

Crossing 161

Chapter 161: Grand Armed Melee!

“10th graders! They’ve long been unable to stand the sight of us 7th graders, and are now bullying the girl from Class-B to taunt us ...” After hearing what Luo Lang had to report, Ling Lan could tell that this was definitely a show of strength by the 10th graders to try and put them in their place.

“10th graders ... Boss Lan, you sure enough are the boss. I, Wu Jiong, give in to you completely!” Wu Jiong had initially thought it was just going to be a grand armed melee with the 8th graders, but who would have expected that Ling Lan would just go for the challenge with the greatest difficulty, directly going head to head with the highest-ranking 10th graders. Wu Jiong folded completely to this sort of courage.

“Wu Jiong, I heard that there are very few people in Class-B that experienced a spiritual mutation, and even in Class-A, a little less than half had no obvious changes?” said Ling Lan, changing the topic.

Wu Jiong’s mood dipped. “Yes, over these few years, there are less and less students experiencing spiritual mutations. If they don’t mutate before they turn 16, they will very likely lose the possibility of operating mecha ...” Even if someone who did not undergo a spiritual mutation operated mecha, they would never be able to go beyond intermediate mecha warrior status. Therefore, when they applied for the various large military schools after they turned 16 years old, those schools would never accept these children into their mecha classes.

“Sometimes, a cruel battle will spur someone to evolve and have a breakthrough ... the grand armed melee is such an opportunity.” Ling Lan vaguely revealed the reason why she wanted to have this grand armed melee.

Wu Jiong’s eyes brightened, and his admiration for Ling Lan deepened. He immediately tapped his chest and said, “Boss Lan, don’t worry. I will inform all our classmates in the special classes ...”

Wu Jiong’s popularity was very high within their grade; he had a good relationship with every team. So, if the students within the grade had any problems, they normally liked to look for Wu Jiong for help. Only if Wu Jiong was not able to help would they carefully approach Ling Lan for assistance.

It could not be helped. Although Ling Lan never got angry, her cold and austere face, along with the faint chill emanating from her body and her indifferent stare, all made them hesitant to approach her. As the children grew older, the better they became at gauging strength levels. Ling Lan’s capabilities had obviously gone far beyond the range of a scout student, causing the children to feel pressured naturally — they even felt that facing Ling Lan was scarier than facing their instructors.

This was also why Ling Lan tasked Wu Jiong to inform the other students — who asked him to be so popular? Of course, Ling Lan really did not know anyone else’s contact number other than Wu Jiong’s. So, even if she wanted to notify the other students personally, she had no way to do it.

After settling everything, Ling Lan logged off the virtual world, put on her jet-rollers, and swiftly left her villa.

Ling Lan had just risen into the air on her jet-rollers when she saw quite a few students of Class-A gliding out from their villas on their jet-rollers as well.

“Boss Lan!” Everyone stopped, greeting her with clear idolisation. If Qi Long was said to be the number 1 fighter of Year 4738, and Wu Jiong was the central pillar, then Ling Lan was their unmoveable mountain ¹, proving just how steady and reliable she was in their eyes.

“Hn. Has everyone arrived?” Ling Lan halted as well, hovering in the air, and in less than a minute, over 30 odd students had gathered around her.

“Pretty much. Some have already gone ahead,” replied one of the students, “While some are still on their way.”

“Then let’s go!” said Ling Lan calmly. With that, the jets on both sides of her jet-rollers shot out a stream of air, activating instantly, driving her towards the canteen of the academy’s upper division.

“Move out!” The students behind her shouted, and the 30 odd students collectively followed Ling Lan on their jet-rollers.

At this moment, inside the academy upper division’s canteen, a gang of red-clad youths of 15 to 16 years old — whether standing or sitting, or leaning and supporting — were casually but surely cordoning off an area with their bodies. On one side inside this circle of people, someone was seated unabashedly on a chair. Opposite him stood a slightly younger red-clad youth, while several boys and girls of the same age stood behind him, dressed in either red or white.

“What, Qi Long, you want to take responsibility for this matter?” said one of the 10th grade Class-A students standing at the side, sneering.

Qi Long grinned good-naturedly and said, “Senior, no matter how the incident started, you’ve already managed to hit and scold — isn’t it time to stop?” Qi Long was not really afraid, but if the situation continued to degenerate and they actually began fighting, the few Class-B female students here would certainly be harmed. He had initially stepped in just so he could prevent them from getting hurt.

“Qi Long, how dare you! Actually speaking to a senior in that tone?!” That person was infuriated by Qi Long’s barbed words, immediately leaping out to berate him loudly.

“Senior, you think too much!” A slight trace of a mocking smile appeared on Qi Long’s lips. By now, of course he could tell that the other side had intended to make a big deal out of this matter from the very start. They were planning to give these 7th graders who had just entered the upper division ² a show of force to put them in their place!

“Qi Long! You ...” This attitude of Qi Long thoroughly enraged the 10th grader. Was this really how a student who had just entered the upper division should act? Thinking back on when they themselves had first moved up and had been hazed by their seniors, their attitude had been extremely respectful and humble. Why was it that now that it was their turn to haze their juniors, they just had to meet this kind of disrespectful and insolent prick?

“Qi Long, don’t be too arrogant now! Although you are the number one of the 7th grade, in our eyes, you’re nothing ...” spat out the leader, expression dark and foreboding, “If we want to play around with

you, it would just be like toying with a pitiful worm ... know your place! Kneel down to me and apologise!”

“Kneel!”

“Kneel!”

“Kneel!”

Cry after cry demanding Qi Long kneel echoed within the academy canteen. The 10th grade students were now united against a common enemy, putting all their pressure on Qi Long, who they saw as the head of the 7th graders.

All of the 8th and 9th grade students stayed in their corners, not daring to make a sound. This was a scene that would occur every year, where the 10th graders of the upper grades would exert pressure to put the newly advanced 7th graders in their place. This was just the beginning — once the other 7th graders appeared, they would also be given the same treatment ... When they had been in the 7th grade, they too had endured the same — that feeling was really absolutely horrible. But this was just how things worked in the upper division ... whoever had the larger fist would be the one with authority!

Here, no instructors would interfere in this type of bullying or scuffles. It should be said that once students entered the upper division, they were already considered as students who could graduate. The academy had taught them all it could, and everything beyond this was for the students themselves to figure out on their own. Therefore, this area had become a microcosm of the adult world, a world where might was supreme and logic was irrelevant. This was also why this incident of the 10th graders hazing the 7th graders would occur every year. It had become a sort of dark legacy. The humiliation they had endured at the beginning would be taken out of the hides of their juniors now.

So, even if the 7th grade students here now were once the elite of the intermediate division, within the upper division, they should first learn how to walk with their tails between their legs!

“Hehehehe ... kneel? My boss told me that men can only die standing, and cannot live kneeling!” The smile on Qi Long’s face had vanished completely. He could compromise, but he would not lose his dignity and his pride.

“In that case, then I really would like to see how tough your bones really are, Qi Long!” The moment the leader of the 10th graders said this, 7 or 8 people stepped out from the crowd, rubbing their palms and clenching their fists in preparation to mob Qi Long.

Seeing this, Qi Long immediately got into a defensive stance. He harrumphed coldly and said, “I too would like to know how capable you seniors really are to get me, Qi Long, to submit ...”

“That’s right! I, Luo Lang, would also like to see!” Luo Lang knew there was no longer any way to delay, so he also stepped forward to stand beside Qi Long. His fists were raised, ready to put up a good fight against these people.

Han Xuya clenched her fists fiercely and shouted, “And me too! Dammit, I’m not afraid of these bastards!” Men who bullied women and those weaker than themselves were the worst, and these 10th grade seniors had committed both those sins — her hate against them was at the max.

Facing this situation of being surrounded on all sides, Luo Chao's complexion was pale with shock and fear, but she still stood her ground resolutely, supporting the injured female student without retreating a single step. She would never forget what Boss Lan had said to her — you can be afraid or panicked, but you cannot retreat and run away!

"What an insolent fellow. Just a 7th grade top rank and he thinks the whole academy is his to rule?" The 10th grade students began to jeer — the more they saw this kind of backbone, the more they wanted to destroy it. They themselves had not managed to stand up for themselves back when they were hazed, what gave these 7th graders the right to do so?

"Teach him a lesson!"

"Teach him!"

"Teach him!"

The 10th grade students were insistent on putting the 7th graders in their place; the entire canteen was filled with raucous cries urging for a beatdown.

"Since you 10th grade seniors want so much to teach us 7th graders a lesson, then we 7th grade students shall collectively accept your challenge!" An icy voice rang out from the doors to the canteen.

Qi Long turned his head in surprise and joy and saw that familiar figure in the lead. He shouted, "Boss, you're here!"

A large group of students in red uniforms marched into the canteen, and at the fore was Ling Lan!

Seeing so many 7th graders appear all of a sudden, the expression of the leader of the 10th graders shifted minutely. "Could it be that you 7th graders want to revolt?"

"Revolt? In my opinion, fighting you all doesn't deserve the use of this term!" Ling Lan's words caused the 10th grade students to break into an uproar. Hells, this gang of 7th graders just kept coming out with more and more insolent punks! Looks like it wouldn't do not to teach them a good lesson!

"Since you all want to fight so much, then as you wish, we 7th graders challenge you 10th graders to a grand armed melee!"

"Grand armed melee?" The 10th grade students were somewhat confused. And then, as if suddenly recalling something, the leader yelled out, "You're insane!"

He looked at the number of students beside Ling Lan and instantly let out a sigh of relief. "No, you all can't possibly succeed in requesting a grand armed melee. With just this number of people, it's impossible ..."

To be approved, a grand armed melee required 95% approval out of the total 100 students³ of the Special Class-A and Special Class-B in the grade.

"No, you heard right, we're officially challenging you 10th graders to a grand armed melee!" Another voice rang out from behind Ling Lan. It turned out that Wu Jiong had also rushed over with a group of students at his back, most of them Class-B students in white uniforms.

Wu Jiong was late because he had been busy contacting the Class-B people. As a grand armed melee required 95% approval from the combined students of Special Class-A and Special Class-B to pass, Wu Jiong had discussed the issue with the Class-B teams in advance and had finally reached a consensus.

“You’re all insane, insane!” The 10th grade students all had fear on their faces. They had only wanted to scare the 7th graders and put them in their place — they definitely did not want to unleash that horrifying grand armed melee ... that was just asking for someone to die!

Chapter 162: Fighting For Honour!

In the most recent hundred years, there had not been a single grand armed melee. This was because the event was much too bloody and cruel, involving all the students of two grades in a large-scale group melee! During that time, no one would be able to control themselves — terror, rage, submission, humiliation ... there were all sorts of elements that could cause someone to lose control. A massive number of casualties had been recorded for a grand armed melee in the past — this was another important reason why the grand armed melee had faded away into obscurity for up to a hundred years.

Of course, the moment the words ‘grand armed melee’ were said, not only were the 10th graders taken aback, even the 7th graders present, like those Class-A students who had come with Ling Lan, were all gobsmacked as well. They had only been notified that a 7th grade Class-B female student had been bullied by a 10th grade senior, and had only rushed here to lend a hand and show support. They had never expected their leaders Ling Lan and Wu Jiong to immediately escalate the issue to such an extent.

However, their blood could not help but boil with excitement — if the ‘grand armed melee’ of 100 years back which made all students turn pale at its mere mention were to reappear at their hands ... that would be so goddamn amazing!

“Big Brother Xu, they don’t have enough people, only 89 ...” One of the 10th grade students quietly reminded their leader to not panic. This was very likely a scare tactic by the 7th graders; they should not trip themselves up because of this.

At this reminder, this Big Brother Xu took a closer look and found that it was as that student said and calmed down. Indeed, who would be so stupid as to play the fool with their own lives — a grand armed melee? Even if they really wanted to try it, they wouldn’t dare to fight one against the 10th graders, right? Wasn’t this just suicidal? These little brats were definitely just trying to scare them, wanting to get them to surrender without putting up a fight. They must not fall for this threat and undermine their own authority! Thus, the leader laughed long and loud, “Hahaha ... that’s hilarious! Actually daring to suggest a grand armed melee against us. Alright, I’ll play with you all. Let’s see if you all can really gather the full 95 people needed to successfully initiate a grand armed melee!”

Originally, there was some disturbance among the 10th graders at the mention of a grand armed melee, but after some internal discussion, the 10th graders had quickly settled down. Now, hearing their leader speak out, they all began chiming in as well, “Yeah, we’re waiting ...”

“Such a fun event, how can you leave me, Li Yingjie, out!” A flippant and prideful voice rang out from the doorway. Ling Lan and Wu Jiong couldn’t help but sweatdrop — this punk Li Yingjie just loved to show off, extremely egotistical.

However, the arrival of Li Yingjie's team showed that the three strongest teams of Year 4738 were working hand in hand. Meanwhile, at this very moment, the number of 7th graders present had reached exactly 95 people. If everyone here chose to agree, they would have the minimum quorum required to initiate a grand armed melee.

"Classmates, since entering the upper division, you all must have felt the suppression from the upper grades. Be it by a little or a lot, quite a number of people have suffered. Boss Ling Lan has said before that people should possess backbones — we should rather die standing than live being forced to kneel. Because this is our dignity, our pride — once lost, then we will be unqualified to be soldiers ... and what are we scouts? The cradle to cultivate qualified soldiers. What do you say? In this situation, can we submit?" proclaimed Wu Jiong loudly.

"No!"

"No!"

"No!" The rage of the 7th grade students was stirred up by Wu Jiong's words; they all shouted their defiance loudly with clenched fists.

"Shall we take up weapons to defend our own honour? To let everyone know that, although we are new members of the upper division, we will not allow ourselves to be scorned!" Wu Jiong continued to fan the flames.

"Grand armed melee!" Heaven knows who hollered it out, and then all the other 7th graders took up the chant, "Grand armed melee! Grand armed melee! Grand armed melee!"

Only by initiating a grand armed melee would the 7th graders prove their right to stand on equal footing with the 10th graders, through a fair fight.

"Then let us initiate a grand armed melee!" Wu Jiong raised his right hand, revealing his communicator, and put up the grand armed melee against the 10th graders for a vote.

Simultaneously, all the 7th grade special class students received the options of 'agree/disagree' to initiate the grand armed melee. Everyone present resolutely clicked on 'agree'. Even those 7th grade special class students who had not yet made it to the scene also received this selection notification from their communicators at the same time.

A white-clad youth lying down on the grass in front of one of the dormitory villas suddenly felt his wrist vibrate. Bored, he listlessly opened the notification and when he saw the contents, he instantly leapt up. "Grand armed melee? Haha, how interesting! Who'd have expected the Class-A people to have such guts? I need to go watch the fun!" The initiator had to be one of the top 5 of Class-A — although he did not know who it was, he still decisively clicked on the button to agree. Then, with a stamp of his feet, he disappeared from the patch of grass!

"Grand armed melee against the 10th grade — 7th grade special class approval at 97 people. This number exceeds the minimum requirement. The grade grand armed melee is officially established!"

Spread out at all corners of the academy, all the 7th grade students, whether they were from the special classes, the merit classes, or the regular classes, received this news on their communicators at the same time. This caused the 7th graders to jump in shock ¹ ...

And then, all the alarms in the academy started to blare, going on for a whole 3 minutes! Everyone was flushed out from all corners of the academy by these warning alarms. They began asking the people beside them what was going on, but unfortunately, other than the 7th graders and a small number of the upper grade students, most of the students were clueless, so there was no clear answer to be found.

Right then, a female voice with a faint mechanical tone rang out above the academy:

“Warning, one hour later, a grand armed melee between the 7th grade and the 10th grade will officially begin. Duration is set for 24 hours. All students not involved with the grand armed melee please note, please enter the dormitory area quickly within this 1 hour. For 7th grade and 10th grade students who refuse to participate in the grand armed melee, please enter the dormitory area as well! One hour later, the dormitory area will go into full lockdown, becoming the only safe area during the grand armed melee. No one shall fight within the safe area; violators will receive heavy punishment!”

The academy’s warning announcement was repeated three times. All the students of the academy were instantly in an uproar — some lower grade students did not even know what a grand armed melee was, and were quickly looking it up along with all other relevant information on their communicators. When they found out how cruel a grand armed melee was, some children’s faces had turned deathly pale.

Very quickly, a recording was played on the academy loudspeakers. It was the speech that Wu Jiong had given to the special class students in the canteen:

“Classmates, since entering the upper division, you all must have felt the suppression from the upper grades. Be it by a little or a lot, quite a number of people have suffered. Boss Ling Lan has said before that people should possess backbones — we should rather die standing than live being forced to kneel.

“Shall we take up weapons to defend our own honour? To let everyone know that, although we are new members of the upper division, we will not allow ourselves to be scorned!”

...

“Grand armed melee! Grand armed melee! Grand armed melee!”

In the end, the students were collectively bellowing for a grand armed melee. This infected all the students of the academy, especially those 7th grade students of the merit classes and the regular classes. During this period of time, they had all suffered the suppression of the upper grades. All the humiliation they had been forced to endure all this time, abruptly exploded in this moment.

Grand armed melee! This was a chance for revenge gifted to them by the special class students! They silently clenched their fists tightly. Even if they died, they would pull those seniors who had bullied them down into hell along with them!

“The assembly point for the 7th grade — Sunmoon Square in the district-N! The assembly point for the 10th grade — Freedom Plaza in district-E!” Finally, the academy mainframe gave the two grades their respective assembly points, and everyone began to move. In contrast with the 7th grade’s repressed and focused fighting spirit, the 10th grade students were obviously somewhat panicked and unbridled ...

“Bastards! That bunch of 7th graders are most definitely lunatics!” A majority of the 10th grade students had the same opinion. Otherwise, how would they be so berserk as to initiate a grand armed melee?

On the other hand, the 8th grade and 9th grade students were all puzzled, astounded at the sheer guts of the newly advanced 7th graders. They would rather start a savage grand armed melee rather than submit and compromise, and subject themselves to the bullying of the upper grades ... could it be that the upper division would be turned on its head?

Some of them were even vaguely regretful — if only they had suggested a grand armed melee like the 7th grade now when they had been hazed by the 10th graders back then ... would they have become different? Maybe even stronger?

In the dining room of the instructors, the instructors had initially been quietly eating their meals. Today, our esteemed dean was also eating in the dining room.

Just as he was enjoying his meal, the academy alarms suddenly sounded throughout the academy. In his fright, the dean actually spewed out the food he had in his mouth right then. He abruptly stood up and yelled, “What’s going on?!”

Could the mainframe have shorted? Or was someone actually stupid enough to attack the scout academy?

The dean’s wrist communicator began vibrating forcefully. The moment he connected, the captain of the ace mecha team guarding the school appeared on the screen. “Dean, what happened?”

“I was just about to ask you. Could it be that outsiders have invaded the academy’s airspace again?” The dean recalled the incident with Ling Lan seven years ago. That Ling family had been so brazen as to fly a mecha straight into the academy’s airspace, giving them quite a scare.

“No, we used radar to scan the surroundings. Everything’s normal. No unidentified objects have approached the academy. Could it be that there’s an internal problem?” The mecha captain reported their findings to the dean.

“Understood. Be prepared to act on your end, I’ll check with the school mainframe ...” The dean had yet to finish speaking when the voice of the mainframe rang out in the dining room:

“Warning, one hour later, a grand armed melee between the 7th grade and the 10th grade will officially begin. Duration is set for 24 hours ...”

“Grand armed melee? F*ck, why did this hundred year old relic appear again?” All the teachers looked at one another. Even they had not experienced a grand armed melee before, having only heard its name, so they did not really know how bloody or scary a grand armed melee could be.

“Heavens, which bastard initiated this?” The dean’s complexion changed drastically as he leapt up in shock. He had actually seen those top secret files before. Every time there was a grand armed melee, the children would indeed develop rapidly, however, the casualty rate was just too shocking. Therefore, the dean of every generation would take precautions against a grand armed melee happening. They would rather the children develop steadily instead of using this kind of cruel method to force their

growth. This was yet another reason why the grand armed melee had disappeared for over a hundred years.

The dean connected to the mainframe and pulled up the video of the location where the grand armed melee had been initiated.

The large screen right at the front of the dining room suddenly lighted up, and then the scene of a confrontation was played. Two sides were facing each other — Ling Lan, Qi Long, Wu Jiong, etcetera were all displayed clearly, not a single person was excluded ...

“Godd*mn! Basically all the 7th grade special class members are there!” Seeing the 7th grade special class so united, all the instructors had approval in their gazes. This made them think of their comrades who had fought by their side through battles of life and death ...

Good good good! As expected of his offspring! The dean stared at Ling Lan’s figure and could not help but suck in a sharp breath. The dean was truly an old fox — just by looking at the standing positions of the 7th grade students, he could tell who the orchestrator of this grand armed melee was.

Chapter 163: The Grand Armed Melee Begins!

Although the dean was fearful and angry, he could not help but be heartened by how influential his old friend’s descendant was. Still, he quickly collected his thoughts and emotions, and bellowed at the gobsmacked teachers frozen in their seats in the dining hall, “Are you all still eating?! Get a move on!”

“Ah ...” The teachers were stunned silly once more by the dean’s ferocity. Who knew that the normally gentle and mild-mannered dean would have such a violent side to him?

“The rules relevant to the grand armed melee will be transmitted to your communicators by the mainframe in a moment,” said the dean frantically, “Everyone be on guard at your positions and monitor every inch of the academy grounds. Keep a lookout for the rescue signals sent by the mainframe — at critical moments, put your backs into saving people!” When the flames were lapping at one’s brows ¹, even the most mild-mannered person would be sent off the edge. If a massive number of casualties really occurred, even he would not be able to hold the fort.

“Yes, Dean!” The teachers finally woke up. The moment the grand armed melee began, their responsibilities would not be easy. They would have to keep the situation under control, and at critical moments, they would have to morph into omnipotent superhumans to rescue students.

“Dammit, what a real bunch of troublesome and reckless fellows ...” The teachers may complain, but not a single one of them was really displeased by this turn of events. The 7th grade teachers, in particular, could barely hide their glee, drawing the admiration of the teachers of the other grades. How had they managed to inspire such guts in their students?

On the other hand, the teachers of the 10th grade were somewhat solemn. They had initially thought that their students were decent enough, but compared to the current 7th grade, they could feel how lacking the students they had taught were.

The teachers swiftly left the dining hall. In the now empty dining hall, like taking off a mask, the dean's expression changed completely. His initially angry and impatient expression disappeared, and his lips actually curved upwards in a suspicious arc, showing just how good his mood was.

"Perhaps, these children will be the Federation's future ..." The circumspect and farsighted dean knew very well what the current children were lacking.

"A grand armed melee ... what opportune timing! Ling Xiao, if your son wasn't just fooling around and planned this on purpose, then he is truly impressive ..." If the boy had truly noticed this point and intentionally launched a grand armed melee to give the children an opportunity to awaken, then that meant that Ling Lan was not just a simple warrior, but a strategist as well. If he continued to develop his skills, it would not be impossible for him to become a legendary marshal.

Blood and combat were the true fertile soil to cultivate real strength! With the passing of the years, old men like them gradually eased up on the younger generation out of compassion. They would rather choose those safer teaching methods than let the children face danger. But in truth, in the past hundred years, the number of people who had managed to advance to higher-class operator was obviously pitifully small compared to that of the previous century. Even taking the unparalleled prodigy Ling Xiao into consideration was not enough to blot out this fact. Although the educational methods of 100 years ago were bloody and cruel, exceptional top-notch operators were produced generation after generation in an endless stream ... The status the Federation enjoyed now was fought for and earned by the batches after batches of top-notch operators produced then.

The dean naturally knew the flaw in their education system now, but he still lacked the conviction to force the start of a grand armed melee ... Unexpectedly, that bunch of 7th grade special class students had helped him to make the decision this year.

At Sunmoon Square of District-N, Ling Lan and the others had already rushed over to the scene. At this moment, the academy's transportation robots had already brought over bundles after bundles of rubber bats and had piled them up inside Sunmoon Square. The same thing had happened over at Freedom Plaza where the 10th graders were.

Everyone who was involved in the grand armed melee, whether on the side of the challenger or the challenged, had all received the rules relevant to the grand armed melee. In this grand armed melee, they would only have one weapon — these rubber bats. If any other weapon was discovered to be used, the user would be immediately expelled, and their side would be deducted 1000 melee points. Of course, you could bring along as many rubber bats as you wanted, as long as you could carry them.

The 7th grade students needed no instruction. They quickly took up their weapons — some took just one, while others took two. This all depended on whether you were more proficient with single-handed wielding or dual-handed wielding.

Ling Lan symbolically took up one of the sticks as well. Frankly, with Ling Lan's capabilities, having a stick or not would not make much of a difference. However, since everyone had taken at least one, she needed to blend in a bit so that she would not stand out too much.

Just when Ling Lan thought that she would only need to sit still patiently and wait for the grand armed melee to start, Qi Long and Wu Jiong unexpectedly collaborated to sell her out. Without letting her know, they directly appointed her as the grand leader of this grand armed melee, and gave her the responsibility of making the overall arrangements and deciding the initial mobilization of their forces. According to Wu Jiong, since the grand armed melee was initiated by Ling Lan, then he should take full responsibility for it.

Ling Lan did not push away this responsibility. From the start, she had planned to use this to settle everything once and for all, getting rid of the troublesome problems from the upper grades with one stroke. She stood up on the open stage of Sunmoon Square, and using the loudspeaker there, she said, "Everyone is saying that we 7th graders have gone mad, actually starting a grand armed melee ... but have we truly gone mad?"

"No!" The steel in Ling Lan's voice pulled in the attention of all the 7th grade students.

"After we've entered the upper division, everyone has suffered some hazing, whether big or small, from the seniors of the upper grades. Some even cross the line into outright humiliation. For the sake of graduating peacefully, there's nothing wrong with choosing to tolerate this. It's also a valid and appropriate method, I agree!" These words of Ling Lan's caused the students to break out into a furore — if tolerating is right, then why had he chosen to start this grand armed melee?

"But will tolerating solve the problem? It cannot!" Ling Lan's voice turned cold and forbidding, even containing a trace of concealed killing intent. "The seniors of the upper grades will not stop just because you tolerate them. In fact, they will just become worse and escalate their bullying time after time ... I believe everyone here has felt this. In that case, why should we continue to tolerate? Is it just to hold on through these few years, just to become as hateful as those upper grade seniors, and then bully the new juniors of that time just to comfort ourselves?"

"Is that the path we want to walk?" Ling Lan's gaze was extremely cold, chilling all the 7th grade students; they actually did not dare to let their eyes meet hers directly.

"Yes or no?!" Ling Lan roared, the sound ringing out loudly by everyone's ears.

"No!" Qi Long was the first to shout in reply. His cry was soon followed by Wu Jiong's and several others', and then more and more, until everyone's voices were merged into a formidable wave of sound, "NO!"

This was the true voice of the hearts of the 7th grade right then. They had not yet been bullied so much that they had lost their pure souls — without a soul twisted by constant humiliation, they were brimming with guts and fighting spirit. Thus, they refused to let themselves become hateful and grotesque.

"A dark history should be ended, a dark legacy should not exist within the cradle which cultivates qualified soldiers. And we, the 7th grade, shall be the ones to end this dark legacy ... we are the champions of what is right!"

"Champions! Champions! Champions!" Everyone's blood was boiling after listening to Ling Lan's speech. That final remaining tendril of fear within their hearts disappeared completely — all that was on their minds now was combat!

Ling Lan waved both hands in a downward sweep to get the students below to quiet down again, and then continued to say unhurriedly, "Of course, I also do not wish for there to be any reckless heroes among us. Intelligence and courage should go hand in hand. Therefore, I recommend that all the merit classes and regular classes move around in teams as a combat unit!

"I do not recommend acting alone. Although the grand armed melee is a messy fight, it is extremely suitable for team members to cooperate with one another. I do not wish for any in our 7th grade to fall. Do not forget — by your side, you have your brothers, your sisters, your friends, your comrades ... you are not fighting alone!"

These words received the heartfelt approval of all the 7th graders. Everyone looked at the good friends and teammates around them, and determined that they would fight by their companions' sides till the very end!

"Besides that, do not forget to read closely through all the rules of the grand armed melee. When you all meet a Special Class-A student, remember to press the button to surrender or the button to ask for help ... admitting defeat is not shameful. Only by living will there be hope for the future!" Ling Lan emphasized her final words with a push of her spiritual power, hoping that at a critical moment, the students would not be so worked up that they would attempt to perish along with their opponents. However, just this strong push was enough to drain Ling Lan's tremendous spiritual power, and her head started to throb in pain.

After saying her piece, Ling Lan stepped off the stage, giving her place to Wu Jiong and Qi Long. She signalled for Lin Zhong-qing to cover her, and then moved to sit in a corner, closing her eyes to rest and regain her strength.

"Boss, how can you be so reckless?" In the mindscape, Little Four was very dissatisfied with what Ling Lan had done.

"Understood. I won't do it again. Let me rest first; help me monitor the surroundings." Ling Lan did not argue with him, but she also did not regret her decision. Initiating the grand armed melee was to give all the 7th graders a chance to become stronger, not to let them stagnate where they were.

After giving her instructions to Little Four, Ling Lan focused on cultivating her spiritual power. Compared to Luo Lang or Lin Zhong-qing, she trusted Little Four's monitoring even more. Anywhere the academy mainframe could monitor, Little Four would be able to monitor as well, without letting the mainframe find out to boot.

Time passed quickly; very soon, the hour was almost over. Under Wu Jiong, Qi Long, and some others' arrangement, the 7th graders had swiftly departed Sunmoon Square to spread themselves throughout the entire academy, finding spots to conceal themselves.

The grand armed melee was a battle where the two sides hunted each other. Aside from the dormitory area, the entire academy was their hunting grounds. Even if the combined total of the two grades was about 20,000 people, once the students were scattered throughout the Central Scout Academy, they would be like water droplets falling into an ocean, leaving no lasting ripples behind.

In the end, Wu Jiong's team and the organizing teams also left, leaving Ling Lan's team as the only team in Sunmoon Square. At this moment, the mainframe's voice once again rang out with an announcement that reverberated throughout the whole academy:

"7th grade vs 10th grade, grand armed melee will commence after this countdown. Duration is 24 hours. Winning criteria: The grade with 40% of their population remaining and an accumulated melee score of 60%! Numbers at present — 9212 vs 9374! Accumulated melee score at 0 vs 0. The countdown begins now. 10, 9, 8 ... 3, 2, 1 — the grand armed melee officially begins!"

As the mainframe officially announced the start of the grand armed melee, a dome of light immediately surrounded the dormitory area. Seeing this, several 10th grade students waiting by the dormitory area were extremely shocked and surprised. They tentatively tried to enter the dormitory area, but were repelled by a powerful force.

Chapter 164: The Strongest Student in the Academy!

"F*ck, we can't go in! The entire dormitory district has actually been fully covered by an energy shield." Apparently, these five or six 10th graders had wanted to watch the fun, planning to run away into the dormitory district if the situation turned bad. Unexpectedly, the mainframe did not leave any room for these students to exploit, directly sealing away the dormitory area behind a light shield. Now, the people inside could not come out, but the people outside similarly could not go in.

"Then what should we do?" asked one of the students, terrified.

"What can we do? Just find a place to hide and wait till everything blows over to come out ... Hehe, the 7th grade has 100 people or so less than us; we 10th graders are sure to win this grand armed melee. It's absolutely the right choice for us to join in this grand armed melee." This speaker was rather smug; he seemed to be the head of this group.

"Leader, why do you say so?"

"I've done some digging. Every time, the winning side of the grand armed melee will receive countless resources from the academy. But those who do not participate will not enjoy these benefits ... otherwise, why would I bring you all out here and take the risk?"

"What if we happen to encounter any 7th grade Special Class-A students?" This group was entirely made up of regular class people. Even though they were three years older than the 7th graders, they still could not go up against those prodigies in Class-A.

"Are you an idiot? That's why we need to hide well! If we're really that unlucky, we just need to surrender. Once we surrender, the opponent can't do anything to us anymore. If they try anything, we just need to press the help button to get assistance and a teacher will come rescue us. At that time, the one who took action against us would also lose the right to continue on in the grand armed melee ..." It looked like this team leader had indeed taken some effort to understand the rules of the grand armed melee just so he could take advantage of the confusion.

"Looks like someone is coming. Hide quickly!" The team leader heard the sound of people approaching, and hurriedly led his team members to hide inside a patch of trees by the side.

Right then, in several locations, the 7th graders and the 10th graders were already clashing ...

After Ling Lan heard the mainframe's announcement, she nodded to Qi Long and the others. Then, Qi Long with Han Jijyun, and Luo Lang with Lin Zhong-qing, two in a group, swiftly departed from Sunmoon Square. The initially noisy Sunmoon Square was instantly deathly silent — only Ling Lan was left standing alone on the stage, looking off into the distance.

"Little Four, where is the top rank of the 10th grade Class-A?" Ling Lan decided to first test the waters, wanting to see how strong the best of the 10th grade was.

Little Four immediately displayed the location of the 10th grade top rank with a red dot on a 2D map of the Central Scout Academy. With a flying leap, Ling Lan left Sunmoon Square without a sound.

"Leader, are we not going to hide?" Somewhere in the academy, six people were standing in a blatantly noticeable location. Their bright red clothes clearly displayed their class. One of the members was glancing around nervously as he questioned a grim-faced youth.

"It's just that bunch of 7th graders. Are they worth hiding for?" The grim-faced youth did not reply, instead, another member standing beside him spoke up with a dismissive quirk of his brow, seemingly not at all worried about this so-called grand armed melee.

"Rumour has it that their top rank Qi Long is very formidable ..." cautioned that nervous-looking team member.

For some reason, he just could not shake the feeling that danger was coming. Although he had no idea what this feeling was, many times, this kind of feeling had let him overcome one threat after another. And this time, this sense of danger was even stronger than anything he had ever felt before — he just had no way of explaining it, because no one on his team would believe him even if he spoke up.

"Last year, he challenged the 8th grade, which is to say the current 9th grade top rank, Lu Jing, and failed. And Lu Jing can't last more than 30 moves against our team leader. These 7th graders are definitely no match for our team leader," argued yet another team member.

"Yeah, the team leader is the only combat genius that has entered the Qi-Jin stage in the scout academy right now, you know! He's the strongest student in the academy!" said another team member, face filled with idolisation, "If the team leader had publicized this information, those 7th grade brats would never have dared to suggest something like this grand armed melee."

At this moment, the grim-faced youth spoke, "Alright, if you all have the strength to bicker you might as well go and clean up some of those 7th graders. I never again want to see something like that incident three years ago ..."

A wave of rage emerged on the youth's face. He was the pride of his grade, but three years ago, his team had lost to a barrier-breaking team from some third-rate planet's scout academy. And then, this year, the 10th graders led by him had actually been challenged to a grand armed melee by the juniors of the 7th grade ... this was clearly a smack to his face! Did they really think this grade of his was so easy to bully?

“Someone’s coming!” One of the team members suddenly voiced a warning.

Following that, a team of 7th grade students dressed in blue uniforms could be seen peeking out from behind the trees ...

“Crap, why are we so unlucky? Meeting the 10th grade top rank Zhang Jing-an’s team right off the bat.” When the leader of this team saw the face of the rumoured strongest scout at present, his mind became a jumbled mess. He immediately signalled for his team members to quickly retreat and escape.

“Eh, where did they go?” One of the running team members looked back to check on the 10th grade team, but found that the 6 people standing there previously had all disappeared.

“Not good, run faster!” The team leader had barely finished speaking when the ground beneath his feet shook violently. His entire body was thrown backwards into the air, before he fell to crash forcefully onto the ground. There was a tightness in his chest, making him feel nauseous.

The team leader hurriedly leapt up to check on his teammates and found the situation unpromising. The weakest team member was already coughing up blood, obviously having sustained heavy internal damage.

At this moment, 6 figures appeared in front of them. As expected, it was Zhang Jing-an’s group of six.

One of them abruptly charged over, the stick in his hand swinging down towards the 7th grade regular class team leader.

The team leader reacted quickly — evading with a twist of his body, his own rubber bat swinging out with the movement. But just as his rubber bat was about to strike the opponent, the other suddenly vanished, and then he felt his abdomen being struck harshly. Once again, he was sent flying backwards through the air, and this time, in the air, a mouthful of blood spewed out!

With just one hit, he had been injured seriously!

They were definitely no match for these people! This notion rose swiftly in the team leader’s mind. The pain in his body should have dulled his reflexes, but for some reason, his fingers moved even quicker than his mind, pressing down on the button to surrender immediately. At the same time, the button seeking rescue lighted up.

He had just crashed onto the ground again when that 10th grade team member rushed in once more to attack with his stick. Suddenly, the 7th grade team leader’s communicator emitted a white light, which instantly repelled the stick! At the same time, the two combatants received a notification from the mainframe: “Attacking a target which has already surrendered — 100 melee points deduction!”

“F*ck, what is this?! Actually losing points!” yelled the 10th grade team member angrily when he read the notification.

Zhang Jing-an stared coldly at the regular class team leader on the ground and said, “His reaction time was pretty quick, actually managing to press the surrender button in that split second in the air. Liulian, you were too careless.”

“Looks like this fellow’s reflexes are really good!” Another member stared curiously at the 7th grade regular class team leader, seemingly very interested in studying him.

“We’ve surrendered!” The 7th grade team leader’s heart was filled with fright. He quickly yelled out to remind the opponents that they could not attack an opponent who had surrendered. The other team members also reacted quickly. During the span of their conversation, they had also pressed the surrender button.

“Tch, so boring!” They had initially hoped the opponent would resist a little so they could toy with them, but unexpectedly, this team actually did not have a single shred of courage, actually choosing to surrender just after being injured with one hit.

These 10th graders could not have imagined that the 7th graders were so decisive and quick to choose to surrender because Ling Lan had embedded a subliminal trigger within them with her spiritual power during her speech. When they encountered an opponent who was distinctly stronger than they were, they would not struggle needlessly but choose to surrender immediately to save their lives.

In fact, the grand armed melee had not been as bloody and cruel as it was made out to be at its inception. Everyone who participated in a grand armed melee in the beginning had known who their opponents were — the regular classes would seek out the regular classes, the merit classes would seek out the merit classes, the special classes would seek out the special classes — so everyone would be fighting against someone of almost equivalent strength. In that way, both sides would be able to gain battle experience while raising their individual capabilities at the same time.

However, as time went on, the grand armed melee began to change in nature. In order to obtain victory, the stronger students would first go after the students from the regular classes. Some who were particularly twisted would not even give those regular class students a chance to surrender, killing them straightaway. The side who was harmed then decided to repay blood with blood and also began sending out their strongest students to go kill the other side’s regular students. In the end, the situation spiralled out of control, amassing large number of casualties and injuries on each side. Thus, the academy had no choice but to make it much harder for the students to initiate a grand armed melee.

Ling Lan naturally knew the tragic history of the grand armed melee. To cut off this potential development, Ling Lan purposefully exerted spiritual pressure to embed a subliminal command, almost causing her spiritual power to collapse on itself. When meeting an opponent of overwhelming strength or obtaining a serious injury, surrender. Even if they were unconscious, their bodies would move because of this subliminal command and press the surrender button.

“Let’s leave. After they surrender, a teacher will soon be here to take them away,” said another team member. Continuing to linger here would just be a waste of time.

“Fine. I think I sense another team of mice approaching. Who knows what level they are this time ... I hope we can have some fun.” One of the team members could sense the approach of another team, and his gaze shone with a faint red light.

“Go!” Zhang Jing-an said only that before disappearing. The others soon followed him.

Seeing no one else around them, the 7th grade regular class team instantly relaxed.

“So this is the top ranking team of the 10th grade Class-A. Our strength is really too far apart from theirs; we couldn’t even take one attack ...” The team leader was extremely depressed, “Who knows if Qi Long can stand up against them ...”

“Qi Long already lost to Lu Jing of the 9th grade, and Lu Jing can’t defeat Zhang Jing-an. I don’t anticipate the outcome of this grand armed melee!” One of the team members was pessimistic.

“What are you all saying? Have you all forgotten that Qi Long still has a boss on top of him? The real king of our 7th grade is Ling Lan!” Another team member was indignant, “One move? Leader, don’t tell me you can withstand one move from Boss Ling Lan?”

Despite being needled by his team members, the team leader was not at all angry. Instead, his spirits rallied. “Oh yeah! how could I forget that we still have Boss Ling Lan? Anyone against him has been finished off in one blow — he’s definitely no weaker than Zhang Jing-an.”

“However, we’ve really lost face this time, being kicked out of the fight so soon after it started. We need to train well once we get back ...” sighed the team leader.

His words caused all the team members to fall into a contemplative silence. That’s right, they were probably the first batch to leave the field! That was truly disgraceful! A strong desire to become stronger rose within their hearts. If there were to be another grand armed melee in the future, they definitely did not want to be the first batch of students to leave again!

Chapter 165: Team Zhang Jing-an!

On a small path within a dense patch of forest, a team of white-clad students were running for their lives. The words embroidered on their chests proved that this team was a 7th grade one.

“They’re coming after us ...” One of the team members seemed to sense something. His expression fell, and he quickly told his teammates the bad news.

The team leader knew that continuing to run was useless. Originally, he was hoping that the other party was just passing by and would overlook their team, but now, from the looks of it, the opponent had clearly set their sights on them. He gritted his teeth and commanded, “You all run ahead!”

“Leader!” all the team members exclaimed. It was clear that the team leader was preparing to stay behind alone to hold off their pursuers.

“Don’t worry, if I really cannot hold them off, I will surrender! But our whole team cannot fall here.” The team leader’s thoughts were clear. They were certainly no match for the team pursuing them, so even if the entire team stayed back to fight, the final outcome would still be their loss. And the final judgement on who wins and who loses a grand armed melee is greatly dependent on the final number of people remaining. From the start, the number of 7th graders who participated in this grand armed melee was already less than the other side, so they needed to save as many people as they could.

“Leader, you lead them away!” The team member right at the end suddenly stopped running, standing still right where he was. If they really had to leave someone behind to hold off the enemy, they might as well let him, the weakest member, do it. Even if he left the grand armed melee, it would not make a significant difference to the overall strength of his team.

“Xiaoming ...” The team members were clearly reluctant — he was a companion who had grown along with them all this time after all.

“Go! Do you all want to fold here?!” shouted the student called Xiaoming angrily.

The team leader saw that Xiaoming had been left far behind during this time; it was now too late even if they wanted to leave another person instead. At this moment, he could not afford any moment of hesitation. Thus, he merely slowed for a brief moment to say, “Let’s go!” before resolutely running ahead.

The team members could only shove their reluctance away and gritted their teeth to chase after the team leader. Running with all their might, they soon disappeared from Xiaoming’s sight.

A red-clad youth rushing swiftly after the team saw the white-clad Xiaoming standing in the middle of the road, and so halted.

His sudden stop made the other red-clad youths behind him stop as well. The number 10 was embroidered neatly on their red uniforms, showing them to be 10th grade students.

“Hoho, looks like they plan to sacrifice one to save the other team members. Leader, what should we do?” The youth who had stopped first asked his team leader standing behind him.

“Shi Qi, have you noted the details of those few people running away?” The team leader turned to ask the red-clad youth beside him tonelessly.

“No problem, Leader. As long as they stay within 2 kilometres of us, they won’t get away,” said Shi Qi proudly. His awakened talent was Lock-On — as long as he locked onto an opponent’s details within his mind, he would be able to seek out the opponent within a 2 kilometre radius.

“How long before they escape from your search radius?” the team leader continued to ask.

“4 minutes!” replied Shi Qi confidently.

“Yuan Chen, I’ll let you play for a bit with the person below!” said the team leader to the youth who had first stopped, “You only have 3 minutes and 30 seconds!”

Yuan Chen rubbed his palms together excitedly. “That’s enough!” That said, he glided down from the tree to land squarely in front of the 7th grade white-clad youth Xiaoming standing in the middle of the road.

It was precisely Zhang Jing-an’s team which had chased up to this 7th grade Class-B team.

When the white-clad Xiaoming saw just one red-clad youth appear before him, he gripped the bat in his hand nervously. His gaze flitted to the trees on both sides, trying to sense where the other members of the other’s team were.

“Relax, I’m the only one fighting you!” Even as Yuan Chen’s words reassured him, Xiaoming couldn’t help but worry for his own teammates.

“How pitiful, actually being sold out by your teammates, being left behind to be a sacrificial offering!” Though Yuan Chen’s lips kept yapping on about how pitiful Xiaoming was, the bat in his hands showed no mercy. He rushed forwards fiercely to attack the other with a savage blow.

The white-clad Xiaoming was very agile. Seeing the other attacking, he instantly leapt backwards, cleanly avoiding the opponent's strike.

"Not bad ... looks like you still want to struggle a bit before dying." Yuan Chen licked his lips in excitement. He raised his bat and continued to attack. This time, his attack speed increased considerably; the bat rained down on Xiaoming like the battering of the rains and winds in a thunderstorm. It looked like his first strike had just been a casual attack, not reflective of his real strength. Moreover, he did not stop needling his opponent verbally, "What a shame, you are just too weak. You can't even take a few of my attacks. You're destined to just suffer by my hands."

The white-clad Xiaoming ignored Yuan Chen's mockery. He merely gritted his teeth and did his best to resist, finally managing to defend against all of the opponent's attacks this round. But even so, Xiaoming could already feel his right hand, which was gripping the stick, going numb and senseless from the repeated battery of the other's power. He knew that if the other continued to attack this way, he would eventually be overcome ...

A loud thump! This was the sound of a bat striking flesh!

"Ah!" cried out Xiaoming in pain. His entire person was thrown backwards into the air by the force of this attack. His numbed right hand had finally been unable to react in time, failing to block a savage blow by the opponent.

Seeing this, Yuan Chen laughed gleefully; this was fully within his estimations. And so, showing no mercy, he once more sped up and got in close to the other, prepared to pummel the other soundly.

Right then, Shi Qi, who had been quietly watching the fight, suddenly let out a shocked cry.

Zhang Jing-an's brow twitched. "What happened? Shi Qi?"

"Nothing, Leader! It's just that those few little mice who had been running away are actually coming back!" Shi Qi announced his discovery to the others.

"Could it be that they are trying to catch us off guard? Or trying to launch a sneak attack? Aren't they looking down on us too much?" Another team member couldn't help but snicker.

"This is even better, saving us the effort of chasing them down." Zhang Jing-an felt that this was a good thing, so he shouted down to Yuan Chen below, "Yuan Chen, take your time and play. Those little mice are coming back, so you have plenty of time."

Zhang Jing-an's words caused the white-clad Xiaoming to panic. Mentally, he was angry and anxious — angry that his teammates had chosen to come back, and anxious that they would end up being completely wiped out here because of this.

Still, no matter how angry and anxious Xiaoming was, he could not suppress the surge of warmth that rose up within his heart. He knew that his teammates' choice was largely because they did not want to abandon him.

Hearing Zhang Jing-an's words, Yuan Chen's initially rapid attack pace slowed. As he swung the bat in his hands, he resumed mocking the white-clad Xiaoming, "Ho, looks like, those few teammates of yours think pretty highly of you, actually choosing to turn back to rescue you ... however, this decision is really

too stupid. Your team really sucks. Who's your team leader? Wishy-washy and indecisive, and also having no self-awareness ... under his lead, you all will definitely never become a strong team and become strong individually. Like now, all you all can be is our stepping stones!"

"Whether our team sucks or not, I do not know. What I do know is that my team is a little better than your team — at least we are more humane than you all are," responded Xiaoming coolly. It's fine if they wanted to mock him, but he would not allow them to scorn his team leader and his companions.

"F*ck you!" Xiaoming's words thoroughly enraged Yuan Chen. Yuan Chen's attack speed rose once again, his rubber bat striking the other's body ceaselessly without mercy, once again throwing the other backwards into the air. These consecutive heavy blows dealt extremely heavy internal damage to Xiaoming, who could not help but throw up blood.

Not too far away, on the branch of a large tree, Ling Lan was closely watching the situation. An ice bead silently appeared in her palm. The other benefits of Ice Affinity were not obvious, but when she was trying to launch a stealth attack, she did not have to waste time and effort to find a hidden weapon — she just needed to focus and she would have a weapon.

Ling Lan aimed at a particular direction where a figure was laying ... a nimble flick of her finger, and the ice bead flew ...

"Ouch!" On one tree, a white-clad youth who had been lying down among the branches secretly watching the show suddenly felt a force push him lightly from behind. This push was not strong enough to hurt him, but it made him lose his balance to fall down from the branches.

He turned back to look for the source of the push, but saw no one. There seemed to be a glimmer in the air, but when he narrowed his gaze to look closer, it had disappeared, as if it had just been in his imagination.

"Ah ah ah ... help!" The white-clad youth did not find the culprit and so could only turn back around and struggle desperately in the air. But in the end, he still ended up crashing spread-eagled onto the ground.

This unexpected scene gave Zhang Jing-an and company a fright. About to launch another attack, Yuan Chen stopped, turning his head to look at this unexpected guest who had disturbed his fight.

In contrast to the other's surprise, Zhang Jing-an's face showed a trace of seriousness. Being able to sneak up on them without being noticed, this white-clad youth was obviously not a simple character. He may very well have some unique hidden ability. Zhang Jing-an immediately discarded the possibility that the other was stronger than him; he did not think anyone from Class-B could be that strong.

The white-clad youth pushed himself up from the ground with difficulty, moaning all the way. His exaggerated manner made everyone stare at him curiously.

Meanwhile, when Xiaoming saw the face of the white-clad youth, he couldn't help but exclaim, "Xie Yi, why are you here?"

"So it's a 7th grade junior! Come to save your fellow classmate? What admirable fellowship." When Yuan Chen saw the number embroidered on the other's chest, he tapped his bat lightly against his left arm, and spoke up with a half-smile.

Xie Yi patted the dust off his clothes and said with an expression of consternation, "You think too highly of me. Facing a team of the top 10th graders, if I have this notion, then I'm definitely a moron. Honestly, I just didn't hold onto that tree securely enough and fell down by accident. If possible, can you all just pretend you didn't see me ..."

"Do you think, that is possible?" asked Yuan Chen darkly.

Xie Yi's face fell instantly, and he pouted and started muttering to himself, "I just knew it. Not hugging onto the tree properly would end up like this ... Ahem, I'm really too pitiful. Just trying to get a good show and being pulled in like this ... How about you seniors show some mercy and we just exchange a move for show and call it a day?"

Speaking up at the end, Xie Yi's eyes were sparkling brightly, his expression clearly broadcasting the fact that he just wanted to have a good discussion with the 10th grade seniors. Everyone sweatdropped. Could it be that this fellow was truly a moron with a lacking brain?

Chapter 166: Who's the Opponent?

"That's fine. You just need to stand there and not move and let me hit you a few times and everything will be over!" Yuan Chen had barely finished speaking when he charged over, ready to teach this flippant punk a good lesson.

"That won't do. If I get hit, it'll hurt ..." squealed Xie Yi in fright, turning to run. Just when Yuan Chen was about to hit him, Xie Yi suddenly looked back and leapt into the air. His initially empty right hand now somehow had a rubber bat in it, and he launched a powerful downward chop towards Yuan Chen's head.

Xie Yi's counterattack came too quickly and too suddenly — this unexpected move gave Yuan Chen a great scare. He did not dare to continue attacking Xie Yi, jerking to a quick stop to raise his own bat above his head, blocking Xie Yi's attack head-on. Luckily he had reacted swiftly, otherwise Xie Yi would have succeeded in his sneak attack.

However, even so, Yuan Chen had still taken a hit. Xie Yi had been acting with a plan, while Yuan Chen had only been reacting reflexively — this attack caused him to stumble 3 to 4 steps backwards, a dull pain roiling in his chest. He couldn't help but open his mouth and blood spewed out immediately ...

"Despicable!" Yuan Chen pressed a hand to his chest and choked out in rage.

"This attacking method ... it's too wretched and despicable!" Rage coloured Zhang Jing-an's face; their team had never suffered such a disgrace before.

Xie Yi acted as if he did not understand what was going on. A puzzled expression on his face, he said, "Aiyaiyai, senior, why are you throwing up blood suddenly? Are you trying to tell us that as long as we work hard, we will benefit?" Xie Yi's face lit up instantly, and he said emotionally, "Boo hoo hoo, Senior, you are really such a great guy! Still not forgetting to teach us even during this critical time, even willing to pay the price of getting injured ..."

“Shut up! I’m definitely going to kill you!” Yuan Chen’s eyes were completely bloodshot. He felt that he had been played by this ant before him — he felt humiliated, feeling that his dignity had been ruthlessly stomped beneath the other’s feet. He wanted revenge. He needed the blood of the opponent to wash away his humiliation. For the first time, an intense desire to kill swelled within his heart ...

Not too far away, Ling Lan’s brows furrowed. She could clearly sense the 10th grader’s desire to kill. Unable to accept the strength of someone he viewed as weaker than him, and thus choosing to destroy the other? Could this also be considered an ugly aspect of humanity?

Ling Lan looked at the still cheerful Xie Yi who seemed oblivious to Yuan Chen’s intent to kill, and a smile bloomed on her lips. “I thought that I had already concealed my capabilities well enough, but unexpectedly, someone is even better at hiding than I am ¹ ... as expected, this world isn’t that simple ...”

“Yuan Chen, don’t break the rules ...” Zhang Jing-an too had sensed Yuan Chen desire to kill, and so spoke up to warn him.

“Leader, don’t worry, I will settle this matter perfectly.” As long as he did not give the other a chance to surrender or ask for help, even if he killed the other ‘by accident’, the academy would have no way to punish him. “Leader, you all can leave temporarily.” He did not want people nattering on beside him when he committed murder, even if it were his team leader.

Zhang Jing-an cast a searching look at Yuan Chen and then said, “Alright ...” That said, with a quick dash, he left the scene. Shi Qi and the others merely glanced at Yuan Chen, then left after Zhang Jing-an without saying anything.

After Zhang Jing-an and the others had left, Xie Yi’s smiling face abruptly became solemn. He said to Xiaoming behind him, “You should leave quickly ...”

“No way. I can’t leave you alone with him. Let’s fight together.” Xiaoming was determined. He felt that no matter what, two people together would stand a better chance of winning than one person.

“Puh-leeze. You’re already seriously injured. How do you plan to fight? Furthermore, if you aren’t here, it’ll be easier for me to escape! Running away is my specialty, don’t hold me back!” Xie Yi couldn’t help but roll his eyes. Sometimes, being too steadfast was also a troublesome thing.

“Really?” Xiaoming wasn’t sure whether he should take Xie Yi at his word.

“Of course it’s true! Quickly, go, go!” Xie Yi’s expression was annoyed. He waved his hand impatiently at Xiaoming, as if shooing away a fly.

Xiaoming looked at Xie Yi worriedly, but seeing that Xie Yi seemed to be serious about this, he clenched his teeth and left the scene.

Knowing that Xiaoming had left the scene, Xie Yi’s initially tense expression instantly relaxed. “Aiks, the troublesome people have all left. Now, let us play ...” With no one watching, Xie Yi was planning to bring out his secret techniques. Otherwise, what was the point in keeping them hidden for so many years ...? Besides, he also did not want to let off someone who wanted to kill him — he was not a saint.

Yuan Chen said sinisterly, “Yes, it is indeed time for us to play ...” That said, he pounced!

Somewhere else, Zhang Jing-an had led his 5 team members to run about five to six hundred metres away. Then, Shi Qi reminded, "Those people are just ahead. We'll see them soon." He was talking about that team of 7th grade Class-B students they had been chasing from the start.

"Zhu Qi, Qing Ming, I'll leave those people for you guys to handle!" For opponents like this, Zhang Jing-an had no need to act himself.

"Shi Qi, you keep watch over the situation!" Zhang Jing-an sent Shi Qi over as well not because he was worried that Zhu Qi and Qing Ming would fail, but rather because he was afraid one or two people would manage to separate and run off from the team again. Zhang Jing-an liked to wrap things up in one go, and did not like there to be any loose ends.

"Yes, Leader!" The three of them acknowledged their orders and quickly sprinted off.

"Leader, what about me?" The remaining team member was rather depressed. Everyone had their own tasks; only he had nothing to do.

"Luo Qiong, haven't you noticed something off? I keep having the feeling that someone is watching us, but I can't find the other," admitted Zhang Jing-an to this remaining team member.

"Leader, could it be some teachers watching us?" This was the first thing Luo Qiong could think of. Some teachers were truly very formidable — the more the students learned, the more they found those teachers frightening.

"This is also possible, which is why I have brought you all away from Yuan Chen. If the teacher's attention stayed there, then we wouldn't sense anything here ... but this feeling kept following me. Even after I sent Zhu Qi and Qing Ming off, this feeling still stayed here ..." As Zhang Jing-an continued to elaborate, he suddenly exclaimed in surprise, "The feeling is gone ..."

Then, his expression changed drastically. "Not good. Something has happened to Shi Qi!" Shi Qi's presence was no longer concealed; this meant that he had most likely lost consciousness.

"Has he been attacked? Is it our opponents?" cried Luo Qiong, shocked.

"Of course it's the opponent. Those teachers would never attack Shi Qi." Zhang Jing-an's expression was dark. He had actually been unknowingly followed by an opponent, and by spreading out his forces, he had unintentionally fallen for the opponent's plot.

Ling Lan had quietly snuck up to Shi Qi who was hiding on a tree branch, and before the other could notice her and react, she had struck him unconscious with one blow. She then carefully laid the other down on the branch, quietly pressing the other's surrender button to ask for assistance.

Right below, Zhu Qi and Qing Ming were oblivious. At that moment, they were gleefully watching the five figures who had appeared in front of them. It was the 7th grade Class-B team who had returned to try and rescue their teammate with a sneak attack.

Between Ling Lan's fingers, two extremely small and thin ice needles appeared out of thin air. With a flick of her wrist, the ice needles flew silently through the air to pierce into the area behind Zhu Qi's and Qing Ming's neck. The two of them shivered, feeling a chill spread out from their neck. However, this

feeling merely flashed by, quickly disappearing without a trace, causing them to think that they had imagined it.

The thin ice needles would not actually hurt them, and also would not give them any lingering after-effects. But for one hour, their true strength would be restricted by 30% to 40% by the cold air of the needles. This was a chance Ling Lan was giving to the 7th grade team. Whether or not they could take advantage of it would depend fully on the efforts of the 7th grade team members.

After doing all this, Ling Lan left the scene to return to the place where Zhang Jing-an was waiting.

“You’ve come!” Zhang Jing-an could feel himself being watched once again. So, he spoke up, hoping to trick the other into revealing themselves.

Meanwhile, as Zhang Jing-an spoke, Luo Qiong was looking around nervously. Dammit, he had not sensed anyone approaching! Could it be that the opponent was like Xie Yi and had a special concealment talent? He did not believe that the 7th grade students could be that much stronger than him.

“As expected of the first rank of the 10th grade!” A cold voice rang out, as if right by their ears, but also as if coming from a far distance. Zhang Jing-an tried to pinpoint the opponent’s position based on this voice but could not; instead, this voice seemed to muffle all other sounds around him.

“Ugh ...” Luo Qiong made a strangled sound, as if his voice had been stoppered at his throat. Without thinking about it, Zhang Jing-an leapt in Luo Qiong’s direction, but there was already no one there.

Zhang Jing-an stood there, cold sweat dripping from his forehead. The opponent had already made his move, and he had lost a team member in an instant, but he had not seen a hair of the opponent. Thus, he had no idea at all who the opponent was — when had such an abnormal prodigy appeared in the 7th grade? Or could it be said that some perverse and deviant teacher was playing a joke on him?

At this point, Ling Lan had already appeared where she had placed Shi Qi earlier. She put Luo Qiong there as well and pressed his surrender button too before disappearing again.

Ling Lan had not disappeared for long before two figures abruptly appeared on that large tree branch. Seeing the two red-clad youths on the branch, they exclaimed, “They’re from the 10th grade Class-A ...”

One of them bent down to check the necks of the two laid down on the branch, “They’re unconscious!”

“How are their injuries?” asked the other with a worried tone.

“The opponent’s method is very polished. These two were knocked unconscious in one hit without any warning. They are not injured at all.” The person who was checking on them continued to diagnose the reason for their condition.

“So what you’re saying is, the opponent knocked them unconscious and then pressed their surrender button to get us to take them away?” said the other, pleasantly surprised.

“Looks like it ...” The person checking on the students was just as pleased. Discovering a strong student indeed made them very happy, but they were even happier that this student’s morality was impeccable as well. Every teacher hoped that their academy would produce such a student who was exemplary in body, mind, and soul.

“The 7th grade students aren’t as weak as we had expected ...” The teachers had originally thought that the 7th grade would certainly lose this grand armed melee without a doubt. Now, it looked like it was too early to come to a conclusion just yet.

Chapter 167: Drawing a Snake Out of Its Lair?

“No matter what the situation is as they fight, we can only observe from the sidelines and try our best to avoid cases of death and bloodshed ...” said the teacher solemnly, with regret. Back when they had been scouts themselves, they had never gone through such a stirring incident like this grand armed melee.

Each holding onto a student, the two teachers swiftly left the scene. Like they said, no matter how much their hands itched to do something, they could only do their duty as a transporter — moving students who had failed off the field, watching dumbly as the students fought each other until the grand armed melee ended.

Zhang Jing-an felt that immense pressure disappear, and knew that the opponent must have distanced themselves once more after succeeding in their attack. His eyes narrowed as he quickly forced himself to calm down. His initiate instructor had once told him that, on the battlefield, no matter what the situation was, one had to remain calm. The moment one loses their calm, one would be at death’s door.

His entire being quietened, and then a surge of energy burst out from within him, spreading out. The melodies on the wind of this energy surge flowed towards Zhang Jing-an like musical notes. Abruptly, Zhang Jing-an turned to stare in a particular direction and said coldly, “Are you still not going to come out?”

Since she had been discovered, Ling Lan did not waste time hiding any further. She walked out from behind a large tree, and coming to stand about 20 metres away from Zhang Jing-an, the two of them stared evenly at each other.

The other was wearing the same red uniform as he was, and the number 7 glinting on the other’s chest proved that he was one of the rival 7th graders in this grand armed melee. However, that elegant and cold face was not the 7th grade top rank, Qi Long, whom they were familiar with. A thought flashed through Zhang Jing-an’s mind, and he said, “Qi Long’s boss — — Ling Lan!”

Ling Lan quirked a brow, as if surprised that Zhang Jing-an knew her name.

“The uncrowned king of the 7th grade is no secret. If one wants to know, then one will know,” said Zhang Jing-an tonelessly. That said, if it were not for the grand armed melee this time, he might not have known that such an exceptional expert was hiding in the 7th grade. Originally, he had thought that no matter how strong the other was, he would at most be at the level of the 9th grade Lu Jing. But now, from the look of things, he had miscalculated.

“Looks like you were already aiming for me from the start! This situation right now should be your doing. We can finally face off one on one ... however, you really think you are a match for me?” Zhang Jing-an remarked with a half-smile. In his eyes, Ling Lan’s planning was undoubtedly a little too self-conceited.

Ling Lan did not answer Zhang Jing-an, but only continued to stare at him emotionlessly, causing Zhang Jing-an to be unable to figure out what Ling Lan was thinking.

In truth, Ling Lan was actually conversing with Little Four in the mindscape. *“Little Four, where are those people now?”*

Apparently, just now, Little Four suddenly alerted Ling Lan to the fact that the people he was monitoring had finally started to move.

“About 3 kilometres from here,” responded Little Four, confirming the others’ position. Little Four was currently in sharing mode with the academy mainframe — everything within the academy was at his fingertips. Also, according to Ling Lan’s wishes, he did not apply any concealment methods onto Ling Lan. Therefore, as long as someone wanted to, they could easily find out where Ling Lan was.

“Little Four, looks like the things you discovered were accurate.” A murderous glint flashed through Ling Lan’s eyes. Another big reason she had initiated this grand armed melee was to lure the snake out of its lair — and now, from the looks of it, the opponent had not been able to hold back, as expected.

However, she first needed to handle this fellow in front of her as fast as possible ... Ling Lan glanced at Zhang Jing-an standing before her. Even though this person was very cocky and arrogant, and his personality was nothing great, Ling Lan still did not want to involve him in the cat-and-mouse blood sport of her and her enemy, and cause his death by unlucky chance. Thus, she decided on a speedy fight to end things quickly, and eliminate him from the grand armed melee as soon as possible.

Right then, Zhang Jing-an was thrilled — the faint sense of Ling Lan’s natural force of presence let him know that the other was an expert — he was glad to find a worthy opponent. Ever since the seniors had graduated from the academy, he had had the feeling of being a large mountain surrounded by molehills. Especially when he became ever more proficient at using the mutation of his spiritual self, he had thought himself unrivalled among the academy students! While this made him proud of himself, it also made him feel somewhat dejected — it was not a pleasant feeling to be alone at the top of the world without a match who could rival him.

Perhaps this youth before him now could give him a good fight and loosen his joints! Although Zhang Jing-an felt that Ling Lan could bring some colour into his life, he never even considered the possibility that Ling Lan could defeat him.

Zhang Jing-an wanted to fight, so he charged in directly. He did not use a rubber bat or any so-called fancy moves — he attacked with a simple punch. Perhaps Zhang Jing-an felt that victory was within his grasp, and so thought that there was no need for any complicated moves, that his strength alone was enough to steamroll the opponent.

It looked as if Zhang Jing-an only took a single unassuming step, but this simple one step actually carried him across the entire 20 metres of distance between the two combatants — in an instant, he was already right in front of Ling Lan.

In fact, this was just a trick of the eye — Ling Lan could clearly see Zhang Jing-an take ten steps within this short period of time to come right up to her. Meanwhile, Zhang Jing-an’s right fist was already flying towards her face.

Whether in terms of his crossing over or this final punch, his speed had reached an extreme — Zhang Jing-an even had the misperception that in the very next second, his fist would strike the opponent and send the other flying ... the smile on his lips had just begun to blossom when time froze.

Because, he felt his fist being detained by a gentle force, preventing him from moving any further.

It turned out that right at the moment Ling Lan was about to be struck, she too made a fist and met Zhang Jing-an's punch with a punch of her own. Although the two fists seemed to collide violently, no sound was produced. It was as if there had been no power behind the two punches at all, making the collision seem like a friendly fist bump.

Zhang Jing-an knew his own strength — he had definitely used about 80% of his strength in that punch of his. A situation like this would only occur because the opponent had met his punch with a corresponding amount of power, hence neutralizing the power of his punch with amazing gentleness.

This punch of Zhang Jing-an's did not create his desired effect, instead pushing him into a deadlock. Now, his choices were to either pull back his strength and try again, or push more force into his punch to continue pressing forwards. As long as his strength could overpower the opponent's, the deadlock would be broken, and the combined forces of both of them might even crash down completely on his opponent.

Zhang Jing-an naturally was unwilling to just pull back; from the start, he had considered himself the stronger party. So, with a soft shout, his entire face instantly flushed red. He abruptly sucked in his belly, and then with several consecutive shakes of his wrist, four silent and invisible energy waves were sent flying towards Ling Lan.

This was an ace in the hole given to him by his initiate instructor — he could unleash four hidden energy waves instantly, and each wave would stack onto the force of the wave before it so that by the time the final wave struck, it would carry the terrifying power of eight times the force of his personal strength. Of course, his initiate instructor warned him repeatedly to not use this move unless absolutely necessary. However, Zhang Jing-an felt that this was the perfect time to use it — because this was a battle of pride between the strongest of the 10th grade and the 7th grade!

Just by looking at her opponent's hand movements, Ling Lan could tell that the opponent had likely used a power-stacking technique. She decisively used One-Inch Punch — the two hidden forces clashed repeatedly, until finally, neither force could suppress the other, and so both of them blew up simultaneously.

Ling Lan and Zhang Jing-an were blasted backwards into the air by this massive backlash of energy. Even the stout tree they were standing by was destroyed instantly by the blast, its broken branches falling from the sky to crash into the ground.

With a reverse plank in mid-air, Ling Lan stabilised her body, landing firmly on the tree fork of another large tree not too far away. On the other hand, Zhang Jing-an did not have as good a time of it — only after flying out for about 5 to 6 metres did he manage to grab hold of a random tree branch with his left hand and, with that as leverage, pull himself back onto a tree to find stable footing again. Still, his right arm hung low, swaying freely with his body movements.

Ling Lan pressed her own right arm with her left hand, and said coldly, "As expected of the number one of the 10th grade, breaking my right arm with one move."

At the same time, Zhang Jing-an was also gripping his own right arm, expression unsightly as he said, "You're not weak either!" Similarly, his arm had also been broken by the other. That last move could be considered a loss on both sides. At this time, Zhang Jing-an no longer had any of the sense of superiority he had at the start; he now knew very well that Ling Lan was an expert at the same level as him.

"Still, even so, we must determine who is stronger!" Ling Lan seemed set on having a clear winner and loser — the moment she finished talking, she stomped forcefully, then borrowing the rebound from the tree branch, she flew forwards like a cannonball at Zhang Jing-an, completely ignoring the injury of her right arm.

Zhang Jing-an's expression was solemn. He knew that this time, it was time to determine a final outcome. For combatants like them at the Qi-Jin level, victory and defeat would be determined in a split second — it just came down to whose Qi-Jin was better.

This time, Ling Lan chose to attack with her left hand. Of course, she could *only* use her left hand now, but, she seemed to not be very confident in her left hand, choosing to attack with a rubber bat.

Zhang Jing-an too chose to attack with a rubber bat. Gripping it tightly with his left hand, he moved to meet her attack. The two were just about to clash, when Ling Lan's face suddenly revealed an expression of great shock and she shouted, "Dodge quickly!"

Zhang Jing-an was unmoved by this, his left hand and the rubber bat in it still moving forwards with the strength of his entire body.

Hmph! Thinking to trick me like this? No way! This notion had barely brushed through Zhang Jing-an's mind when he felt the back of his head being struck a heavy blow ...

He instantly felt as if his body were drained of all energy. As he fell down, with his last remaining bit of consciousness, he saw Ling Lan across from him choosing to turn tail and run, as if seeing some frightful being ...

Hells, so he wasn't trying to trick me ... At this moment, Zhang Jing-an's heart was filled with regret. If only he had listened to the other's warning. Would he then have been safe from this sneak attack?

Zhang Jing-an tumbled down from the tree he was standing on, but before he could crash into the ground, a figure swept by to catch him and set him down gently on the ground. At the same time, the figure pressed Zhang Jing-an's surrender button, and then disappeared instantly without a trace.

Somewhere 1000 metres away, a team of five dressed in instructor garbs were pausing for a moment. One of them, a 27 or 28 year old young teacher was activating his spiritual power to delve into the nearest monitoring signal, trying to locate the position of their target with all his might.

"The other's position right now has changed. From the initial southeast direction, he has moved towards the north," the teacher opened his eyes and said to a 35 or 36 year old male teacher beside him.

Chapter 168: Is This Mission Really Right?

“How far from us?” This teacher should be the leader of this team. At hearing his team member’s report, he could not help but frown.

“Not even 1000 metres away,” replied the scanning teacher.

” Xiao Lai ¹, watch the surroundings carefully. Don’t let the other teachers discover our tracks,” arranged the leader decisively.

“Yes, Leader!” The scanning teacher Xiao Lai received the command.

The leader waved a hand behind himself, and five figures disappeared instantly from the area with several hushed swishes.

Meanwhile, in the direction of true north, Ling Lan was sprinting across the ground, instructing Little Four inside the mindscape to help her find the most appropriate hunting grounds.

“*Little Four, here?*” Ling Lan abruptly stopped her steps and asked Little Four.

“*Yes. There are no scout students at all within 1000 metres of this area.*” Although Little Four did not know why Ling Lan was so concerned about the presence of scout students, as a follower, he had a responsibility to meet his boss’s requests.

“*Alright, then let’s wait here for prey to come!*” The hunting grounds Ling Lan had chosen was a large, dense forest deep within the academy. This area was already far from the various large dormitories — a typical person would not choose to come to this sort of dark and desolate place, unless they were students who were trying to be clever and hide for the whole 24 hours of the grand armed melee.

With a few flying leaps, Ling Lan disappeared soundlessly into the forest.

Not even a minute later, the team of five teachers appeared where Ling Lan had disappeared.

“Right here. A minute ago, the monitoring device detected his figure here. He entered the forest and disappeared from this point,” Xiao Lai pointed at the direction where Ling Lan disappeared.

“Can we not find his precise hiding spot?” The leader looked out into the quiet forest and asked.

“No way to pinpoint it. This place has almost no monitoring facilities, unless we mobilise the satellite system of the mainframe,” said Xiao Lai regretfully, “I still cannot hack into the Central Scout Academy’s mainframe to obtain its control rights ... its level is no less than the mainframes of our military headquarters.”

The leader said then, “Only a minute has passed. He can’t have gotten far. Let’s chase!” That said, he was the first to jump into the forest. His team members did not hesitate, jumping into the forest with him. They were just going in to handle a 13 year old babe, they had no worries about strategizing to avoid forests or any disadvantageous locations.

The group dashed far a length of ground, until when the leader suddenly halted and closed his eyes, carefully sensing the environment around him.

“The other’s presence suddenly disappeared. How did he do it?” The leader’s expression was dismayed. If the target escaped this time, they would find it very difficult to explain things when they returned. It

should be known that chances to finish off the other without leaving obvious traces were extremely rare; so, their ringleader had already given the execution order — that brat had to die in this grand armed melee.

“Could it be that we chased too far and overtook him?” asked one of the team members. They absolutely could not believe that a 13 year old plus child could beat them in terms of travel speed.

“Of course not!” The leader harrumphed. He could sense the disturbances where the other had entered and moved through the forest, so of course this was impossible.

However, he also believed that, with their speed, it was impossible for them not to have caught up to the other. Thus, the most likely possibility was that the other had a kind of miraculous concealment method, and was hiding somewhere at the side to avoid their detection.

“He should be close by! Let us spread out and search. Search properly, don’t overlook any suspicious places.” The leader made a decision instantly. “Also, don’t forget what we came here to do ...”

The leader swept a cold look over all the team members. “Kill him. Don’t be soft-hearted and show any mercy! That is our mission!”

“Yes, leader!” The four of them acknowledged the orders. Their initially somewhat relaxed expressions instantly became serious. They each chose a separate direction and then began slowly searching outwards.

“As expected, they are here to kill us ...” Inside Ling Lan’s mindspace, Little Four dutifully projected what all 5 of the men were doing.

“Argh, why are that fellow’s movements so accurate? He’s about to find us!” Little Four jumped up in fright inside the learning space.

“Don’t panic!” Ling Lan consoled Little Four. She peered intently at one of the teachers — well, let’s just call them teachers for now — who was already very close to her location ... she needed to find an opportunity to land a one-hit killing blow.

The moment these people got close, Ling Lan knew she was facing the second great crisis in her life ever since that first assassination attempt when she was six. These five people were all combat experts in the middle to late stages of Qi-Jin. In particular, that team leader had even fully mastered the Qi-Jin stage, like her, and was just waiting for that last catalyst to spark the insight to enter a new domain.

The other was getting closer and closer to her hiding spot, yet Ling Lan’s heart was becoming increasingly calmer. Her heartbeat slowed immensely, almost going into a state of hibernation as she laid there unmoving.

One step, two steps, three steps ... the other was already right in front of her. The shoes on his feet almost stomped on her fingers, but even so, Ling Lan’s heart was still as clear as ice. Unafraid even if the sky collapsed, she did not move a single inch.

Just as the other was about to approach one step further, the neighbouring shrubs about a metre away suddenly rustled. That person instantly turned with a look of caution upon his face, ready to go and investigate the situation over there. Right then, Ling Lan moved!

Ling Lan's right hand was gripping a conical weapon, transparent in colour and emitting a trace of cold air — it was an ice cone made via the use of Ice Affinity. At present, this was the largest weapon Ling Lan could condense with her talent. Hmm? You ask, wasn't Ling Lan's right hand broken? Why can she still use a weapon?

Well, apparently, when she had met Zhang Jing-an's punch with a punch, Ling Lan's right arm had been unharmed. She had just pretended it was injured to give the impression of weakness, as for who would fall for it ... that was not something Ling Lan needed to consider.

However, the ice cone in her right hand was not Ling Lan's most reliable weapon; her real killing move was a spiritual charge.

In this generation, spiritual attacks were an ability that only combat experts at the Domain stage or ace operators could possibly have. Take a good look, they could only 'possibly have' it. Indeed, both these parties must possess immense spiritual power and ability to advance that far, however, just having the spiritual power for it did not mean they could use spiritual power attacks. Only if they awakened an innate talent in this vein could they possess this ability. For example, the spectre ability gained from spiritual mutation was a type of spiritual attack.

However, Ling Lan was an oddball. She did not awaken any spiritual attack type innate talent, but because she had the instruction of the learning space, she had gained this formless yet powerful killing move through masochistic training. This was also why Ling Lan dared to hunt the 5 people after her who were Qi-Jin stage experts like her.

In fact, the rustling of the shrubs that pulled the opponent's attention had also been Ling Lan's doing via manipulation of her spiritual power. Undoubtedly, this time, Ling Lan had planned very well. All the reactions of the opponent were within her calculations.

A fierce spiritual charge would cause the opponent's head to be struck by an abrupt force. Zhang Jing-an, who had just stepped into the early stages of Qi-Jin, had fallen unconscious without being able to put up any resistance²; however, this teacher before her, who was already at the mid-stages of Qi-Jin, was only stunned for 2 seconds before regaining consciousness.

But these 2 short seconds were enough for Ling Lan to kill the opponent several times over. The ice cone created by Ice Affinity plunged mercilessly into the other's chest. Ling Lan did not hesitate at all after her successful strike, backing off instantly. Without even glancing at what would become of the opponent, she left!

That last strike had already revealed her killing intent. If she lingered for even a beat, she would be surrounded by the other 4 people. At that time, she would truly be put in a tight spot with the odds against her.

The moment Ling Lan left, the ice cone piercing the other's chest shattered, becoming countless translucent and glittering spots of light to disappear into the air. Without the continued support of Ling Lan's Ice Affinity, the ice cone had no way of maintaining its shape; this was also a reason for Ling Lan to

choose weapons created via Ice Affinity. In the end, only these 5 people would know what her killing weapon was³.

“Xiao Lai!” Rushing over, the leader yelled out in shock. It turned out that the first team member killed by Ling Lan just happened to be Xiao Lai, the one who had awakened a hacking innate talent and who could hack into the monitoring systems to track her. As hacking talents belonged to the spiritual series of awakened talents, Xiao Lai had had great resistance against Ling Lan’s spiritual charge. However, he was still not completely immune to Ling Lan’s spiritual charge, and so had finally died under Ling Lan’s sneak attack.

Fearfully, Xiao Lai pressed desperately on the wound at his chest, trying to staunch the blood gushing out, as he mumbled over and over again, “I don’t want to die, I don’t want to die ...” They had initially thought that this was an extremely easy mission — they only had to kill a 13 year old scout, and they were all elite soldiers ...

“Xiao Lai, hold on!” The team leader took out some medicinal agents and fed them to the other. However, he too knew that it was useless. Unless they could get supplementary blood to maintain the other’s minimum blood level within the next 3 minutes, and then obtain a replacement heart within 2 hours, even a god would be unable to save him.

But now, they were in the Central Scout Academy. Moreover, they were impersonating teachers to assassinate a student within the academy. They had no way of requesting emergency aid, and so had no way of receiving assistance. In other words, the leader had no way of bringing Xiao Lai back to their own territory within 3 minutes.

Hiding at one side, Ling Lan bit down fiercely on her own palm, hoping the pain could alleviate the discomfort she felt in her heart. The person she had just killed was not the virtual humans created by the learning space, and neither was he an enemy nation mecha warrior like on planet Demonbeast, nor was he a traitor who had betrayed her trust.

He was very likely just a regular soldier who did not know the truth beforehand, someone who had just simply accepted a mission ... yet, she could not be merciful just because of this. She could not die. She definitely could not die. Early on, she had already made a vow — in this life, she wanted to live safely, securely, and freely. If anyone tried to interfere with this goal, she would not care even if she had to morph into a demon to defend it ...

“Leader! Is this mission really right?” asked Xiao Lai, eyes filled with doubt as he breathed his last.

“Xiao Lai!” The team leader howled lowly, tears falling silently from the corners of his eyes. Just as Xiao Lai had said, was this mission really right? Why did they have to kill a half-grown kid? Could it be because the child’s father had betrayed the country, so they suspected the child would also become a traitor? Why did they have to go so far to prevent something yet to be decided?

The team leader slowly closed Xiao Lai’s wide open eyes. When he lifted his head once more, his gaze was sharp and cold, “Xiao Lai, until now you do not understand. We do not need to know what is right or wrong. Once you’ve entered the organisation, the mission is number one! Don’t worry, I will kill him and avenge you. A comrade’s blood is not wastefully spilled.” The team leader’s killing intent became thick

and overbearing. His entire aura gradually began to fluctuate and become unstable, even showing faint signs of going berserk.

Chapter 169: Demon?

Seeing this, a thought flitted through Ling Lan's mind. The leader's aura was in a chaotic state, causing him to lose his usual composure ... this was definitely a great opportunity to kill him. But just when Ling Lan was about to make her move, three figures flew towards them from three different directions.

"Leader!" shouted one of the team members.

Meanwhile, another team member saw the blood-soaked Xiao Lai laying in the leader's arms, and could not help but cry out in dismay, "Xiao Lai!"

Still in hiding, Ling Lan quietly lamented the lost opportunity. If those three people had come just 5 seconds later, she would have had enough time to make her move. Ling Lan was a decisive person. Seeing that there was no longer any possibility of launching a sneak attack, she once again muffled all signs of her presence, sinking down to hide like an inanimate object.

The team leader pushed down the sorrow and rage he felt in his heart, and said through gritted teeth, "Xiao Lai was the target of a sneak attack by the opponent. He's dead! The opponent is proficient at concealment and assassination. You must all be careful." His turmoil had only lasted for a moment. By now, he had already regained his calm, and immediately deduced Ling Lan's general position. "He shouldn't be far from here. From the time I sensed killing intent and rushed here, only 3 seconds have passed. He would not have had the time to go too far."

The team leader believed that although he had been thrown into mental turmoil by Xiao Lai's death, he had not lost his sensory abilities. If Ling Lan had chosen to run away back then, he would definitely have sensed the boy's movements. But when he had arrived at the scene, the surroundings had been still and silent. That meant that the other must have chosen to lay low somewhere close by.

Perhaps, the boy was just by their sides now, just waiting for a chance to strike a killing blow.

"From now on, the three of you shall be one team. When you search, don't stray too far from the others. It's best if you all can keep an eye out for each other." The team leader knew that the other three members of his team were at about the same level of strength as Xiao Lai. As such, they would be in danger if they got stranded on their own, so he decided to let the three of them search as a group. As for himself ... if the opponent thought that he was a good target on his own, he would let that punk know that, before true strength, any brilliant sneak attacks or assassination attempts were all futile.

"Yes, Leader!" acknowledged all three men with serious expressions. Xiao Lai's death had raised their guards; they were not confident that they would be able to evade the opponent's undetectable sneak attack on their own.

Ling Lan saw the four of them split up into two teams and start searching in two different directions. Ling Lan's luck was undoubtedly excellent — the first directions the two parties began searching in were coincidentally not where she was hiding. Of course, this was just a temporary reprieve. When the two parties did not find anything in the directions they were searching right now, they would definitely circle

back to search the places they had not covered on their first run. In other words, if Ling Lan just continued to hide here, she would still eventually be discovered by the opponents.

Ling Lan considered her options, and then decided to find a chance to trail that group of three. Although on the surface, going after the team leader to try and execute an assassination seemed more likely to succeed, Ling Lan somehow had an unexplainable feeling in her heart that there was something dangerous about that team leader. It was this sense of danger that made her give up on trying to sneak attack that team leader immediately.

Of course, for Ling Lan to launch a sneak attack on the three-man team without being caught was also very difficult. However, Ling Lan believed that as long as she was patient and focused, it may not be impossible.

Right then, a gust of wind swept by, shaking the leaves on the trees, causing them to rustle loudly. With a light push of her palms, Ling Lan sprang off the ground and flew towards the direction where the three-man team had gone ...

When the wind died down, Ling Lan drifted softly to land like a leaf, dashing into another concealed spot to continue hiding once more ... Ling Lan's patience was extremely high — even though she still could not see hide or hair of the three-man team, the moment the wind stopped blowing, she would stop moving as well, and would remain still until the next gust swept by.

On the other end, the team leader was searching with his head bowed. His ears twitched with the sounds of the wind. Though his face remained expressionless, doubt flashed briefly through his eyes ...

He actually could not hear anything out of place. Other than the sounds of the wind, and the rustling of leaves, all he could hear was the sound of their own footsteps as they traipsed through the dry grass. Could he have made an error in judgment? Was the opponent still choosing to hide at his original spot and not planning to try another sneak attack? Or had he perhaps already gotten close to them, and he just could not hear it?

The leader's expression became grim. Just then, a tendril of fog abruptly appeared in the forest. It slowly became thicker and thicker, until the leader's figure was hidden within this dense patch of white fog.

The members of the three-man team kept the instructions of their leader close to heart; the distance between them never exceeded 10 metres. Not only that, they each also made sure to keep one team member within sight at all times. This was the triangular formation unique to the Federation military, and it was considered a defensive formation with no blind spots.

Ling Lan continued to use the sound of the wind as cover, sneaking up stealthily to the three-man team. However, she was not happy. Instead, her brows were tightly furrowed, because she had noticed that under this formation, she would have no chance whatsoever to try a sneak attack.

She needed to mess up this formation as soon as possible! Ling Lan knew she did not have a lot of time. Little Four, who had been keeping an eye on the leader, had just told her that he had lost track of the leader. Although Little Four was using high-definition satellite monitoring to scan the area where the

team leader had disappeared, that area had already become a thick cloud of fog. Under these circumstances, even the most high-definition satellite would be ineffective.

Ling Lan reckoned that the fog was part of the other's innate talent ability. Under the cover of the fog, perhaps the other had already turned back and was rushing here at full speed. Meanwhile, she not only had to find a way to finish off these three people in front of her as soon as possible, she still had to beware the aftermath. She did not want to be like the tragic mantis which stalks a cicada, unaware of the oriole behind it ¹.

A gust of wind swept by, causing the shrubs and trees around to sway gently, rustling. At the start, the three-man team had been in a state of paranoia, which then toned down to nervous caution ... and now, they were calm. At this play of the wind, they merely cast brief glances reflexively at those areas which emitted sound.

Seeing this, an idea sparked in Ling Lan's mind ...

The three men saw nothing strange and so continued to walk and search. Not long after, another draft swept by, and like before, the trees and shrubs emitted a round of choppy noises — but this time, an almost imperceptible object shot out along with this gust of wind.

Taking advantage of the wind, Ling Lan had sent an extremely thin and small, yet extremely sharp, ice needle flying out at the team member closest to her. At this time, the other's range of sight just happened to turn towards some source of sound. Moreover, the direction of this turn just happened to expose his most defensively weak temple to Ling Lan.

Ever since humans have used gene agents to spur the development of the body, their bodies' vitality and resistance had been strengthened greatly in comparison to that of Ling Lan's previous world 10,000 years ago. Thus, besides the areas of the head and brain, there were no longer any fatal weaknesses on any other part of the body.

If Ling Lan wanted to rely on this extremely thin ice needle to give the opponent a death blow at any other part of the body, that was almost impossible. Only by shooting it straight into the head to destroy the other's brain could it achieve a killing effect. Just like how Ling Lan had killed that Twilight Empire mecha operator on planet Demonbeast — using a short wooden needle to pierce through the other's lower jaw diagonally to penetrate the brain, killing the opponent by destroying the other's brain. Otherwise, just purely piercing the throat may not necessarily guarantee the other's death.

Compared to the layers of defense shielding a mecha operator's head, this three-man team before her, due to their disguise as teachers, had not donned any defense for their heads. This gave Ling Lan the possibility of achieving one-hit kills.

Ling Lan's ice needle was truly too small and thin, and on top of that, she had used the sound of the wind to cover its tracks — only when the ice needle was no more than 10 millimetres away from the opponent did his expression twist in realisation.

No matter how much she tried to hide the attack within the sound of the wind, a Qi-Jin level combat expert would have a defensive Qi flow around him, so when the attack approached this Qi flow, it would be noticed by the opponent. This was also why Ling Lan had chosen to do a close-range assassination at

the start with Xiao Lai. After all, hidden weapons were not very effective against Qi-Jin experts who were on their guard.

That person was just about to move his head to dodge the attack, when Ling Lan's long prepared spiritual attack followed. This time, her spiritual attack was not as intense as the one she had used against Xiao Lai, which could cause someone to fall unconscious directly. Instead, this attack would only concuss the head of the target, making him lose control of his movements, briefly paralyzing the other.

It would only last for a split second; the target would be back to normal almost immediately. However, this one split second was enough — with fear and shock, the opponent found that it was too late to dodge!

The ice needle plunged soundlessly into the opponent's temple, leaving no trace except an extremely miniscule red dot where it had entered ... as well as that rictus of horror right before the moment of death!

In the meantime, the other two people did not notice that anything had happened. They continued to search ahead, still staying in their triangular formation. But after walking a few steps, they realised that one of their members on one of the corners had trailed behind ...

One of the remaining members stopped and shouted out doubtfully, "Xiao Lin, did you find something? Why aren't you keeping up?"

Xiao Lin just continued to stand there unmoving, staring off fixedly at a spot, as if he had found something.

The two of remaining members looked at one another, then agreed tacitly to go over to take a look. They carefully made their way over and one of them walked right up to Xiao Lin's side. He nudged Xiao Lin on the shoulder and said, "Hey, why aren't you answering?"

Unexpectedly, this nudge caused Xiao Lin's entire body to fall forwards. The two men were shocked — one of them quickly got into a defensive pose nervously, while the other moved forwards to check on their companion, only to find that Xiao Lin had stopped breathing ...

"Ahh ... that goddamn bastard, you need to f*ckin' come out and show yourself! What kind of hero attacks from the shadows?! Come fight me one on one if you have the guts!" That person leapt up abruptly, screaming out into the dimly lit forest hysterically. He was thoroughly frightened by this silent and unexpected passing of Xiao Lin.

"Xiao Chong², calm down!" the other team member yelled anxiously, looking around warily all the while. The surroundings were quiet and still, not a figure in sight ...

"Leader! Leader!" bellowed the hysterical team member, hoping that his team leader would hurry over to investigate the cause of Xiao Lin's death.

However, all that answered him was still silence. Even his leader was nowhere to be seen or heard. The hysterical team member gradually calmed down, but his complexion also grew increasingly paler. He could not help but think: Could it be that their team leader had also already been killed silently and unexpectedly like this?

He shook his head emphatically. No, the leader was so strong and formidable. He definitely wouldn't be offed by a 13 year old child ... but, was their target really just a 13 year old child? Or perhaps the one behind the deaths of his comrades was not their target at all? Perhaps it was a demon?

He thought of that large hole in Xiao Lai's chest that had been created by an unknown weapon, and then looked down again at Xiao Lin laying on the ground without a mark on him. All he could see was the terrified expression on Xiao Lin's face, as if he had seen something horrific right before he died ...

Chapter 170: Split-Core Twofold Detonation Technique!

"Xiao Fei, there was clearly no one around earlier, but Xiao Lin still died, even leaving with such an expression on his face. Our opponent isn't human!" Although science and technology explained that there were no ghosts and spirits in this world, the bizarre nature of Xiao Lin's death had still caused Xiao Chong to panic. "Right now, even the leader has disappeared! He must have died at the hands of that terrifying demon too! If we continue to stay here, we'll definitely die!" Facing such a creepy situation, even a braver man would be affected by fear.

"Slap!" Xiao Fei threw a tight slap across Xiao Chong's face. In reaction, Xiao Chong gaped, expression still anxious, confused, and helpless.

"You need to godd*mn calm down!" barked Xiao Fei, "The leader had mentioned that the opponent is good at concealment and assassination, so it's not surprising that he knows some methods that we cannot understand. But this doesn't mean he's invincible!"

"Besides, I don't believe the leader has really been finished off." Xiao Fei knew his leader's capabilities very well — if even the leader could not resist, then they would really have no chance of leaving this forest alive. He told himself that he must remain calm. The moment the both of them got caught up in panic, then death would really be at their heels.

Xiao Fei's calm and steady words finally lessened Xiao Chong's panic. His gaze began to rove, but just as he was about to say something, he suddenly saw the bushes about 10 metres behind Xiao Fei burst apart soundlessly. Countless blades of grass and leaves shot out like arrows at Xiao Fei's back.

"Watch out!" Xiao Chong's previous panic was wiped away instantly. A cold light shone from his eyes as he pushed Xiao Fei gently to one side with his left hand. Then, lifting his right hand, he charged towards the bush the attack had come from. A formless blast of Qi-Jin, and the grass and leaves flying towards them were instantly obstructed.

A muffled "bang!" — the two invisible forces collided. Xiao Chong's body was shaken by the blast, and he felt the breath and blood in his chest roil ... calmly, he circulated the hidden force in his body, and once more gathered the energy at his palms to push out at the opposing force once more ...

The addition of this burst of Qi-Jin finally suppressed that formless energy, and the grass and leaves frozen in the air were immediately thrown back from whence they came.

Hiding in the opposite direction, when the muffled blast rang out, Ling Lan's complexion paled, as if sustaining some great blow. However, her expression did not change and her vision did not waver. She

still kept her eyes coolly focused on the other team member, the one who had been pushed aside by Xiao Chong, Xiao Fei.

That's right, her target this time was none other than Xiao Fei. The flying grasses and leaves earlier were indeed her tactic, but that move was just a feint, an intentional attack to lure the attention of Xiao Chong.

Although Xiao Chong's surface panic had looked very real, the invisible bloody aura lingering about them proved that these people were all veterans who were used to bloodshed. How could they be so easily frightened by a comrade's unexplained death? His performance was undoubtedly meant to lull Ling Lan and try to entice her into attacking.

After figuring things out, Ling Lan decided to just play along. Even though she risked getting injured this way, she would obtain another chance to kill off yet another one of her opponents. This was an undoubtedly worthy exchange.

Right after Xiao Chong blasted away those grasses and leaves, with no hesitation, he stomped on the ground, and using the reaction force generated from it, he pounced towards the area that had been blasted apart. Both his palms were thrust forward, formless Qi-Jin behind them as he struck out!

Since the formless force had come from this direction, then the opponent must definitely be hiding there! He had caught the killer! Glee flashed through Xiao Chong's eyes. As long as the opponent exposed himself, based on the strength he had sensed from their last encounter, Xiao Chong was confident that he would definitely be able to kill the other by working together with Xiao Fei.

With a loud "Boom!", dirt was thrown up into the air along with shrubbery as the ground was blasted apart by the force of his attack. At the end of it, a deep pit of about a metre wide in diameter laid before Xiao Chong.

"A good opportunity! Explode!" At this moment, Ling Lan, who had been hiding to one side, saw Xiao Chong leave the side of the other team member, and immediately detonated the spiritual power she had planted by Xiao Fei's side.

Ling Lan was not confident that she could kill two Qi-Jin experts at the same time with a spiritual blast. In comparison with Xiao Chong's late stage Qi-Jin strength, Xiao Fei with his early mid-stage Qi-Jin strength was undoubtedly easier to kill. Therefore, from the very start, her target had always been Xiao Fei — always start from cartilage when gnawing on bones¹, after all.

The formless and colourless spiritual power, under Ling Lan's control, exploded in an instant, creating a massive shockwave aimed straight for Xiao Fei's brain.

Xiao Fei, who had been pushed to one side by Xiao Chong, had already been in defensive mode. His attention was currently focused on Xiao Chong's attack — the moment he noticed any sign of the opponent, he would follow up with an attack of his own and help Xiao Chong.

However, before he could notice anything, tremors abruptly coursed through his mind. This was a warning signal, an ability of every fighter who managed to enter Qi-Jin stage. Could it be that the opponent was trying to launch a sneak attack on him?

This notion had barely passed Xiao Fei's mind when the hidden force spread out across his body ballooned rapidly — if anyone or any hidden weapons approached him, he would be able to sense it ...

But even as he pulled this defensive action, he felt a formless energy collide with the defensive hidden force on his body ... He felt his Qi-Jin shudder violently, and then waves of dizziness and disorientation invaded his brain. As if from a distance, he felt like he could hear his own Qi-Jin being detonated by that surge of energy. Boom! Boom! Boom! ...

These concussive forces were focused on attacking his brain. In the end, he felt his brain succumb to these overwhelming energy surges, and with a last roaring blast, it exploded ... he thoroughly descended into darkness and knew no more.

On the other side, Xiao Chong, who was attacking the source of the attacking energy, thought that his two Qi-infused palms would force out the killer hiding within the shrubs. However, other than flying dirt and grass, there was no one to be found ... besides the rustling sounds of the trees and plants stirred by the wind, there was nothing else in the surroundings.

"Damn it!" Seeing his two palms not having their intended effect, Xiao Chong could not help but curse silently, heart doubtful. Had the killer snuck away in the very moment he had launched his sneak attack at Xiao Fei? But he had not heard anyone moving at all! Or could it be that that person had never been there to begin with? In that case, then how had that attack been created?

Sure enough, Xiao Chong was not as flustered as he had appeared to be. Or, more accurately, his previous weak performance was just meant to put the killer hiding in the shadows at ease and get him to attack.

He had indeed gotten his wish. The opponent had struck, but the outcome was not ideal. He did not manage to frisk out the opponent, which made him even more uncertain and lost than before.

He moodily walked back to his teammate's side. Of course, along the way, he did not forget to stay vigilant — he believed that the killer was still nearby. It was only that the killer had a mysterious way of moving and hiding, causing him to be unable to find an opening, so fear began taking root in his heart.

"Xiao Fei, did you find anything?" he asked softly. Xiao Fei had been standing behind him all this while defending, perhaps he had seen something.

Unfortunately, there was no response to his question. Sensing something off, Xiao Chong's expression changed drastically. He rushed over to stand before Xiao Fei and was treated to the sight of Xiao Fei's wide open eyes staring off sightlessly into the distance. Meanwhile, thin rivulets of blood were flowing ceaselessly from Xiao Fei's eyes, nose, ears, and mouth ... With just one glance, Xiao Chong could tell that the other was already dead.

"Aaaah!!" Xiao Chong howled mournfully. Compared to the other teammates, he and Xiao Fei had grown up together, attended school together, fought their first battle together, and survived together. They were the best of sworn brothers. His death caused Xiao Chong to go utterly berserk ...

Hiding within the grass, Ling Lan's current condition was not optimistic either. Her face was as white as paper — that last spiritual blast had undoubtedly drained her spiritual power. Not only that, a spiritual blast was also an attack which extracted a heavy toll on oneself even as it dealt great damage to the

opponent². Moreover, the attack she used this time — the split-core twofold detonation technique — actually had an even higher requirement than a regular spiritual blast, with a correspondingly higher damage output.

Though the power of a spiritual blast was indeed very strong, it had a weakness — after it was activated once, the user would not be able to accumulate spiritual power again for a short period to continue attacking. Thus, if Ling Lan used a spiritual blast to attract the opponent's attention, then she would have no way of immediately gathering spiritual strength again to launch another sneak attack. In order to successfully kill off one of her opponents, she could only take a risk and use the split-core twofold detonation technique.

The split-core twofold detonation technique was an area-of-effect technique. It split her spiritual power into two portions, which could then be detonated separately to attack a target. The immense turbulence caused by the twofold blasts of spiritual power could instantly destroy anything tangible or intangible within a certain range.

Ling Lan knew well that that missing team leader was most certainly on his way here. There was no time for her to continue wasting; she needed to finish off these two people before the team leader arrived. Otherwise, up against that leader at the peak of Qi-Jin, Ling Lan had no confidence she would be able to stand up to him even one-on-one, much less if the other still had a helper remaining.

Ling Lan believed that, by using the split-core twofold detonation technique, she would definitely be able to kill off at least one of her opponents. And in reality, Ling Lan had done it. However, the cost was also very high. Not only was her spiritual power depleted, her head ached fiercely, feeling as if it were splitting apart, causing her to feel like puking. Even her physical body sustained a little damage. The only blessing was, setting her spiritual power aside, her combat ability had not been decreased by much.

“Boss, you cannot use any more spiritual power.” Checking on Ling Lan's condition, Little Four spoke up to caution her, “Forcefully using any more will cause irreparable long-term damage to your spiritual self.”

“Understood!” replied Ling Lan. Her gaze was fixed on the grieving and berserk Xiao Chong. His aura had started to fluctuate; this was undoubtedly a good time to attack ...

Since she already had no way of using spiritual attacks anymore, then all she could do was charge in. With a strong push of her arms, she flew like an arrow towards Xiao Chong who was still howling mournfully up into the sky.

At the same time, a cone-shaped icicle appeared in her hands, and in a split second, she was at the opponent's back.

In fact, Ling Lan already long knew that the so-called innate talents from spiritual mutation actually had very little to do with how strong one's spiritual power was. It was just that the innate talents possessed by a body required spiritual power to trigger. Although Ling Lan's spiritual power was depleted, she still had the tiny bit of spiritual power needed to activate Ice Affinity to make this small icicle ...

At that moment, the wailing Xiao Chong abruptly turned around. He glared at Ling Lan with bloodshot eyes and shouted, “You've finally appeared!”

