

I Am Loaded 21

Chapter 21: Save Me, Judge!

1

There was no rest time between the preliminary round and the competition between the top 64 contestants.

1

However, news that Xu Xiaoshou had killed someone had already spread throughout the entire Outer Yard during the night.

Most of the people only paid attention to the bosses who were ranked in the top ten of the Windcloud Scoreboard. However, Wu Peng, like a dark horse, had forced people to take notice of him.

The advancement competition started at noon the next day.

Unlike the preliminary competition, from this point on the Chuyun Platform would no longer be split into 18 different arenas, and one arena master would engage in consecutive duels.

This was what everyone was looking forward to.

Many people had been frustrated that they'd missed the historic moment of a person being killed in the Outer Yard because they'd been looking at another battle.

There was a crowd of people in the spectator seats, and it was incredibly loud.

"It's here, it's here. We've waited so long to reach this moment."

"Sigh, who here hasn't waited? To think that I missed the first death in the Outer Yard because of the two Innate-stage fighters, Senior Mo and Senior Chao!"

"Haha, then you really missed out. What's so great about seeing the two of them before the advancement competition? Didn't they finish off all their opponents in one move?"

"Let me tell you. Yesterday, Xu Xiaoshou held back his finishing blow while Boss Wen launched a sneak attack at him from behind. In the end, he got stabbed in the chest... The twists and turns in their fight were so exciting!"

"Everyone in the spectator seats was shocked. It was so silent that you could hear a fart."

"Urgh, stop telling me about it. Can't you see the regretful tears running down my face?"

Besides for the spectators who'd come here just to observe the competition, there were spectators present who supported Xu Xiaoshou, as well as those who didn't like him.

However, everyone had had a night to cool down and now showed much more restraint. At the very most, they would glare at each other and feel unhappy whenever Xu Xiaoshou was mentioned.

Xiao Qixiu landed in the main arena. Chief Elder Xiao, who had stood in the air for a few consecutive days, finally decided to plant his feet on the ground and honestly host the competition.

He didn't dare fly in the air anymore. He was afraid that his heart wouldn't be able to take it if he saw another soul rise to the heavens.

He expertly took out a piece of paper from his robes, and the spectators immediately fell silent. They were all ears.

"I believe that everyone has heard about the death from yesterday..."

A glimmer appeared in everyone's eyes when Xiao Qixiu said this.

This matter would've silently passed if no one had mentioned it again, so didn't Xiao Qixiu mentioning it now mean that there were some follow-up matters to deal with?

Had a decision been made by the Spiritual Law Division? Was Xu Xiaoshou going to be barred from the competition?

Xiao Qixiu surveyed his surroundings. This was the first time he wasn't reading from the paper. His expression was stern.

"Here, I want to remind all of you..."

"Even though the Tiansang Spirit Palace has provided all of you with a comfortable training environment, I don't want your wills and minds to weaken.

"One day, the time will come when you will graduate and head out of the palace. However, once you leave the spirit palace, there will definitely be many life or death moments in the Shengshen Continent!

"Every competition is an obstacle in the outside world. You need to give your best effort!

"However, at the same time, I hope that you maintain a good attitude. This attitude will define your life, your death, your morals. It will be your bottom line.

"If you cross that bottom line, you will eventually reap what you sow.

1

"Be it if your name is Xu Xiaoshou or Wen Chong!"

Everyone slipped into silence.

They were all waiting for an outcome. Was Xu Xiaoshou going to be barred from the competition or be judged not guilty and allowed to continue with the contest? No one knew the answer.

To these people, speculating about the results of the contests outweighed their regard for human life.

However, Xiao Qixiu had been unwilling to comment on the event yesterday. Instead, he made use of this incident to teach everyone a lesson.

Didn't Wen Chong die because he crossed the bottom line and reaped what he'd sown?

But whether or not Xu Xiaoshou had crossed the bottom line and intentionally landed the killing blow was also a question.

However, there could only be one resolution to this matter.

Now that Xiao Qixiu had said this, only time would tell whether Xu Xiaoshou met a good or bad end.

In the arena, Chief Elder Xiao felt very comforted when he saw the crowd's reaction.

To a person who had killed many a time like him, someone dying was no longer a big deal to him. He didn't have to put in that much effort and waste his words on this incident.

However, it was different with these young people. If his words only jolted a few of them awake to life's realities, that was enough to him.

It was meaningless for them to act on their momentary courage and hatred, as it would only cause them trouble in the future.

Xiao Qixiu was overcome with emotion. In the past, he wouldn't have said much, but things were different now.

After all, he was no longer the brutal killer Xiao Qixiu of the past. He was now a Chief Elder in the Tiansang Spirit Palace.

"Great!"

Xiao Qixiu shook the piece of paper in his hand and said, "Since that's the case, we shall now talk about the main issue at hand."

"The battle between the top 64 contestants will now start. The pairings will be drawn on the screen. There will be two people in every group. The time limit of the battle is 30 minutes!"

"Fight your hearts out today. We will have as many people advance as possible. We have the time!"

The crowd of spectators, who'd still been in deep silence, immediately started to stir at Xiao Qixiu's words, and the atmosphere gradually livened.

Chief Elder Xiao was very satisfied with the crowd's response, and he immediately waved his hand to signal for the competition to start and make the tense crowd spring into action.

"Now, the contest will start..."

"Wait!" a voice hurriedly interrupted him.

Everyone was shocked and looked at the person who'd spoken. He dared to interrupt the chief judge? Did he want to die?

"Xu Xiaoshou?"

"That person must be ill!"

"My God, it's already great enough that Elder Xiao didn't hold him accountable, yet he still wants to provoke him?"

“He’s here, he’s here, Xu Xiaoshou’s here! As someone who’s paid attention to him since the group stages, I dare say that Xu Xiaoshou isn’t Xu Xiaoshou if he doesn’t provoke others!”

Eighteen people dressed in black were sitting sternly in the panel of judges. The 12th judge immediately slumped over when Xu Xiaoshou arrived.

“He’s here. That person is the Xu Xiaoshou I was telling you guys about.”

“Look closely. That lad is definitely going to cause trouble!”

1

“I was tormented by that lad. Come, come, come, I’ll bet one Spirit Crystal. Even Boss Xiao wouldn’t be able to keep his composure in front of him!”

A few of the black-robed people beside him started to laugh, their eyes full of shock.

“Is he as bad as you say?”

“Doesn’t he only have an Innate-stage physical body and an Acquired-stage Sword Will? I’ve seen many geniuses!”

“That’s right. No matter how much of a genius he is, is he better than Su Qianqian from the Inner Yard?”

The 12th judge shifted his chair and leaned forward. He saw Xu Xiaoshou run to Xiao Qixiu and shook his head slightly.

“No, no, no, that’s all secondary. What’s most terrifying about that lad is how unpredictable he is!”

1

He paused for a moment, then added, “You never know what infuriating thing he’ll do next.”

Everyone was looking at the arena.

Xiao Qixiu’s expression was terrifyingly dark. However, he could do nothing but watch the brazen, anxious young man run toward him.

A candidate could request the chief judge to pause the competition under special circumstances.

This was within the rules of the Windcloud Competition, though no one had ever done it.

“What’s wrong? I’ll finish you off if you don’t have a special reason for this!” Xiao Qixiu spoke at the top of his voice. Xu Xiaoshou’s interruption had made him a little flustered.

“Save me, Sir Judge!”

The young man in front of him was flustered, and his face was red. Xiao Qixiu could feel the scorching heat radiating from Xu Xiaoshou’s body when he came closer to him.

Xu Xiaoshou was truly panicking!

He didn't know what the detestable old man had given him. As soon as that red seed had entered his stomach, he'd only felt his body get hotter and hotter. A terrifying, scorching aura had radiated out from the seed, continuously gnawing at his body.

He had tried to refine the seed by meditating at Goose Lake to expel the seed from his body.

However, the symptoms had only gotten worse the more he'd tried, and the seed had melted!

3

The scorching aura had seeped into every cell of his body and was continuously burning him.

Xu Xiaoshou felt as though he were about to explode.

Even his Innate-stage physical body couldn't tolerate the burning. Several of the meridians in his body had broken. He would die if this continued.

2

He had wanted to head to the Spiritual Medical Division, but all of the best medical attendants and pharmacists had come to help out in the Windcloud Competition.

Thus, he could only come here to look for them.

However, how could he easily find those people? Furthermore, he didn't know if the old man had anything to do with them, so he couldn't recklessly reveal himself.

Thus, Xu Xiaoshou could only use his trump card!

Xiao Qixiu looked coldly at the young man. He wanted to see what kind of nonsense Xu Xiaoshou was capable of spouting.

Xu Xiaoshou tore his shirt apart and revealed his red flesh.

"Save me, Judge!" he howled hysterically.

"I took drugs. Please bar me from the competition!"

3

"I want medical personnel to examine my body. Immediately, right now!"

Chapter 22: Requesting Help

All of the spectators were stunned. In this day and age, someone was actually requesting to be barred from the competition?

Xiao Qixiu's expression darkened. He had thought that it was a grave matter.

Doping?

What contestant didn't consume a few pills before the start of the competition to boost their abilities? There weren't even rules that prohibited a competitor from using pills to recover their spiritual strength.

“Nonsense!”

“Hurry up and get out of the arena!”

Xiao Qixiu was furious. He nearly drew his sword and thrust it at Xu Xiaoshou.

There was a bitter expression on Xu Xiaoshou’s face. He said, “If not for the fact that I really took too many drugs, I wouldn’t have to come to look for you. I really need help!”

He looked behind him. There was a bunch of angels in white robes sitting there.

Xiao Qixiu frowned. This young man really was anxious. Also, his stark-red body...

What was going on here?

He knew that Xu Xiaoshou had an Innate-stage physical body, so what kind of item was this that it was capable of making him experience such adverse side effects?

“Get over here!” Xiao Qixiu pressed his hand onto Xu Xiaoshou’s chest, and a terrifying scorching energy instantly assaulted him.

Creak!

He smelled the scent of flesh burning and immediately pulled his hand away. He didn’t have an Innate-stage physical body.

The spectators were dumbfounded.

“Oh f***, just what kind of drugs did Xu Xiaoshou take? To think that it managed to injure Elder Xiao.”

“This is insane. Did he really take drugs? And he dared to come here to turn himself in?”

“If it was really as he said, I would think that he had no other choice. Haha, this is too funny!”

Even Xiao Qixiu was startled. He quickly enveloped his palm with his spiritual source to eliminate the scorching aura. However, his palm had already been burned.

He had disregarded Xu Xiaoshou’s symptoms and touched him without protecting himself with his spiritual source first. He ended up paying the price for that with a burned hand.

“The Infernal Fire Seed?”

“Elder Sang must have gone mad,” he murmured to himself. “Didn’t the Infernal Fire Seed once cripple a person with an Innate-stage physical body?”

2

Xu Xiaoshou nearly peed his pants when he heard this. He fearfully looked at Xiao Qixiu, his eyes full of questions.

Xiao Qixiu awkwardly stroked his hand as he realized that Xu Xiaoshou had overheard him muttering to himself. “That item is great,” he quickly added. “It’s your good fortune. There’s nothing wrong, there’s nothing wrong...”

Xu Xiaoshou was about to explode. "What do you mean that there's nothing wrong?" he thought to himself. "Didn't you just say that it once crippled a person with an Innate-stage physical body?"

"I heard everything!" he said slowly.

"You heard wrong!"

"Hehe!"

1

"Sigh!" Xiao Qixiu sighed. He patted Xu Xiaoshou's shoulder and said, "Go back and rest. Do your best. Fight through the pain!"

"Got encouraged. Passive Points +1."

Xu Xiaoshou was gobsmacked.

"That wasn't the answer I was looking for! I want medical attention!" he thought.

"I don't want to be burned and crippled!"

Xiao Qixiu no longer cared about Xu Xiaoshou. He got him to squat in the corner and announced the start of the competition, then went at his own pace and started drawing the pairings.

Everyone in the spectator seats grew interested. What was going on?

Xu Xiaoshou had admitted to taking drugs and requested to be barred from the competition, yet the judge had disregarded his claims and wasn't even going to give Xu Xiaoshou medical attention?

"Hahaha, this is too funny. What happened here today is a lesson that the evils we bring on ourselves are the hardest to bear!"

"Xu Xiaoshou is so pitiful. He took drugs and ended up in this state. Bravo!"

"Please give him some medical attention. He's about to turn into braised meat... Haha, I can't hold it in any longer!"

Xu Xiaoshou's upper body was bare, and he was becoming terrifyingly redder and redder, and there was steam rising from his body.

He dejectedly returned to his waiting area.

"How could he be so merciless? He didn't even get a medical worker to look at me..."

Xu Xiaoshou secretly mulled over the situation. He had gained something by coming here. At the very least, he had obtained some critical pieces of information.

The Infernal Fire Seed had once crippled a person with an Innate-stage physical body!

Also...

Elder Sang?

He seemed to have heard that name before...

Judging from the information that Xiao Qixiu had accidentally revealed, Xiao Qixiu knew about the item he had consumed... the Infernal Fire Seed?

Also, Xiao Qixiu might know the detestable old man.

This was the reason why Xu Xiaoshou didn't continue with his antics.

"They are partners in crime..."

Xu Xiaoshou sat down cross-legged and continued expelling the scorching aura from his body a little at a time. This was all he could do for the time being.

However, this terrifying scorching energy gradually seeped into his energy reserve as he refined it.

"Won't it eventually burn my energy reserve?"

Xu Xiaoshou felt indignant. He had unknowingly got done in by the detestable old man.

He suddenly remembered what Xiao Qixiu had said about this being his good fortune.

Perhaps that detestable old man had given him the Infernal Fire Seed to get him to successfully refine it?

Now that it had come to this, he was no longer hung up on how this item had once crippled a person with an Innate-stage physical body. No one was going to help him, so he had to depend on himself.

The screen above the arena flickered. Names were chosen, and two people walked into the arena.

The spectators were joyfully shouting. The atmosphere inside the arena was charged with energy.

Xu Xiaoshou, on the other hand, was trying his best to refine the seed. He took out the Red Gold Pill and took a whiff of it from time to time, using the high to neutralize the pain and heal his injured body.

"Got attacked. Passive Points +1."

"Got attacked. Passive Points +1."

...

The notification panel in his mind refreshed every second. Xu Xiaoshou was constantly being burned. On an average day, the number of passive points he was gaining would've made him happy, but now...

Hehe, it had once crippled a person with an Innate-stage physical body.

That sentence was like a nightmare, continuously coming back to haunt him.

"Sigh, do I still have to participate in the competition? What's going on?"

Even though he was trying his best to hang in there, his condition was terrible. The meridians in his body were being severed one after the other, then restored time after time by the Red Gold Pill.

The pain was unimaginable.

"Oh, maybe I can dispel this scorching energy through battle?"

Sometime later, Xu Xiaoshou, who was sitting cross-legged on the ground, had a stroke of inspiration and abruptly stood up.

That idea might work!

He looked at the arena. Many pairs had already been drawn, however, his name hadn't been picked yet.

The most eye-catching person in the arena right now was a man in white robes. His expression was cold, and he was wielding an Ice Stream Sword. His attacks turned his opponents into ice sculptures as he sliced his way to victory.

"Zhao Qingteng, victorious!"

Xu Xiaoshou's eyes glimmered. Ice?

He really wanted the other party to slice him with his sword. He'd feel so comfortable he might explode!

However, Zhao Qingteng...

He was an Innate-stage fighter!

This made him a little nervous.

The screen flickered again. Two names appeared in bold on the screen.

"Xu Xiaoshou!"

"Zhang Fei!"

2

As soon as the announcer's words fell, the spectators erupted with excitement. This was the second time this had happened. The first time was when the Innate-stage fighter Zhao Qingteng had entered the arena.

"He's here, he's here, Xu Xiaoshou!"

"Open your eyes wide, Sandbag Xu is coming!"

"Oh? Why is he called Sandbag Xu?"

"You don't know? Let me tell you, that Xu Xiaoshou..."

Xu Xiaoshou immediately flew into the arena from the waiting area and once again ran to Xiao Qixiu.

"Give me treatment if I defeat this person!" he pleaded.

Xiao Qixiu's expression turned dark. What kind of candidate was this?

"I'm a judge," he thought. "Who do you take me for? You ran over here to talk to me like this?!"

One of the people from the panel of judges behind Xiao Qixiu was elated. "Look at Boss Xiao. Xu Xiaoshou's only just come up to him, and he's already starting to get frustrated!"

He was quite happy and observed Xu Xiaoshou with curiosity.

“Go back and stand in your corner!” Xiao Qixiu scolded.

Xu Xiaoshou pointed to his neck. It was billowing smoke.

There was an unpleasant look on Xiao Qixiu’s face as he looked at Xu Xiaoshou. However, he was the judge, so it wasn’t like he could do anything to him.

“Look, this area is already burned red. I’m a candidate. I have the right to receive treatment!”

“Hehe, you did this to yourself before the competition, so it has nothing to do with me!”

Xiao Qixiu did want to treat Xu Xiaoshou, but even the best medical worker present, much less himself, wouldn’t be able to help him, so all he could do was get Xu Xiaoshou to fight through the pain.

Xu Xiaoshou’s eyes glimmered when he heard this, and he said, “That’s right. Since I did this before the competition, it has nothing to do with you, but if I get injured during the competition, you have to treat me!”

“Yes, that’s right!” He nodded hard, then muttered loudly to himself, “Furthermore, according to the rules, you have to restore me to tip-top form!”

Xiao Qixiu looked really angry now. “Scram!”

“Zhang Fei!

“Where are you, Zhang Fei? Hurry and come into the arena!”

Chapter 23: One Punch, One Palm

In the arena, Xu Xiaoshou looked menacing.

There was a manic look in his eyes. He took off his shirt and revealed his chest. His body was stark red, and there was steam rising from his skin. He looked like a living god of war.

4

“Where are you, Zhang Fei? Come up here and battle me!” Xu Xiaoshou shouted. He wanted to infuriate Zhang Fei to get him to attack him. That way, Xiao Qixiu would take action and save him when he saw the pitiful scene about to unfold.

Of course, the most important thing was removing the Infernal Fire Seed in his body.

In the waiting area.

Zhang Fei and his friends looked worried.

“In my opinion, you should admit defeat. He’s Xu Xiaoshou. Besides the two Innate-stage fighters, he’s the most notorious dark horse in this competition.”

Zhang Fei looked a little hesitant. “But...”

“Look at him. That guy really has taken drugs. Didn’t you see him when he killed Wen Chong?”

“He wasn’t as manic then as he is now. If you go up the arena, you’ll either be killed or dismembered!”

Zhang Fei shivered. What his friend said made sense.

But...

He raised his hand and looked at the bite mark on it. He knitted his brows and said, “I just talked trash about him yesterday. Wouldn’t it be really disgraceful to admit defeat the moment we encounter each other today?”

4

“Is losing face worse than losing your life?”

Zhang Fei thought about it, then shook his head and said, “He might not be able to break through my defenses!”

He shrugged off his friend’s hand and quickly got into the arena.

“Sigh, what a fool!” A pitiful sigh came from behind Zhang Fei.

...

“You’re Zhang Fei?”

Xu Xiaoshou looked at the tall muscular man. His fists were like bags of sand.

Great. It would definitely be a pathetic scene if he got beaten up by this person.

Which was the effect he wanted!

He glanced smugly at Xiao Qixiu. The chief judge would have to save him if he was faced with the spectator’s skepticism later!

As long as the chief judge had to save him, there was no way he could disregard the seed in his body.

Zhang Fei clasped his hands. “Hello, Senior Xu. The technique that I’ve cultivated is called the Great Metal Bronze Body. My defenses are exceptional, so please don’t hold back.”

Great Metal Bronze Body?

Xu Xiaoshou staggered. “Isn’t that a defensive spiritual technique?” he thought. “You’re supposed to be beating me up. How could you have cultivated such a technique? You’re not living up to your great physique.”

Xiao Qixiu instantly snickered. How could he not know what Xu Xiaoshou’s plan was?

He waved his hand. “Battle, start!”

This wasn’t good. He had to force the other party to attack. Otherwise, his first plan would be foiled!

He made a provocative gesture at Zhang Fei. Then, he got into a loose battle stance and signaled that he wasn’t going to move if his opponent wasn’t going to move.

Zhang Fei gave a slight smile. He let out a low grunt and got into the same battle stance. The spiritual strength in his body surged as his skin turned a shade of copper.

The battle reached a stalemate.

The spectators burst out laughing.

“Hahaha, I have to hand it to the both of them. This is a competition. What are they doing!”

“Zhang Fei’s Great Metal Bronze Technique only has one retaliation move at the end. What’s Xu Xiaoshou doing? Doesn’t he have offensive techniques? Attack!”

“Attack? Don’t you know he’s called Sandbag Xu? Xu Xiaoshou will only get attacked. He’ll feel itchy all over if he isn’t beaten up!”

1

“Haha, I can’t take it anymore. We’ll be watching them stay their stances until nightfall at this rate!”

1

Xiao Qixiu’s expression darkened. He’d been angry more times today than in the entire year combined.

All of them, what were they doing?

This was a competition!

“Please take note, candidates, that the battle only lasts 30 minutes!”

Xu Xiaoshou knitted his brows. “This Zhang Fei has good focus. It looks like he isn’t planning on attacking, so isn’t my first plan foiled?”

“Do I really have to attack to get rid of the scorching energy in my body?”

He could attack, but he was afraid that his opponent wouldn’t be able to withstand it!

Xu Xiaoshou turned back to look at Xiao Qixiu. “You’re really not going to save me?”

“Hehe!” Xiao Qixiu replied with a snicker.

“You don’t believe my attack will kill him?” Xu Xiaoshou pointed at Zhang Fei.

Zhang Fei’s face turned green. He felt his legs go numb, and he fought back the urge to jump out of the arena.

“Your beef is with judge Xiao, not me,” he thought. “Why did you drag me into it?”

Xiao Qixiu’s expression turned cold. “This lad is trying to threaten me?” he thought.

“Attack if you please,” he said. “If Zhang Fei dies, I lose!”

Zhang Fei felt his legs shake. “D*mn it. I’m not an object you can wager on. I’m a living person!”

2

The panel of judges was startled.

“Boss Qiao’s become furious?!”

“Darn it, this Xu Xiaoshou is impressive. To think that he could make Boss Xiao utter those words. I have to hand it to him!”

“Hehe, I’ve told you that this Xu Xiaoshou is impressive. However, I’m quite worried about the lad on the other side.”

“Level Nine... He should be able to take the attack...”

In the arena, Xu Xiaoshou raised his brows slightly when he heard Xiao Qixiu’s words. He wasn’t looking at Zhang Fei. He was looking straight at Xiao Qixiu.

“Are you sure?”

He activated the aura of the Infernal Fire Seed in his body, then fiercely punched the ground.

Boom!

A large crater appeared in the arena, and a scorching energy instantly blasted through the surroundings, burning the area a few meters around the crater pitch-black.

“I really took drugs. No one will be able to take this attack!” Xu Xiaoshou flexed his arms to show his muscles.

Just that?

Xiao Qixiu looked disdainful.

Zhang Fei was tired. Seeing how nonchalant Xu Xiaoshou was, as well as how unphased Xia Qixiu was, he could see his pitiful fate.

“Save me. Do I continue standing here or not?” he thought.

Xu Xiaoshou’s punch had scared him half to death and made everyone’s eyelids twitch.

“My God, that destructive power...”

“Zhang Fei is too pitiful. He managed to defend his spot for three consecutive battles in the preliminary round, but it’s like he doesn’t even exist in front of Xu Xiaoshou.”

“Please take a look at Zhang Fei before you guys continue with your conversation. His legs are trembling!”

Zhang Fei’s legs were trembling. But it wasn’t just his legs. His voice also trembled as he said, “Senior Xu, please hold back. Don’t take what I said earlier seriously. Just give me a few light taps.”

He muttered, “Please allow me to save face...”

The spectators burst out laughing. Seeing that Xiao Qixiu was silent, Xu Xiaoshou fiercely charged forward. “Enjoy the last moments of your life!”

Xiao Qixiu stared at him. Even though he felt that the lad was joking, he had to be prepared if Xu Xiaoshou was serious!

Boom!

Xu Xiaoshou's punch landed on Zhang Fei's chest, and a pulsing, scorching energy burst forth, and he felt the high that comes with letting loose.

Creak...

Zhang Fei's hair was singed, and even his clothes were a little charred. However, he didn't move from his position.

Xu Xiaoshou was shocked. "To think that he managed to take his punch at 50% power!" he thought. "He's decent!"

Letting loose really had an effect. His opponent had a strong defense. Since that was the case, the chief judge need not save him. He should save Zhang Fei!

"Huff!"

He took a deep breath, engaging his diaphragm. This would be his first time using his spiritual strength in his attack.

A visible scorching aura gathered around his left hand. It looked like his hand was burning with a formless fire, causing the area around it to distort slightly.

Zhang Fei's pupils dilated.

"Take it, I have to take it!" he thought. "It won't be embarrassing to admit defeat after taking this attack!"

Xu Xiaoshou calmly said, "One punch, one palm!"

Zhang Fei became flustered. He immediately changed his mind. "I admit..."

Boom!

A beam of light flashed, and Xu Xiaoshou's punch landed on Zhang Fei's chest. An explosion was heard in the air, and a visible heatwave spread throughout the surroundings. The stones in the arena were instantly charred and sent flying.

The pulsing spiritual strength behind this punch made Xu Xiaoshou feel as though he were slapping a mosquito. He instantly sent Zhang Fei flying.

Zhang Fei hadn't yet finished his sentence when he immediately became unconscious from the impact and was sent flying out of the arena. His body was dragged backward along the ground from the momentum of his fall, creating a deep ravine in the ground.

Thud, thud!

Sparks flew the moment his body stopped flying backward, and flames erupted over his body.

“Save him!” Xiao Qixiu roared.

The white-robed angels didn't need to be told this. They'd already gone over to Zhang Fei the moment he was sent flying. They split the work evenly between themselves and extinguished the fire and tended to Zhang Fei's wounds.

“That felt great!”

Xu Xiaoshou took out a Red Gold Pill and sniffed it. He let out a comfortable moan.

3

He had managed to expel a good amount of the scorching energy in his body from his attack. Even though he still felt miserable, he'd won in terms of letting loose!

3

He glanced at Chief Judge Xiao, who was glaring at him. “I was holding back,” he said innocently. “He'd already be dead if I hadn't.”

Xiao Qixiu was speechless.

The spectators were speechless.

Chapter 24: Three Sentence Technique

1

Everyone in the arena gasped.

“He really just used one punch and one palm!”

“Why do I feel so bad for Zhang Fei? But it is a little funny. He used all his effort to get into the top 64, but in the end...”

1

“It's undeniably funny. But this Xu Xiaoshou might be a little too powerful. He's almost as strong as the people ranked first and second on the scoreboard!”

“After seeing this, can't you tell that this person might really have an Innate-stage physical body!?”

“Innate-stage physical body?”

“I don't know. Someone analyzed the situation a few days ago and said that the probability of that being true is 70%. Now that we just saw that punch and palm, I would think that probability has increased to 90%.”

Many people fell silent after hearing this. An Innate-stage physical body was extremely difficult to cultivate, and a person's efforts might not even yield any results, yet someone had managed to obtain an Innate-stage physical body?

“Maybe it’s because Xu Xiaoshou took drugs? Look at the scorching heatwave radiating from his body. He’s already requested to be barred from the competition. Why isn’t the judge doing anything about it?” some people protested out of jealousy, and their words naturally reached Xiao Qixiu’s ears.

He disregarded them. He didn’t even care to explain himself.

Everyone has their opportunities. Was there a rule against mastering a powerful technique before the competition?

Even if there was such a rule, were they going to prohibit someone from training before the competition, achieving a breakthrough during the competition, or improving after reflecting on the competition?

This was the case for Xu Xiaoshou. The Infernal Fire Seed that Elder Sang had given him couldn’t even be regarded as an opportunity, as his body might be destroyed if things went wrong.

You can obtain an Innate-stage physical body if you have the ability, but someone might use you as the subject for their experiment.

Xu Xiaoshou ignored his surroundings and walked back to the waiting area. The competition continued. Thirty-two people out of the original 64 would be advancing. There were still many battles to go. He had more than enough time to rest.

While he sniffed at the Red Gold Pill, he paid attention to his notification panel and couldn’t help but be elated.

“Got respected. Passive Points +142.”

“Got envied. Passive Points +874.”

“Got mocked. Passive Points +113.”

“Got attacked. Passive Points +1.”

The notifications told him about the emotions he had stirred up rather than the Passive Points he’d gained!

“Listen, so many people in the spectator seats are saying good things about me!” he thought. “Look, so many people are secretly envious of me. Tsk tsk!”

Xu Xiaoshou glanced down the notifications.

“Passive Points: 42888.”

3

Clang!

He hit his head on the railing, and a wave of mocking laughter came from the spectator seats. The number of Passive Points soared again to 43003.

“How could I have so many?”

Xu Xiaoshou was stunned. He remembered that he only had a little more than 10000 points after the three battles in the preliminary round. How could his Passive Points have skyrocketed in just one morning?

He tried his best to think back but couldn't recall having done anything to anger anyone.

"Killing Wen Chong?"

"Impossible," he thought. I was still in the barrier during that time and wouldn't have received the bulk of the Passive Points then. Even if I had, I imagine it would've been several hundred points, or a little more than a thousand at most.

"How could the points have risen by more than 30000!"

1

Xu Xiaoshou quickly scrolled through the past notifications to take a look. All of the notifications looked objective and realistic. They each gave him a dozen or several hundred points, but no numbers larger than that appeared.

"Could the system have made a mistake?" The thought flashed through his mind. However, he quickly discarded the idea. He'd sooner believe that a meteor was falling from the sky.

,

"Got attacked. Passive Points +1."

"Got attacked. Passive Points +1."

...

While he was in a daze, the notification panel continued to update every second. It constantly updated. Xu Xiaoshou groggily looked at the notifications, then suddenly slapped himself on the head.

"The Infernal Fire Seed?!" He seemed to understand what was going on now.

His body had continuously been burned since dawn, which was when he ate the item. The system must have classified the burn as an attack received per second.

Which meant that he'd gotten one Passive Point every second.

Getting a Passive Point every second wasn't very impressive, and Xu Xiaoshou didn't pay it any attention.

However, those points would really add up as time went on!

Xu Xiaoshou did a simple calculation in his head. It must've been around seven in the morning when he met that detestable old man. It looked like a little more than three periods had passed.

1

Xu Xiaoshou started counting on his fingers, then used his toes to continue counting.

Three periods was six hours. There were sixty minutes in an hour, sixty seconds in a minute...

Over 20000 seconds!

2

Over 20000 Passive Points!

Creak!

Xu Xiaoshou exhaled two jets of steam and forgot about the chair he was sitting on. He released the spiritual strength around his buttocks and the heat emanating from his body completely melted the chair.

3

He fell onto the ground with a thump.

An attendant immediately ran over and asked him what happened.

In a daze, Xu Xiaoshou waved his hand to signal that he wasn't in any trouble. The attendant was about to leave when Xu Xiaoshou quickly stopped him. "Wait, help me calculate how many seconds there are in a day," he said.

"A day?"

The attendant thought for a while, then said, "Around 86400 seconds, I think!"

Thud!

Xu Xiaoshou crushed the cup in his hand. He'd been struggling to get up, but he fell limply onto the ground once again. "What did you say?" he exclaimed. "Say it again!"

The attendant looked at Xu Xiaoshou's body, which was constantly emitting steam. He didn't know whether to help him up or not. All he could do was say again, "Eighty-six thousand and four hundred!"

"Gulp!"

Xu Xiaoshou swallowed. More than 80000?

His facial expressions were interesting. One second it was pain, then bliss, then shock, then a silly grin...

The attendant didn't know why Xu Xiaoshou was acting so insane, but then he suddenly remembered the instructions he'd gotten from the panel of judges. He needn't care about Xu Xiaoshou, no matter what requests he had or what condition he was in. He could just regard Xu Xiaoshou as an idiot.

He silently left the waiting area, thinking that the chief judge lived up to his reputation. He knew about everything!

Xu Xiaoshou held up the Red Gold Pill and took a deep breath to quell his agitation, and shuddered. After doing this, he noticed that he was about to run out of Red Gold Pills.

In just a little more than half a day, he had used up the two bottles of pills Elder Qiao and the previous judge had given him.

Xu Xiaoshou thought it was a pity. Those were items that could save his life!

However, this proved how powerful the Infernal Fire Seed was.

1

However, after realizing how valuable the Infernal Fire Seed was, Xu Xiaoshou was no longer in so much pain that he needed to vent. Instead, he started to feel happy.

“Pain?” he thought.

“Hehe, it’ll pass in a flash.

“A successful man doesn’t become successful without going through immense pain. If I only pay attention to the pain, I won’t experience the bliss that comes after.”

He waved his hand and summoned the attendant once again. “Go and look for Elder Xiao, the chief judge in the arena,” he instructed. “Ask him for some Red Gold Pills. Remember to bring me some.”

The attendant looked at him like he was an idiot.

“Are you dreaming?” he thought.

Xu Xiaoshou’s face was already red, so there was nothing for him to be shy about. He continued, “I’ll teach you the three-sentence technique. Remember it well!”

“First, if he doesn’t agree, tell him, ‘you were unwilling to give me medical attention, so you should at least give me some Red Gold Pills. I’m also a candidate. I will not stand for this!’”

The attendant was at his wit’s end. “He thinks I’d dare to talk to Elder Xiao like this?” he thought. “He’s the chief elder of the Spiritual Law Division, not a street vendor.

1

“And for free?”

“Keep dreaming!”

“Second,” Xu Xiaoshou continued, “If he still doesn’t agree, you can say, ‘Hehe, don’t think I don’t know that you’re partners in crime and are experimenting on human bodies.’ Your tone must be firm. You must be fierce!”

The attendant was a little dizzy. “This Xu Xiaoshou is definitely daring,” he thought. “Be fierce? Have a firm tone? Why don’t you go and die?”

“Third, he must have agreed by this point. There’s no way that he’d dismiss the request. You can add a final line, ‘Since you’re already willing to give me the pills, are you not embarrassed that you’re giving so little? Add a zero to the back!’”

1

“Go yourself!” the attendant laughed coldly.

“Go by myself?” Xu Xiaoshou immediately became unhappy. “I’m a candidate, and you’re an attendant. We each have our jobs to do!

"I still have to battle and fight later, so I need to recuperate now. Hurry and head over.

"Do your best. Don't be afraid. He isn't scary. You have to know that people who hold higher positions than you are more afraid of soiling their reputation. He wouldn't attack you for no reason."

The attendant staggered backward. "Are the things you're asking of me not good reason enough?" he thought.

"Go!"

Xu Xiaoshou waved his hand. The attendant didn't know how to react momentarily, and could only leave with a bitter expression on his face.

"It's too hard!" he thought.

"I want to change my job!"

Chapter 25: Let's First Spin With 10000 Passive Points

Xu Xiaoshou immediately returned to the red interface after the attendant left.

"Sharpness (Acquired Lv. 9)"

"Sharpness (Acquired Lv. 10)"

"Sharpness (Innate Lv. 1)

1

Xu Xiaoshou held a spirit crystal in his mouth and constantly inhaled it. His eyes were unfocused, and there was a blissful, foolish smile on his face.

1

When he was poor, he'd never dreamed that being rich could make him this happy.

He splurged on his techniques since he now had so many Passive Points. However, he only spent 3000 points, which was negligible considering he now had more than 40000 Passive Points.

Xu Xiaoshou finally had a second Innate-stage passive skill after Strengthen.

As Sharpness reached the Innate-stage, an undulating transparent sheen appeared on the surface of his body. It looked like it could slice through anything. It looked like a glistening treasure, and was extremely splendid.

Xu Xiaoshou had a thought. He willed the light to gather in his forearm and transformed his arm into a blade. Then, he sliced his hand down toward the ground.

1

Creak!

A deep crack appeared in the ground, as if a sharp blade had just sliced through it.

Xu Xiaoshou's eyes glimmered, and he gathered the light to his toes and swept toward the ground again.

"Creak!"

His shoes were torn apart.

Xu Xiaoshou was speechless.

However, he couldn't contain his excitement when he saw the sword-like marks under his feet.

"Indeed, every passive skill will undergo a huge transformation when it's raised to the Innate-stage."

He remembered Strengthen. That passive skill had taken his body into the Innate-stage the moment it reached the Innate-stage. Now, a transparent glow that gave every part of his body extraordinary slicing capabilities had appeared the moment Sharpness reached the Innate-stage.

1

This was the best weapon for assassins. It was indefensible.

He could suddenly kick an opponent during the competition and tear enemies into two...

Xu Xiaoshou couldn't help but tremble at the thought. That was too terrifying!

Because it was a passive skill, there was no casting time or prelude, so how could anyone defend against his attack, even if he used it out in the open?

They couldn't!

"You can defend against my kick to your nether regions, but can you defend against the rest of my attacks?"

Xu Xiaoshou thought outside the box. He gathered the transparent glow onto his hair, then took out a spirit crystal and threw it up into the air.

Thud, thud!

His hair swept past the crystal, and the crystal, which was as hard as granite, was reduced to fragments. The pieces hit the ground with a series of thuds.

Xu Xiaoshou was dazed. "That was an unconventional idea. But it worked?"

He felt immense pity for the shattered spirit crystals on the ground. "What a waste," he thought. "I should have tested the passive skill on a piece of rock instead."

5

Xu Xiaoshou finally realized how powerful the Passive System really was. Each of his passive skills were spiritual techniques that could be upgraded. Furthermore, he could enhance them without training.

1

Currently, he had two Innate-stage spiritual skills, and he had another two skills that could be enhanced to the Innate-stage!

But this wasn't the most important thing. More crucially, these were all passive skills. If used well, they were basically active skills that could be instantly cast!

"That's too terrifying..."

Xu Xiaoshou giggled as he exchanged his points for ten Passive Keys. I'll use 10000 Passive Points for now. I'll top it off if that's not enough!

Originally, the Fleeting White Clouds was his trump card. However, he'd had to show it before he wanted to because of Wen Chong, and no longer had a finishing move in his arsenal.

Having all of his trump cards exposed was a dangerous thing.

He had to obtain a passive skill with more destructive capabilities. Otherwise, he might not be able to defeat the two Innate-stage fighters, Mo Mo and Zhao Qingteng, if he encountered them in his upcoming battles.

1

Xu Xiaoshou had become a little arrogant. At the very least, in his eyes, only the two Innate-stage fighters could be a match for him in the Outer Yard.

That was the truth. He'd even defeated powerful people like Wen Chong, Liu Zhen, and Zhang Fei. In the eyes of the crowd, he had the right to compete for the top spot on the scoreboard.

Xu Xiaoshou placed the keys into the wheel one by one, feeling really good. He'd feel even better if he got a black screen again.

The illusion of the white clouds that the Sword Technique Expertise had given him had more than doubled his powers, and he naturally wanted more.

As the last key disappeared, Xu Xiaoshou went through his routine and shouted, "Hah! RNGesus bless me!" and then looked expectantly at the notification panel.

"Better luck next time!"

"Better luck next time!"

"Better luck next time!"

"Better luck next time!"

"Better luck next time!"

"Better luck next time!"

"Better luck next time!"

"Better luck next time!"

"Better luck next time!"

"Better luck next time!"

1

This...

Thump!

Xu Xiaoshou fainted, and his eyes rolled back into his head as he fell face-first onto the ground.

Another attendant in the waiting area felt that something was off. He had constantly been keeping an eye on Xu Xiaoshou's antics. Xu Xiaoshou had sliced the ground and tossed his hair around, looking like he was having a lot of fun playing by himself, just like a child from the attendant's family.

However, why did he suddenly fall?!

This was a grave matter.

He quickly ran over and shook Xu Xiaoshou awake. Xu Xiaoshou was dazed when he first woke up, and he fainted again when he saw the notification panel.

6

"F***!"

"The judge was right. This Xu Xiaoshou is a handful!" he thought.

As a qualified attendant, he had some medical experience and could tell that Xu Xiaoshou had fainted from mental trauma.

But...

This was his first time seeing someone make himself faint by tossing his hair around!

4

Slap, slap, slap!

The attendant repeatedly slapped Xu Xiaoshou using his spiritual strength, and finally woke Xu Xiaoshou up again. Xu Xiaoshou, who had just woken up, looked blankly at the attendant, and two rivers of tears flowed down his cheeks.

The attendant was flustered. "What's going on?" he thought. "I didn't do anything to you when you were unconscious!"

"Leave, I don't want to see you. Let me have some time alone!" Xu Xiaoshou cried.

1

The attendant was confused.

He turned around and decidedly left.

Xu Xiaoshou felt extremely bitter. He had considered the worst-case scenario, but he hadn't expected it to really happen.

"That was 10000 Passive Points!"

“Gone just like that. You’re toying with me!

“You didn’t even give me an extra key. You’re cruel, you’re merciless, you’re ridiculous!”

Xu Xiaoshou felt like his body had been hollowed out, and he no longer had the strength to stand up. He thought about the 30000 points he had left. “Should I level up the Breathing Technique and Sword Technique Expertise?” he thought.

2

“No, I don’t believe this. I’ll do ten more spins!”

13

Xu Xiaoshou was someone who would never admit defeat. At least, that was what he thought. Thus, he exchanged his points for ten more keys.

“If I don’t get anything this time, I’ll...

“I’ll...

“Hah!” He exhaled and chose to give in to his fear. He silently inserted the keys until the last one had disappeared.

“Hah! RN...” Xu Xiaoshou shouted out of habit, but then his voice gradually became softer, and he looked up at the sky without saying anything.

“Forget it, I can’t get hyped up,” he thought to himself.

“Better luck next time!”

“One extra key!”

“Better luck next time!”

“One extra key!”

“Better luck next time!”

“Better luck next time!”

“Obtained Fundamental Passive Skill: Eternal Vitality!”

8

“One extra key!”

“Better luck next time!”

“Better luck next time!”

Xu Xiaoshou’s eyes shone with greed, and he bounced around with excitement.

“Look at that long line that’s so out of place!”

1

“I! Got! Something!”

“Hahaha!”

He laughed maniacally at the sky. The Passive Points needed for 20 keys was equivalent to the points needed to level-up two techniques to the Innate-stage. But he’d gotten a new passive skill out of that. Was it worth it?

Yes!

Xu Xiaoshou felt that it was extremely worth it!

He couldn’t level-up his skills if he didn’t have any, but he could slowly amass more points in the future to level-up the skills he’d obtained.

Xu Xiaoshou hugged the pillar and bounced around as if he’d gone insane. He raised his head, and his manic laugh spread through the waiting area.

2

“He’s gone mad, he’s gone mad!”

The attendant looked at Xu Xiaoshou, who was constantly rubbing himself against the pillar, looking like he’d just opened a door to a whole new world.

Could someone really get that much happiness from playing by oneself?

7

“Am I the one who can’t keep up with the times?”

He sighed melancholically as he looked at Xu Xiaoshou, who was hugging the pillar. He was extremely worried, as the pillar got a little thinner every time Xu Xiaoshou jumped. What a terrifying situation!

2

Chapter 26: I’ll Give You All Of Them

Xu Xiaoshou hadn’t accessed the interface in a long time. He opened it and looked at the first section.

One, Fundamental Passive Skills:

Breathing Technique (Acquired Lv. 1).

5

Eternal Vitality (Acquired Lv. 1).

The new passive skill he’d gotten was in the “Fundamental Passive Skill” section, which surprised him a little.

He was no longer a newbie that didn't know anything about the system. While fundamental passive skills weren't comparatively as functional as extended passive skills, their supportive capabilities were terrifying.

This was evident in the Breathing Technique, which belonged to the same category as the new technique.

Xu Xiaoshou had never leveled up the Breathing Technique, but not because the skill wasn't powerful. On the contrary, it was too powerful. The side effects that came with making the technique stronger were a little scary, and Xu Xiaoshou was afraid of them.

4

"So will Eternal Vitality also be this powerful?" he thought.

Xu Xiaoshou mulled over the passive skill's name. "My life force will be eternally flowing?"

1

"If that's the case, won't it be a great help to me?"

He looked into his body at his energy reserve and then focused his attention on the Infernal Fire Seed that was continuously being refined.

The seed was only the size of a fingernail, but it harbored a horrifying amount of energy that was impossible to quantify.

Xu Xiaoshou would be put through torturous pain as long as this item was inside him. It was releasing a scorching aura every second that was manically eating at his insides.

His blood, nerves, bones...

Everything, including his cells, was being engulfed by the scorching aura.

The surface of his body was blood red, but that only looked terrible. If a person could see inside his body, they'd realize that he was injured all over.

Every inch of his muscles had been charred to a crisp, and his meridians had been baked until they severed.

However, because of the Breathing Technique's existence, all he needed to do was take a whiff of a Red Gold Pill whenever his injuries were aggravated to instantly recover, allowing him to last a little longer.

Now, he was almost at the end of his supply of Red Gold Pills. He no longer had any to smell. However, when he observed himself now, he saw that his ravaged nerves and bones were slowly recovering on their own.

3

But their recovery speed couldn't keep up with the speed at which they were being destroyed. However, his recovery rate had become much faster than that of the average person!

Xu Xiaoshou immediately realized that this was the effect of Eternal Vitality.

“So the effect of this new passive skill is accelerating the speed at which my injuries heal?”

It was the best technique he could've asked for!

Xu Xiaoshou didn't hesitate. He still had 20,000 points after spinning the wheel 20 times. Thus, he purchased five Skill Points and dumped it all into the passive skill.

“Eternal Vitality (Acquired Lv. 6).”

Xu Xiaoshou looked visibly more refreshed. Vitality coursed through his body, and his injuries were instantly greatly alleviated.

“Indeed!” Xu Xiaoshou looked surprised. What a miraculous technique!

He once again purchased five Skill Points and used them on the technique.

“Eternal Vitality (Innate Lv. 1).”

A rich life force spread out into the surroundings like a web, and it made the attendant who was constantly glancing at Xu Xiaoshou suddenly more energetic.

He was shocked and immediately averted his gaze. However, he now felt like he had unlimited energy and suddenly started to miss home.

4

If it had this strong of an effect on an outsider, then it probably had an even stronger effect on him. His mouth opened wide in shock as he observed the situation in his body.

The destruction speed of the Infernal Fire Seed had been forcefully evened out by the Eternal Vitality. Both effects had reached a stalemate, neither of them surpassing the other.

“This...”

Xu Xiaoshou was stunned. This recovery rate was a little too terrifying!

He'd had to use two bottles of Red Gold Pills to counteract half a day's worth of the Infernal Fire Seed's effects. That was nearly ten Red Gold Pills.

Yet the recovery rate of Eternal Vitality could go toe to toe with the destructive capabilities of the seed. Didn't that mean he'd no longer have to consume Red Gold Pills to recover from his injuries in the future?

2

That would save him a lot of resources!

Then, the attendant, who was still glancing at Xu Xiaoshou out of curiosity, became mortified when he saw him take out the ninth-grade spiritual sword from within his ring and stab it into his palm.

1

Puuu!

Blood splattered everywhere, and the attendant thought that the situation had taken a turn for the worse.

1

He'd shaken his head and fainted for no reason, which was bad enough, and now he was starting to mutilate himself?

There must be something wrong with that Xu Xiaoshou!

Xu Xiaoshou didn't care. He looked at the stab wound on his palm. It recovered at a rapid pace and was fully healed in an instant.

It didn't even leave a scar!

"Oh, f***..."

Xu Xiaoshou couldn't help but curse. The Innate-stage Eternal Vitality healed him a lot faster than the Red Gold Pill.

Thud, thud, thud!

Xu Xiaoshou heard footsteps from far away. He looked over and saw that it was the attendant who'd run off just now.

He had ten medicine bottles in his hands, and his face was filled with disbelief. He didn't expect to obtain the Red Gold Pills from Elder Xiao just by following what Xu Xiaoshou had told him to do. He even managed to obtain ten bottles. It was like a dream.

2

More importantly, this batch of pills had been given to him for free!

Xu Xiaoshou smiled widely. "You managed to get it. Ten bottles?"

The attendant felt as if he'd just woken up from a dream, and he nodded in a daze.

"Did it feel good?" Xu Xiaoshou asked. "Talking like that to the chief elder of the Spiritual Law Division? That must've been the highlight of your life, right?"

The attendant nodded profusely.

"Feeling good is great. And there's something for you to feel even better about!" Xu Xiaoshou waved his arm. "You can have all of those!"

2

The attendant was dumbfounded. "No no no, these are your items. I can't take these!"

He hadn't come to his senses. Even though he didn't know what kind of insanity Xu Xiaoshou was under, he had professional standards and would never accept bribes.

Xu Xiaoshou chuckled. "It's fine. I'm willing. Keep them!"

The attendant continued shaking his head.

“You really don’t want them?”

“I really don’t!” Xu Xiaoshou fetched the ten bottles of Red Gold Pills from him and waved at the other attendant, who looked envious. “Come. I’ll give these all to you!”

Attendant A was speechless.

Attendant B was also speechless.

Both of them were completely silent. They looked at each other and saw that they were both trying to suppress their desire.

Xu Xiaoshou fought back the desire to laugh. “All right, there are only the two of you here. No one will notice if you guys split this among yourselves!”

The two of them shook their heads.

Xu Xiaoshou couldn’t take it anymore. “Must you put a damper on my mood?” he scolded. “Two bottles for each of you. End of discussion.”

The attendants still wanted to decline, but Xu Xiaoshou took out Hiding Pain and stabbed it into the ground.

1

“Are you taking it or not?!”

“Yes!”

“Good!”

He secretly gifted four out of the ten bottles he’d received.

It couldn’t be helped. These people were too cowardly to accept his gift, so he had to use his sword to force them to accept. Fortunately, with a little bit of force and coercion, he eventually ended up sharing his happiness with the people around him.

2

After all, these were Red Gold Pills. These were recovery pills that someone might not be able to obtain even if they begged for it. Thus, the two attendants were happy to go against the rules this one time.

Of course, they were rather morally upright under normal circumstances. Xu Xiaoshou could vouch for them.

Evening was approaching. The 32 people advancing to the next round had finally been determined. According to the rules, they had to determine the top 16 candidates today.

Xu Xiaoshou hadn’t finished being happy after giving away the pills when he heard the judge call his name. He immediately left the waiting area and headed toward the arena.

His shadow elongated under the setting sun.

The two attendants each held a bottle of Red Gold Pills in their hands, feeling that the heavily injured figure returning to the arena looked extraordinarily attractive.

1

"I never once thought that Xu Xiaoshou was like that."

"Yes, yes!"

"Generous, suave, a cut above the rest."

"Yes, yes!"

"Even though he gets a little insane from time to time, it actually makes him look rather cute."

5

"Yes, yes!"

"I... Urgh!"

"Yes, yes, oh?"

Chapter 27: Great Bamboozler Xu

On the Chuyun Platform, in the main arena.

"Xu Xiaoshou!"

"Zhou Tianshen!"

Two tall and slender figures walked over under the light of the setting sun. Zhou Tianshen's waiting area wasn't far away from Xu Xiaoshou's. Their eyes met the moment they walked out of their respective waiting areas.

Xu Xiaoshou saw that his opponent was carrying a blade that was taller than he was. He also saw the desire to battle in his opponent's eyes and nodded with satisfaction.

It looked like his opponent wasn't going to admit defeat.

That was natural. Whoever won this match would advance to the top 16. Who would give up on that chance?

Zhou Tianshen was born with a handsome face. He had practiced the gold domineering blade technique for many years, and was charismatic, which gave him a youthful ferocity. Many female disciples squealed when he walked out.

In the arena, he gently stabbed his wide, tall, and golden blade into the ground. Then, he propped both of his hands on the blade's guard and lifted his head slightly.

"Acquired-stage Sword Will, Innate-stage physical body..."

"Xu Xiaoshou, I, Zhou Tianshen, will admit that you're very powerful!"

“In the Outer Yard, you’re the only one who has the right to be ranked below me as rank five on the Windcloud Scoreboard!”

The audience was in an uproar. Several people were overwhelmed by Zhou Tianshen’s cold, arrogant aura.

When Zhou Tianshen spoke, he left no room for doubt. Coupled with his abilities as the fighter ranked fourth on the Windcloud Scoreboard, he did seem exceptionally overbearing.

Xu Xiaoshou gave a calm smile.

For the first time, someone was provoking him first after taking the stage instead of him having to provoke them. It was exceptionally refreshing.

Without waiting for Xu Xiaoshou to speak, Zhou Tianshen continued and said, “But, my target this time is rank one.”

“So, you have to submit to my blade!”

1

After saying this, Zhou Tianshen pulled out the golden blade from the ground and pointed it at Xu Xiaoshou. A boundless, pulsing Blade Will surged out of his blade.

Crack, crack!

The Blade Will ravaged the surroundings, and the area around the arena was ripped apart.

“Acquired-stage Blade Will!”

Everyone in the spectator seats instantly trembled, and all of them had looks of disbelief on their faces.

“When did Zhou Tianshen learn the Acquired-stage Blade Will? My God!”

“Judging from how well he can control it, he must have mastered it more than a year ago. Xu Xiaoshou’s in danger this time.

“He could rival an Innate-stage fighter just with this Blade Will. I thought he was boasting when he said he was aiming for the top spot. But now it might...”

Xiao Qixiu was also startled. This person had hidden his abilities well. No one from the group stage or preliminary stage had forced him to use his full powers?

If it weren’t for Xu Xiaoshou being his opponent, he could’ve hidden his Acquired-stage Blade will until after he reached the finals.

Xu Xiaoshou’s calm smile stiffened. What was going on?

An Acquired-stage Blade Will?

And he can control it at will?

He remembered that his Fleeting White Cloud would instantly deplete his spiritual strength, while his opponent...

2

There was no such possibility!

However, he couldn't lose in terms of spirit, so Xu Xiaoshou twitched his lips into a smile and said, "Junior Zhou, don't be too overconfident."

Zhou Tianshen's lethal Blade Will suddenly halted, and everyone watching immediately burst out laughing.

"Hahaha, it looks like Xu Xiaoshou must be one of the oldest people in the Outer Yard!"

"One of the oldest? He is the last of his batch. Those more experienced than him have all already entered the Inner Yard, while those weaker than him wouldn't have been able to make it to the advancement stage!"

"That's right. Then isn't Xu Xiaoshou the most senior disciple in the Outer Yard?"

1

"In theory, that should be the case. However, in his three years at the Outer Yard, he never once showed his abilities. And he was almost kicked out of the Spirit Palace..."

"I don't know why he suddenly had such a showing. He's a true dark horse. It's like his body's been taken over by someone else!"

13

"Hahaha, you sure are funny. Taken over!"

1

"If we think about it that way, even strong fighters like Mo Mo and Zhao Qingteng are considered juniors in front of him... Haha, I can't stand it any longer. Look at Zhou Tianshen. His expression's darkened!"

Zhou Tianshen's expression had darkened, but his Blade Will had become much more lethal. Xiao Qixiu saw that the situation had reached its breaking point and immediately waved his arm.

"Battle, start!"

"Wait!" Zhou Tianshen said coldly while holding his blade horizontally, putting a damper on Xiao Qixiu's high spirits.

The crowd was curious. "Were these candidates negatively influenced by Xu Xiaoshou?" they thought.

"Why are they all acting so strangely?"

"Why is he talking instead of fighting?"

"There's something I have to clarify before the battle starts," Zhou Tianshen said. "Even though Wen Chong was despicable for launching a sneak attack on you yesterday, you shouldn't have taken his life. You could've just lightly punished him, but you took such a merciless approach instead!"

He pointed his blade at Xu Xiaoshou, a righteous look in his eyes. "In my eyes, you're a despicable lowlife who'll never amount to anything great!"

Xu Xiaoshou wanted to wrap a coat around Zhou Tianshen. He said nonchalantly, "This is why you wanted to mock me before the battle? To conquer my mind before my body?"

1

Zhou Tianshen froze. He nearly choked, "I didn't intend to break your spirit before defeating you. I was merely stating facts!"

1

"Hehe, did you get close to the arena that day? Did you get a good look at the incident?"

"You don't know anything," Xu Xiaoshou rambled on, "Yet you spouted nonsense and slandered me the moment you stepped into the arena. Will you be justified in killing me if I said I intentionally killed Wen Chong?"

"No, it's not like that!"

Zhou Tianshen was flustered. He shifted from side to side with his blade in hand. His face was red. He seemed to want to say something but didn't know what to say.

"That's enough!" Xu Xiaoshou shouted, shaking his head. His aura was imposing as he said, "I know what you're going to say next. You're going to say that I have a glib tongue!"

2

"No, I'm not!"

"Hehe, people like you always like to stand on a moral high ground and criticize others, yet you've never once thought that your so-called words of justice are the true blades that pierce a person's heart!"

Zhou Tianshen repeatedly stepped backward, and his eyes dimmed. His Blade Will had been completely overpowered by Xu Xiaoshou. He fiercely lifted his sword and straightened up his posture. He wasn't going to talk anymore.

"Why?" Xu Xiaoshou turned the tables and asked, "You speak when you're not supposed to and can't win in an argument against me after speaking. You can't even outtalk me, and now you want to attack me?"

Zhou Tianshen held his blade in his hand. He didn't know whether to attack Xu Xiaoshou or not. He was at a loss, and felt extremely embarrassed.

Xu Xiaoshou looked calm on the surface, but he was laughing maniacally on the inside. He'd already guessed that Zhou Tianshen was someone with a one-track mind.

He was a person who touted justice and was extremely passionate. He usually only saw things at face value or would frequently be used by other people after being misled. He was so dumb it was cute.

Everyone in the spectator seats was shocked. Xu Xiaoshou's words were not only the best reply he could've given to yesterday's events, but it also confused the thoughts of those still suspicious of him.

"Hng hng, that Xu Xiaoshou is so pitiful. I was wrong about him!"

"That detestable Zhou Tianshen is trash! Shameless! He wants to break Xu Xiaoshou's mind before defeating him!"

"Oh, f***! You guys must be mad. Isn't the one who's doing the spirit-breaking here Xu Xiaoshou?"

"My God, how can he say it like that? I nearly fell for his trick. Fight on, Zhou Tianshen! Don't be fooled by him! Cleave him with your blade!"

In the arena, Xu Xiaoshou saw that his opponent was hesitating and looked like he was about to admit defeat. He suddenly realized that he had gone a little too far, and he quickly spoke again.

"Junior Zhou, even though we can't always look at things at face value, as a Spiritual Cultivator you must never admit defeat once you step into an arena.

"You have to know this. Giving up before a battle is a great disrespect to one's opponent, and running away without battling is a humiliation to Spiritual Cultivators. Raising one's hands to surrender is a black stain on one's life!"

He flailed his sleeves and looked exceptionally charismatic. His words were spirited.

1

On the other side, Zhou Tianshen looked like a weight had been lifted from his chest. He grabbed onto his golden blade, his eyes blazing with the desire to battle once again. He clasped his hands and said, "Senior Xu, thank you for the lesson!"

Xu Xiaoshou nodded slightly, as though he did see Zhou Tianshen as a teachable student.

Xiao Qixiu was speechless.

Chapter 28: I Was Thinking the Same Thing!

Clank...

Xu Xiaoshou was almost sent flying backward when the golden domineering blade and Hiding Pain collided for the first time. His spirit power surged in his body, and he almost vomited blood.

"That felt great!" Zhou Tianshen laughed heartily. "Let's continue!"

Xu Xiaoshou looked confused. For the first time, he was at a disadvantage in terms of strength with his Innate-stage physical body, and his opponent had even stolen his lines.

How detestable!

"I can't take his attacks head-on..."

Xu Xiaoshou deliberated. His opponent's Acquired-stage Blade Will had to be a frontal-assault type technique, so with his weaknesses, he would definitely be defeated if faced with his opponent's strong suits.

He wanted to try fighting Zhou Tianshen with his Innate-stage Sharpen but was afraid he'd be cleaved in two with one strike, so he was forced to abandon the idea.

Since that was the case, he could only use his opponent's blade techniques to test out his Acquired-stage Sword Will.

Seeing the other party cleave toward him with brutal force, Xu Xiaoshou held onto Hiding Pain and thought about the countless techniques he'd gained while in the illusion of white clouds.

Those were killing techniques that he'd hidden deep inside his mind!

The golden blade was directly above Xu Xiaoshou's head. Xu Xiaoshou slanted his sword to defend against the attack but saw the golden domineering blade slice down along the body of his sword. He flicked his sword, and a fleeting yet weighty force fiercely pushed the golden domineering blade to the side.

Whoosh!

Xu Xiaoshou's sword sliced across the air in front of Zhou Tianshen's throat. Zhou Tianshen abruptly leaned backward, and the sword sliced off a few strands of his hair.

Zhou Tianshen followed through with the momentum and rolled on the ground. Then, he waved his domineering blade and caused a rich spiritual power to surge and slashed his blade down toward Xu Xiaoshou's knee.

Clang!

Xu Xiaoshou had stabbed Hiding Pain at the ground when he missed his opponent, and the sword accurately stabbed the area where the blade and guard of Zhou Tianshen's domineering blade connected and let out a loud buzz.

The two candidates looked at each other. They saw the passion in each other's eyes, and could almost see smoke in the air from how heated they were.

Xu Xiaoshou flexed his arms and instantly propelled the two of them apart.

The crowd cheered after the electrifying first bout, their blood racing with excitement as they observed the battle.

"It's here. Acquired-stage Blade Will vs Acquired-stage Sword Will!"

"My God, how harrowing. Zhou Tianshen would've had his throat sliced open, while Xu Xiaoshou would've had his knees severed if they'd been careless. This battle is going to get exciting."

"Definitely. Furthermore, they're both extremely quick to react. All advancement battles should be like this. I can't get used to those one-sided victories."

“That’s right, that’s right. These two have only been at it for a few seconds, but they’ve nearly died on several occasions.”

The crowd was still talking excitedly when they saw that Zhou Tianshen was the first to steady his blade. However, he didn’t attack. Instead, he laughed heartily and said, “Xu Xiaoshou, witness my Nine Tides!”

Nine Tides was a blade technique that unleashed a constant stream of cuts, each attack stronger than the last. If Zhou Tianshen managed to get a momentum going, there was no way Xu Xiaoshou would be able to defend against the attack if it was paired with the Acquired-stage Blade Aura that Zhou Tianshen could control at will.

He slowly raised his knife vertically, and the strength of his aura increased as he gradually brought the blade up.

On the other side, the young man wielding the sword was silent. He immediately closed his eyes, and a mysterious atmosphere seemed to engulf the arena. Even the debris in the air seemed to slow down.

This was a starkly different kind of battle. The blade and sword were keeping each other in check.

Crack, crack!

The arena under their feet gave way under the force of their techniques, and even the barrier started to violently tremble.

1

The spectators were sitting upright, their fingers laced. Even Xiao Qixiu was concentrating hard on the battle, his eyes squinted.

The rising tension reached a breaking point, and even the sky seemed to tremble.

The next second, Zhou Tianshen slashed down with his blade, and his Blade Will transformed into a wave and rose and fell as it advanced. On the other side, Xu Xiaoshou abruptly opened his eyes and slowly sliced his sword through the air. His attack was like a cloud in the sky, enveloping the entirety of Zhou Tianshen’s wave.

Clang, clang, clang!

The crowd held its breath and saw the reality of the situation in the area between the two candidates.

Outline of sword and blade clashed wherever the wave and clouds crossed, and the sound of weaponry clashing was endless.

“My God, they’re this powerful?” someone couldn’t help but say.

A person to the side immediately scolded, “Stop talking. Shut your mouth!”

Xu Xiaoshou’s robes rustled in the wind, and his hands became after-images. His attacks looked like they were slow as fleeting clouds, but in reality, his sword was dancing at a high speed.

2

Countless sword glows shot out from the body of Hiding Pain. This was Xu Xiaoshou's first time using the ninth-grade spiritual sword at full power, and his sword was buzzing excitedly with joy as it went all out to show off its strength.

However, Xu Xiaoshou still had to dodge from time to time to avoid the blade glows that his body couldn't handle, but even so, streaks of blood started appearing on his shirt.

"Got attacked. Passive Points +1."

"Got attacked. Passive Points +1."

"..."

His notification panel constantly updated. Zhou Tianshen's Blade Will was extremely powerful. Just a scrape from it caused Xu Xiaoshou immense pain, and it left a coursing power behind in the wound, which made it difficult for the average person to recover from the wounds it inflicted.

However, Xu Xiaoshou couldn't display the terrifying regenerative capabilities of Eternal Vitality.

2

The passive skill would immediately activate whenever a wound opened on his body, and the Blade Will that an average person couldn't easily get rid of would be healed on the spot.

Xu Xiaoshou was elated. He was in awe of the foundational passive skill. Its regenerative capabilities were top-notch.

It was different for Zhou Tianshen. He was practically an immobile weapon. He didn't move an inch, yet he was able to force Xu Xiaoshou back with just a few strokes.

"Hahaha, Xu Xiaoshou, you're out of moves, aren't you?!"

"Once the Nine Tides gets going, I, Zhou Tianshen, will be able to defeat even an Innate-stage fighter, much less you and your mere Acquired-stage Sword Will!"

The Blade Will was completely overtaking Xu Xiaoshou, and he and his sword glows were about to be pushed out of the arena.

"Xu Xiaoshou, hang in there!"

"Stand your ground! Fight back! You can't let him push you out of the arena like that!"

"Hng hng hng, he's already covered in blood. Xu Xiaoshou, aaahhhh! I feel so bad for him!"

"Xiaoshou, stop trying to hang on. Come into my arms. I can't take it any longer. Why is there so much blood?"

3

Xu Xiaoshou was indeed covered in blood, but it only looked bad.

He was trying his best to survive with as little damage as possible under the barrage of blade glows. Thus, the injuries all over his body weren't fatal, and they didn't affect his mobility.

Furthermore, because Eternal Vitality was constantly activating, Xu Xiaoshou was practically in peak condition.

As he used his sword techniques, Xu Xiaoshou turned into a hungry sponge. He made use of the attacks that Zhou Tianshen was sending at him to practice the techniques in his mind, and nearly instantly understood the sword techniques that he'd never used in the past.

Seeing that he was about to be pushed out of the arena, Xu Xiaoshou no longer hesitated. He exchanged his Passive Points for two Skill Points and used them on Sword Technique Expertise.

“Sword Technique Expertise (Acquired Lv. 2).”

“Sword Technique Expertise (Acquired Lv. 3).”

In that instant, his mind was flooded with boundless knowledge. Xu Xiaoshou roared and moved around the flurry of blade glows. With one strike, he swiped away all of the Blade Will, then sprung his sword once again.

Boom!

An explosion sounded, and the barrier buzzed. Zhou Tianshen was shaken and sent staggering backward, his face filled with shock.

The crowd was confused. None of them understood what was going on.

“Xu Xiaoshou, he... achieved a breakthrough?”

“I think so. To think that he managed to retaliate while being beaten back by the powerful Blade Will. That last Sword Will looked like the second form of the White Cloud Sword Technique, Billowing Clouds!”

“But how do you explain the counterattack after he pulled his sword back? That wasn't the third stroke of the White Cloud Sword Technique.”

“This... You're asking me, then who do I ask?”

“...”

Xu Xiaoshou had achieved a breakthrough. Di Xin'er had taught him this attack.

However, he'd never succeeded at using the second stroke of the White Cloud Sword Technique. Just now, in the middle of a tense situation, he'd managed to forcefully tweak the technique and push the White Cloud Sword Technique into a different direction.

Even though he'd been introduced to sword techniques with the Fleeting White Clouds, his current techniques were no longer that of the White Cloud Sword Technique.

Xiao Qixiu looked startled. That Xu Xiaoshou managed to modify a sword technique with his Sword Will during battle?

This wasn't even something that a master in the arts of the sword would dare to easily try, yet he'd managed to battle like that just with his Sword Will?

This was potential of unprecedented proportions!

Xu Xiaoshou looked as though he'd been bathed in blood. His clothes had been torn to shreds, revealing his already red body. Even his hair was covered in blood.

Even so, he cracked a smile and lifted his sword in invitation. "Junior Zhou, can you go faster? Don't stop!"

3

Zhou Tianshen was still angry and in shock from his Nine Tides being countered, and his expression turned fierce when he heard Xu Xiaoshou's words. He lifted his blade and laughed.

"I was thinking the same thing!"

Chapter 29: Poetic

As he said this, the Blade Will that had been ravaging the surroundings was absorbed into his golden domineering blade. Zhou Tianshen loosened his grip, and the domineering blade trembled as it emitted an incandescent brilliance.

Xu Xiaoshou's pupils dilated. "This guy still has some moves up his sleeve?"

1

He grabbed Hiding Pain, and the once unrestrained ninth-grade spiritual sword whimpered, looking incredibly indignant.

Xu Xiaoshou's expression darkened. He knew his Sword Will's current level wasn't high enough for him to be able to withstand Zhou Tianshen's attacks.

Without hesitation, he once again exchanged his Passive Points for three more Skill Points and used them all on the Sword Technique Expertise.

"Sword Technique Expertise (Acquired Lv. 6)."

In an instant, his mind was flooded with knowledge once again. He looked at the golden domineering blade Zhou Tianshen was loosely holding in his hand and seemed to understand something.

The next second, Xu Xiaoshou slowly gathered his Sword Will back into Hiding Pain, and he loosened his grip as it absorbed the boundless Sword Will into its blade.

Zhou Tianshen was confused.

The crowd was also dumbfounded when they saw the two candidates get into identical stances.

"What's going on? Xu Xiaoshou also knows Zhou Tianshen's blade technique?"

"How is that possible? Isn't the move Zhou Tianshen's using the opening strike of the Innate-stage spiritual technique 'Deity Mountain-Lifting Technique,' so how could Xu Xiaoshou know it?"

"Could he be learning the technique on the spot? My God, that's too creepy."

“Learning an Innate-stage spiritual technique on the spot? Are you kidding?”

Xu Xiaoshou didn't know what blade technique Zhou Tianshen was using, and he also couldn't produce the golden incandescent light that Zhou Tianshen was releasing. However, Zhou Tianshen's form did give him a stroke of inspiration for his newest attack...

“Fleeting White Cloud, Two!”

“Deity Mountain Lifting Technique!”

The two of them raised their weapons at the same time. As Zhou Tianshen raised his blade, he released a several-meters-tall golden blade glow. It pulsed with murderous intentions and directly ripped the arena apart as it slashed toward Xu Xiaoshou. There was nowhere for Xu Xiaoshou to run.

Strangely, Xu Xiaoshou didn't release anything when he raised his sword, as if he were merely moving it through the air.

The spectators' jaws dropped, and Xiao Qixiu felt his heart miss a beat.

“You put on such an act for so long only to move your sword?” he thought.

2

“You're going to die!”

He instinctively wanted to charge forward, but then he saw Xu Xiaoshou move his sword slightly when faced with the golden blade glow.

He slowly pulled Hiding Pain backward, and a powerful suction transformed the air into a vortex of clouds. Xu Xiaoshou's sword had casually pulled the lethal golden light to the side.

It wasn't over. Xu Xiaoshou turned and sent the golden light flying back at his opponent.

1

Zhou Tianshen was dumbfounded. “What kind of sorcery is this?” he thought. “To think that he managed to send my Innate-stage spiritual technique flying back at me!”

2

His technique had almost depleted all of his spiritual strength, so he had no choice but to forcefully release another one of those attacks again. He dispelled the terrifying onslaught of the Deity Mountain-Lifting Technique with an attack of similar power.

The two golden glows clashed and made a loud explosion as they turned into countless golden scales and fell to the ground. Amidst the beautiful scene of falling gold, a figure moved toward Zhou Tianshen with his sword in hand.

Zhou Tianshen could no longer care about the battle. Xu Xiaoshou's sword technique was poetic, and there were no openings in his attack.

Such a divine sword technique shocked him. It was just as good as the techniques used by his grandfather, who had brought him onto the path of the swordsman when young.

“A sword can be used like that?”

“What about a blade?”

He lapsed into deep thought and forgot that he was in the middle of a battle.

Xu Xiaoshou had no choice but to forcefully stop his attack. His black sword stopped right before Zhou Tianshen’s forehead. Even so, he still didn’t have full control over his Sword Will. It slightly pierced his opponent’s forehead, causing him to bleed.

Zhou Tianshen was still lost in thought!

Xu Xiaoshou was shocked. “This is a battle. Please show your opponent some respect, will you?” he thought.

He moved to put away his sword when an immense spiritual strength suddenly rose around Zhou Tianshen’s body and pushed him away.

Everyone looked at the sky in shock. An infinite amount of spiritual strength was billowing into the arena and entering Zhou Tianshen’s body. The sound was grand. It sounded like a deity was murmuring into their ears, and it made everyone more alert.

“Hah!”

Zhou Tianshen abruptly opened his eyes. His aura had risen from Spiritual Cultivation Level Ten to the Innate-stage, and with his shout, his Blade Will shot into the surroundings and shattered the barrier around the arena.

Xu Xiaoshou crawled on the ground, dazed. “What’s going on?” he wondered. “He broke through to the Innate-stage while we were fighting?”

“You cheated, didn’t you?!”

But he didn’t have time to think about it, and immediately stood up. Zhou Tianshen was already terrifying at Acquired-stage Level Ten. How powerful would he be now that he’d stepped into the Innate-stage?

Unexpectedly, Zhou Tianshen put away his sword after shouting and said respectfully, “Thank you for holding back, Senior Xu. I was too rash. I could tell that you were a gentleman when you pulled your sword back just now!”

Xiao Qixiu came to his senses and immediately waved his hand. “The battle is over. Xu Xiaoshou is the winner!”

1

Naturally, he knew that Zhou Tianshen wouldn’t have survived, much less achieve a breakthrough, if Xu Xiaoshou hadn’t pulled his sword back just now.

Of course, with him keeping an eye on things, that tragedy wouldn’t have happened.

2

However, victories and defeats are just that—victories and defeats. In a real battle, there was no way an enemy would allow their opponent to achieve a breakthrough. This battle had ended the moment Xu Xiaoshou pulled his sword back.

Xu Xiaoshou held his black sword behind his back and smiled. He didn't comment on what Zhou Tianshen's said.

Zhou Tianshen's face was red. Before the battle, he'd boldly said that Xu Xiaoshou was a merciless man, and in the end, he was spared by the "merciless" Xu Xiaoshou. It was undoubtedly a great irony.

"Great!" His eyes flitted around, and he voiced the first thought that came to mind. He nodded heavily at Xu Xiaoshou and said, "I've decided. I, Zhou Tianshen, will definitely have you for a friend!"

5

Xu Xiaoshou waved his hand and left the arena. He didn't want to say anything more to this man with a one-track mind.

This battle was the most difficult one he'd had so far in the competition. The battle with Liu Zhen was difficult too, but this battle with Zhou Tianshen was different in the sense that he'd managed to get more out of it.

1

This was especially so for the cherry on top at the end that was the Fleeting White Cloud Two. Xu Xiaoshou hadn't even had the time to give the technique a name.

It had appeared just like that after his stroke of inspiration, and he'd used it like that. His becoming one with his sword, technique, and will was rather miraculous.

1

It was as though everything were fated. It was a comfortable feeling.

Even he himself was shocked when he'd used the technique. He had to quickly head back home to mull it over.

Zhou Tianshen had broken through to the Innate-stage and destroyed the barrier, and Xu Xiaoshou's notification panel was refreshing like crazy. However, Xu Xiaoshou didn't care about these things. All he wanted to do was go over his sword technique.

The spectators gave a thunderous applause. Some admired Xu Xiaoshou, some were shocked, however, most of them felt bad for Zhou Tianshen.

Everyone in the arena was considering the possibility that the outcome of the competition might've been completely different if Zhou Tianshen had managed to come to his senses earlier.

The only exception was chief judge Xiao Qixiu. He froze as he watched Xu Xiaoshou leave, unable to say a word.

He had announced the end of the competition a little too late just now not because he was waiting for Zhou Tianshen to admit defeat, but because he was truly startled by Xu Xiaoshou's sword technique.

It was poetic. It was the sword technique of a deity!

He had abandoned all thought of spiritual techniques and swordplay and battled purely with his Sword Will, taking his opponent's attacks with his reactions. Wasn't this form the most powerful form as described by the Eighth Sword Deity?

His eyes were filled with shock. Perhaps even Xu Xiaoshou didn't realize just how terrifying battling only with Sword Will really was.

However, he did. He saw the makings of someone who would slowly rise to become the most powerful swordsman.

3

He waved his arms to get the crowd to calm down and activated the screen once again.

"The competition continues!"

Chapter 30: Reverse Application of the Breathing Technique

2

Goose Lake.

Willows surrounded the area, and dense spiritual strength occupied the surroundings.

Xu Xiaoshou didn't blindly wander around here this time. He held his sword in his hand and closely examined the surroundings. He wanted to meet the old man with the straw hat and dark circles under his eyes again.

He was going to make that promise a reality if he saw that old man again.

However, unfortunately, he didn't manage to meet that old man, even after nightfall.

Goose Lake was a quiet place and was suitable for training. While he was waiting, Xu Xiaoshou reflected on his insights from using the sword technique in the afternoon.

After the appearance of Sword Technique Expertise, his talent for the way of the sword and his understanding of it had been forcibly raised by several levels. At such a high level, his potential for sword techniques also seemed to increase as the level of the passive skill increased.

He realized many things after calming down.

For example, he'd noticed many openings in his opponent's sword technique during his battle with Di Xin'er. Back then, he thought that Di Xin'er wasn't skilled in the way of the sword. However, now that he thought about it, it might've been him whose standards had far exceeded that of an average person.

Only that person with a one-track mind, uhh, Zhou Tianshen, who had also learned the Acquired-stage Blade Will, could pressure him in these realms that their wills created.

Xu Xiaoshou didn't have a mentor, so he could only mull over the technique and use his past experiences to understand Sword Will. However, the more he thought about it, the more he felt that purely battling with Sword Will seemed more reasonable and natural than fighting with a spiritual technique.

He stroked his chin and slipped into deep thought.

"Hm... It was probably an illusion. After all, I only know the first form of the White Cloud Sword Technique, so how could I determine which of the two approaches is stronger!"

He quickly abandoned the thought, even though it had overwhelming potential. He might have continued his research in that direction if a powerful swordsman had come to address his doubts.

However, he clearly didn't have that kind of opportunity.

In his dantian, the Infernal Fire Seed was like a suspended sun. It roasted his energy reserves until they were blazing red. In just a day, Xu Xiaoshou felt as though his spiritual strength had been ravaged beyond repair.

His scorching spiritual strength would sever his meridians every time he activated it.

It was like that even for him, who had an Innate-stage Physical Body. A person with an ordinary body would've died within a few seconds if he'd consumed the Infernal Fire Seed.

Correspondingly, his offensive capabilities had gotten much stronger. However, he had to injure himself to injure the enemy.

"I have to refine this item completely. Otherwise, my cultivation level will be destroyed, even if my physical body is fine with the help of Eternal Vitality," he thought to himself.

He glanced into his mind. Passive Points: 27899.

He had used 5000 Passive Points to upgrade Sword Technique Expertise during his battle with Zhou Tianshen in the afternoon, making his reserves dip to 5000 points.

4

However, after being roasted for three more hours, his Passive Points had once again skyrocketed to over 20000 points. Of course, the passionate crowd had also contributed some of these Passive Points.

1

The increase in Passive Points was naturally a good thing. However, the feeling of being burned from the inside out was excruciating. Xu Xiaoshou would rather head into the arena and get beaten up by 100 people for half a day than continue feeling like this.

Furthermore, he didn't know what kind of threat this item would have now that it was above his energy reserve.

"That detestable old man..."

He was determined. He was going to fully refine this item tonight.

Xu Xiaoshou took out two Red Gold Pills and pinched them in his hands. He thought about it, then purchased five Skill Points and threw them into the Breathing Technique.

“Breathing Technique (Acquired Lv. 6).”

9

Xu Xiaoshou didn't notice any change, even after the Breathing Technique leveled-up five times.

This was probably the only passive skill that didn't show any effects after it was upgraded.

However, he still instinctively shuddered when he saw the notification. In terms of how scary each of the techniques was, he was most afraid of the Breathing Technique.

Originally, he hadn't planned on upgrading the technique before reaching the Innate-stage. However, he was out of ideas. It'd be bad if the effects of the Red Gold Pills weren't enough when he refined the Infernal Fire Seed later.

Furthermore, his body had developed a resistance to the Red Gold Pills, as he'd been taking the medicine like crazy recently and no longer got that much of a high from them. This was why he dared to raise the level of the Breathing Technique by five in one go.

With these preparations made, Xu Xiaoshou tried to activate his spiritual strength for the first time to actively come into contact with the Infernal Fire Seed.

Creak...

His spiritual strength swarmed up like a tide. However, the spiritual strength got burned when it encountered the immense heat from the Infernal Fire Seed, and only a shred was left by the time it passed it by. Xu Xiaoshou seized the opportunity and used this shred of spiritual energy to draw the energy trapped within the fire seed out.

A scorching heat coursed through his body, and Xu Xiaoshou felt like he'd been struck by lightning. He shivered. He'd only drawn out a minute portion of the fire seed's energy, yet it instantly damaged his nerves and veins beyond recognition.

The Eternal Vitality showed its prowess once again, and Xu Xiaoshou was immediately restored to his previous state and didn't have to use the Red Gold Pill that he'd prepared.

1

Xu Xiaoshou was bleeding from every orifice and was in immense pain.

He drew out the energy from the fire seed and refined it, paying the price for it with the pain he felt from his body being destroyed only to instantly recover. He fused the seed's energy with his energy reserve and felt his spiritual strength undergo a qualitative change.

His ordinary spiritual strength seemed to have a little bit of a fire element to it now.

He had a shred of elemental power that was unique to Innate-stage fighters even though he was only at the Acquired-stage. Wouldn't he be able to beat an Innate-stage fighter as an Acquired-stage fighter if he managed to fully refine the seed?

Xu Xiaoshou slipped into deep thought.

It seemed like the detestable old man had had good intentions when he got him to swallow this item. His abilities would drastically improve if he managed to refine the Infernal Fire Seed.

7

Xu Xiaoshou calmed himself down. He felt that the process of refining the seed was too slow!

At this rate, it would take him more than two weeks to finally chip away at the Fire Seed.

2

He had been tortured by the item for the first half of the day. Now that he realized that he could refine the item, Xu Xiaoshou started to grumble about the speed of the process despite the pain.

This person really had guts.

He was actually able to remain silent, even though he was going through immeasurable pain during the refinement process, something an ordinary person wouldn't have been able to bear. He could actually clench his teeth and fight past the pain.

"How can I increase the speed..."

Xu Xiaoshou touched the blood on his face and looked at the geese playing in the water. He mulled over the question for a while.

He currently only had one way to refine the Infernal Fire Seed, which was to refine it using an ordinary training technique. The pain was ever-present, and its speed was extremely slow.

However, he used the Breathing Technique during his day-to-day training as a substitute for the ordinary training technique.

Since that was the case, could he refine the seed using the Breathing Technique?

"Breathing Technique..." Xu Xiaoshou softly muttered to himself, suddenly having a stroke of inspiration.

In the past, he'd used this fundamental passive skill as a training technique and to heal his wounds. However, the technique hadn't introduced itself as a training technique but as the most fundamental passive skill.

Perhaps there were other uses for the technique?

"Breathing Technique..."

"Breathing..."

"Breath..."

Xu Xiaoshou slapped himself on the head. If he took the name of the technique literally, his training and healing only required him to use the "inhalation" part of the Breathing Technique. He'd never used the "exhalation" part of the technique.

“Since I can use the power of inhalation to breathe in the properties of medicine into my energy reserves, can I use the power of exhalation to expel the energy within the Infernal Fire Seed from my body?”

3

Xu Xiaoshou was shocked by the idea. However, he felt that it was very possible.

He might as well try it!

He immediately adjusted his breathing. He took a deep breath and placed all of his attention on the Infernal Fire Seed. He imagined breathing normally, then held the thought of expelling the Infernal Fire Seed in his mind and let out a small breath.

1

Creak, creak, creak!

An immense scorching energy was pulled out from the Infernal Fire Seed and expelled through his bronchial tubes and mouth. The energy passed through his body like lava, making his muscles feel like magma.

Xu Xiaoshou immediately coughed out a mouthful of blood, and the scorching energy instantly spewed out of his nose and mouth. During the process, he felt as though his throat had melted, and he nearly died on the spot.

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However, he had Eternal Vitality. He quickly picked up the Red Gold Pill in his hand and took a deep breath to stabilize his breathing.

“Oh, f***!”

Xu Xiaoshou became flustered a second after he finished taking a whiff of the pill.

He saw the Red Gold Pill between his fingers suddenly transform into vapor, and the pure scorching energy that he’d just released once again entered his body through his nose.

Under the clear moonlight, on the other side of Goose Lake, the old man wearing a straw hat, who was sitting properly on a willow tree, trembled and nearly fell from his branch.

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“Does that lad want to lose his life?”