

Chaotic 331

Chapter 331: The Ten Best Practitioners

Taking the Illusionary Flash book, Jian Chen's heart couldn't help but tremble with emotions. This battle skill was a speed based one. It was quite different from the Profound Steps written in the Azulet Sword Law. That one was focused more on walking and for use in combat, and while it was able to increase his speed, against a wind attributed expert: he would surely lose.

This Illusionary Flash increased the speed of a person's run in a linear direction. While it lacked the flexibility of the Profound Steps in the Azulet Sword Laws, it could beat a wind attributed cultivator in linear movement which was what Jian Chen wanted.

Furthermore, if the Illusionary Flash were to reach the pinnacle of mastery, then its speed would be unrivaled and he could travel up to 500 kilometers in an instant.

Although it sounded like an exaggeration, this was an aspect of the Illusionary Flash that could only be described as terrifying.

"Jian Chen, you shouldn't underestimate the Illusionary Flash battle skill. My uncle Tian said that although it may be an assisting Heaven Tier Battle Skill, its effects could be used against even a Saint Ruler. It was also one of the things he and my ancestor had found in the Death Nest a long time ago. This Illusionary Flash was an especially rare ancient record that belonged to an ancient clan. Its only weak point is that it is extremely hard to learn. Even I am stuck at a rough spot, but my speed has already increased two to three times over." Ming Dong explained to him.

Upon his explanation, Jian Chen immediately thought back to when he had come across Ming Dong. At that time, Ming Dong's speed was inconceivable and he flew across several kilometers at a terrifying speed.

"Jian Chen, this Illusionary Flash book is only just a copy. Once you memorize it, make sure you burn it so that it doesn't fall into anyone else's hands." Ming Dong.

Jian Chen clutched the Heaven Tier Battle Skill and nodded his head seriously, "I understand."

"Jian Chen, continue to research, I won't bother you any more. However, I suggest that you learn the Illusionary Flash as soon as possible. Against a Heaven Saint Master, you'll gain the power to flee if need be." With that, Ming Dong left the room.

Jian Chen immediately halted his research on the Heaven's Stolen Fortune battle skill and began to read the Illusionary Flash. Since it was only a supplementary battle skill, its contents weren't too descriptive and it only had thirteen pages. Jian Chen quickly memorized all thirteen pages with his cognitive memory skills, and after that he burned the pages so that not a single word remained.

Jian Chen continued to sit on his bed while deep in thought. Right now, he had come across the profound material that was the Illusionary Flash. It was extremely challenging to practice despite it being a supplementary battle skill and was harder than even the Heaven's Stolen Fortune. Its innermost contents were both mysterious and profound; some of the contents even dabbled with matters regarding space itself, causing Jian Chen to be confused beyond belief.

For the next three days, Jian Chen remained in his room as he tried to comprehend the Illusionary Flash. Sometimes he would be sitting on his bed, other times he would be pacing in his room in an effort to understand it.

Quickly, the finals to the Gathering of the Mercenaries approached. After three straight days of trying to reach an enlightenment, Jian Chen finally had a small grasp of the skill. This didn't mean to say that he had reached a mastery of the very basics, but it was still a minor achievement for Jian Chen. At the very least, he had a small unripened version of the Illusionary Flash which allowed him to move at a faster speed at the cost of a small amount of Saint Force.

By the following morning, Jian Chen finally paused his efforts to understand the Illusionary Flash and left his room. Soon after, he, Qin Xiao, and several others left the inn together. In the next few days, the finals would be taking place. 500 mercenaries would be fighting one on one until a King of Mercenaries is announced.

The fighting grounds for the finals would take place on a giant plaza in the middle of Mercenary City. The arena was already set up as several highly raised platforms with a transparent barrier covering each arena. In every direction a multitude of people had already gathered to spectate today's events.

Qin Xiao slapped Jian Chen and Ming Dong's shoulders with a firm hand as he encouraged them, "Jian Chen, Ming Dong, fight on!" Although he only spoke these six words, they were all that the two others needed to hear.

With a smile, Jian Chen replied, "Don't worry, I will fight to my final breath. While I can't guarantee being number one, I am sure I can reach into the top ten without a problem."

Afterward, Jian Chen, Ming Dong and Senior An split up from Qin Xiao and the rest of the group before identifying themselves as competitors. They crossed a Space Gate into a barrier protected region which was an isolated area that protected the competitors from the spectators while still allowing them to see the outside world.

Even the arenas themselves were protected with a frail looking but incredibly strong barrier that sealed up the insides completely. Only a person that had entered through a Space Gate would be able to gain access. That way, no one from the audience would be able to interfere, and the fights on the inside would not be able to affect the outside world.

The matches in the finals would be settled by ballot. The first ticket holder would fight against the 499th ticket holder, while the second ticket holder would fight against the 498th ticket holder, so on and so forth with the tenth ticket holder fighting against the 490th ticket holder. With such a method in place, if there was someone without a match they would wait until the current round was over before participating in the ballot again for the next round.

Jian Chen picked the 88th number, meaning he would fight against number 412 and would be the 88th match.

With ten arenas conducting the matches simultaneously, the pace went by quickly. In no time at all, it was Jian Chen's turn to walk to the eighth arena.

Walking through the Space Gate to cross into the eighth arena, Jian Chen arrived within the arena encased by the barrier. This barrier was not only incredibly durable, but it had another unique characteristic which was the inhabitants inside would not be able to hear the outside world. At the very most, they would be able to see the open mouths of the audience as they screamed, but no sound could be heard. Even the materials made to build the arena were unknown, as each step felt as if it was made from an incredibly strong iron.

Just as Jian Chen entered the arena, his opponent crossed into it as well through the other side. A burly looking man with the waist of a bear and the back of a tiger appeared. Compared to Jian Chen's slim build, the two were completely different. The man had a short inch of hair with fierce looking eyes that made his expression seem intrepid. He had a two-handed sword that glowed red, signifying that he was a fire attribute Earth Saint Master.

The two said no words and silently prepared to fight.

"Begin!" An elderly voice penetrated the barrier and resounded in the eardrums of both fighters. The middle aged man immediately sprung into action and flew toward Jian Chen. The two-handed sword in his hand blazed forward as it tried to stab Jian Chen's heart.

Jian Chen stared calmly at the approaching man as his mind couldn't help but plot a course for the Illusionary Flash.

In that moment, the sword was already less than a meter away from Jian Chen's heart, but Jian Chen had not made a single movement yet. The middle aged man saw that Jian Chen hadn't made an effort to dodge and couldn't help but feel astonished. In a split second, the tip of the sword aimed at Jian Chen's heart immediately tilted to stab into his chest.

Suddenly, right as the sword was about to pierce into Jian Chen's chest, Jian Chen's eyes flashed once as his sword appeared in his right hand and stabbed outward in an instant. At the same time as his strike, Jian Chen's figure disappeared as a dissipating mirror image could be seen in his place. By the time he had reappeared, he was standing behind the man with his sword on his shoulder.

"You've lost!" Jian Chen didn't look back as he spoke those words.

The man looked a little dazed for a moment before quickly recovering himself. He immediately brought a finger up to where his throat was only to find a small amount of blood on it.

When he saw the blood on his finger, his face instantly grew shocked before sucking in a deep breath, "What a fast sword, and what a fast speed!"

In that split second, Jian Chen's Light Wind Sword had already stabbed past the first few layers of skin on the man's throat without injuring him. The amount of strength he had put behind the blow was just perfect; if Jian Chen had been a little deeper with his strike, then the man would have been dead on the ground.

"Jian Chen is the winner of Arena Eight!" Came the judgement a second later as the two Space Gates opened up on either sides,

"Younger brother, thank you for your leniency." After a few words of thanks, the middle aged man walked off of the the eighth arena with a look of dejection.

Afterward, Ming Dong and Senior An had advanced. With Minh Dong's Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master strength, he had easily defeated his opponent in an unsurprising way. Senior An's battle had been more intense, but in the end, he had achieved victory with some injuries.

Many Radiant Saint Masters could be seen in Mercenary City treating the various injuries of men for free and in no time at all.

After half the day had gone by, the first round had finally been over. In the end, 249 people had moved on, meaning a single person had to fight a randomly selected member from the other 249 men.

By the second day, 124 people had passed with yet another single person left out, leaving him to fight it out for a spot with another one of the 124 men.

Chapter 332: The Ten Best Practitioners (Two)

By the fourth day of the competition, most of the 500 men had been quickly eliminated so that only 31 men remained. Senior An had been eliminated in the earlier round, leaving Jian Chen and Ming Dong. At the same time, Dugu Feng, Tianmu Ling, and Huang Luan were all still in it.

By this point, everyone within the top 31 were not weak at all. Their strength was plenty, their experiences ample, and each had a battle skill to compliment them.

The identities of the three Radiant Saint Force cultivators had long since been revealed and they had been put on close watch by Jian Chen. Unfortunately, the opponents all three men fought weren't very strong, so the amount of strength they displayed had only been the tip of the iceberg.

Aside from them, there was only one other competitor that had caught Jian Chen's eye: the one named "Jue". Reaching the fourth ranked spot, she was a high ranking woman with a black robe and a dagger like weapon. Not only that, but she was a wind attribute cultivator, meaning her speed was incredibly fast.

From her appearance, she looked to be around twenty five or twenty six years old, but there was no definite proof of her age. Although her appearance was not yet beautiful enough to cause nations to fight over her, she could not be said to be ugly either. She was pretty in appearance, and her natural disposition was far beyond what Tianmu Ling could boast of, meaning not a single man could dare ignore it. Her eyes however had a bone chilling stare that could freeze the spirits themselves as a terrifying expression adorned her face constantly as if to hide the killing aura emanating from her. Every single one of her opponents had not been able to survive and died by getting struck through the heart each time. Her speed with the dagger was comparable to only Jian Chen's sword speed.

That night, Jian Chen spent time by himself in his room to study the Illusionary Flash. Tomorrow morning would establish the top sixteen, and by then, the top ten would be established.

Experts within the Tian Yuan Continent were like clouds, there was simply no shortage of outstanding civilians. Although Jian Chen had only heard of the five experts during his time collecting the tokens, they were not the only experts in the competition. In their midst were people who were excellent at keeping a low profile, and it was only when the final started that their identities were revealed. Otherwise, all of the men that had come across them were killed off so that their strength would not be revealed.

Right now, Jian Chen felt that he was quite narrow-minded. Starting tomorrow, each and every match would have an unknown variable to it since by this point in the Gathering of the Mercenaries, all of the weaker mercenaries had been weeded out. The remaining 31 people were the elite among the elite and would be stronger than Dugu Feng at the very least.

At that moment, a knock on the door could be heard.

Jian Chen slowly opened his eyes from his contemplative meditation. With a wave of his hand, a gust of wind unlatched the metal bolt on the door, "Come in!"

As the door opened, four expensively dressed elders walked in. Among them were two white robed men with black hair and kindly expressions. The third man wore a black robe and had hair that traveled down to his shoulders and a scarred left eye. Only his right eye remained open, giving him a rather fierce looking expression, evidently he had been injured a long time ago. The last elder wore a simple red garb that covered his small build, but his skin was rather dark.

Jian Chen measured up the four elders with a rather serious expression. None of the four men had bothered to hide their presence, and judging from that, Jian Chen was astonished to discover that all four of them were Heaven Saint Masters.

As Jian Chen was measuring them up, the four of them were also sizing him up. Since the patriarch of the Tianqin clan had given him a way for him to hide his own strength, despite the four men being Heaven Saint Masters, they were unable to discern Jian Chen's strength.

"Four elders, what business might you have?" Jian Chen asked as he spoke to the four in a normal tone of voice.

"Young brother, you are Jian Chen?" One of the elders spoke with a kindly voice.

"This one is." Jian Chen replied.

"Brother Jian Chen, we have heard that the third lord of the Shi family, Shi Xiangran was killed by you. Is that matter true?" The same elder spoke with a calm tone.

Without a twitch in his face, Jian Chen spoke, "Who might these elders be?"

With a laugh, the elder began to stroke at his long beard, "Others have called us four as the four brothers of the Cai family. Presently, we serve as the Shi family's handlers of the law." Then, the elder briefly stopped talking for a moment before saying once again, "Brother Jian Chen, we have already investigated the matter, but we bear no malice toward you. We merely hope that brother Jian Chen will return the Seal of Treasure Mountain. That cannot be permitted to fall into an outsider's hand; if it remains with you, it will only bring you trouble."

"Elder brother speaks correct." The one eyed person spoke without a single hint of emotion, "The Seal of Treasure Mountain is an heirloom of the Shi family that came to be after a special refinement method. Only those of the Shi family will be able to wield its power. To you, the Seal of Treasure Mountain will be an useless piece of iron that you cannot use."

None of elders had tried to threaten Jian Chen and instead tried a simpler approach in hopes that Jian Chen would hand the Seal of Treasure Mountain over.

Jian Chen cupped his hands together in an apologetic manner, "I give my apologies, but the Seal of Treasure Mountain will not be given back."

"Young brother, you must understand, if you do not return the Seal of Treasure Mountain, then the Shi family will not let you go. This item will only serve to destroy you." The elder spoke honestly and kindly.

Shaking his head, Jian Chen didn't give a second thought, "This shouldn't be something that elders should worry themselves with." Jian Chen knew that even if he were to hand it over, the Shi family would not let him be.

"If young brother is determined on this path, then we have no choice, we shall leave." The elders spoke no more words and left the room quickly.

After exiting the inn, the single eyed man sighed, "Big brother, what shall we do now, the one called Jian Chen refuses to hand over the Seal of Treasure Mountain."

"Our responsibility lies only with protecting the young lord, not the retrieval of the Seal of Treasure Mountain. For now, let us report this to the Shi family and let the leader deal with it." The leader spoke in a neutral voice.

"This time not only did the Shi family's plan fail, but the third lord has died as well while also having the Ruler Armament snatched away. This is truly an example of giving away the bride and then losing the army. The Shi family will definitely be shaken down to its core." The red robed elder laugh, they were not truly affiliated with the Shi family.

"Forget it, we have no business with this matter. Let the Shi family deal with its headaches. We are nothing more than the business dealers for the Shi family, not a scapegoat for their troubles. Let us all remember, do not think that the person the Shi family has offended is someone that we have offended. This time, the Gathering of the Mercenaries has amassed a large amount of strong combatants. While they themselves are strong, the powers supporting them are not. Furthermore, some of these powers are people even the Shi family cannot afford to offend. Especially the one called Qin Ji. I have heard that he is the sole prince of the Qinhuang Kingdom. It is possible that he is the next emperor to be of the kingdom; this type of person is someone we definitely should not offend."

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By the second day, Jian Chen had entered the competition area earlier to draw his lot before entering the Space Gate to start the match.

Not too long after he had entered, his opponent entered the arena as well. But the moment Jian Chen saw his opponent, his eyes widened in shock; it was Dugu Feng.

Dugu Feng returned the stare with a bitter laugh, "I didn't think that I would be fighting against you."

Even Jian Chen felt helpless as he shrugged his shoulders, "This is nothing more than a coincidence."

Quickly, the announcement to start the fight could be heard, but neither Jian Chen or Dugu Feng made a move.

"Jian Chen, I hope that you will achieve the number one spot." With that, Dugu Feng admitted defeat.

In this match, Jian Chen had won without fighting.

Exiting the arena, Jian Chen stuck around in order to observe the other matches. After this round, only sixteen would move on. In the end, three men were killed and two heavily injured. One of the casualties had been from Jue's dagger stabbing into a man's heart, drawing his final breath. This was something even the strong Radiant Saint Masters had found impossible to reverse.

Both Jian Chen and Ming Dong had managed to advance into the top sixteen. Qin Ji and Tianmu Ling had advanced as well with their Ruler Armament causing major injuries to their opponents. Although Huang Luan had her Solunar Bow, within the constrained arena, her Solunar Bow was heavily handicapped. She herself only had the strength of a First Cycle Earth Saint Master, so she lost since her opponent had been one of the Radiant Saint Force attributed men with impeccable strength.

Because of an untimely match with fate, Dugu Feng had been eliminated from the tournament while the other two Radiant Saint Force attributed men advanced on. The three of them were true to their rumors and were extremely strong. One of them in particular was a Fourth Cycle Earth Saint Master with a strong repertoire of battle skills.

The following ten combatants would be decided from the top eight of the sixteen combatants. From the losers bracket, the top two would be given another chance.

Because it was still daytime, the competition resumed. After choosing his lot, Jian Chen stood on a stool and waited for the next round. The other fifteen fighters stood by Jian Chen in the isolated area away from the crowd.

"Hey, Jian Chen, you have to get number one okay? Don't let us all down, we all have high expectations for you." Ming Dong slapped Jian Chen on the shoulder and laughed.

"Hehehe, little brother, the experts here are as numerous as the clouds. Although you were able to win over me, the others will not be as weak. Do you think you will be able to claim number one among them all?" Tianmu Ling spoke from in front of Jian Chen. Both of her eyes stared at him with her words sounding like an enchanting spell that could entice any man.

Jian Chen stared back and then moved his eyes to the outside of the arena, "I can only say that I will try my best and try when the time comes."

As soon as Jian Chen finished talking, a peculiar voice could be heard from behind, "Hmph, to try your best? Kid, you're only so old, do you not know how vastly far you are from the number one spot? Do you take the rest of us as trash?"

Turning his head, Jian Chen could see a middle aged man around the age of 45 or 46. He wore a white robe and his appearance was quite familiar to Jian Chen, since he was one of the three Radiant Saint Force attributed cultivators.

By the middle aged man's side, another man not too far away in age stared at Jian Chen with contempt before speaking absent mindedly, "Forget it, Caraga. Don't bother with the words of a brat, he is nothing more than a braggart."

At the words of these two, Jian Chen's eyes narrowed before his stare turned cold in temperature. Even Ming Dong grew angry as he spoke with a warning, "You two should best hope that I don't come across you in the arena."

The two men instantly grew furious as Caraga exploded, "Such an ignorant brat, if this place were not Mercenary City, this one would have cut you into multiple pieces!"

"Kid, you must be Ming Dong. Allow me to offer you a word of advice, if you ever come across me in the arena, surrender at once. Otherwise, I swear that you will not leave the arena alive." The middle aged man right next to Caraga spoke with killing intent leaking from him. If it were not for the place they were in, then the two would have struck out earlier.

Ming Dong sneered before leaking out his own killing intent, "Then we'll see if you can stay true to your words."

Jian Chen's face grew dark as he stared at the two men before speaking, "Caraga, Ka Zhafei, I will remember your words. We will see who lives and who dies in the end." These two were the first and third ranked men so their names had long since been memorized by Jian Chen.

"Hmph, two kids who don't know the immensity of the heavens." Ka Zhafei laughed as he mocked both Jian Chen and Ming Dong.

"That's enough, you two truly don't know shame. You've grown this old yet you are bullying the younger generation? I feel as if I must feel shame in your place." The remaining man in the middle finally spoke.

Hearing that, the two men's stares were redirected toward the third person, "Zhar, this is something between the two of us, there is no need for you to butt in." Ka Zhafei replied to him.

"Could it be that you two think that bullying the juniors is a glorious task? How silly, if word of this were to be announced, then disgrace would fall upon us Radiant Warriors." Zhar's words were like ice.

"Enough!" Caraga stared at Zhar with a look of embarrassment, "Zhar, don't forget your place. Just what side do you belong to if you side with an outsider?"

Zhar sneered, "Don't give such a preposterous argument, I am helping no outsider. I only cannot approve of you two. You two bring shame to us Radiant Warriors."

"You..." Caraga and Ka Zhafei both growled as they trembled in anger, but no words escaped from their mouths.

At that moment, the barrier suddenly changed color before disappearing rapidly. In the next second, all of the arenas in front of them suddenly began to descend before disappearing without a trace into the ground, forming a single flat clearing without any dents or bumps.

Jian Chen was shocked by this sudden development. He hadn't thought that the Mercenary City would be capable of such a mysterious event. Jian Chen had no idea how the arenas descended into the ground and then suddenly rise up again as a single giant piece of land. This single piece of land was far bigger than the arenas and was about five hundred meters in width.

As the single arena ascended up, another transparent barrier completely encompassed it before two Space Gates opened up on opposite sides of each other.

Chapter 333: The Ten Great Practitioners (Three)

“Will the competitors step inside the arena!” An elderly voice called out from a mysterious location.

Jian Chen looked at the number three in his hand, he was to be the third match.”

Today was the day the top ten people would be decided, thus, the way the competition would continue would be different. Ten matches would not happen at the same time, instead, it would be one match at a time. After all, the people gathered here now were the geniuses of the continent. Not a single one of them was weak, and each one of them were spectacular in the ways of battle.

“Little brother, could you cheer me on?” Tianmu Ling laughed into Jian Chen’s ears before walking into the Space Gate. Afterward, another middle aged man walked into the other Space Gate.

The match continued straight away as Tianmu Ling took out her longsword which was blue in nature, meaning she was a water attributed cultivator. She first fought against the man with her own strength, but several exchanges later she decided to bring out her Ruler Armament. The strength of this middle aged man was stronger than her own.

Tianmu Ling’s Ruler Armament held an advantage in speed as the whip could extend and contract with ease. The whip’s mirror image could be seen almost everywhere in the ring as it drew closer to her opponent and suppressed him inside. The power of a Ruler Armament was something that scared the man, as he wasn’t strong enough to take on a blow and could only dodge it.

Mercenary City had not forbade the use of Ruler Armaments. Although its use was equivalent to using outside help, the Tian Yuan Continent was not known for being fair. No matter what was used, as long as one won, then that was the way of the king. Thus, it could be said that using outside help was still a form of strength.

The middle aged man could only dodge miserably since Tianmu Ling’s whip could cover a large area. With an explosive shout, a large amount of energy rippled out before giving him protection. Straight away, a giant sword ten meters long appeared in his hand before stabbing through the void in the whip’s path with a loud clap of thunder.

“This must be an Advanced Earth Tier Battle Skill. Judging from this, it must take a large amount of Saint Force to use.” A few men muttered beside Jian Chen.

In the arena, Tianmu Ling’s face grew serious as her whip moved in reaction. Striking at the ten meter long sword, the sword managed to take several blows from the whip before finally shattering with a loud bang as a wave of violent energy burst outward.

A wave of water attributed Saint Force flew out from Tianmu Ling’s body before enveloping her as a form of defense against the energy, but she was still forced back.

Just as Tianmu Ling moved back, her face suddenly grew pained as a large sword suddenly pierced through her chest from the back.

The middle aged man had somehow moved behind her during the explosion and used his Saint Weapon to tear through her chest.

“You’ve lost!” The man spoke as he held his sword through her chest. With his sword run through her body, if Tianmu Ling didn’t admit defeat, then the energy within his Saint Weapon would explode outward in an instant which would cause an extreme amount of damage to her.

Tianmu Ling, unable to withstand the pain anymore, nodded her head slowly in realization that she had lost.

“Aridia is the winner!” The announcer boomed as the middle aged man slowly took out his sword before leaving the arena.

Just as Tianmu Ling left the arena, two Radiant Saint Masters immediately came to her side and began to treat her wounds with Radiant Saint Force. That was because even the eight losers would have to fight for a spot in the top ten.

Thus, even though Tianmu Ling was eliminated, she still had a chance of hope.

The second match was between Zhar and Tian Qicheng. With his dominating strength, Zhar easily defeated his opponent.

The third round was Jian Chen’s match. As he entered the arena, a black robed girl entered it as well; Jian Chen’s opponent was Jue.

Jue held her dagger in her right hand with eyes as cold as ice as she stared at Jian Chen. Her entire demeanor seemed as icy as her glare, and even though she was still standing still, she gave off the impression that she was an extremely cold statue instead.

Jian Chen looked quite calm, he had been observing her for some time now, so he knew that Jue was a merciless opponent. With her icy stare, she would never let her opponent leave alive, and Jian Chen would be no different to her.

“Begin!” The elderly voice cried out through the barrier. In an instant, Jue disappeared into a black streak of light as she shot toward Jian Chen with her dagger shining in the light as it stabbed at his heart. At the same time, a strange and chilly feeling could be felt from the dagger, causing Jian Chen to feel a cold shiver.

Jian Chen secretly felt some surprise in his heart, this would be the first blow of many, but he hadn’t thought her Saint Weapon would be able to launch such a cold presence. Despite his shock however, Jian Chen’s movements weren’t lacking either as he brought out his Light Wind Sword in an instant to strike against the dagger.

“Ding!” A metallic clang could be heard as Jue’s dagger was stopped by Jian Chen’s sword. However, Jian Chen’s sword began to gain a frosty coating while making Jian Chen feel as if he was suddenly naked within a world of ice and snow.

With a look of shock, Jian Chen suddenly came to the realization that he had been underestimating Jue too much. The very moment their Saint Weapons had come in contact, his sword had been infected by ice crystals.

“Just what martial art method is this for it to have such an effect?” Jian Chen thought to himself.

But then, Jue struck out a second and third time as her dagger was poised to claim Jian Chen’s heart.

Jian Chen's sword smashed against the dagger both times, but with each block, the Light Wind Sword grew thicker with frost. The icy chill made Jian Chen's arm grow rigid as well almost as if it was freezing the bloodstreams within his arm.

"Her martial arts is quite strange, the longer we fight, the worse I grow. I have to end this fight straight away!" Jian Chen thought immediately. With a wave of his arm, the Light Wind Sword smashed against the ground, shattering the frost on it. Straight away, Jian Chen's arm blurred as the entire area became shrouded with mirror images of his sword.

Jue's eyes flashed dangerously as a cold white aura flowed out from her, making it seem as if the area around her was freezing into ice. The entire arena began to feel the effects as it instantly froze over. Even the barrier itself took on a layer of frost.

Jian Chen's stab was immediately blocked as several clangs could be heard. Almost like a fish in water, Jue was able to move forward and stab at Jian Chen's heart once more with her dagger.

Seeing the dagger fly at him, Jian Chen subconsciously thought of the Illusionary Flash. With a single movement, he flew forward, leaving behind a perfect mirror image in his place before he struck out with his Light Wind Sword.

Immediately turning around, Jue's dagger blocked Jian Chen's sword. Then, without retreating, she drew closer to Jian Chen's body and stabbed at his heart. At the same time, a sheet of frost climbed up Jian Chen's legs, making him immobile.

Realizing that his mobility had been cut off, Jian Chen's face grew startled. Without a single moment of hesitation, his Light Wind Sword flew into motion as it flew out three different times. One was to block the dagger, the second and third were aimed at Jue's heart and throat, to try and force her back.

With a grunt, Jian Chen stamped down on the ground with Saint Force aiding his feet, allowing him to shatter the ice that bound his legs to the ground. With his mobility back, he instantly used the Illusionary Flash to move like lightning toward Jue's side with his Light Wind Sword flying straight at her to suppress her.

While Jue's attack was by no means slow, Jian Chen was faster by a small margin. Just barely blocking Jian Chen's strikes with some pain, the Light Wind Sword took on a sheen of frost once more, slowing down his next stab.

Just at the most crucial point, a sharp amount of Sword Qi flew out from the sword, reducing the frost on the blade into powder before flying straight at Jue.

Quickly flying backward, frosty cold air flew out from Jue's body before surrounding the entire area around her.

With a small smirk, Jian Chen instantly activated the Heaven's Stolen Fortune so that his strength and speed was multiplied three times over. His Light Wind Sword exploded with Sword Qi so that it shattered through the ice that had formed in the area before resting against Jue's throat.

Seeing the strike at her throat, Jue stopped her attack and stared at Jian Chen with an expressionless face, but her eyes still reflected a frosty aura without any fluctuations of emotions.

“Jian Chen is the winner!” A loud voice called out as two Space Gates flew up on both sides of the arena. As his Light Wind Sword disappeared, he began to walk out without speaking a single word. Jue turned to leave as well without another word.

“Jian Chen, good job!” Ming cried out in excitement as he walked over to greet him. As Ming Dong’s hand landed upon Jian Chen’s shoulder, he immediately retracted his hand and cried out in shock, “Good god, Jian Chen, did you just come out from an icy cavern? Why are you so cold?”

With a forced smile, Jian Chen replied, “Pretty much. That arena was essentially colder than an icy cavern. I almost found myself frozen to the ground. That Jue is not an ordinary person, her martial arts is quite magical and strange. To be able to control such a cold aura along with her fighting strength, even someone stronger than her would be easily caught in her trap.”

Hearing Jian Chen’s words, Ming Dong grew serious as he murmured, “It seems we have to be careful of her in the future.”

Chapter 334: The Ten Great Practitioners (Four)

Ming Dong’s match was right after Jian Chen, so after the announcement, he and his opponent entered the Space Gate.

Almost as if arranged by the heavens, Ming Dong’s opponent had been one of the two people that had mocked them, Ka Zhafei.

Before he had left, Ming Dong had a small grin on his face, “Jian Chen, I have to chop this guy in half.”

Slapping Ming Dong on his shoulders, Jian Chen gave him an encouraging look without saying anything.

Ka Zhafei had a dark smile on his face as he spoke, “How coincidental, my opponent is you? It seems that God no longer wishes for you to remain alive and allowed me to take control. Kid, aren’t you supposed to be mad? You’ll be mad soon enough.”

Hearing those words, Ming Dong leaked some killing intent into his words as he spoke, “Spare me your big words, wait until we get into the arena. I’ll make it so you can’t even cry anymore.” With those words, Ming Dong immediately walked through the Space Gate and into the arena.

“Hmph, even with death near at hand, you are so arrogant still.” Ka Zhafei spoke in disdain as he walked into the arena.

“Begin!” As soon as the two men entered, a loud voice called out to them again.

Instantly, a large amount of killing intent flowed from Ka Zhafei as he stared at Ming Dong like a bloodthirsty magical beast. A Radiant Saint Force attributed sword appeared in his hand, forming a two meter long longsword. The longsword emitted a bright milky light that made it seem as if it were a divine sword.

“Go and die!” Ka Zhafei roared as he flew toward Ming Dong with his sword swinging fiercely toward him.

With a small laugh, Ming Dong took out his cyan colored sword before disappearing from view. In a flash, he flew toward Ka Zhafei and almost as if his sword had blended in with the wind, it streaked across Ka Zhafei's waist with a cyan glow, leaving behind a fierce looking wound.

Ming Dong's speed was unbelievably fast to the point where even Ka Zhafei wouldn't be able to keep up. Feeling the wound on his waist, Ka Zhafei could only see his hand drenched in his own blood.

With an ugly expression, Ka Zhafei tried to figure out just when he had been injured. He had insulted and threatened that Ming Dong wouldn't be leaving the arena alive, but he didn't think that in the very first exchange, he would be the one damaged. This was a shame that could not stand.

"Brat, you're dead!" Ka Zhafei's glare grew dark before a milky white glow emerged from his wounds at the same time as he was talking, causing his wounds to heal quickly.

Ming Dong sneered in disdain, "I've heard that you cultivators with a Radiant Saint Force are not killable and are called the undying. Today we'll see just how undying you actually are." With that, Ming Dong flew toward Ka Zhafei and disappeared within the next instance.

"What a fast speed!"

"Heavens, for his speed to be that fast, could he be a wind attributed Heaven Saint Master?"

Outside of the arena, many people cried out in amazement as they saw the speed that Ming Dong had just revealed.

Even Ka Zhafei grew deathly serious as he watched Ming Dong flash away. As soon as he grew close, Ka Zhafei immediately shouted out loud as he brought his Radiant Saint Weapon toward Ming Dong's chest. However, he had managed to only cut into an empty space where Ming Dong's mirror image had been.

"Crap!" Ka Zhafei exclaimed at this bad development. Without a second's worth of a reaction, a sudden stinging pain could be felt from behind as a cyan colored sword stabbed through his chest.

Ka Zhafei shouted out in anger as he dashed forward so that the sword would be taken out of his body. In the next moment, a large amount of Radiant Saint Force coursed through his body to treat the wound. While the wound on his chest wasn't fatal, it was still a heavy injury that would impact his fighting ability.

"Brat, you've truly angered me. I'll definitely smash your body into pieces!" Ka Zhafei's eyes grew bloodshot as he glared at Ming Dong with a furious expression.

"You truly do think yourself as invincible. If I wanted to kill you, then I would have stabbed your heart earlier and killed you." Ming Dong laughed as if he was playing around with him.

With a furious snarl, Ka Zhafei immediately burst with Radiant Saint Force before forming a silver white armor that covered his entire body sans his eyes.

Caraga and Zhar looked at the armored Ka Zhafei with a look of surprise before Zhar mocked him, "What a nuisance, he reaps what he sows. Now that he took out his Radiant Saint Armor, he has truly lost all face."

Caraga stood by Zhar's side with an ugly look on his face, but not a single word was spoken.

The other competitors had been stunned by Ming Dong's speed. Although Ming Dong wasn't all that old, his strength wasn't weaker than anyone else here. His speed was especially fast and made everyone think that he was actually a Heaven Saint Master. That was because his speed had already far outstripped the realm an Earth Saint Master could attain, and even a Sixth Cycle wind attributed Earth Saint Master wouldn't be able to reach such a speed.

Seeing the protective armoring on Ka Zhafei, Ming Dong was a bit dazed. This was the very first time he had seen such a thing, but he laughed anyways, "Did you think wearing a tortoise shell would protect you?" With that, Ming Dong disappeared once more before reappearing behind Ka Zhafei and slashed onto Ka Zhafei's chest.

"Bang!" A loud sound was heard as Ka Zhafei flew back with a clear imprint on his chest armor.

Ming Dong shook his slightly numb right hand as he muttered, "What a thick tortoise shell."

Ka Zhafei glared venomously at Ming Dong as he raised his sword above his head, "Brat, you've been aggressive enough. I'll send you on your way now, Absolute Truth—First Cross!" Radiant Saint Force surged out from Ka Zhafei's body as he brought his sword up. At the same time, a powerful amount of pressure suddenly came crashing down on the entire arena, causing Ming Dong to find it hard to breathe. Although the pressure had not affected the barrier, the entire arena was affecting even the outside area, causing everyone on the outside to feel the mountain-like pressure as well. The pressure was so much that none of them felt as if they could move and instantly went pale as their blood escaped from their faces.

"This is a Heaven Tier Battle Skill, he's using a Heaven Tier Battle Skill!" A white haired elder cried out in shock, causing everyone else to pale at the overwhelming power. At the same time, everyone stared in excitement at Ka Zhafei. Regarding Heaven Tier Battle Skills, they were a once in a millennia opportunity to become rich. Not a single person wanted to miss this, even the Heaven Saint Masters were all staring intensely at Ka Zhafei. This was because Heaven Tier Battle Skills were extremely expensive and some Heaven Saint Masters didn't even have a single Heaven Tier Battle Skill.

Seeing Ka Zhafei's battle skill, Ming Dong had a serious look at last, "Don't think that you're the only one with a heaven Tier Battle Skill, I'll show you the power of an Advanced Heaven Tier Battle Skill." With that, an equally large amount of energy began to ripple out of Ming Dong before collecting together in his sword.

In the next moment, a stronger wave of pressure blew back and returned the pressure given to him by Ka Zhafei's battle skill. Its power had reached even the outside area where countless of Great Saint Masters coughed out a mouthful of blood as their faces grew even more pale.

Suddenly, the entire crowd began to push backward as the ones incapable of enduring the pressure tried to escape. All sorts of panicked cries could be heard.

"Heavens, this is a Heaven Tier Battle Skill...."

"Two Heaven Tier Battle Skills are about to clash, who's going to be the winner and who will be the loser?"

“With two Heaven Tier Battle Skills about to clash, this will cause even the heavens to shake. Who knows whether or not the arena will be able to handle it, everyone get back!”

“For two Heaven Tier Battle Skills to go head to head, what result will happen, we’ll find out soon enough...”

The power from the Heaven Tier Battle Skills of Ming Dong and Ka Zhafei had caused a panic as everyone from Great Saint Masters to Earth Saint Masters all flew into an outrage. Not a single of them had seen such a clash like this before.

While the Heaven Tier Battle Skills continued to build up power, Ming Dong and Ka Zhafei both continued to hold back, at their level, they needed to build up power for the full power.

The wind began to grow turbulent as a strong gale was whipped up around the two competitors while they initialized their Heaven Tier Battle Skills. The pressure was enough for Great Saint Masters to be forced back, and even some Earth Saint Masters were forced a few steps back.

By this point, only a few of the Heaven Saint Master experts were within twenty meters of the arena without any pain. However, each one of them had a layer of Saint Force protecting them.

While it took some time to explain, it had only taken a few moments. In the end, both battle skills were fully prepared.

“Absolute Truth—First Cross!”

“Sword of the Tyrant—Heaven Shaking Blade!”

Chapter 335: The Ten Great Practitioners (Five)

Two bangs could be heard as the two men’s Saint Weapons flashed forward.

Ka Zhafei’s silver sword seemed almost as if it was a divine sword that shot forward with seemingly two strikes that resembled a single cross that shined brilliantly in everyone’s eyes, leaving behind a sun spot like image.

With an overwhelming amount of power, the cross flew toward Ming Dong.

Ming Dong’s sword slashed toward Ka Zhafei as well. As his sword was swung, the winds began to warp as the skies grew dark. Only a compressed amount of Sword Qi could be seen as it flew toward Ka Zhafei and smashed against the cross. With a loud explosion, a large ripple of energy immediately scattered the entire area.

Ming Dong’s slash impacted against the cross, shattering it into pieces before continuing on toward Ka Zhafei. In the end, it pierced into his body before striking at the barrier behind him. With an explosion, the barrier rippled slightly before the attack dissipated.

The explosive energy caused by the blow was quickly absorbed by the barrier surrounding the arena. Even as the energy struck against the barrier, it was like a pebble being thrown into the ocean and disappeared without any other external effect. In a flash, the entire arena was clean of any of the energy.

Ming Dong continued to feel the brunt of this terrifying backlash. Compared to before, he no longer had the same easy going face as before and was completely pale. The Saint Force that was used up by the Heaven Tier Battle Skill was truly immense, and after that one startling attack, his Saint Force was almost all used up.

Ka Zhafei stood in front of him with sluggish eyes and a dazed expression.

“Kacha!” Suddenly, the strange white piece of armor that covered Ka Zhafei’s body began to fracture into a large crack appeared from his forehead to the point between his legs and the bright red tint of blood could be seen coming out. The silver armor right now was an extremely eye-catching sight.

In the next moment, a truly surprising thing happened as Ka Zhafei’s body suddenly split in half before falling to the ground. His inner organs had long since been reduced to a minced mess as blood poured all over the place.

After the two Heaven Tier Battle Skills had clashed, Ming Dong had come out unscratched while Ka Zhafei was split in two.

This sight caused everyone there to be breathless, even the various Heaven Saint Masters were left speechless. At this moment, there were millions of people watching the finals, but the entire place was silent. So silent was the area that the heartbeat of everyone could be heard bumping at an accelerated pace.

When the two Heaven Tier Battle Skills clashed, everyone had imagined its aftereffects. Most people had anticipated both sides to come out heavily injured and end in a tie. They hadn’t imagined that the impossible would happen, and that after the two initialized their battle skills, one person would die a wretched death by being split in two while the other would remain unharmed.

A single elder dropped down from the middle of nowhere with his silk robes. Standing in the air, it seemed as if he was treating the Earth Saint Masters and Heaven Saint Masters as beneath him, yet he was not rude at all. Not a single of the Heaven Saint Masters below him had any complaints and or any dissatisfaction toward this individual. Every single Heaven Saint Master had only respect for him and even a small yearning.

The elder stared at the arena below before muttering, “A Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master versus a Fifth Cycle Earth Saint Master. An Advanced Heaven Tier Battle Skill versus a Primary Heaven Tier Battle Skill, this type of outcome wasn’t unexpected at all.” While the elder didn’t speak too loudly, his voice could still be heard loud and clear throughout the arena.

Immediately, the entire crowd went into an uproar as they looked at Ming Dong with a mixture of envy, admiration, and jealousy.

“An Advance Tier Heaven Tier Battle Skill, he had one of those? I’ve been a Heaven Saint Master for over twenty years, but my strongest battle skill is only an Advanced Earth Tier Battle Skill, ai...”

“He’s already a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master at this age? Dear heavens, that’s impossible...”

“Did I hear that right? He’s not even thirty years old, how could he be a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master? And a Heaven Tier Battle Skill, good god, that’s just too shocking! This Gathering of the Mercenaries is far too much.”

In a short moment, all sorts of comments could be heard coming through all over the arena as everyone congratulated, complained, or grumbled their thoughts about Ming Dong.

The floating elder looked at Ming Dong with a smile envious look before speaking absentmindedly to himself, "Who would have known that the Great Elder would have bestowed the technique that made him well known to you. For a youth to have such control over the Sword of the Tyrant. It seems that the Great Elder did not waste any effort to train you. Ming Dong, just who are you for the Great Elder to spend so much time and energy?"

The winner of this match was clear to see to anyone with eyes. So even though Ming Dong hadn't heard the cry of victory, a Space Gate opened up to let him out.

With a breath of relief, Ming Dong looked at the split body of Ka Zhafei and said, "I told you I'd split you in half, let's see if you believe me now." With that, he walked away and into the Space Gate.

The Space Gate behind Ka Zhafei opened up as well as several of the members of Mercenary City quickly came in and started to clean up the arena.

Ming Dong returned to Jian Chen's side as everyone stared at him in a new light. Each one now had a deep fear imprinted on them; even Caraga looked at Ming Dong with a completely new emotion.

Jian Chen and Ming Dong gave each other a mutual look before the both of them sat down on stools to watch the rest of the matches.

At this moment, Qin Ji walked up to Ming Dong with a respectful posture, "Congratulations to brother Ming Dong for becoming one of the top ten. With your strength, getting into the top three will not be an impossible task."

With a laugh, Ming Dong began to speak to Qin Ji for a little while.

As the two talked, the finals continued with the usual marvelousness, but after the match between Ming Dong and Ka Zhafei, nothing could compare to their beautiful clash. Thus, every match after did not seem as exciting.

After the eight matches had been concluded, eight winners were established. Aridia, Zhar, Jian Chen, Ming Dong, Baili Tong, Caraga, and Zhangsun Yunfeng.

Much to the shock of Jian Chen, the wind attributed Earth Saint Master that he had come across before while hunting for tokens had made it into the top eight, Zhangsun Yunfeng.

After the top eight had been established, Jue and Tianmu Ling had managed to make their way back into the top ten after winning the loser's bracket.

At last, the ten names of the contestants were complete. Aridia, Zhar, Jian Chen, Ming Dong, Qin Ji, Baili Tong, Caraga, Zhangsun Yunfeng, Jue and Tianmu Ling.

Afterward, the competition prepared to move forward. The tournament would not end until the King of Mercenaries was found. Only the top eight contestants would be able to compete as well as Tianmu Ling and Jue who had both made the ninth and tenth spots.

The eight people began to pick their numbers so that an announcement could be made. Then the announcement came:

Jian Chen Versus Caraga.

Ming Dong Versus Zhangsun Yunfeng

Qin Ji Vs Zhar

Aridia Vs Baili Tong

The final rounds would be held three days later as each competitor went into a special inn prepared for them to rest. The entire inn was protected by a barrier so that only the competitors could enter. At the same time, they couldn't exit the barrier. All of the inn workers were trusted aides of Mercenary City.

During those three days, Jian Chen spent the majority of his time ensuring that his body would be in peak condition. After that, he took out the Duanyun Sword and the Seal of Treasure Mountain to inspect them. After fiddling with them for half a day, he had come to a final conclusion. He would not be able to use either Ruler Armaments, and even if he were to use his own Saint Force to force it into them, it would be eliminated. The Seal of Treasure Mountain was as the four brothers of the Cai family said. Jian Chen would not be able to use it, and the Seal of Treasure Mountain was nothing more than a broken piece of iron in his hands.

"Could it be that the words of those four were true? A Ruler Armament requires the right bloodline in order to be used?" Jian Chen thought as he eyed the item, this was the only explanation that made sense to him.

Afterward, Jian Chen placed both Ruler Armaments back into his Space Ring and began his study of the Illusionary Flash.

In the past few days, the four brothers of the Cai family had already relayed the news of Shi Xiangran's death by Jian Chen's hands as well as the capture of the Ruler Armament to the Shi family. The very moment the Shi family heard the news, the family head was shocked beyond relief and grew angrier by the second. Even though Shi Xiangran was the third son, his cultivation talent was far beyond everyone else; he was an outstanding person that appeared once in a millenia.

Four hours after receiving the news, two Heaven Saint Masters were dispatched to Mercenary City.

Chapter 336: Two Moves

Three days went by in a flash. Every competitor had their bodies in peak condition for the finals. Outside of the barrier, there was a lot of chatter and many discussions on who would be the winner, causing people to start to bet. Every single one of the gamblers wanted to win big, so the overall sum was well over ten million purple coins. However, most of the bets were on Ming Dong being the winner while everyone else had a tenth of the votes.

By the afternoon, Mercenary City was completely filled. The amount of people that came here today was quite a bit more than the amount from the previous days, causing all of the streets that led to the plaza to be completely congested.

Jian Chen and Caraga both stood in the opposite ends of the arena while giving fierce looks at each other.

“Brat, you and that Ming Dong seem quite close. Ming Dong has killed my brother Ka Zhafei. Today, I shall spill your blood as a sacrifice to Ka Zhafei’s soul. Then, Ming Dong will have his turn to accompany you!” Caraga glared at Jian Chen.

Jian Chen snorted as he gave a small smirk, “Your brother Ka Zhafei and Ming Dong had said similar words to each other, and in the end, Ka Zhafei was split in two by Ming Dong. Today, your words scare me just as much as Ka Zhafei’s words scared Ming Dong. You will see that the person who falls today will be you.”

“Hmph, do you think yourself as Ming Dong? The fact that Ming Dong is a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master is something that I did not expect, and neither did I think that he had such a strong Heaven Tier Battle Skill. Ka Zhafei’s death at Ming Dong’s hands was not wrong, but you, are you also a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master? Hmph, if you are one, then I, Caraga, will immediately admit defeat and kowtow my head thrice.” Caraga sneered with disdain.

With an impassive look, Jian Chen replied, “There is no need for you to know my strength. Just know that you need not kowtow because you will not leave here alive. Remember that each and every word of yours comes at a heavy price” With that, Jian Chen’s killing intent began to leak out from him.

With a cold smile, Caraga began to exude his own killing intent, but not another word was spoken.

“Begin!” A loud voice called out into the barrier.

A silver white two-handed sword that was two meters long appeared in Caraga’s hand, flickering with a faint white glow that made it seem almost holy.

At the same time, Jian Chen’s Light Wind Sword could be seen materializing in his own right hand. Holding it in front of him, Jian Chen spoke, “If you have that strange armor, then you would best put it on or risk losing the chance to later.”

At this, Caraga’s face grew hot with fury. In the past, no matter where he went, he had been respected and revered by all. However today, he had been scorned by a single youth no older than the age of twenty, for the high and mighty Caraga, he could not bear this. With an angry roar, he yelled, “It seems as if you don’t even know how to write the character for death, there is no need for me to use the Radiant Saint Armor against you, die!” With that, he flew at Jian Chen and swung out with his giant longsword with all the power a Fifth Cycle Earth Saint Master could muster.

Caraga’s strength could equal Ming Dong’s own despite him being a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master.

Jian Chen stared icily at Caraga as an azure and violet light appeared on his Light Wind Sword, causing the silver light on the blade to intensify.

The very moment Qin Ji and Tianmu Ling saw the light, their eyes immediately zoned in on Jian Chen’s sword. To be accurate, the light on the Light Wind Sword was quite eye-catching, and they couldn’t help but remember what had happened back in the immortal’s cave. Jian Chen had easily shattered the barriers of Shi Xiangran and Jiede Wukang with that very light. Right now they suddenly remembered that Jian Chen was using those same lights.

The azure and violet Sword Qi was quite weak now, but because of the silver glow from the Light Wind Sword, the azure and violet Sword Qi was quite noticeable and eye-catching.

Caraga noticed the sudden azure and violet Sword Qi, but whatever purpose it served he did not care to take notice. Instead, he carried on to slash at Jian Chen's waist.

At the same time, Jian Chen took action as well as the Light Wind Sword clashed with Caraga's own sword with a violent crash.

"Bang!"

A wild explosion burst out of the two Saint Weapons, but because Caraga's Saint Weapon was much stronger than Jian Chen, the Sword Qi on the Light Wind Sword had been scattered for the most part. A kaleidoscopic picture of Sword Qi flew out and impacted against the barrier without a single scratch on it before the Sword Qi disappeared from reality.

Although Jian Chen's sword had most of its Sword Qi scattered, the azure and violet Sword Qi was not affected. Just as those two and Caraga's Radiant Saint Force made contact, Caraga's sword became like a rotten piece of wood that instantly chipped away as the Light Wind Sword left behind a two finger wide hole in it.

Feeling the damage from his Saint Weapon, Caraga stifled a shout as his face went white and he spat out some blood.

Mere seconds after Jian Chen's sword had smashed against Caraga's sword, Jian Chen continued up with a second strike with his sword in a split second. While the strike had only been for a moment, the power and speed in which it had struck out was inconceivable.

Caraga could feel the damage done to his Saint Weapon with a shocked expression, As the azure and violet Sword Qi flashed in between his eyes again, he immediately remembered his surroundings and quickly increased the distance between him and Jian Chen.

However Jian Chen had somehow managed to get behind Caraga while holding his sword in an elegant like position without moving.

Outside of the arena, everyone began to point wildly at the scene with loud chattering of amazement at the initial strike.

"Who do you think will win...?"

"Of course it'll be Caraga...."

"Its definitely Caraga, I've heard that he and Ka Zhafei are extremely close. Even Ka Zhafei was a Fifth Cycle Earth Saint Master, Caraga's strength is definitely just as strong, but I'm not sure if he has a Heaven Tier Battle Skill or not..."

"But Jian Chen's strength isn't bad either. He's quite young, what age do you guys think? I would say twenty years old, he couldn't have been cultivating for that long..."

"That's right, Jian Chen couldn't have been cultivating for more than a dozen to twenty years. I can also see that he is an attributeless Saint Force cultivator as well. He cannot compete with Caraga who is a

Radiant Saint Force attributed cultivator. He is also called the undying by most and is incredibly strong, who could possibly kill him....?”

Suddenly, the chatter immediately stopped as everyone saw the bright red line on Caraga’s neck. The red line began to grow wider before the entire neck seemed to be completely red. Even before the line could become completely red, everyone had already come to the conclusion that the line was blood.

Like a water fountain, blood began to spill from Caraga’s neck as he fell to the ground. His neck already had a pool of blood forming beneath his body. Then, his head rolled away from the body, causing the blood to pour from his neck in a steady stream, covering the entire arena with blood.

Outside of the arena, everyone had gone into a mute shock as they stared at the scene in the arena with wide eyes and looks of amazement.

For someone strong with a Radiant Saint Force like Caraga, it was unexpected for him to be beheaded by the young looking Jian Chen as soon as the match had started. This was such a wide gap in skill everyone found it almost hard to believe.

As if ignoring everyone else, the moment the announcement was revealed, Jian Chen walked out of the Space Gate and into the staging area where everyone was staring at him with wide eyes as if they had no idea whether or not someone was coming back.

“What a fast sword, for him to stab outward in less than a single second, this type of strength is far too much! It seems that his sword has a secret regarding those two strange lights if it could cut a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master’s weapon.” A Heaven Saint Master elder spoke in admiration.

Leaving the arena, Jian Chen had found it hard to contain his excitement. This wasn’t excitement from winning, but excitement from seeing his azure and violet Sword Qi growing in strength once more. Though, everyone had seen the glows.

Jian Chen had been able to behead Caraga, so Ming Dong naturally congratulated him. The other competitors’ outlook on Jian Chen had now changed by a lot. They all replaced Caraga with him as the number one person here. Everyone had a strange fear of him now almost as if he were a bigger threat than Ming Dong. Jian Chen’s beheading slash of Caraga took less than a second, practically faster than a thunderclap. Even they hadn’t seen what had transpired inside the arena since Jian Chen’s speed was just far too fast for them to notice.

Chapter 337: The Finals

The next fight was between Ming Dong and Zhangsun Yunfeng. After a short break the arena was back to normal, allowing Ming Dong to enter via the Space Gate. However, before he could cross through Jian Chen pulled him aside and with a sharp glance toward Zhangsun Yunfeng, spoke a few words of warning.

With a clench of his fist, a spark of killing intent could be seen in Ming Dong’s eyes as he spoke, “Don’t worry, brother Qin Xiao has been kind to us, I, Ming Dong, will take revenge for him.” With that, he stalked into the arena.

Zhangsun Yunfeng was a middle aged man who looked quite refined almost as if he was a wise scholar. His eyes wavered when he saw Jian Chen and Ming Dong talking together as his heart began to beat

faster. With some hesitation, he finally gritted his teeth and strode into the arena with his head held high.

Quickly, both combatants entered the arena with Ming Dong staring at Zhangsun Yunfeng with a look that held none of his killing intent back. This caused Zhangsun Yunfeng to feel a bit startled before taking on a more serious look. He and Jian Chen already had a small conflict in the past, and Jian Chen and Ming Dong were on good terms with each other, allowed him to deduce from these two facts that Jian Chen had asked Ming Dong to eliminate him.

“Begin!” The announcer cried out.

Without hesitation after hearing the announcement, he disappeared without a single trace and flew at Zhangsun Yunfeng in an instant.

“I admit defeat!” A mere moment after the match had started, Zhangsun Yunfeng cried out immediately. He had personally seen Ming Dong and Ka Zhafei’s fight for himself and knew that Ming Dong’s strength was not something that he himself could be an opponent of.

Ming Dong had no intention of sparing Zhangsun Yunfeng and instantly reappeared right in front of him with his Saint Force exploding out from his body as he lashed out with his sword. At the same time, a powerful sword appeared and pressed against Zhangsun Yunfeng’s body, causing him to feel as if he was stuck in a quagmire and could not move.

“Earth Tier Battle Skill!” Zhangsun Yunfeng spoke in shock. He had no idea that Ming Dong would have such an attack and would be so familiar with the skill that he could use it straight away.

Ming Dong’s sword came slamming down onto Zhangsun Yunfeng’s head with a domineering pressure and speed that had rendered him unable to defend or even move against Ming Dong’s attack.

At the same time, the barrier came crashing down like a curtain from the heavens, separating Ming Dong and Zhangsun Yunfeng from each other.

Ming Dong’s strike crashed against the barrier with a resounding bang, but the energy from the shock wave was absorbed into the barrier like a pebble in the ocean without a single trace of damage.

“When one of the combatant admits defeat, then the other combatant is forbidden from making any further attacks, Ming Dong is the winner!” A loud voice boomed out as two Space Gates opened up on both sides.

Staring vehemently at Zhangsun Yunfeng, Ming Dong let out a helpless sigh before walking back to his Space Gate dejectedly.

With his own sigh of relief, Zhangsun Yunfeng was extremely grateful for the last second protection against Ming Dong. If it were not for that, then he would have been killed by Ming Dong’s attack and would not live to see himself walk out of the arena.

Zhangsun Yunfeng stared in fear at the retreating back of Ming Dong before walking himself sadly back to his own Space Gate. He had spent forty long years cultivating so that he could attain such a strong power, but he hadn’t thought that some youth under the age of thirty would have been able to force him into such a miserable state.

The next match was between Qin Ji and Zhar. Although Qin Ji had a Ruler Armament he could not use it in this match because of the barrier placed onto him being restricted. The match was extremely short since Qin Ji was incapable of hurting Zhar with his Radiant Saint Armor, leaving Zhar as the winner.

The final round was between Aridia and Baili Tong. Both of them were well built men. Baili Tong had the strength of a Fifth Cycle Earth Saint Master. The fight lasted an hour before, finally, Baili Tong managed to strike at Adiria for the win.

Thus, the four strongest had been established: Jian Chen, Ming Dong, Zhar, and Baili Tong.

After a day of rest, the finals started straight away. With the matches being determined, the list of names had been released. What caused both Ming Dong and Jian Chen to feel gloomy was that they had been pitted against each other at last. Zhar had been paired up against Baili Tong who had a Ruler Armament as well.

In the arena, Jian Chen and Ming Dong both stared at each other helplessly. Luck had played with them and the Heavens had pulled one final joke at their expense.

This day would end with the final two strongest being established. If Jian Chen and Ming Dong hadn't been pitted against each other, then there would have been a good chance for them to be first and second place. Because of the will of the Heavens, one of the two men would be eliminated.

"Begin!" The announcer called out, but not a single person made a move.

"Ming Dong, you are quite strong, so I trust that you will be able to be number one, don't disappoint me." Jian Chen spoke. He had every intention to admit defeat here. He knew in his heart that if he did not use his azure and violet Sword Qi, he would not be an opponent for Ming Dong at all. After all, Ming Dong was a wind attributed Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master and had a better comprehension of the Illusionary Flash. Compared to Ming Dong, Jian Chen had no chance of winning.

"I admit defeat!"

Just as Jian Chen opened his mouth to admit defeat, Ming Dong beat him to it.

Seeing the amazed look on Jian Chen's face, Ming Dong laughed, "Jian Chen, your strength isn't any weaker than mine, I believe that you can grab the first place, so don't you dare disappoint Me!"

With a forced smile, Jian Chen replied, "Ming Dong, you becoming first place is not a difficult task, why did you give me the chance to do so instead?"

"Because you need it more. Jian Chen, uncle Tian told me that whoever is first place within the Gathering of the Mercenaries will be able to cultivate in the holy grounds of Mercenary City for half a year. Jian Chen, you know that I am already at the peak of the Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master. At any given time, I can make the breakthrough to become a Heaven Saint Master, so the holy grounds is of no use to me, you on the other hand, are in a different situation." Ming Dong spoke seriously.

Smiling more freely now, Jian Chen said, "Then fine, Ming Dong. Since you have given me the chance, I won't dare let you down now."

"Congratulations on your win." Ming Dong laughed.

What Ming Dong didn't know was that when he had conceded the match, countless of people howled out in anger and cursed. That was because everyone had bet on Ming Dong being the number one person in the competition. When they had placed all their bets on Ming Dong and now witnessed him admit defeat, the money they had spent was thrown away.

The final conclusion between Jian Chen and Ming Dong had been far beyond what anyone had expected. Only those who had some familiarity with the two had a look of smugness on their faces. They knew that Ming Dong and Jian Chen had been with each other for some time, and while they knew that Ming Dong was extremely strong, he had always treated Jian Chen as the leader almost as if he was the boss.

The millions of people within Mercenary City began to talk among themselves as everyone that had bet on Ming Dong felt extremely dissatisfied. It was only until a Heaven Saint Master commented that Jian Chen himself was not weak at all and had proved it when he beheaded Caraga in an instant. After that, anyone who had expressed their dissatisfaction at Ming Dong's defeat grew quiet. For those who had placed a large sum of money on Ming Dong, they could only drop their heads and wallow in their sadness.

No matter how loud the chatter was, not a single person within the arena could hear it because of the soundproofing characteristic of the barrier, so Ming Dong and Jian Chen had not heard a single word.

Afterward, Zhar and Baili Tong stepped into the arena. Zhar had already reached the Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master level and had a small repertoire of strong battle skills. Baili Tong was only at a Fourth Cycle Earth Saint Master strength but had a Ruler Armament, yet this would not be very effective against the Radiant Saint Armor of Zhar. With Zhar also being able to heal himself with his Radiant Saint Force, the battle did not take long with the Radiant Warrior Zhar being the winner.

The final round of the competition and the most important one would take place the following day. Because this was the final battle, it would give rise to the strongest individual of the Gathering of the Mercenaries and would be given the honor of being called the King of Mercenaries.

During the following day of rest, Jian Chen disregarded the break and put all of his efforts into comprehending the Illusionary Flash. He had already attained the first layer of mastery with the Heaven's Stolen Fortune and could increase his strength three times over. This was already a pleasing result to Jian Chen, so he did not need to worry anymore on studying the Heaven's Stolen Fortune since it would be impossible for him to make the second layer in such a short amount of time. Even if he were to somehow gain mastery of the second layer, his fighting strength would not be all that much different in relativity since his strength would only be multiplied by four times. Even with his First Cycle Earth Saint Master strength multiplied by four, it would not be able to contend against a Heaven Saint Master.

Rather than that outcome, Jian Chen threw all of his time and effort toward studying the Illusionary Flash. He was not focusing on getting first place of the Gathering of the Mercenaries since he had a great deal of confidence in getting it already. What Jian Chen truly did fear was the Jiede clan and Shi family. He could anticipate that the moment he left Mercenary City, there would be experts from both powers coming to kill him and take back the Ruler Armaments. The grudges between him and the two powers would never be dissolved since he was far too weak.

Chapter 338: Zhar's Condition

The next day, countless people waited for the finals to finally start. This was the day that the King of Mercenaries would be established. The bi-centennial Gathering of the Mercenaries was finally coming to a close. The news of Zhar fighting against Jian Chen had been the focus of everyone's banter. Even several Heaven Saint Masters had personally come to watch the fight before trying to predict who would win. In the end, the final conclusion was that the two men were not that different in strength.

Zhar was over the age of forty five, but also below the age fifty with the strength of a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master and had the Radiant Saint Force. Because of that, he was called the undying by many since he could heal any injury he might receive. His natural advantages were plenty and he was as complex as the two other Radiant Warriors from before. Neither audience nor combatants knew of his battle skills except for the exceptionally strong armor he had. However, many people speculated that he had a single Heaven Tier Battle Skill at the very least.

Jian Chen was most likely above the age of twenty and below the age of twenty five with the strength of a First or Second Cycle Earth Saint Master. He had no known attributed Saint Force but his strikes were incredibly deadly. His sword was incredibly fast and could make it hard for a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master to dodge. Moreover, he could maintain that speed for a long period of time without feeling the side effects of this supernatural movement. And because of some sort of martial arts, his movements were incredibly fast, he had no known battle skill, but he had a single hidden secret that could shatter the Saint Weapon of a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master. When he utilizes the azure and violet glows of light, his fighting strength was suddenly multiplied and many people speculated that this was definitely a Heaven Tier Battle Skill.

When information regarding the two's strength had been revealed, everyone immediately took notice and within the same day people began to gamble once more. Because this was the final round, every single gambler had placed high stakes on the match. Many of the wealthier men had wagered hundreds of thousands of purple coins on the two, making the pot of the entire bet count up to over a hundred million purple coins. Because of the ambiguity over the two combatants strength, there were people that looked at Jian Chen favorably and people who looked at Zhar favorably for an almost equal outcome. Half the people had bet on Jian Chen, the other half had bet on Zhar.

"Hehehe, how lively. I would like to bet 100,000 purple coins on brother Jian Chen to win it all." Tianmu Ling took out the appropriate sum of money to hand it over.

"I too would like to bet on brother Jian Chen's victory, 500,000 purple coins!" Qin Ji strode forward and took out the money from his Space Belt.

"I'd like to bet a thousand purple coins on Jian Chen, that's all I have." Senior An brought out a smaller stack of money onto the table.

"30,000 purple coins on Jian Chen, all of my personal wealth rests upon Jian Chen's shoulders." Qin Xiao spoke out in a grand voice.

"10,000 purple coins on Jian Chen." Dugu Feng wasn't one to be left behind and spoke to the one taking the bets with a calm look.

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In the arena, Jian Chen and Zhar both stood quietly across from each other. Jian Chen stood in carefree manner in front of Zhar with his sword in hand, the point of the sword resting on the ground, yet a piercing stare was honed in on Zhar.

Zhar was a sturdily built man who was about two meters tall and had a chilling stare as he looked at Jian Chen. He had come fully prepared by wearing his silver colored armor where wisps of Radiant Saint Force could be seen revolving around it, basking the area around him in a glowing light and giving him the appearance of a holy person. The only place that had not been covered by the armor were the two spots where his eyes were. Holding his bright Saint Weapon above his head, the armored Zhar looked like a revered war god.

The two had already stood in the arena for some time before instantly bursting into action as the announcer made the call.

Suddenly, the war god like Zhar spoke from within his silver armor, "Jian Chen, although you are using some sort of special method to hide your presence, I can tell that your Saint Force is not far away from my own. With your young age, I am sure that with time, you will reach the peak of the Tian Yuan Continent. So in this battle whether I win or lose, I hope that we will remain friends and not enemies."

Jian Chen was slightly shocked after hearing those words, but he stared at Zhar with a strange look, "We've killed your comrades Caraga and Ka Zhafei, did you not wish to avenge them?"

Even under the helmet, there seemed to be no difference in his emotion as Zhar spoke calmly, "I admit, Caraga and Ka Zhafei both came from the same place as I, but our affiliations are with a different power. We are not friends, but instead competitors. Our relationship with each other is quite subtle, and if it was any worse, then it would have become hostile. With you and Ming Dong killing the both of them, I should thank you; in fact, you've eliminated potential enemies in my future."

Zhar let out a long sigh, "This triple entente between the three of us has gone on for too long. Perhaps, it was time for it to be smashed apart." Zhar said before speaking once more, "Jian Chen, no matter how this battle goes, I truly hope that we will remain friends."

Jian Chen's eyes flashed with a strange light, he knew that this was an unknown situation where he was at great risks of being dragged into a terrible battleground. With some thought, Jian Chen said, "I can only say that we will not be enemies; as for friends, that cannot be easily done with so few words."

Zhar nodded his head, "That is true enough. If just saying these words were enough for two strangers to become friends, then the value of friendship would be absolutely worthless. Jian Chen, I know that you are determined to be first place, but do you have the strength to overcome me?"

Jian Chen's eyes flashed with a strange look as he tried to understand what Zhar was trying to get at, but he opened his mouth and replied anyways, "Partially!"

Zhar laughed, "It seems that you have confidence in yourself." With that, Zhar took out his long sword and then another silver bladed sword from within his Space Ring, "Jian Chen, if I were to use this Saint Weapon, how sure are you that you will be able to beat me?"

Jian Chen took a looked at the new weapon in Zhar's hand with a bright stare, "If my guess is correct, that is a Ruler Armament."

Without any other words, Zhar laughed once more, "Correct, this is a Ruler Armament. Jian Chen, if I were to use this, then how sure are you that you would be able to beat me?"

Jian Chen stayed mysteriously silent, giving no reply.

Continuing to speak, Zhar said, "Jian Chen, you must know that just the two of us reaching this step was not easy. The requirements for the Gathering of the Mercenaries didn't allow many of the geniuses born at the wrong time to participate, so no matter if it is you or me that desires first place, we both will not easily renounce it. With our strength being so close to each other, we will have to fight with all our power to attain first place, and since we must defeat the other in order to become first, I will indeed try my best" Zhar suddenly stopped his speech to look at Jian Chen for a brief moment, "But if you could agree to my request, I will renounce my attempt and give you the spot of first place."

Hearing this, Jian Chen kept a calm look on his face but his mind instantly began to think back to the first words that Zhar had said. In a flash, he had come to a conclusion that there would be a possibility for him to be involved in a clash between major powers. Zhar's condition was quite alluring, but for such an alluring condition, there would definitely be an equally heavy price to pay for it. Zhar must have seen Jian Chen's potential as well as the relationship he had with Ming Dong or greatly desired to have the support of the powers behind the both of them. Whichever the situation was, Jian Chen would definitely not want to agree to him.

"My apologies, but I believe that this battle should be won using our own strengths, not words." Jian Chen spoke calmly with a neutral expression.

"Jian Chen, did you not even want to hear what my request was?" Zhar asked.

"There is no need." Jian Chen replied.

"Jian Chen, this is your chance to become first place. I am not afraid to tell you, but I am in possession of a Middle Heaven Tier Battle Skill and a Ruler Armament, did you think you could beat me?" Zhar asked.

Jian Chen had a deep smile on his face as he replied, "Zhar, if you cannot hit me, then the Ruler Armament in your hand has no use. As for the Heaven Tier Battle Skill, hehe, while they are indeed powerful they require time to employ. If you dare try to initialize your Heaven Tier Battle Skill, then I can guarantee that you will not be able to release it. My sword will strike at your throat."

If it were not for the helmet on Zhar's face, then the facial change would have been noticeable to everyone. He stared blankly at Jian Chen for a moment before laughing for a good while. This was the first time he had ever thought his words had been so useless and suffered so much by the younger generation.

After a short period of time, Zhar let out a sigh as he stared at Jian Chen in thought, "If only my son was as remarkable as you, that would be great. Even if I were to reduce my life by a hundred years, if not a thousand or even ten thousand years, I would agree!"

Jian Chen was speechless.

Chapter 339: The Soul Sword Once More

The moment Ming Dong saw the Ruler Armament in Zhar's hand from the outside, his face grew startled. "Crap, I didn't think he would have a Ruler Armament. His secret was cleverly hidden until now. This will be troublesome to see if Jian Chen will be able to beat him."

The next moment, the two fighters spared no more words and waited for the match to officially start.

Two hours had passed, and if Zhar hadn't made a move, then Jian Chen would have thought that the match had long since started. He hadn't heard the call, but the time he had waited was already far too long. He had come here in the morning, and now it was almost noon.

The blazing hot sun was already high in the air and its hot golden light rays bored down, basking the entire area with a golden color.

Despite the sun blazing overhead, not a single person felt the heat. It was already winter in season, so the temperature was not unbearable. Only a few really noticed the sunlight's heat, but they thought it to be more comfortable than not, unlike summer heat which everyone came to hate.

"It is now the third hour, let the competition begin!" Suddenly, the voice of the announcer could be heard.

Hearing this, Jian Chen almost felt like spitting out blood. He had no idea that he and Zhar would be standing around like idiots until the first hour past the start of the afternoon for the match to begin.

"Tai!" On the other side, Zhar had already burst into motion as his Radiant Saint Force exploded away from him. With his Ruler Armament high in the air with a divine like radiance, his entire person seemed equally divine in spirit, making him seem like a war god.

As the Ruler Armament was waved in the air, a large amount of Sword Qi suddenly flew out toward Jian Chen like a crescent moon. Its power was so strong that even while flying through the air, the crescent shaped Sword Qi began to distort.

For a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master to wield a Ruler Armament, the amount of energy that would be released would be much more than Dugu Feng.

The crescent shaped Sword Qi flew at Jian Chen who was instantly torn apart, allowing the attack to continue on. It exploded against the barrier where it disappeared like a pebble within the ocean.

Seeing how Jian Chen had been smashed apart by the crescent Sword Qi, the entire audience all gasped in shock and amazement. However, the cries were all cut short as they realized it had only been a mirror image of Jian Chen that had been hit. The real one suddenly reappeared behind Zhar with his Light Wind Sword glowing with a faint azure and violet Sword Qi before stabbing at his back.

Zhar didn't even bother to turn around and immediately swung his Ruler Armament behind him. The energy from the Ruler Armament burst outward with a shaking sensation almost as if the area around it could not handle the energy output.

Growing serious at the blow, Jian Chen could feel that the amount of power Zhar had while using the Ruler Armament was far stronger than that of Qin Ji and Dugu Feng by a good amount. Jian Chen wouldn't be able to handle a fraction of the Ruler Armament's power, let alone the entire force of it.

Taking back his sword, Jian Chen immediately used the Illusionary Flash and left behind a mirror image for the Ruler Armament to attack while reappearing behind Zhar to stab at him with his azure and violet Sword Qi once more.

Without even moving to dodge Jian Chen's blow, Zhar brandished his Ruler Armament so that his Ruler Armament would strike Jian Chen.

Jian Chen had been fearful of Zhar's Ruler Armament, he knew just how strong the azure and violet Sword Qi were, but the Ruler Armament was not Zhar's Saint Weapon. Even if he were able to shatter the Ruler Armament, it would not diminish Zhar's fighting ability too much. For the sake of his own safety, he had to take back his strike once more and dodge the Ruler Armament.

The two men continued to go at each other in a fierce exchange of blows that never connected as they dodged, making the fight seem almost silent.

Zhar knew that Jian Chen's speed was far too fast so he hadn't tried to dodge Jian Chen's attacks and instead tried to meet the blows head for head. His Ruler Armament was brandished in a wide area so that Jian Chen would be forced to pull back his own sword at the last moment to avoid collision.

Jian Chen was already utilizing the Illusionary Flash to the best of his ability and traveled in a circle around Zhar rapidly. In less than a few moments, the two men had exchanged multiple strikes with not a single person being able to do a thing to the other.

The formidable amount of power coming from Zhar's Ruler Armament struck fear into Jian Chen's heart. He also knew that he didn't dare risk for a mutually assured destruction with Zhar because he wasn't sure if the Ruler Armament would be able to cut him in half. With the amount of power that was exuding from the Ruler Armament, he didn't want to test it out.

Suddenly, a flash of light appeared in Jian Chen's eyes as he dashed backward while stabbing at Zhar with the azure and violet Sword Qi infused Light Wind Sword in every position. The armor that Zhar was wearing was strong enough that even Ming Dong would normally be helpless against it. Jian Chen's regular strikes wouldn't be enough to dent it, so he needed to borrow the power of the azure and violet Sword Qi.

With an angry shout, Zhar brought his Ruler Armament up close to him so that the Light Wind Sword would be useless against it and scatter all of the Sword Qi away.

"Hmph, I, Jian Chen, doubt that I would be unable to deal with this situation." He snorted before revealing an eye full of rage that made it seem as if they contained fire instead. In an instant, the Light Wind Sword separated from his hand and transformed into a silver ray of light that shot toward Zhar with impeccable speed. The Light Wind Sword seemed to have almost reached the speed of "light," making it almost impossible for anyone to see.

At this moment, Jian Chen was using most of his soul to utilize the Soul Sword. The flight of the Light Wind Sword would have astounded the entire audience to a new level if seen by them even as the sword began to conceal itself within a faint mist.

"Ding!"

Before Zhar could even react, the Light Wind Sword had already struck against his armor, but because Jian Chen had underestimated just how strong the defenses were, the sword had only left behind a small trace of damage.

Although Zhar had suffered no injuries, the Light Wind Sword had still traveled at an incredible speed and pushed him back a few steps with a large amount of force. The moment he had seen the silver streak of light, his face instantly slackened with shock as he cried out, "Just how is this possible? You...just what did you use to hit me?"

Because of Jian Chen's efforts, the Light Wind Sword had flew at a speed and direction that made it impossible for Zhar to take notice, so he was completely unaware of what had been used to hit him.

Jian Chen ignored Zhar's surprised outcry and slowly closed his eyes, to sense the existence of his Light Wind Sword. Using his spirit to control the Light Wind Sword, he and the sword achieved a harmonized state of mind. He was the sword, and the sword was he; the two beings were one and not two.

Just as Jian Chen had delved into this state of mind, the azure and violet Sword Spirits suddenly began to shake within his dantian. The Multicolored Stone also began to shake as if it were extremely happy like an overly excited child.

"Ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding...."

A series of echoes could be heard as Zhar's body continued to dance in a strange motion. With each step he took he was driven back so that he staggered in a new direction each second, several times, he was on the verge of falling to the ground. It was evident to see that he was in a bad position.

On his armor, a chain of firework like sparks could be seen as they lit up his Radiant Saint Armor and left several impressions in it.

"Just what in the world is happening... what trickery is this....?" Zhar cried out in shock and anger. Jian Chen and his sword were now one and with him placing all of his strength on controlling the Light Wind Sword, its speed was practically invisible to the naked eye. Even though Zhar was being constantly assaulted by strikes, he couldn't see just what was hitting him.

The Light Wind Sword continued to rain down on Zhar's body with an unbelievable amount of strength. Each strike rocked his body making him unsteady. At last, Zhar stabbed his Ruler Armament into the ground to anchor his position while allowing the invisible strikes to continue to pelt him unobstructed.

His Radiant Saint Armor was valiantly durable and was comparable to even Shi Xiangran's defensive barrier. No matter how many strikes hit him, they did no damage to him at all.

"Just what in the heavens is this..." Zhar stared in bafflement toward the immobile Jian Chen. He had no idea how many times he had spoken those words now, but it went without saying that he was extremely curious to know just what trickery Jian Chen was doing.

Outside of the arena, every single person gasped in shock with their eyes wide open as they watched the show happening right in front of them. All they could see was the stationary Jian Chen who seemed like a stone statue and Zhar who was twenty meters away with his Ruler Armament stabbed deep into the ground. His hands were clenched onto the Ruler Armament while a series of sparks flashed across his armor.

This strange show left everyone absolutely mystified on how exactly this situation came to be and what was causing it.

Chapter 340: The Holy Land

The spectating Qin Ji had a strange look of puzzlement on his face as he observed the two men, “Just what are they doing? It seems Zhar is being assaulted by attacks in an endless stream, but I don’t see where they’re coming from. Also the sword from Jian Chen’s hand is missing; Jian Chen is quite definitely a strange one, someone far more mysterious than I had initially thought.” Even Qin Ji was incapable of spotting the Light Wind Sword since the speed it was traveling at was beyond what he could detect with his naked eye, meaning that he could only see the sparks flying off Zhar’s armor without know just how Jian Chen was involved.

On the other side, Ming Dong looked on with some relief at the sight of Zhar being showered with sparks. With a small smile, he muttered, “It is no wonder that he is a brother of mine; he is quite special. It seems that in this case, it won’t be much longer until Zhar loses. To think I was worrying over this fight for nothing!”

“Oh! Little brother seems to have hidden such a mysterious thing, for him to force the Ruler Armament wielding Zhar to eat up such a loss, I bet that Zhar would have died a long time ago if it were not for his armor. However, how did little brother get so much strength? Since it is an attack that is invisible to everyone, it is not that easy to defend against. I can tell that being an opponent of his would not be a smart choice.” Tianmu Ling stared at the arena with eyes that flashed with wonder.

Even the yellow robed Huang Luan was staring at Jian Chen with a dazed look. Her expression was exceptionally complex. Her mind couldn’t help but think back to the first time she had met Jian Chen, that awkward meeting at the river. She then thought about when she saw him during the survival competition.

“Are you really the same man as before?” Huang Luan wondered absentmindedly as she looked at Jian Chen and muttered to herself. She could clearly remember a few years back Jian Chen was not worthy of being her opponent and wasn’t capable of dealing any damage to her. She had no idea that after some time, she would meet the much stronger Jian Chen who could outmatch her by a long distance.

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In the arena, Zhar held his ground tenaciously as he clutched at his Ruler Armament with great force as he shouted, “Jian Chen! You cannot harm me while my Radiant Saint Armor is up so don’t waste your energy! While I don’t know just how you are doing this, I do know that you won’t be able to keep it up for long. Just wait until your energy runs out, then you will lose!”

As if he hadn’t heard Zhar’s roar, Jian Chen continued to hold his eyelids shut while twitching his finger. On that finger, a faint glow of azure and violet Sword Qi could be seen before it was shot straight toward Zhar.

At the moment Zhar movements were restricted, forcing him to brace himself with the Ruler Armament to withstand the attacks. Therefore, he wasn’t able to move whatsoever and could only watch as the azure and violet Sword Qi drew closer to him.

Seeing the azure and violet Sword Qi, Zhar felt himself starting to panic. Although he had confidence in his Radiant Saint Armor and his strength as a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master with a Heaven Tier Battle Skill, he couldn't help but think back to when this very Sword Qi had damaged Caraga's Saint Weapon. For the very first time, Zhar felt doubt appear in his heart: could his Radiant Saint Armor's defenses be destroyed by this azure and violet Sword Qi?

Even as he had that fleeting thought for a mere moment, the azure and violet Sword Qi continued on, flying straight at his chest.

Without a sound, a small hole suddenly opened up in his armor as the azure and violet Sword Qi carved a hole into his body.

With a grunt, Zhar could feel his body starting to shake. The moment the azure and violet Sword Qi entered his body, it had begun to bounce around inside. Each and every moment, Zhar could feel that his organs were one step closer to being completely damaged to pieces.

"Ah!" Zhar let out a heaven piercing roar as the veins in his forehead suddenly bulged. All of the Saint Force within his body immediately surged to wrap the azure and violet Sword Qi in order to eradicate it from his body.

While the azure and violet Sword Qi was weak, its power was still enough to cause Zhar to be incredibly fearful. He used all of his Saint Force to intervene, but not only did it fail, the azure and violet Sword Qi continued to wreck his inner organs.

As the azure and violet Sword Qi bounced around Zhar's insides, it continued to whittle away at his chance to live. Not only was a man's interior body their weakest point, it was also the most fatal area. With the azure and violet Sword Qi destroying his insides, in less than a few breaths, Zhar had already suffered several serious injuries.

"Just...just what in the world is this force? Hu-hurry up and take it back, take back this force!" Zhar had a terrified look on his face as he cried out to Jian Chen. At this moment, the azure and violet Sword Qi was bouncing for his heart, and if it were to get too close, then his heart would be instantly shredded apart like tofu. Even a Radiant Warrior would not be able to survive an injury like that.

A faint streak of silver light appeared within Jian Chen's hand as he slowly opened his eyes, revealing a tired expression. With a sudden sway of his body, he flashed in front of the beaten Zhar and placed his palm against Zhar's chest.

The very moment Jian Chen placed his palm against Zhar's chest, the azure and violet Sword Qi that was causing havoc inside his chest instantly turned docile like a sheep. Just like how an obedient child would behave, it slowly moved out of Zhar's chest and into Jian Chen's palm where it blended in with the Sword Spirits within Jian Chen's dantian.

Feeling the presence of the azure and violet Sword Qi dissipate from his body, Zhar let out a sigh of relief before staring at Jian Chen with a frightened voice, "Just what in the world was that force? It was so strong that it easily managed to shatter my Radiant Saint Armor!" He quavered.

"Zhar, I've won this battle!" Jian Chen spoke with a smile.

Knowing that Jian Chen would not talk anymore about the strange azure and violet Sword Qi, he decided not to talk anymore about the subject and nodded his head sadly, "You've won indeed." With that, the Radiant Saint Armor on Zhar's body began to disappear from sight.

It was only at this point that Zhar's face could be seen, a deathly white color. The clothes that he wore underneath the armor had already been dyed a bloody red from the attack of the azure and violet Sword Qi.

At that moment, the barrier that had been surrounding the arena suddenly disappeared. The elder who had been announcing the competition suddenly spoke in a loud and grandiose voice so that everyone in Mercenary City could hear.

"I declare as of this moment, there is finally a victor to the Gathering of the Mercenaries. With Jian Chen as the winner, he will also be crowned the King of Mercenaries and will be awarded with the glorious medal of our Mercenary City. He will also be awarded with an Advanced Heaven Tier Battle Skill and Cultivation Method. Furthermore, he will also be able to enter the holy grounds to cultivate for half a year, and if his mercenary group is not already A ranked, then it will be automatically promoted to such a rank!"

Hearing the announcer's judgement, Ming Dong finally let out a deep breath of joy as Qin Xiao and the others cheered while Senior An hugged everyone in excitement.

The Gathering of the Mercenaries rewarded the first place person quite handsomely and even granted the winner with a medal that represented the honor of being the King of Mercenaries.

Upon hearing the first place prize of the Gathering of the Mercenaries, countless of Heaven Saint Masters had looks of envy on their faces.

An Advanced Heaven Tier Battle Skill was infinitesimally close to a Saint Tier Battle Skill. Not a single one of the Heaven Saint Masters outside of the arena could boast of having an Advanced Heaven Tier Battle Skill; many of them didn't even have any Primary Heaven Tier Battle Skills. This was because all of the strongest battle skills were in the possession of the few strongest clans, so any Heaven Saint Masters without a background would already find it challenging to find even a Primary Heaven Tier Battle Skill.

But right now, an Earth Saint Master kid had somehow managed to claim the number one spot of the Gathering of the Mercenaries and obtain a Heaven Tier Battle Skill. Thus, this made many of the older generation cultivators feel an extreme amount of envy for that battle skill.

"Ai, this Advanced Tier Battle Skill was far too easy to obtain. I left my home to travel the continent for a hundred years, and the only thing I have to show for it is an Advanced Earth Tier Battle Skill. Just when will I get a Heaven Tier Battle Skill?" A white haired elder muttered to himself as he stared at Jian Chen with envy; he too, was a Heaven Saint Master.

"The holy lands, that is the legendary place that is said to house even Saint Rulers. I bet there would be no shortage of the rumored Saint Tier Battle Skills there, but I don't know if that is true or not. Unfortunately, I have never heard or seen any information regarding it in my entire life." Another Heaven Saint Master sighed.

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Jian Chen and Zhar both walked through the Space Gate with a brilliant glow as they left. Just as Jian Chen disappeared from the arena, he saw a crane hairstyled elder standing five meters away from him with a smile. It looked as if he had already been waiting for him for some time.

Dressed in fine silk clothing, the elder stared at Jian Chen with a faint smile, "Jian Chen, congratulations on becoming the King of Mercenaries. I will take you to reward you with a Heaven Tier Battle Skill and Cultivation Method, please follow me."

"Then if senior would lead the way." Jian Chen cupped his hands together and followed the elder toward the armory.

On the way, the elder spoke calmly, "Jian Chen, the biggest reward of being the King of Mercenaries is the holy land, not the Heaven Tier Battle Skill. The holy land is not only a sacred place to our Mercenary City, but to the entire Tian Yuan Continent. This is where Heaven Saint Masters yearn to be and where Saint Rulers roam about. You must cherish this opportunity since only Saint Rulers are allowed entrance. It is only every fifty years that anyone under the rank of a Saint Ruler can enter, but they must be the King of Mercenaries."