Jin, regardless of victory or defeat, we’ll have some drinks after this match, don’t you skip it then!” The Ancient Saint is straightforward and carefree, setting the post-match banquet even before the match begins.

“Deal!”

Ye Fan agreed with a smile.

“Hehe...”

The Ancient Saint continued, “Ye Zi, I know your skills, I won’t fight you at an equal realm; that would be self-torture. So the match is settled like this. Moreover, regarding the honor of the sect, I won’t hold back; be careful!”

“Mr. Gu is frank, that’s good. Please, Mr. Gu, enlighten me!” Ye Fan nodded with a smile.

Gu Hao waved his hand grandly, saying, “Ye Zi, that’s not right. After all, my realm is higher; you should make the first move. I absolutely won’t attack first!”

“Since that’s the case, then politeness is unnecessary; Mr. Gu, be vigilant!”

Ye Fan’s expression turned solemn, the smile fading, as his mind moved, a powerful aura erupted.

At this moment, Ye Fan seemed to transform; his black hair fluttered, radiating a faint purple-gold light, exuding a sky-reaching domineering energy, resembling an Asura War God returned from Hell.

Swish!

With a flash of light, the Thunder Emperor Spear appeared in his hand, Ye Fan wielded it single-handedly, pointing it towards the heavens, innate dominance!

“Leveling Sun and Moon!”

Ye Fan shouted loudly, the Thunder Emperor Spear darted like a serpent dragon emerging from the sea, dividing into one true and one false gun light, piercing towards Gu Hao!

“Nice one!”

Gu Hao's eyes shot out two brilliant lights, with a loud shout, he wielded an eight-sided bright silver hammer in his hand, fiercely smashing towards the gun light!

Boom!

With a loud boom, Gu Hao accurately identified the True Destiny Prince among the two gun lights, engaging hard with Ye Fan!

Light burst forth, space annihilated, their Holy Power directly shattered the void, forming a terrifying black hole, absorbing all energy into it without causing any destruction!

The first strike ended in a draw, neither gaining an advantage, leaving the spectators utterly shocked.

Many had believed Ye Fan couldn't withstand even one move against the Ancient Saint; to their surprise, the first collision resulted in a tie, astonishing those who deemed Ye Fan no match.

"This... how is it possible?!"

At this moment, almost everyone felt as if in a dream, some rubbing their eyes forcefully, refusing to believe the result!

Chapter 1445: A Battle with Everything on the Line

Even though for many people, they have a thousand and one reasons to believe that Ye Fan cannot withstand the full force strike of the Ancient Saint Mr. Gu Hao, facts are facts and will not change because of anyone's will.

The first strike, Ye Fan and Gu Hao neither won nor lost!

"It's my turn!"

After one hit, Gu Hao no longer hesitated, with a loud roar, the Holy Embryo emerged; it was a purple Qilin, covered in a layer of purple flame, looking exceptionally majestic.

"Attack!"

Gu Hao shouted loudly, throwing a punch, the blazing punch ray condensed into a Qilin claw, fiercely grabbing towards Ye Fan's chest!

Before it reached him, Ye Fan already knew how terrifying the energy contained in this strike was; once hit, even he couldn't withstand it!

"Dominating Fist!"

At the critical moment, Ye Fan immediately unleashed the most fierce killing move of the Dominating Fist, the blazing punch ray condensed into a fist, smashing forward fiercely.

Until the last moment, Ye Fan didn't want to use Xuandi Fist, because with Qing Lian present, once he used the Xuandi Fist, he would surely be recognized.

The Di Clan, standing at the pinnacle of this world, is unshakable mainly because of the Mystical Techniques passed down by the Great Emperor.

The Xuandi Fist is one of them, it is the unpassed secret skill of the Ling Family, even Qing Lian, the future daughter-in-law of Ling Family, has no qualifications to learn it.

But having no qualification to learn it doesn't mean she wouldn't recognize it; the Xuandi Fist is very well-known in this world, once the Ling Family finds out he knows Xuandi Fist, they will surely come to kill him.

No clan is willing to let its Secret Skills leak, as they are the fundamental strength for the clan to thrive.

Boom!

The two fists collided, yet Ye Fan didn't retreat a single step, as his clothes suddenly burst apart, revealing bronze-colored skin, with Thunder Power like Xiao Long roaming around him.

Gu Hao's tiger eyes widened, feeling an extremely dominating Holy Power surging in, he hastily activated his own Holy Power to resist!

Bang!

The Ancient Saint's face changed, taking a step back to dissolve the piercing Holy Power, and his internal qi and blood roiled for a long time before he managed to suppress it!

"What? The Ancient Saint actually stepped back? Is that Ye really so strong?"

"Incredible, he was able to make the Ancient Saint retreat, is Ye Fan the reincarnation of a Great Emperor?"

"Such immense strength! And he hasn't even shown his Holy Embryo, truly terrifying!"

Witnessing this, the crowd outside burst into uproar, discussing animatedly, shocked by Ye Fan's performance!

After all, the Ancient Saint is the strongest successor of a long-standing grand Holy Land, the future Saint, yet was forced to retreat by Ye Fan, it's simply unbelievable.

What they couldn't accept even more was that Ye Fan was only at the Mid-stage Saint Embryo Realm, not the Peak, and still hadn't revealed his Holy Embryo, how could he have such overwhelming combat power?

Compared to them, Gu Hao was even more shocked. Although he knew Ye Fan had the ability to fight across realms, he didn't expect him to be so strong, even he was difficult to withstand.

"Take my seven hammers, if you can take them all, I will concede defeat!"

Gu Hao's expression was serious, at this moment, he had to admit that Ye Fan indeed had the qualification to contend with him, even though in terms of realm he was two small realms lower, his strength was by no means inferior!

The Sky-shattering Seven Hammers!

This was created by a Quasi-Emperor strongman from the Ancient Sacred Land during Ancient times, with boundless power, second only to the Jing Tian Strike from the Ancient Sacred Land.

Now, Gu Hao was deploying this set of hammer techniques, aiming to determine victory with one hit, firmly believing that Ye Fan couldn't remain unharmed under his Sky-shattering Seven Hammers.

Clang!

Ye Fan's palm flashed with light as the Thunder Emperor Spear reappeared. Since it was to determine the victory in one hit, he dared not be careless, only using the Heaven Slaying Seven Spears in response!

Swoosh!

Silver light flashed, the Eight-sided Bright Silver Hammer appeared in Gu Hao's hand again, with a thought, the Bright Silver Hammer instantly became the size of a house, aiming to smash down upon Ye Fan!

"Flame to the sky!"

Ye Fan shouted loudly, deploying the Heaven Slaying Seven Spears, using seven guns to oppose seven hammers, this was a truly peak showdown!

Clang!

Ye Fan stabbed the Bright Silver Hammer, cleverly deflecting it aside, holding his spear for a counterattack!

Gu Hao, like a Heavenly God, wielded the Bright Silver Hammer harshly towards Ye Fan, the two spiritual artifacts clashing endlessly, exploding with dazzling light and lightning-like sounds.

From the outside, everyone watched intently, even though they couldn't make out what was happening in the arena, it didn't diminish their enthusiasm for watching.

Bam!

Ye Fan was grazed by Bright Silver Hammer, directly knocked flying, spilling a trail of blood, his Treasure Body almost shattered, which showed how strong Gu Hao was.

Simultaneously, Ye Fan's spear swept over Gu Hao's back, sending Gu Hao flying, almost breaking his spine.

"Pff—"

"Roar~!"

Gu Hao spurted a mouthful of blood, followed by his black hair standing upright, bursting out intense light all over, making people squint, his aura soared.

Hmm?

Ye Fan's heart tightened, Gu Hao was about to breakthrough on the spot?

"As expected, the Ancient Saint Gu Hao can breakthrough to Divine Power Realm anytime, he's choosing to breakthrough now!"

“That Ye Fan is simply against the norms, forcing the Ancient Saint Gu Hao to breakthrough on the battlefield!”

“Indeed, but as long as the Ancient Saint breaks through to Divine Power Realm, Ye Fan will surely be defeated!”

As Ye Fan’s mind stirred, many people sensed Gu Hao’s aura continuously rising, and immediately understood, discussing eagerly.

Listening to these discussions, Ye Fan dared not be careless, also sitting cross-legged on the ground, fully activating Mystical Skill, the phantom in the last acupoint instantly solidified.

Boom!

A vast aura surged from Ye Fan’s body, like blood of a dragon shooting straight from the top of his skull to the sky, within him, as if a Barbarian Dragon awoke, its imposing aura slowly gathered, Ye Fan opened his eyes, his pupils emitted two purple electric divine rays!

“That Ye Fan also broke through to the Late-stage Saint Embryo Realm!”

“Oh my god, he just broke through one small realm, how could he cause a Heavenly Tribulation?”

As Ye Fan broke through, exclamations resounded around from the outside again.

Meanwhile, above Fire Spirit City, thunderbolt aura thickened, lightning flickered, emitting terrifying energy fluctuations, forming a Heavenly Tribulation!

Because of cultivating the Thunderclap Treasure Skill, Ye Fan has the possibility of causing a Heavenly Tribulation every time he breaks through!

However, this time, just as the heavenly tribulation was about to strike, it disappeared.

This Fire Spirit Landing Spot seems to have unique Heaven and Earth laws; breaking through here surprisingly does not attract a heavenly tribulation.

Of course, this is what the Bai Yan wolf had confidently told him; otherwise, Ye Fan would never have chosen to break through at this time.

There were too many people in the arena. If a heavenly tribulation were triggered, it would surely cause an unprecedented catastrophe, bringing misfortune not only to the cultivators watching but also to ordinary people.

According to the Bai Yan wolf, this is the place where the Ancient Emperor defeated a Fire Spirit comparable to a Great Emperor, leaving behind the Emperor's aura, preventing the occurrence of a heavenly tribulation. It would only be possible when breaking through to the Venerable Realm to attract one here.

“Roar...”

Just then, the Ancient Saint successfully stepped into the Divine Power Realm, exuding a terrifying aura.

“Blade!”

Gu Hao shouted coldly, and a purple Flame Saber appeared in his hands as he made virtual grasps with both hands, emitting scorching heat that deformed the air.

“Qilin Purple Fire?”

“Flame Saber? He comprehended the elemental divine power of fire in the world?”

“Using the Qilin as a Holy Embryo, he comprehended the elemental divine power of fire; the Ancient Saint is indeed powerful. Is he vying for the Emperor’s position?”

Witnessing this scene, everyone was stunned, almost deliberately ignoring the fact that Ye Fan also broke through to the late-stage Holy Embryo Realm.

Although both made breakthroughs, Ye Fan only broke through a small realm, while the Ancient Saint broke through a Great Realm; the two simply cannot be compared!

“Ye Fan is bound to lose!”

“There’s no suspense facing Divine Power Realm with the Holy Embryo Realm!”

“He’s already defying the heavens to last this long, but it should end here!”

After Gu Hao broke through to the Divine Power Realm, everyone believed that Ye Fan was bound to lose, without any suspense, and the discussions were very loud.

“Damn wolf, you set me up!” Shen Tu said with a sideways glance at the Bai Yan wolf.

By now, he also did not favor Ye Fan’s chances. Before, seeing Ye Fan hold his own against Gu Hao, he was excited, but seeing Gu Hao break through to Divine Power Realm, he felt completely unconfident.

“Kid, have some patience, okay? Winning with your attitude would be a miracle!”

The Bai Yan wolf said calmly, “No matter what, Ye Fan is still your brother; what good is his defeat to you?”

“I dream of him winning the match, but is it possible?”

Shen Tu said irritably, "Not to mention he's sure to lose, unable to defeat the Ancient Saint; even if he miraculously wins, he would still face a freak like Qing Zi; it's better if he loses here!"

"Can't you have a little confidence? Ye Fan isn't as weak as you think. If he dares to lose the match, I, King, will bite him to death!"

The Bai Yan wolf, knowing how deep and robust Ye Fan's cards were, always had confidence in him.

After all, Ye Fan once demonstrated his strongest combat power during his time among the Divine Race, even shocking the Bai Yan wolf!

"Brother Ye, show your strongest strength; otherwise, you won't stand a chance."

Gu Hao held the Flame Saber but did not attack, first reminding Ye Fan.

"Thank you, Mr. Gu, for the reminder, I will." Ye Fan took a deep breath, knowing the critical moment had arrived, and he must go all out.

A thought flashed in his mind, recalling the method to use Holy Power to break through divine powers.

Bang!

Ye Fan decisively ignited his Holy Power, as if enveloped in a layer of purple fire, instantly recovering from injuries.

Then, Ye Fan burned his Divine Soul Power. The combination of two distinctly different powers, along with the Thunder Power, exploded with mighty force under the mediation of Pure Yang Qi.

“Roar...”

Behind Ye Fan appeared a self with a purple-gold body, descending like the Nine Heavens Immortal King into the mortal world.

At this moment in battle, Ye Fan’s human-shaped Holy Embryo was exposed to everyone.

Woo woo woo! Woo woo woo!

At the same time, two opposing auras erupted from Ye Fan’s body, one bright and holy like a divine being, the other brimming with demonic violence, filled with a savage killing aura.

Bang!

Following this, around Ye Fan appeared phantoms, incomplete human-shaped creatures stood in ranks like soldiers on his left.

On Ye Fan's right was an ancient god with its heart pierced, its head half missing, both holy and demonic auras surging.

"This..."

This scene shocked everyone, including the two vice-deans and those supreme strongmen!

As the vice-deans of the two great academies and helmsmen of various powers, they had seen many genius demons, but never such a scene.

The current young cultivators could no longer recognize those demonic human-shaped creatures, but they both knew.

Seeing the phantoms of human-shaped creatures appearing beside Ye Fan nearly made the two exclaim in shock; the scene was too astonishing!

"What kind of secret is hidden in this young boy's body, causing such phantoms to appear?"

At this moment, the two vice-deans and those supreme strongmen were filled with doubt.

“Sword Shattering Void!”

Gu Hao was also stunned, taking a while to react, and slashed at Ye Fan with his saber, convinced that all phantoms are useless under a single full-strength blow of his own.

Boom!!

Ye Fan exhaled a mighty breath, greeted him with a punch, the purple Punch Ray forming a mountain-like giant fist, cutting through the air, smashing the Flame Saber with one strike.

Bang!

The momentum did not decline; the purple fist directly slammed Gu Hao into the ground, shattering quite a bit of the defensive array patterns!

The purple fist disappeared, leaving a gigantic deep pit on the arena.

Gu Hao was smashed to the bottom of the pit, his entire body cracked, suffering unimaginable severe damage!

Chapter 1446: Advancing to the Finals

Silence!

The scene plunged into a deathly silence!

Everyone was stunned by the sudden turn of events!

No one expected that even after breaking through to the Divine Power Realm, the Ancient Saint would still be defeated by Ye Fan, and so miserably!

In fact, if Gu Hao wasn't lying motionless in the deep pit, some people would have thought they were hallucinating!

Hallucination?

Whoosh!

The vice principal of the Immortal Academy waved his hand, grabbing Gu Hao from a distance to quickly check his injuries. He found that although Gu Hao was severely injured, he was not in mortal danger, just unconscious.

This result caused the two vice principals to suddenly change their gaze towards Ye Fan!

Originally, Ye Fan's ability to defeat Gu Hao was already beyond their expectations, and after checking Gu Hao's injuries, they realized that Ye Fan had controlled his power so precisely in such a dangerous situation, without harming Gu Hao's life.

This degree of control over power is truly astonishing!

For a moment, even the two vice principals, who had seen countless talents, found Ye Fan hard to fathom.

If even they felt this way, what about the others?

"How did he do it??"

At this moment, whether it was the audience outside the ring, the geniuses participating in the competition, or those standing in the air from various factions, all eyes focused on Ye Fan, and they all had the same question in mind.

"Ye Fan, congratulations!"

As if to respond to the crowd, Gu Hao soon woke up. Seeing the huge deep pit behind him, his heart was extremely complicated. There was a bit of disappointment, but more so, he was shocked by the power Ye Fan had unleashed.

He knew very well that Ye Fan had held back!

If Ye Fan had really wanted to kill him, he would have been severely injured if not dead, but now he was not in mortal danger, so he cupped his hands and congratulated Ye Fan!

“Just a fluke, Mr. Gu, you’ve let me win!” Ye Fan smiled slightly, a face full of modesty.

“In this match, Ye Fan wins, Ancient Saint Gu Hao is defeated!”

The vice principal of the Immortal Academy announced the match result loudly.

In fact, there was no need for him to announce it, who won and who lost was obvious at a glance.

Even so, the majority of people still hadn’t recovered from the shock, stunned beyond measure by the visions exhibited around Ye Fan earlier and that earth-shattering strike!

A normal cultivator, burning Holy Power, how could such strange visions appear? Could there be some mystery in the unseen?

“What just happened? Why did phantoms of Ancient Gods and human-shaped creatures appear around Ye Fan?” an old cultivator said excitedly.

In the Cultivation World, living long enough is a kind of capital; this old cultivator didn't know how long he had lived, so he naturally knew some secrets unknown to others.

On this land, there once existed a kind of powerful creature very similar to humans yet absolutely not humans, which almost dominated this world.

However—

With the continuous prosperity and flourishing of the Human Race, especially with the emergence of the Great Emperor, they gradually eliminated these powerful human-shaped creatures.

To this day, there are no such human-shaped creatures on this land, but those who went through the dark era will never forget that during that dark and chaotic era, countless strong people of the Human Race perished, and human-shaped creatures roamed the entire world, almost cutting off the traditions of humanity.

“What just happened? How could there be shadows of Ancient Gods appearing, could it be that Ye Fan is a descendant of Ancient God?”

Some young cultivators didn't recognize human-shaped creatures, but they recognized Ancient Gods. They noticed that the phantoms appearing were incomplete, meaning both were dead.

How could holiness and Demonic Qi coexist in one person's body?

What kind of secrets does he carry?

“This little guy is becoming more and more mysterious. How many more surprises will he give me?”

At that moment, even Yaling was stunned. She thought she understood Ye Fan very well, but she had never seen such sights appear around Ye Fan before.

“Phantoms of Ancient Gods and human-shaped creatures? Could it be...”

Bai Yan wolf’s eyes darted around, muttering, but no one heard clearly what it was saying.

“Good!”

Seeing this scene, Qing Zi only said two words, a fierce gleam flashing in his eyes!

“Brother, do you have confidence?”

Seeing Ye Fan punch Gu Hao into the ground, shattering even the defensive array patterns on the arena, Qing Lian asked her brother.

“Don’t worry, no matter how strong he is, he will eventually die at my hands. I will slowly torment and kill him to avenge our father!” Qing Zi said in a chilling voice, gritting his teeth.

“That’s good, sister can’t make a move; our father’s revenge can only rely on you!”

Qing Lian’s voice was also extremely cold. If she weren’t unable to participate in the competition, she would have wanted to personally step onto the stage, smash Ye Fan into pieces, extract his Life Soul, and eternally suppress him in Purgatory!

“This Ye Fan is too defiant, being able to defeat even a strong figure like the Ancient Saint. It’s simply unbelievable!” a cultivator couldn’t help but say.

“Indeed, he has created a miracle!”

For a while, echoes continued.

Those who previously said it was impossible for Ye Fan to win now felt their faces burning, their faces flushed like red cloth, wishing they could find a crack to crawl into.

The most pitiful was the middle-aged cultivator with a sharp mouth and monkey cheeks!

When Ye Fan punched Gu Hao into the ground, his vision went black, and he almost fainted on the spot.

Puff!

The middle-aged cultivator with a sharp mouth and monkey cheeks spat out a mouthful of old blood. Looking at the eleven jins of top-grade spirit stones he had bet on Ye Fan losing, he now felt like ending it all!

Some were joyous, some were worried. Compared to the middle-aged cultivator with a sharp mouth and monkey cheeks, Shen Tu was all smiles, forming a stark contrast.

After the result was announced, Shen Tu swaggered through the crowd like a rogue, approached the middle-aged cultivator, spread his large hand, and said with a smile, "We won, pay up with the spirit stones?"

"Brother, no, Master, I realize my mistake, here's your principal, please spare me?" The middle-aged cultivator's face was flushed like pig's liver, but he really couldn't afford it!

"What do you mean by this? Accept your loss, since you dared to take our bet, you should have been prepared to pay up, otherwise what right do you have to set up bets? Cut the crap and bring out the spirit stones!"

It was rare for Shen Tu to have such a triumphant moment, he naturally couldn't let it pass.

“And mine too!”

Tong Qianchen was also in high spirits, having bet on Ye Fan’s victory purely out of trust and support for Ye Fan, never expecting him to forcefully defeat the Saint Heir from the Ancient Sacred Land and advance to the finals.

“This...”

The middle-aged cultivator’s face turned green. He had indeed collected a lot of bets from others, but even if he gave it all back now, it wouldn’t be enough!

“I have an idea for you.”

Shen Tu said with a smirk, “You couldn’t have come alone, right? Surely you have friends, borrow some from them, if that doesn’t work, go to the Spirit Manor to borrow, as long as you write an IOU, there are plenty of spirit stones to be had!”

“You...you...you’re ruthless!”

The middle-aged cultivator’s intestines were turning green with regret. If he had known this, he would never have taken their bet. Now, he’s not only broke but also saddled with a mountain of debt!

However, Shen Tu also had a point. The middle-aged cultivator was well-connected and was himself a disciple of the Wu Shang Sect, so he still had some face.

After begging many, he finally scraped together a hundred and ten jins of top-grade spirit stones, paid off the gambling debt, and left in disgrace.

“We really hit it big this time.”

Shen Tu looked at the pile of top-grade spirit stones, almost drooling, he immediately packed them into his space bag, grinning from ear to ear.

“Miss, so many top-grade spirit stones are hard to carry, why not deposit them with us at the Spirit Manor?”

As Tong Qianchen was fretting over the trouble of storing so many spirit stones, a disciple from the Spirit Manor approached her with a suggestion.

“No need to trouble your Spirit Manor, we at the Treasure Pavilion can also store spirit stones.”

Just then, Yaling came over, with a wave of her slender hand, she collected all the spirit stones from the ground.

Strictly speaking, Tong Qianchen was also a person from the Treasure Pavilion, so she certainly wasn't willing to let Tong Qianchen deposit the spirit stones with the Spirit Manor.

"Uh..."

Seeing Yaling personally take action, the disciple from the Spirit Manor opened his mouth but ultimately said nothing more and left dejectedly.

The first match of the semifinals ended with Ye Fan's unexpected victory, but the commotion it caused was far from over. Many cultivators from various domains were discussing it.

Especially after Ye Fan burned his Holy Power, the phenomenon that appeared caught the attention of many older generation cultivators.

Only they knew what the mysterious human-shaped creature around Ye Fan was all about, and they were even more concerned, fearing that such creatures would descend upon the world again.

In this world, there are Forbidden Zones of Life in each of the Five Great Domains. Apart from the Ancient Emperor, no one has ever returned alive from them.

Even the emperors who have been to these forbidden zones remain silent about them, never mentioning a word, adding to the mystery of these zones.

The only non-mysterious forbidden zone is the center of the Xuanshou Mountain Range, which is the Holy Land of the Demon Clan.

All cultivators know this, but only those in excellent relations with the Demon Clan or those extremely powerful have the qualification to enter.

People speculate that during several historical dark turmoils when human-shaped creatures re-emerged, it was likely they came from these forbidden zones.

Ye Fan was also very concerned about this issue. After returning, he discussed it with Elder Xuan. According to Elder Xuan's speculation, after Ye Fan burned his Holy Power and Divine Soul, the phenomenon likely resulted from being contaminated with the demonic aura in the forbidden zone at the Divine Battle Relics.

It was an Ancient Battlefield where too many of the Ancient Divine Race and those demonic human-shaped creatures died, forming a grievance of god demons. After Ye Fan was tainted with this aura, his body carried this demonic aura.

After burning his Holy Power and Divine Soul, this aura was activated and amplified, resulting in the so-called phenomenon!

This was the most reasonable explanation!

Ye Fan also agreed with this explanation, as it was the only way to account for the phenomenon that occurred with him.

“Elder Xuan, what exactly is the so-called dark turmoil?”

After getting the explanation, Ye Fan asked the question that had been on his mind.

“Kid, these secrets are not something you should focus on now. Work hard on your cultivation, and pay attention to them when you become a Venerable or even an Emperor!”

Having lived through the dark turmoil, Elder Xuan said, with a deep note of taboo in his words!

Chapter 1447: Leave the Arena Alive

“Brother Ye, I have arranged a small banquet at Qi Shi Restaurant. We won’t leave until we’re drunk tonight!”

After the match, Sikong Po extended an invitation to Ye Fan.

“Thank you for your kindness, Brother Sikong. I will surely be there!”

Ye Fan agreed with a smile, knowing that Sikong Po must have some purpose in inviting him, but certainly nothing malicious.

“Mr. Gu must come too!” Sikong Po turned to the Ancient Saint and said.

“Of course, if Brother Ye is going, how can I not?”

The Ancient Saint laughed heartily, showing no displeasure at losing the match.

“The Sikong Family of the Eastern Domain is one of the most ancient clans. It’s simply unbelievable that they have any connection with this Ye Fan!”

Some cultivators who hadn’t heard of Ye Fan’s deeds at Qi Shi Restaurant were stunned to see Sikong Po inviting them. It’s known that Sikong Po’s status in the Eastern Domain is in no way inferior to the Ancient Saint’s status in the Southern Domain, making them equals.

In this context, Sikong Po’s initiative to invite Ye Fan filled them with surprise and doubt.

However—

Before they could figure it out, Ye Fan and the others left.

The morning match concluded with Ye Fan’s victory, and the afternoon saw the second semi-final.

The match between Qing Zi, hailed as the Southern Domain's top genius, and Feng Feiyang, the strongest successor of the Feng Clan, promised to be a spectacular showdown that had everyone eagerly anticipating!

The winner would enter the finals to compete with Ye Fan for supremacy!

As the afternoon match began, Qing Zi and Feng Feiyang stepped onto another arena.

After a grueling battle, Qing Zi emerged victorious, albeit at the cost of his injuries, defeating the Feng Clan's Feng Feiyang and advancing successfully.

This battle was exceptionally tough because Feng Feiyang broke through on the spot, comprehending the divine skill of the Gangfeng Blade, which is precisely where Qing Zi was injured.

Feng Feiyang's physique was unique, naturally close to the wind. Upon breaking through, he immediately grasped the Gangfeng Blade, a highly destructive killing move with a large coverage area, catching Qing Zi off guard!

The Divine Power Realm, as the name implies, is a further advancement beyond the Holy Embryo Realm, involving the comprehension of some elemental power of the heavens and earth, wielding the power of heaven and earth, which is terrifying.

Between heaven and earth, there are five primary elements: gold, wood, water, fire, and earth. Additionally, there are some more esoteric elemental powers like wind, thunder, light, and dark, which are very powerful.

Feng Feiyang comprehended the power of the Wind Element, which happened to restrain Qing Zi's Wood Element power, as the saying goes, 'The tree that stands out is blown down by the wind!'

However—

Qing Zi's strength was truly terrifying. Even with his elemental attribute being restrained, he still displayed tremendous combat power, ultimately winning this crucial match.

This match was full of twists and turns. At the beginning, Qing Zi demonstrated overwhelming strength, steadily suppressing Feng Feiyang, but after Feng Feiyang broke through, he immediately launched a frenzied counterattack, catching Qing Zi off guard.

In the end, by burning divine power, Qing Zi forcibly increased his combat power by a tenth, barely managing to defeat Feng Feiyang.

The strength displayed by Feng Feiyang still left everyone deeply impressed.

After all, Qing Zi had already broken through to the Divine Power Realm before the competition, whereas Feng Feiyang broke through on the spot, there was a significant gap between them. Being able to injure Qing Zi was already very remarkable.

Thus, the semi-finals concluded successfully, with Qing Zi and Ye Fan winning and advancing to the finals to compete for the final championship, and the position of the Emperor among the Four Kings and One Supreme.

The two vice deans still allowed them three days to rest and recover, as Qing Zi was injured, and Ye Fan's Holy Power was also heavily depleted. At this moment, they couldn't showcase their true combat power.

"Ye Fan, have you considered withdrawing from the competition?"

Returning to the palace of Bao Shi Pavilion, Wang Qingshan and Shen Ximen came to Ye Fan, advising him to withdraw from the competition because the duel with Qing Zi was too dangerous.

Undoubtedly, Qing Zi would engage in a life-and-death battle with Ye Fan. Once they signed a life-and-death agreement, their fates would be in heaven's hands, and no one was allowed to interfere in the match, not even the two vice deans, who could only watch helplessly.

Ye Fan's potential was limitless, destined to shine brightly in the future. If he were to fall now, it would be a great pity!

"Elders, rest assured, I know what I'm doing and I won't take unnecessary risks. The grievance between Qing Zi and me should be settled!"

Ye Fan stated his intentions, "Besides, I've already reached the finals. If I withdraw now, what will people think of our Sect and Xuanwu State? For the honor of the Sect, for the honor of Xuanwu State, I must fight this battle, and I must win it!"

“Have you really decided?”

Shen Ximen looked at Ye Fan with concern and said, “Indeed, this match concerns your personal honor as well as the honor of the Sect and Xuanwu State. But Qing Zi is too powerful; how confident are you that you can defeat him?”

“I’m not confident, but I have to try. If I choose to escape now, my cultivation might stagnate from here on. It’s a mental barrier, and I must break through it!” Ye Fan admitted frankly that he had no definite assurance of victory against Qing Zi.

“You two old fools, just stop advising already. Ye has been recognized by the Thunder Emperor spirit Spear, the one who inherited the Thunder Supreme’s legacy. Have you ever heard of the Thunder Supreme avoiding battles?” Bai Yan Wolf said from the side.

“This...”

The two of them were stunned!

Bai Yan Wolf was right. The Thunder Supreme had never lost to anyone in his life, never avoided battles, no matter how strong the opponent was. He always faced them confidently and ultimately defeated or killed them, advancing over the corpses of his enemies, just one step away from becoming the Great Emperor!

“Alright, since you insist, we have only one request: leave the arena alive!” Wang Qingshan said solemnly.

“Brother Ye, that’s what I also want to say to you, stay alive!” Tong Qianchen also came over, saying with a complex expression.

“What are you doing? It’s as if Ye is sure to lose!”

Shen Tu, with his arm around Zhang Taiyi’s shoulder, walked over, laughing as he spoke to Ye Fan, “Ye, I believe in you. You can absolutely crush that arrogant Qing Zi with one punch.”

“...”

Ye Fan couldn’t help but laugh.

That night, Ye Fan bathed under the waterfall that cascaded like a ribbon, changed into a new set of clothes, and flew down Bao Shi Pavilion with Shen Tu, Bai Yan Wolf, Zhang Taiyi, and Tong Qianchen, heading towards Qi Shi Restaurant.

Even though Sikong Po hadn’t invited them, he would surely not refuse them, as they came with Ye Fan.

At the entrance of Qi Shi Restaurant, Ye Fan encountered the Ancient Saint Gu Hao, who was accompanied by three others, all of similar age, each exuding a powerful aura, clearly peerless geniuses like the Ancient Saint!

Chapter 1448: All Powerhouses

“Brother Ye, let me introduce you!”

Gu Hao warmly approached and pointed to a young cultivator in rich purple attire beside him, saying, “This is Li Daoyi, the Saint Heir from the Wu Shang Sect of the Central Domain’s Zi Xiao Divine Sect. You two should get acquainted!”

“Brother Ye, I’ve long admired your name!”

Li Daoyi from Zi Xiao Divine Sect smiled kindly and clasped his hands in greeting to Ye Fan.

“You flatter me, Brother Li!”

Ye Fan returned the gesture, and then introduced Shen Tu and others to them.

“This is the grandson of Hu Zongtian, one of the Nine Great Bandits of the Northern Domain. His name is Hu Fei, but you can just call him Bandit!” Gu Hao continued the introductions.

“You rascal, that’s not very fair!”

Hu Fei laughed and gave Gu Hao a pat, then said to Ye Fan, “Brother Ye, we are sort of in the same field. I’ve heard of your great reputation in the Northern Domain, taking over several of the Qing Family’s spirit stone mines—well done!”

“__”

Ye Fan was speechless, simultaneously wanting to visit the Northern Domain.

The Northern Domain is rich in spirit stones, while the Southern Domain only has a few small spirit stone mines and the yield isn’t ideal.

Massive Holy Lands like the Ancient Sacred Land all have their own spirit stone mines in the Northern Domain, or they wouldn’t be able to sustain the consumption within a large sect.

“I’m Shi Ye from the southern part of the Eastern Domain. No need for Gu Hao to introduce me, I’ll do it myself!”

At that moment, a burly man beside Gu Hao, dressed in beast skin, with hair disheveled and muscles bulging like a dragon, spoke in a deep, resonant voice.

“A barbarian is a barbarian, no manners at all!” Gu Hao grumbled in dissatisfaction.

“Dare you say I’m a barbarian again? Believe me, I’ll knock you out with a single strike!” Shi Ye showed no courtesy to Gu Hao, shaking the stone staff in his hand as a threat.

“Afraid of you, you bully. I really don’t know how the Immortal Academy accepted you, haven’t you caused enough trouble there?” Gu Hao retorted.

“I slapped the old guard at the Immortal Academy’s entrance and broke in myself, so what, not convinced?” Shi Ye glared provocatively at Gu Hao, challenging him.

“Is that even possible?”

Ye Fan was astonished. This Shi Ye truly is a barbarian; it seems his physical strength is extremely powerful—anyone guarding the entrance of the two major academies must be top-notch experts, and Shi Ye being able to strike such a person away says a lot.

“Brother Ye, you might not know, the Immortal Academy and the Imperial Academy are different. The Imperial Academy was founded by the Great Emperor, and most of those studying there are from the Di Clan and Saint Heirs from the Holy Lands, while the Immortal Academy selects based on merit, as long as you have the strength, you can be admitted, without concern for social status,” Li Daoyi explained to Ye Fan.

So, that’s how it is!

Ye Fan was enlightened; the Imperial Academy is undoubtedly powerful—the strongest heirs of the Di Clan, none are easy to deal with.

The Saint Heirs of the Holy Lands are also leaders among people, capable of attracting such talents, the Imperial Academy indeed has unique strengths.

But the Immortal Academy is also very formidable; being able to stand on equal footing with the Imperial Academy speaks volumes of the Immortal Academy's excellence, plus the Immortal Academy recruits without bias, as long as you have the strength, you can enter the academy for in-depth study.

Of course, first and foremost you must be young, past thirty years of age and you're prohibited from entering either academy, this is an ironclad rule with no exception for anyone.

The group exchanged pleasantries for a while and collectively headed toward Qi Shi Restaurant, where Sikong Po had already made arrangements, allowing Ye Fan and others to directly choose among the Four Great Scenic Spots, led by young female cultivators.

"This place is much better than my barren homeland in the Northern Domain!" Hu Fei couldn't help but praise as he observed the restaurant resembling an Immortal Realm.

"My home is not worse off, just lacks such pretty girls!" Shi Ye, being straightforward and candid, spoke his mind freely, leaving the young female cultivators leading the way in embarrassment.

"Isn't it delightful to have friends come from afar!"

With a literary expression, Sikong Po welcomed them, and the group exchanged greetings once more.

“Everyone, among the Plum, Orchid, Chrysanthemum, and Bamboo Four Scenic Spots, where would you like to be today? I’ll arrange it,” Sikong Po magnanimously offered for everyone to choose a spot.

“I’ve heard that each of the Four Great Scenic Spots has Brother Ye’s poetry; might we first appreciate it and then decide on the scenic spot?” Li Daoyi suggested with a smile.

“That’s absolutely fine, follow me everyone!” Sikong Po led the way ahead, and the group headed towards the Orchid Scenic Spot together.

Upon arrival, Ye Fan discovered that Sikong Po had arranged an artificial mountain on the previous empty ground, with his poetry engraved upon the mountain, its words elegant and naturally profound.

“Indeed, a fine poem, complementing the orchids in the garden perfectly. Ye Fan’s talent truly impresses me!” Li Daoyi couldn’t help but commend, tapping his hands in praise after reading Ye Fan’s poem.

As a Saint Heir, not only must one have robust strength but also an understanding of Art, Literature, and more is required, and it’s precisely this understanding that allowed Li Daoyi to better grasp the poetic intent.

“Why can’t I see any excellence?”

Hu Fei inspected for a long while but couldn't perceive the poem's subtlety, turning to ask the barbarian Shi Ye, "Old Shi, did you see anything?"

"Isn't that nonsense? If you can't see it, how could I?" Shi Ye rolled his eyes, replying in a deep, resonant voice.

"A bandit, a wild man, it's strange that you can appreciate the subtleties of Brother Ye's poem, you're only fit to listen to some raunchy ditties." Gu Hao mercilessly mocked the two.

"Old Shi, hit him!" Hu Fei rolled his eyes in displeasure, egging on Shi Ye.

"Not hitting, what he said is right, I indeed don't understand, no reason to hit him!" Shi Ye shook his head, not swayed by Hu Fei.

Next, everyone visited the Bamboo Sea Scenic Area and Han Mei District, experiencing the changing of seasons and admiring the two much-praised poems Ye Fan left behind.

Especially the line "Alone, blooming in the cold," made Li Daoyi ponder deeply; every peerless strong person blooms alone in the cold, dominating the world solo.

However—

In Jin Qiu Garden, seeing the famous line “After my bloom, all flowers perish,” everyone was stunned; even Stone Ye, who claimed to be uneducated, understood the poem’s essence and praised it repeatedly.

“Brother Ye, I must admit, regardless of your cultivation, your strength, or the result of the competition three days later, your literary talent, I Hu Fei am convinced. I have never seen such domineering and impressive poem, you’re simply the champion in our field!” Hu Fei marveled again and again.

As the descendants of a fierce bandit, Hu Fei naturally couldn’t compare with the strongest heirs of the Saint Heirs and Di Clan; they didn’t care much about literary talent, that Heavenly Technique Treasure Book had long disappeared, and literary talent seemed useless to them.

But this doesn’t mean they don’t care about talent at all; good literary talent is respected by everyone. In this world, strength rules, cultivators naturally earn everyone’s respect, but there’s another kind of people who are also respected, those are the scholarly old scholars.

These people have little cultivation, but they often say things that even a Saint Lord Level cultivator admires, and some words can even make a saint suddenly enlightened.

So, even in this world where strength is supreme, good literary talent is equally respected.

Of course, the premise is that this talented person doesn’t also have high cultivation, otherwise they will inevitably be targeted—it’s impossible to have both fish and bear’s paw!

Ultimately, everyone chose to drink and converse in Jin Qiu Garden, a place with pleasant climate and fragrant flowers—ideal for a small gathering.

Before Ye Fan and others arrived, Sikong Po had specially closed the Four Great Scenic Spots, not welcoming any guests; only after they chose did he open the other three spots.

Due to Ye Fan's widely spread poems, many people wanted to come and see; hence, during these days, Qi Shi Restaurant's business was booming to the extreme.

Of course, due to Qi Shi Restaurant's high prices, most who could come were young geniuses comparable to Saint Heir and strong figures from various forces.

In the arrangement of Sikong Po, the young master of Qi Shi Restaurant, various exquisite dishes were served, the fragrance instantly permeating Jin Qiu Garden, mingling with the flower scent, intoxicating everyone.

The large round table was piled high with dishes and soups made from the meat of powerful Xuan Beasts; these ingredients, supplemented by Spiritual Medicine and Spiritual Spring, prepared by culinary masters, provide great benefits to cultivators when consumed.

For the banquet of Ye Fan and others, Sikong Po spared no expense; just this table can't be arranged without a hundred kilograms of top-grade spirit stones.

"Brother Ye, wish you a triumphant victory, seizing the final win!" Sikong Po raised his glass, speaking to Ye Fan.

“Thank you!”

Ye Fan also raised his glass, drinking it all in one gulp; seeing this, others also lifted their glasses for a toast.

“Brother Ye, give Qing Zi a good beating, that son of a bitch, I get annoyed just seeing him!” Hu Fei also raised his glass, everyone joined in a communal toast.

“There must be a reason for the third toast, what’s the rationale?”

Shen Tu stood up, saying, he and Zhang Taiyi, Tong Qianchen hadn’t spoken much, Hu Fei and others’ cultivation put great pressure on them.

In Xuanwu State, Zhang Taiyi thought he was a genius, but upon meeting Ye Fan, he realized there’s always someone better.

However—

Upon arriving in Fire Spirit City, he thoroughly understood he was merely a frog at the bottom of a well; the Southern Domain alone has so many geniuses vastly superior to him; broadly speaking, how many demon-level geniuses are there across the Five Great Domains?

Before these people, he was hardly different from a simple cultivator!

If not for Ye Fan, he might never have qualified to dine at Qi Shi Restaurant.

“The third cup is to toast for our meeting!”

Shi Ye suggested, everyone from different domains might never have intersected if not for this Southern Domain genius tournament; meeting is indeed fate, it’s rightful to toast for this.

“Didn’t expect you, a barbarian, to know these things, well said, everyone drink!” Hu Fei joked to Shi Ye, quickly changing the topic, leaving Shi Ye no chance to get angry, only able to follow suit, raising his glass.

“Speaking aside, joking aside, Brother Ye, be careful during the competition, Qing Zi is not simple; being called the number one genius in Southern Domain, he surely has other trump cards, don’t fall into his trap.”

After three rounds of drinks, Sikong Po reminded Ye Fan; he suspects Qing Zi might have some great opportunity, cultivating some lost secret technique!

Chapter 1449: The Eve of the Final

Every figure at the Saint Heir Level possesses great destiny, otherwise they wouldn’t be able to stand out among the cultivators, vast as the Star Sea, and become one of the most dazzling geniuses.

Qing Zi is naturally no exception. Being hailed as the number one genius in the Southern Domain, aside from exceptional talent, he must also have unusually great destiny.

However, Ye Fan was not too worried.

Up until now, he has not used his full strength, nor unleashed his ultimate moves—recently, he has gained deeper insights into the first form of the Xuandi Fist, and his Thunderclap Treasure Skill has also made considerable progress. Together, their power doubles.

“Brother Ye Fan, if you win the competition, I hope you can join the Immortal Academy, let’s continue being brothers!” Shi Ye said sincerely, having already entered the Immortal Academy; if Ye Fan joins too, they can take care of each other.

“Let’s talk about this when the time comes. I can’t even be sure if I’ll walk out of the arena alive!”

Ye Fan was reluctant to reveal too many secrets about himself, after all, both “Nine Heavens Profound Skill” and “Xuandi Fist” are supreme treasure books.

He once heard Elder Xuan say that in this world, there are only a few top-notch Heavenly Technique Treasure Books, and Nine Heavens Profound Skill is indeed the Ling Family’s secret inheritance.

The other few books were also handed down by Great Emperors, held by various Di Clans and Holy Lands.

Of course, there are also a few Cultivation Techniques in this world that are no less valuable than those handed down by Great Emperors, and the Xuanwu Sect's Xuanwu Heavenly Technique is one of them, albeit a fragmented version, waning beyond the Lord Realm.

Due to this reason, the Xuanwu Sect has always struggled to grow, as those exceptionally talented geniuses all desire to join a powerful sect, at least so they won't need to worry about future Cultivation Techniques.

"Ye Zi, I truly hope you choose the Immortal Academy, but first you must knock Qing Zi down, because I'm also about to study there." Hu Fei proposed, encouraging Ye Fan to join the Immortal Academy.

Soon, everyone became familiar with each other, and the conversation turned more casual as Hu Fei advised Ye Fan to join the Immortal Academy.

"The Imperial Academy consists mostly of descendants from Di Clans and folks from Supreme Sects, the Saint Heirs of the Holy Lands. If you go there, you're bound to face discrimination among them. I also suggest you go to the Immortal Academy!" Li Daoyi nodded, agreeing with the other two.

"Alright, if I can walk down the arena alive, I'll choose the Immortal Academy!" Ye Fan nodded in agreement.

Actually, even if they hadn't said anything, Ye Fan would also choose the Immortal Academy over the Imperial Academy. He clearly knows that Qing Zi's elder sister Qing Lian and her fiancé, the Ling Family genius, are studying in the Imperial Academy. In a position where he can't ensure his own safety, he doesn't wish to meet them.

The meal was harmonious, and returning from the Qi Shi Restaurant, Ye Fan immediately went into seclusion, entering the Virtual Space in his room directly.

Time waits for no one, he has witnessed Qing Zi's strength. To survive the competition in three days, Qing Zi must be defeated, and the ability to defeat requires strength.

In these three days, Ye Fan trained diligently, gained enlightenment, practiced martial arts, studied the Thunderclap Treasure Skill and Nine Heavens Profound Skill, while also comprehending the Secret Technique within the Xuandi Fist.

The Nine Heavens Xuan Emperor, towering over the Tianxuan Continent, was once a supreme strongman at the pinnacle of this world. Though he couldn't withstand the erosion of time, failing to comprehend the Immortal Dao, he didn't become immortal but returned to dust. However, his legacy remains one of the strongest inheritances.

On the third evening, Ye Fan finally emerged from seclusion, his Treasure Body faintly exuded a purple Divine Radiance, his entire aura steady as a mountain, standing there giving a feeling of majestic presence.

The three days in the outside world were actually equivalent to a month's passage for Ye Fan. His realm at the Late-stage Divine Realm has completely stabilized, with no fluctuations.

At this moment, Ye Fan thought deeply; logically, all the Holy Embryo Illusions in his acupoints have solidified, ideally reaching the Peak of the Holy Embryo Realm. Yet, he knows clearly, there's still a long way to go before reaching the Peak of the Holy Embryo Realm.

This is an indescribable feeling yet immensely clear, impossible to articulate but certainly perceivable.

During this month's time, Ye Fan consumed a large quantity of Spirit Stones, including those seized from the Lou Family and Qing Family. Apart from sharing half with Bai Yan wolf and using some for formation setting, almost all were refined by him.

Of course, there were a few peculiar Spirit Stones he deliberately didn't refine but collected instead.

Strictly speaking, those pieces aren't Spirit Stones but Strange Stones, common stones at best. Were it not for bringing the Spirit Stone Storage altogether, Ye Fan might have discarded them.

These stones weighed thousands of pounds, with smaller ones around a dozen pounds. Yet, not a hint of Spiritual Artifact dispersed, seeming like ordinary stones.

Initially, Ye Fan nearly tossed them aside, but was stopped by Elder Xuan.

According to Elder Xuan, since these stones were stored with Spirit Stones, their worth should not be inferior to Spirit Stones, definitely not ordinary stones. Or else, why would the Qing Family bother, fetching some worthless stones to pad up the numbers?

As Elder Xuan speculated, these stones likely are the legendary Strange Stones, holding hidden contents, mysterious without being split open.

However, Elder Xuan told Ye Fan, any such Strange Stone either houses nothing, or once containing something, it's extraordinary, potentially an invaluable rarity.

Ye Fan himself lacked confidence, opting to let the stones sit and ponder over them leisurely when free.

After consuming a massive amount of Spirit Stones, Ye Fan felt his body seemingly on the verge of another breakthrough, not merely a realm breakthrough, but a physical one.

Having gone through several rebirths, Ye Fan naturally understood this as a sign of another evolution of the Nine Heavens Profound Body, though without sufficient Spirit Stones as support, further rebirth wasn't feasible.

During these three days, the outside world buzzed with discussions. Although Qing Zi was injured, his core wasn't damaged, and after three days of recovery, he restored his peak state fully.

After defeating Feng Feiyang, Qing Zi publicly announced that in three days, he would engage in a life-and-death battle with Ye Fan, personally sending Ye Fan off for the deceased Qing Family members!

Consequently, for the last three days, conversations in Fire Spirit City centered around whether Ye Fan would accept the life-and-death challenge and how long he could last.

"I speculate, the cultivator surnamed Ye might not accept the life-and-death challenge. If he refuses, no matter how Qing Zi wishes to kill him, it won't be possible, as the two deputy deans certainly won't permit it." Some cultivators with no affiliation to either side speculated dispassionately.

These cultivators hail from other domains, or they strictly maintain neutrality as Loose Cultivators, or affiliates of other small sects. They merely discuss pragmatically, albeit evidently not optimistic about Ye Fan.

Understandably so, despite Ye Fan defeating Gu Hao in various battles with the Ancient Saint, having initially been friends, many believe Gu Hao greatly underestimated, caught off guard by Ye Fan.

“Ye Fan must die!”

Numerous sects from Qing Province voiced such sentiments, harboring immense hatred for Ye Fan, firmly standing alongside the Qing Family.

From the Mist Sea expedition, other provinces experienced minimal casualties, mainly succumbing to unexpected incidents upon entering the tomb.

Yet, Qing Province lost a vast number of youthful elites, most directly or indirectly having fallen to Ye Fan, provoking their fury to the extreme.

Though seething to grind Ye Fan’s bones to ashes, they dared not act in Fire Spirit City, instead placing their hopes on Qing Zi.

This is their sole shot at vengeance!

Otherwise, if Ye Fan returns from the arena alive, he will surely enter the Immortal Academy or Imperial Academy.

Then, hoping to kill Ye Fan under the protection of the two venerable institutions is sheer fantasy!

Chapter 1450: The Battle of Vengeance!

The Genius Competition is one of the most important events on the Tianxuan Continent, and the finals of the Southern Domain Genius Competition have attracted the attention of various forces across the continent.

Over the past three days, other cultivators have continuously arrived, including some ancient living fossils who have not appeared in ages.

“These two, one is a favorite to win, the other is a dark horse who came out of nowhere. Who will have the last laugh? It’s hard to say!”

As the finals approach, the cultivators from various factions are making their predictions.

Although most people do not favor Ye Fan, there are some insightful old fossils who have noticed something extraordinary about Ye Fan and believe he might not necessarily lose.

On the day of the finals, the large plaza is packed with people, both on the ground and in the air, densely packed and crowded.

In an inconspicuous corner of the plaza, an old man with a worn-out felt hat covering half his face is sitting in front of a dog meat stall, eating voraciously, his mouth covered in grease.

Next to him is the dog meat stall owner, who has been left speechless. This man has not stood up since he sat down and has already eaten two large black dogs, over a hundred pounds of meat, yet his belly still appears flat as if he hasn't eaten.

Compared to the helmsmen from various factions, the old man seems very unremarkable.

Accompanied by the members of the Xuanwu Sect, Ye Fan arrives at the plaza, with the crowd automatically parting to make way for him to reach the competition area.

Meanwhile, Qing Zi, accompanied by the Qing Family Ancestor, Qing Lian, and cultivators from Qing Province, also arrives at the plaza.

As usual, Qing Zi's face is gloomy, exuding a cold aura that deters people from getting close.

"Brother, today, no matter what, you must kill that Ye named scum in front of everyone to avenge our father and fallen clan members!"

As they near the competition area entrance, Qing Lian stops, her voice heavy with killing intent.

“Sister, rest assured, I will use his blood to honor our father’s spirit!” Qing Zi coldly glances at Ye Fan ahead, responding with resolute killing intent.

“Before making a move, get him to agree to a life-or-death duel, otherwise, it’ll be hard to kill him,” the Qing Family Ancestor advises, having watched Ye Fan’s previous matches.

Since Ye Fan was able to defeat the Ancient Saint Gu Hao, Qing Zi will definitely not be able to defeat Ye Fan quickly.

In this situation, to kill Ye Fan, a life-or-death duel is necessary!

“Rest assured, Ancestor, I know what to do.” Qing Zi nods and then steps toward the competition area entrance.

At the same time, Ye Fan and his party also pause at the competition area entrance.

“Xiao Fan, remember my words, staying alive is the most important!”

Wang Qingshan speaks, voicing the thoughts of everyone present.

“Mm.”

Ye Fan nods and strides into the competition area, with the Bai Yan wolf following closely, utterly ignoring the surprised glances around, as if its presence in the competition area were only natural.

Fortunately, the competition area is large enough and non-participants are not allowed near, providing ample space for the two.

“Little Qingzi, the Xuan Beast meat from the Qing Family’s Mausoleum is not bad. Bring me some next time,” the Bai Yan wolf chuckles as it sees Qing Zi arriving at the waiting area.

Swish!

Hearing the Bai Yan wolf’s words and recalling the day when the Qing Family allied with other forces to hunt down Ye Fan and the Bai Yan wolf—this person and wolf hid in the Qing Family’s Mausoleum and ate several of their precious Xuan Beasts—Qing Zi’s expression subtly changes with anger.

Although fuming, Qing Zi also knows it would be too humiliating to argue with a Bai Yan wolf in front of so many people and therefore doesn’t react.

“Ye named scum, before this competition, you vowed confidently to defeat me on the field. I hope you don’t forget your words and become a coward!”

Qing Zi ignores the Bai Yan wolf but targets Ye Fan instead, exuding a menacing aura.

“Just because you say life-or-death duel, it has to be a life-or-death duel? Can you not see what you are? Who are you to have the right to a life-or-death duel with the heir of the Thunder Supreme? Was your head crushed by the legs of a mother beast?” Without waiting for Ye Fan to respond, the Bai Yan wolf sneers.

Pfft!

The Bai Yan wolf’s words are so harsh even Ye Fan can’t help but laugh, and the plaza erupts into laughter, with some people even spitting out the water they were drinking.

Even some composed female cultivators laugh uncontrollably, while others hold their stomachs, tears almost flowing from their eyes.

“This Bai Yan wolf is a real character.”

“Never argue with it, or you’ll die of anger!”

This is everyone’s consensus, as the Bai Yan wolf’s standing in their eyes skyrockets, and it becomes recognized as someone never to provoke.

“Damn wolf, I’ll skin you!”

Qing Zi's eyes blaze with fury, his face turning green with anger, his entire body radiating killing intent as if ready to strike at any moment.

"Wait!"

Seeing Qing Zi about to attack, the Bai Yan wolf suddenly stops him, speaking like an aloof master, "Your opponent is him, not me. Besides, I'm disdainful of fighting with juniors like you, because if word gets out, it will sound like bullying, and it's against the rules to fight privately in Fire Spirit City! Are you trying to trap me?"

"Hiss~"

Hearing the Bai Yan wolf's words again, Qing Zi shivers with anger but refrains from acting.

Because the Bai Yan wolf's last sentence reminds him.

Even as the heir of the Qing Family, he cannot challenge the rules of Fire Spirit City!

At the same time, the observers burst into laughter again, and even some of the helmsmen of the major powers laugh, finding the Bai Yan wolf to be quite a character!

Clang!

At this moment, the bell rang, and the vice presidents of the two academies appeared on the competition stage. After coughing lightly to hide the smile on their faces, they began to speak.

“After an intense struggle, the Southern Domain Genius Tournament has determined the two contenders for the championship, and now we enter the final showdown...”

After the vice presidents each said a bunch of nonsense, just as everyone was growing impatient, they finally announced the official start of the match!

“Ye scum, dare to have a life-and-death duel?”

The match began, but Qing Zi did not attack directly. Instead, he asked coldly.

A life-and-death duel must be agreed upon by both parties. If either side refuses, the vice presidents will certainly intervene at a critical moment to save the loser.

Though Qing Zi was arrogant, he was self-aware enough to know he couldn't kill Ye Fan under the eyes of the vice presidents, so he provoked Ye Fan into agreeing to a life-and-death duel.

“I dare!” Ye Fan said, “But I won't accept!”

“Uh...”

Upon hearing Ye Fan’s words, everyone was stunned.

Before this, almost everyone thought Ye Fan would definitely agree to a life-and-death duel with Qing Zi. No one expected such a result.

“What trick is Ye Fan playing?”

“He actually refused Qing Zi’s proposal?”

“He dares not have a life-and-death duel with Qing Zi, he’s lost his nerve!”

“I originally thought highly of him, but now it seems he’s not even qualified to fight Qing Zi.”

“This championship belongs to Qing Zi without question!”

All sorts of gossip erupted immediately, with all the cultivators discussing, as no one expected Ye Fan to reject the life-and-death duel.

“In a way, it’s wise. Knowing you’re outmatched but still acting reckless—that’s mere bravado, not worth pursuing!” Some understood Ye Fan’s choice.

Tong Qianchen was stunned!

In her memory, no matter how strong an opponent Ye Fan faced, he never hesitated. He left a towering impression in her heart.

And now, the ever-forward, confident Ye Fan actually refused the challenge.

This seemed extremely odd to her!

Rationality and intuition told her something was fishy!

“What trick is this kid playing?”

Yaling was also stunned. She never thought such a scenario would occur, with Ye Fan refusing the life-and-death duel. How was this possible?

Hmm?

Qing Zi was taken aback, too. He was confident and prepared to kill Ye Fan, but the opponent refused to engage in a life-and-death duel, making him feel like his punch filled with force hit thin air—a frustrating feeling.

Qing Daoyuan and Qing Lian, along with the cultivators negotiating in Qing Province, were also stunned. They thought that Qing Zi would certainly kill Ye Fan in the match, but now Ye Fan had refused the life-and-death duel.

With this, Qing Zi's chance of killing Ye Fan was practically nonexistent!

"This..."

The Ancient Saint Gu Hao, Barbarian Shi Ye, and the fierce bandit Hu Fei were also on the square, witnessing this scene with puzzlement.

"If water is too clear, there are no fish; if a person is too vile, they become invincible! Brother Ye Fan is truly invincible!" Hu Fei shook his head and sighed, "Being able to bend and stretch is the mark of a true man; he's an example for people like us!"

"Avoiding the battle like this is not good for his future cultivation, it might cause a Heart Demon. If he can't fight to the death this time, it will be even harder for him to defeat Qing Zi in the future. He will be haunted by the belief that he is no match for Qing Zi," Li Daoyi said.

As a Saint Heir, Li Daoyi's perspective was sharp. He immediately saw the crux of the matter and was very puzzled by Ye Fan's choice.

"It's over, our Xuanwu State is missing out on first place!" Many cultivators from Xuanwu State couldn't help but sigh.

"Ye scum, weren't you arrogant before the competition? Why are you acting like a turtle now? Do you only dare to show off with your words?"

Qing Zi spoke again, pressing Ye Fan step by step to engage in a life-and-death duel with him.

Because, to him, if he couldn't kill Ye Fan in the match, he wouldn't be satisfied even if he won the title of Emperor.

"Who said I'm acting like a turtle?"

Ye Fan sneered, eyes as sharp as a knife locking on Qing Zi, "I'm not accepting because I think it shouldn't be called a life-and-death duel, but a revenge duel!"

"Recently, your Qing Family openly broke the rules, colluding with various forces to hunt me down for tens of thousands of miles!"

Under the gaze of everyone, Ye Fan spoke again, "Today, with so many respected elders present, I want to see if your Qing Family dares to act shamelessly and intervene when I send you on your way!"

"You...what did you say?"

Qing Zi glared at Ye Fan, shouting in a hoarse voice.

"Today, both old and new grudges will be settled, I'll send you on your way!!"

Ye Fan responded, his voice like muffled thunder, echoing across the sky.