

Nobel Ruler 191

Chapter 191: The Crystal Realm

At this moment, a silver ray of light flew in from outside and turned into a huge barrier that contained the pill!

At the same moment, a strong arm wrapped itself around Chu Liuyue's slender waist and brought her away from the square cauldron!

Buzz!

The immense energy collided with the barrier and made a loud, deep sound!

A ripple appeared on the barrier and spread across it, quickly muting the loud noise before it disappeared.

The room was silent again, as if nothing had happened.

Chu Liuyue's heart was still beating wildly, and a low laugh came from the side of her ear.

"Are you trying to make everyone vie with me over you with all this commotion?" Only Rong Xiu could appear that quickly in that short amount of time.

As she leaned against Rong Xiu's warm and broad chest, Chu Liuyue's wildly beating heart strangely felt calmer.

She heaved a sigh of relief as she watched the silver barrier contain the square cauldron and pill.

The loud commotion from the pill formation was bound to attract attention.

Once people found out...

Chu Liuyue closed her eyes. "Thank you."

Rong Xiu noticed that her voice sounded strange. Hence, he turned to look at her, only to find that her face was especially pale.

His eyes were gloomy. *She is clearly fatigued from exhausting all the energy in her body when she formed the pill. Is this worth it for an unrelated person?*

"What were you going to do if I didn't show up?"

Chu Liuyue paused as she looked up at him, only to see that Rong Xiu's expression was a little unreadable.

He seems... upset? Chu Liuyue blinked and instinctively grabbed the front of his shirt. "Your Highness really won't show up?"

The surroundings were dim, but her eyes were bright. It was like they were filled with stars.

Chu Liuyue's tone was normal, but her voice moved Rong Xiu more than anything that he ever heard.

The trace of unhappiness at the bottom of his heart disappeared, making space for the immense joy he felt. "You have me in your clutches, huh?"

Chu Liuyue curled her lips and scoffed before she left his embrace. "Not really. But today's matter counts as you making up for your mistakes."

"Making up for my mistake? What mistake?"

"Your Highness, you know it better than I do. Do you really need me to point it out?" Chu Liuyue did not notice it initially, but she felt something off a few days later.

What kind of person was Rong Xiu? If he did not want to be disturbed by those girls, he naturally had a way for them not to appear before him. However, Yan Qing was the one who asked them to leave that day.

There was nothing wrong with it, but it was not how Rong Xiu operated.

She had figured it out after thinking for a while.

Rong Xiu did not deny it. *She has always been the smartest.*

“I haven’t seen you in a while, and I see Yue’er has been thinking about me.”

Chu Liuyue glanced at him, but she did not say anything since Rong Xiu’s skin had always been the thickest anyway.

She walked over to the square cauldron and stared at the barrier. “Your Highness, you have a lot of good stuff. This crystal barrier is worth a lot.”

A crystal barrier was a special Yuan instrument that could be activated with just a little force to form a strong defense. It was quite useful in times of crisis.

It managed to silence a fourth-grade pill instantly.

Rong Xiu raised his hand, and the silver light on the barrier disappeared to form a small, longan-sized, silver sphere.

“If you like it, it’s yours.”

Chu Liuyue walked over to the square cauldron and held the pill in her hands.

The energy wave from just now had been contained by the crystal barrier. Now that everything was calm, it was safe.

She placed the pill into a box on the side and paused when she heard Rong Xiu's words. She wanted to turn him down, but a crystal barrier was indeed very useful for her right now.

She could already form pills, so there was no way she could keep something like this under wraps if the same thing happened in the future. Most importantly, she suspected that her ability to form pills was related to the water droplet in her body.

She did not have complete control over the water droplet, so she was not sure what kind of commotion she could cause in the future.

She thought about it and looked towards Rong Xiu. "Then... name me a price, Your Highness!"

Rong Xiu raised his brows and walked over. He held her hand and placed the crystal barrier in her hand. "I said that I'm gifting it to you, so it's a gift."

But Chu Liuyue refused to take it. "Your Highness, I can't take things from you for nothing."

"You owe me a lot anyway, so it's just once more." Rong Xiu tightly held her palm as he spoke.

Chu Liuyue did not know what to say...

That really does seem true... Other than these valuable treasures, I still owe Rong Xiu for saving my life multiple times...

“There’s nothing I want right now, so just save it for next time. You can pay me back in the future when I think of something.”

Chu Liuyue took a deep breath and accepted the item graciously. “Then thank you, Your Highness!”

Rong Xiu stared at her before he suddenly asked, “Oh right, I heard you’re joining the Qing Jiao Competition?”

Chu Liuyue was not surprised that he found out about it and nodded.

Rong Xiu narrowed his eyes. “I’ll leave the academy tomorrow and be back after a while. Be careful while you’re alone.”

Chu Liuyue asked strangely, “Leaving the academy? Where are you going?”

The instant the words left her mouth, she felt that it was inappropriate.

Rong Xiu was mysterious and strong. He was not as simple as he looked, and she really did not have the right to ask what he was doing.

But Rong Xiu seemed happy to receive the question. He curled his thin lips into a smile and pinched her face. “This matter is rather serious. I’ll tell you about it when I return.”

A strange feeling flashed across Chu Liuyue’s heart.

Rong Xiu behaved like a husband talking to his wife before he left home.

She looked away and murmured an acknowledgment.

“Since I’m leaving tomorrow, Yue’er does not have any problems with me sleeping here tonight, right?”

Chu Liuyue was speechless. *I should not have let my mind wander just now! To think that I was even worried! It seems entirely unnecessary now!*

There was no way Rong Xiu would be bullied! It was usually more the other way round.

Chapter 192: Begging for Mercy

As usual, Rong Xiu slept by Chu Liuyue’s side and kept her in his arms the whole night.

Chu Liuyue felt a little awkward initially, but she let him be after struggling to no avail. Perhaps it was because she had exhausted herself, but she quickly fell asleep.

Rong Xiu, on the other hand, stayed up the whole night with her in his embrace.

When Chu Liuyue woke up the next morning, Rong Xiu had already left.

She had slept extremely well last night. The exhaustion she felt in her body had disappeared overnight, and she felt much better. She thought that she would take a few days to recover, but it seemed otherwise now.

Chu Liuyue walked to the window and looked toward Yi Feng Courtyard. Its doors were tightly shut, and it was clearly empty.

She frowned slightly. *What kind of matter could make Rong Xiu leave the academy so urgently?*

...

As she walked, Chu Liuyue clearly felt the tension in the entire campus.

With the Qing Jiao Competition coming soon, everyone wanted to get a good result. Hence, everyone was excited about it.

Chu Liuyue arrived at Liao Zhongshu's lodging alone.

With only Liao Zhongshu left, the place seemed especially quiet.

Chu Liuyue pushed the door open and saw Liao Zhongshu gloomily lying on his bed. Her entrance did not wake him, and his eyes were still tightly shut.

Chu Liuyue walked over to the side of the bed and checked Liao Zhongshu's pulse before she knitted her brows tightly together.

Even though she had given Liao Zhongshu some medicine before, its effects were limited. Now that all the medicine in his body had been used up, the poison in his body could take effect at any time.

Since Liao Zhongshu was injured, it would be much tougher for him to pull through.

Chu Liuyue called out to him. "Liao Zhongshu, wake up."

He did not respond.

She nudged him gently, and he only came to after a long while.

He looked worse than he did a few days ago; his eyes were dim and lifeless.

A ripple appeared across his eyes when he saw that it was Chu Liuyue, and he struggled as he attempted to get up. But how could he possibly have the energy?

Chu Liuyue pressed him down. "Don't move; just take the antidote."

As she spoke, she handed the pill over.

Liao Zhongshu was stunned when he saw Chu Liuyue handing him a pill that could only be made by heavenly doctors instead of a bowl of medicine.

“Th-this is the antidote you got?” His voice was weak, and Chu Liuyue would not have heard him if not for her good hearing.

Chu Liuyue paused but did not deny it. “En.”

Liao Zhongshu did not question anything and swallowed the pill whole.

The pill melted in his mouth, and a strong but warm force spread towards his limbs.

“The remnant poison will be excreted from your body within a day of taking the antidote, but your body has been heavily damaged. Therefore, it will take you about a month to recover completely.”

Liao Zhongshu looked at Chu Liuyue gratefully. “How can I ever repay you for this...”

Chu Liuyue shook her head. “This thing happened because of me. Someone was targeting me, but they went for you first. Treating you is what I should do.”

Shock flashed across Liao Zhongshu’s eyes.

“I don’t know who’s behind all this yet, so I’ll need your help for now.”

Liao Zhongshu nodded hard. “I’ll do everything I can!”

Chu Liuyue briefly summarized what she saw Chu Xianmin do, but she did not say that she made the pill. Instead, she said that she had gotten it from Chu Xianmin.

“... So, you can’t let anyone find out that you’re healed. Just send the message that you’re hanging on thanks to the medicine. The other party will definitely appear if they’re suspicious. This is the only way we can draw them out.”

Liao Zhongshu understood. “I understand. Don’t worry; I won’t leave my room. I’ll just pretend that the poison hasn’t been cleared yet.”

“En, you can take the time to recuperate. Other than clearing the poison, the pill can also aid your recovery. But thank you for dealing with the trouble.”

Liao Zhongshu smiled. “I’m alive thanks to you. How can something so small be trouble? Don’t worry; you’ll be the first to know if anything strange happens.”

Chu Liuyue heaved a sigh of relief. “Okay.”

...

Time passed quickly, and the Qing Jiao Competition arrived in a blink of an eye.

The other two academies arrived, and the Imperial City became more lively.

Wutong Hall, the Imperial Palace.

Emperor Jiawen and the Empress were eating.

It was rather quiet in the hall.

The Empress glanced at Emperor Jiawen from time to time, looking like she had something she wanted to say.

This was the first time Emperor Jiawen had stayed with her for a while. Hence, she was really happy. She wanted to beg for mercy on the Crown Prince's behalf, but she was afraid of incurring Emperor Jiawen's wrath.

She sent Chu Xiao earlier, but he had been heavily reprimanded. Thus, she had not dared to say anything till now.

"Just say whatever's on your mind," said Emperor Jiawen.

The Empress hesitated before she spoke. "Your Majesty, the Qing Jiao Competition... Shall we let the Crown Prince return to the academy to take part in it?"

Emperor Jiawen's eyes turned cold. "You're speaking for him too."

The Empress added quickly, "Your Majesty, I'm not doing this for him but for you! The Qing Jiao Competition concerns our country's image. If Tian Lu Academy loses, you will look bad too!"

The Empress continued speaking after she saw that Emperor Jiawen's expression seemed gloomy but receptive. "Especially since we're hosting the Qing Jiao Competition. If we lose... won't it look especially bad? The Crown Prince has made a mistake, but he's young, and it was a rash decision. Do you intend to stay mad at him forever? Besides, hardly anyone can compare to him in the academy. Do you think he can atone for his mistakes with credit?"

Emperor Jiawen rubbed his temples. His anger had already subsided substantially. Besides, he had thought about what the Empress had said. "Since you asked, I'll give the Crown Prince a second chance."

The Empress knelt down to thank him. "Thank you, Your Majesty!"

Emperor Jiawen did not wish to say anything else and pardoned her.

"How far he can go will depend on his ability. What about Zhen Zhen? How has she been?"

The Empress's smile faded a little, quickly replaced by sadness. "Zhen Zhen has been upset since her pearl of essence was destroyed. She has locked herself in her room the entire time. This... Your Majesty, you understand. She used to be so outstanding, so she feels terrible after something like this happened to her. I went to go see her, and I saw her secretly crying a number of times."

She began to cry as she spoke.

Emperor Jiawen sighed. He did dote on Rong Zhen, so he felt terrible hearing about this.

“She can keep going this way. It’s fine. Tell her that I’ll bring heavenly doctors over for her after the Qing Jiao Competition to see if anything can be done.”

The Empress wiped her tears and gratefully said, “On behalf of Zhen Zhen, I thank your majesty.”

Chapter 193: Find Her!

After dinner, Emperor Jiawen got up to leave.

The Empress was a little surprised. “Your Majesty, you-you’re not staying with me tonight?”

Emperor Jiawen’s face was stoic. “It’s almost October.”

The Empress paused, and complex feelings grew in her.

October. It did not mean anything to others, but it was especially special to Emperor Jiawen since Consort Wan died in October.

In all these years, Emperor Jiawen’s mood would always be especially gloomy around October, and he would never spend the night with his concubines.

The Empress knew the rule, but she forgot about it in the spur of the moment since Emperor Jiawen agreed to release the Crown Prince and get help for the Fourth Princess.

“It’s my mistake! I ask for forgiveness, Your Majesty.” The Empress lowered her head and concealed the hatred that flashed across her eyes.

Emperor Jiawen waved his arms. “You, go check on Zhen Zhen.”

With that, he left.

The large palace hall was silent once again.

All the surrounding servants were bowed and silent, afraid of incurring the Empress’s wrath. Everyone in the palace knew that the Empress had the highest status in the harem. In reality, she was no match for Consort Wan.

There was a place in His Majesty’s heart that could not be replaced by anyone, the Empress included.

It would be fine usually, but what happened today was like a slap to the Empress’s face!

After a long, dead silence, the Empress took a deep breath and returned to her usual elegant self. “I’m going to check on the Fourth Princess.”

“Yes!”

...

Arriving at Rong Zhen's palace, the Empress saw a group of servants kneeling outside.

They had pained expressions on their face as if they were in great pain, but they dared not make any sound.

Rong Zhen was seated at the palace's main doors, looking at the servants viciously. Panic flashed across her eyes when she saw the Empress and hurriedly got up. "Mother, what brings you here?"

The Empress frowned. "Your father asked me to come and check on you. What are you doing?"

She took a closer look and smelt the faint scent of blood.

Rong Zhen replied briskly, "Nothing! I'm just punishing them a little because they made a mistake!"

The Empress did not believe her and looked towards the servants. "All of you, get up."

A servant in front tried to stand up but fell to the ground the moment they moved. They cried out in pain as they hugged their knees.

The Empress only realized then that rusty nails were stuck in the person's knees! She glanced around and realized that it was the same for everyone else!

She repressed the anger in her heart. "Everyone go back to rest. I'll send someone to take care of your wounds. The Fourth Princess has been in a bad mood lately, so she's a little temperamental. However, I don't wish for anyone else to find out about this, understood?"

The servants answered quickly and helped one another leave.

The Empress glanced at Rong Zhen. "Follow me inside!"

Rong Zhen knew she was in the wrong, so she could only do as she was told.

The Empress only spoke after the door was locked shut. "What exactly are you doing? How many times have I told you that you're absolutely not allowed to do this? What would your father think if he found out?"

Rong Zhen looked away. "He no longer cares if I live or die! I'm just a good-for-nothing now, so why would he care?"

The Empress repressed her anger. "Your father has agreed to send more heavenly doctors for you after the Qing Jiao Competition. Even if they can't do anything, the envoy from the Tianling Dynasty is on his way. They'll be able to help then! You have to make your father feel bad for you, not hate you!"

Rong Zhen was stunned. "Really?"

"Of course! More importantly, your father has agreed to release your brother. If he stands out at the Qing Jiao Competition, he'll gain your father's favor again. You must not create trouble at such a crucial time!"

Rong Zhen's expression changed, and she hurriedly said, "I understand! I won't make you worry!"

As she spoke, she went over and hugged the Empress's arm. "I know Mother treats me the best!"

Even though she was still angry, the Empress's heart ached for her daughter as she patted her daughter's head. "A damaged pearl of essence is not without hope of repair. Look at Chu Liuyue. She was born with a damaged Yuan meridian, but hasn't she recovered now?"

A light flashed across Rong Zhen's eyes when she heard that. "Right! Mother, how did we forget about this?!"

She shook the Empress's arm excitedly. "Didn't all the heavenly doctors in Country Yao Chen say that her Yuan meridian could not be repaired? Not only did she recover, but she's also a prodigy now! Mother, there's definitely something wrong with Chu Liuyue!"

The Empress frowned. "You mean..."

"Why don't we make her come here and ask her how she recovered?! I bet there's someone powerful helping her! If she brings that person here, I might make a full recovery!"

"That does make sense... We didn't think of that before." The Empress pondered. "But we're not on good terms with Chu Liuyue. She might not agree to this."

Rong Zhen was unbothered. "So what if she doesn't agree to this? She's just the daughter of the Imperial guards' Commander-in-Chief. She can't disobey us."

However, the Empress was a little hesitant. She remembered that Chu Liuyue did not have an ordinary relationship with Zhen Bao Pavilion... “I think we should be more careful about this matter. How about you follow me to the Qing Jiao Competition competition, and we’ll talk to her then. It’ll be great if she’s willing to help. If not...”

Rong Zhen laughed coldly. “She has no choice!”

Chapter 194: Cloud Pattern

Imperial City.

Refreshing autumn.

In the midst of everyone’s excitement, the annual Qing Jiao Competition began. The Qing Jiao Competition was held by all three countries and was highly prestigious.

Everyone who could compete was prodigies of their nations. Thus, not only could everyone see exciting battles at the Qing Jiao Competition, but they could also watch these prodigies battle one another.

It was not just a competition between three academies but also a veiled battle between three countries. Especially because it was held in Country Yao Chen this year, everyone in Tian Lu Academy was excited and wanted to attain good results in the competition.

Most of the students gathered early in the morning, with the exception of the few who stayed back. Everyone headed to Jia Nan Square in Imperial City together.

Jia Nan Square was one of the most famous squares in Imperial City. It had a large area, and it was built by Country Yao Chen's founder.

All the important competitions in the Imperial City would be held here. Naturally, the Qing Jiao Competition was set to be held here.

After Chu Liuyue arrived with all the academy's students, she was quickly sent to an assigned area. She only got the chance to inspect the large square after she had settled down in her assigned spot.

The square took on a circular shape. In the middle was the arena made of a large hanbai stone. It was circled by rows of seats that grew taller with each row.

At a glance, it could house at least 10,000 people, and these seats were now filled with people.

The square was lively, and chatter could be heard everywhere.

Chu Liuyue and the other students' seats were next to the arena.

There was a gold-purple chair in the southward position. Wooden chairs were also placed in the three other directions. The gold-purple chair was reserved for Emperor Jiawen.

He usually didn't appear in the early matches. Instead, he only showed up for the finals.

The chair's current placement was just a show of respect for Emperor Jiawen.

Everything knew that Emperor Jiawen would not appear on the first day, so the square was especially relaxed and lively.

The wooden chairs in the three other directions were clearly left for the various academies.

The elders and teachers sat in the two front rows.

The students only sat from the third row onwards. They were arranged according to their seniority. Chu Liuyue and her classmates were new students, so they sat at the back.

Their individual positions were further divided. Heavenly doctors sat at the front, and martial artists sat at the back.

Chu Liuyue was seated in the Xuan Master section, which was right in the middle.

A young man was seated at the very front.

The young man seemed like he was fifteen or sixteen. He had gentle features, and his skin was ridiculously pale. It even seemed a little transparent under the light.

His expression was distant and carried an air of arrogance. It was clear that he was Meng Zexiao, the newest heavenly doctor cohort's most talented student. He was not from the Imperial City and was of common birth. However, he was talented and valued by the teachers.

He was rumored to be hard-working, but this was the first time Chu Liuyue had seen him since she entered the academy.

Of course, students from the heavenly doctor section were all rather arrogant. They trained in a different venue, so it was not easy to meet them.

As if sensing her gaze, Meng Zexiao—who had been observing the area—suddenly turned and glanced at Chu Liuyue.

Their eyes met, and Chu Liuyue nodded politely, but Meng Zengxiao's eyes reflected a change.

His eyes seem to carry... a little curiosity? Chu Liuyue paused, but Meng Zengxiao had already turned.

“Eh, Liuyue, you know Meng Zexiao?” Si Yang asked.

Chu Liuyue shook her head. “No.”

“Then, why does he look at you strangely? He's Mr. Zuo Rong's disciple, the person who has the most hope of becoming a heavenly doctor out of all of us. He's usually rather arrogant!”

A thought flashed across Chu Liuyue's head when she heard Zuo Rong's name. *Did he act that way because Mr. Zuo Rong told him about my trip to the Heavenly Pharmacy?*

As Chu Liuyue pondered the situation, she heard a deep and powerful voice.

“Country Huai Cang’s Nan Feng Academy!” The voice was powerful and echoed in the square. Everyone could hear it clearly.

There was a commotion, and everyone looked towards the entrance.

A large group walked in! They wore turquoise uniforms, and there were three white lines across their left chest.

The person leading the group looked like he was about 50 or 60 years of age, but he looked energetic. His eyes were especially clear, unlike a typical elder person, illustrating his advanced cultivation.

Sun Zhongyan went up to receive them.

“Hahaha! Brother Yunshan, you all are finally here!”

Fu Yunshan’s face was also full of joy. “Brother Zhongyan, it’s been a while. How are you?!”

The two greeted each other. It seemed like they knew each other well.

“I heard that you all arrived at the Imperial City yesterday. I wanted to visit you, but I decided against it since you might have been tired from traveling. Brother Yunshan, you won’t blame me, right?”

“Haha! Of course! Eh, why don’t I see Elder Ye?”

“The director has been in seclusion recently. He has not returned yet, so I’m in charge of the Qing Jiao Competition’s affairs.”

“I see!” Disappointment flashed across Fu Yunshuan’s eyes, but it quickly disappeared.

“Brother Yunshan, that’s your seat over there. Please...”

Fu Yunshan laughed out loud. “Brother Zhongyan has always been reliable and trustworthy! We’ll head over first?”

“Okay.” Sun Zhongyan nodded in agreement.

Fu Yunshan only brought his students to their assigned positions then.

The voice echoed again right as Fu Yunshan and his students just sat down.

“Country Xing Luo’s Tai Yan Academy!”

The slightly quietened square became lively again.

Chu Liuyue looked around strangely. *Why does it feel like the square is even livelier than before?*

At a glance, many faces of excitement could be spotted. Even the people around her seemed rather excited.

She looked towards Si Yang, and she asked softly, “What’s wrong? What’s special about Tai Yan Academy?”

“You really don’t know?” Si Yang widened his eyes. “I heard that Country Xing Luo’s number one beauty—their eldest princess—is among the group. Situ Xingchen!”

As he spoke, he turned and glanced at Tai Yan Academy’s group before he pointed. “There, that one! The one at the front, the prettiest girl!”

Chu Liuyue followed his finger and saw a slender and sweet-looking girl. This girl stood out among the crowd and attracted everyone’s attention instantly.

Si Yang stared for a while before he turned to look at Chu Liuyue. He then laughed strangely. “Heh. Liuyue, everyone says that Country Xing Luo’s eldest princess is a real beauty, but I feel like she pales in comparison to you! If you dress up, you’ll definitely crush her!”

Chu Liuyue glanced at him. She was not interested in such things.

But the next moment, Chu Liuyue suddenly turned, looked at Situ Xingchen, and narrowed her eyes.

Embroidered on her sleeves was the same cloud pattern that Rong Xiu had.

Chapter 195: Situ Xingchen

Cloud patterns were not rare, especially for royalty. It was not uncommon for people of high status to have clothes embroidered with a cloud pattern.

But the key was that the cloud patterns on Rong Xiu's robes and hems were different from the typical ones. Even though it was a cloud pattern, its lines were intertwined. From an angle, the cloud patterns even looked like blooming peach blossoms.

The first time Chu Liuyue noticed it, she asked Rong Xiu about it. Back then, Rong Xiu said that he drew the cloud pattern himself and had it specially embroidered. He said that he was the only one with that design.

However... Chu Liuyue did not expect the pattern to appear on another person's clothes.

Chu Liuyue could not even consider it a coincidence even if she wanted to. She saw the design clearly and knew that it was exactly the same. She raised her eyebrows and looked away.

"You seem quite familiar with this eldest princess?" asked Chu Liuyue with feigned nonchalance.

"How can that be? I haven't been to Country Xing Luo. It's just that this eldest princess is rather famous!" Si Yang moved his mouth. "You saw her. Her looks and aura are rather rare. Most importantly, she's rather talented! I heard that she's already a third-grade heavenly doctor even though she's only 16. One more step, and she'll be a true heavenly doctor!"

“She is Country Xing Luo’s only princess, the apple of her parents’ eyes! She has been getting more attention in the last couple of years, and many are smitten with her. However, it doesn’t seem like she pays much attention to these things. All the marriage proposals were turned down. I wonder what kind of person will gain her favor.”

Chu Liuyue looked around and saw that a number of the young men’s eyes had lit up after sighting Situ Xingchen.

She thought about it and suppressed the strange feeling she had.

Sun Zhongyan had gone forward to greet the group at this point. “Brother Cheng Han!”

Tai Yan Academy’s leader was also an elderly person. His hair was white, but he gave off a saintly aura. He broke into a smile at the sight of Sun Zhongyan. “Brother Zhongyan, you look better since the last time we met!”

“Hahaha! You’re too kind! You’ve traveled really far, so you must be tired, please!”

Cheng Han waved and motioned for the people behind him to take their positions while he chatted with Sun Zhongyan. “Elder Ye has been rather mysterious in the last couple of years. It’s hard to catch a glimpse of him, even at the Qing Jiao Competition!”

“Uncle-Master has always been like this. Brother Cheng Han, you understand, right?”

“Given how often Elder Ye goes in seclusion, I’m assuming he’s about to break through?”

“Haha, Uncle-Master has never said anything, so I can’t be sure either!”

“Brother Zhongyan, you’ve been in charge of Tian Lu Academy for the Qing Jiao Competition over the last few years. Elder Ye has it easy! In the future, I think...”

Sun Zhongyan cut him off with a laugh. “Brother Cheng Han, we can’t be sure of the future. Everyone has been waiting for quite a while, so why don’t we hurry up and start?”

Cheng Han paused before he laughed. “Sure, sure! I’m sure the kids can’t wait!”

He then walked over to the Tai Yan Academy section and sat down.

Sun Zhongyan was still smiling, but his eyes were a little cold.

Director Fu Yunshan from Nan Feng Academy and Director Cheng Han from Tai Yan Academy were from the same generation as him, while Ye Zhiting was one generation above them.

Fu Yunshan was nothing, but Cheng Han had been breaking through in the last couple of years. Hence, he was becoming increasingly arrogant.

He even had the guts to speak ill of Ye Zhiting in front of everyone earlier and throw hints at Sun Zhongyan to replace Ye Zhiting. He clearly did not respect Tian Lu Academy!

Chu Liuyue—who saw everything from below—narrowed her eyes. “The people from Tai Yan Academy seem rather arrogant.”

“But of course! They received the best results last year! Of course, they’re arrogant. Cheng Han is their director. I heard he broke through and became a fifth-grade heavenly doctor last year. Now, he is on par with our director. Naturally, his attitude toward Elder Sun lacks a little respect,” Si Yang explained softly.

Chu Liuyue nodded in understanding. *No wonder.*

Cheng Han and Elder Sun were from the same generation, but now that he had the ability to challenge Elder Ye, he naturally did not have much respect for Elder Sun.

He looked rather harmonious, but everything he said and did reeked of arrogance. Judging by his behavior, it seemed like he was interested in battling it out with Elder Ye.

“This Cheng Han is also Situ Xingchen’s mentor! I heard that she only entered Tai Yan Academy this year, but she’s really valued. She’s now one of their top prodigies. I heard that her seniors might not even be her match. They’re probably aiming for first place again!”

The Qing Jiao Competition did not differentiate between the different grades of students. All the students were split into three groups—heavenly doctors, Xuan Masters, and warriors. They would then battle it out in the arena.

With that said, any warrior could take part in the warrior competition. Their opponent could be a student from the same or even different grades of opposing academies.

In the competition, the new students were at a disadvantage. However, they also benefited greatly from the experience of competing. Therefore, the new students were still eager to participate even though they knew it would be tough for them to obtain a good ranking.

Si Yang realized that Chu Liuyue was unaffected after he spoke. Hence, he asked, "Why aren't you surprised at all?"

"What's there to be surprised about?" Chu Liuyue widened her eyes slightly.

"She's a new student, but her ability is on par with her seniors!"

Chu Liuyue could not help but laugh. "Heavenly doctor cultivation is special. How much ability one has is determined by their talent, not other factors. Besides, the seniors in her academy are only a year or two older than her. That's not particularly helpful in terms of heavenly doctor cultivation."

"Really?" Si Yang did not buy it completely. "How do you know so much about this?"

Chu Liuyue glanced at him.

Si Yang suddenly recalled that the person before him had passed all three assessments in her entrance examination. Therefore, it was normal for Chu Liuyue to have an understanding of heavenly doctors.

But he heard that her heavenly doctor talent was not really that great, which is why she went with Xuan Master in the end.

"Sigh, whatever! We're not taking part in the heavenly doctor competition, so we don't have to bother about it! Let me tell you about the strong Xuan Masters!"

...

On the other side, Situ Xingchen quickly glanced around after she sat down, but she did not see the person she hoped to meet. Her beating heart calmed down as she retracted her gaze disappointedly. She then sighed.

Then again, he definitely wouldn't show up at this kind of event. He should not have any interest in the Qing Jiao Competition.

Chapter 196: Chu Liuyue 197: Chu Liuyue

When Cheng Han saw how Situ Xingchen—who was sitting beside him—seemed to be surveying her surroundings, he could not help but ask, “Xingchen, what are you looking at?”

“Hm? Oh, nothing much. It's my first time at the Qing Jiao Competition, so I'm rather curious.” Situ Xingchen quickly hid the disappointment in her eyes and happily smiled at Cheng Han.

Cheng Han did not doubt her words and laughed out loud. “It's natural for you to be curious. You'll naturally find out what's going on when the competition starts! I have high hopes for you this time!”

“Don't worry, Mentor. I'll definitely do my best.”

“You have such outstanding talent. I don't have much to worry about.” Cheng Han was very confident, as if he knew for certain that Situ Xingchen could definitely attain good results in the end.

Situ Xingchen smiled and nodded, suppressing her other thoughts at the bottom of her heart.

...

Sun Zhongyan stood in the middle of the square and cupped his hands towards his surroundings.

“I’m Sun Zhongyan, Tian Lu Academy’s Elder. I’m in charge of this year’s Qing Jiao Competition. The competition sequence will be the same as usual; we start from warriors, then Xuan Masters, and finally heavenly doctors!”

His thick and forceful voice reverberated throughout the square, silencing the originally bustling crowd. This caused them to look at Sun Zhongyan with serious expressions.

“The competition rules are the same as before. The three academies will challenge each other. Everyone, please look here. There are three boxes in front of the three academy’s areas! Those three boxes are written with heavenly doctor, Xuan Master, and warrior, respectively. They contain the names of students participating in the various competitions. However, to be fair, the boxes in front of the academies don’t have the names of their own students.”

He pointed towards Tian Lu Academy.

“Tian Lu Academy’s box contains the names of Tai Yan Academy’s students. The students who are going to compete will randomly pick a name from the box, and the chosen person will be their competitor.”

The crowd burst into an uproar. *Isn’t this the same as making Tian Lu Academy students challenge Tai Yan Academy students?*

Sun Zhongyan put his hands down and continued after the crowd quietened down. "Similarly, the box in front of Tai Yan Academy contains names of students from Nan Feng Academy. Nan Feng Academy, of course, has the box filled with the names of Tian Lu Academy's students."

Everyone partook in heated discussions. No matter what, this still sounded pretty fair.

"The one who loses the competition will have their name taken out from the box, and the winner's name will be placed back inside. The competition will proceed in different rounds until the final winner emerges!"

Chu Liuyue crossed her arms in deep thought. "Doesn't it mean that the person who wins the competition has the chance of being picked for a second, third, or even more times?"

The further one goes in the competition, the more brutal the battles. It really isn't easy to take first place.

Si Yang said, "Maybe not. Thus, the competition's sequence is very important! It's better if you're placed at the back, but if you're unlucky and you're placed right at the front, you really might have to compete multiple times! Of course, you need to have the ability to win first before you can be picked repeatedly."

He chuckled as he said, "Actually, this competition isn't that grim. There's a specific amount of time set for the competition every day. Normally, one person will only compete once a day. Even if a person wins and gets picked again, they will still have time to recover. Of course, the condition is that they aren't severely injured."

If one truly was brutally beaten up, they would just directly withdraw from the competition.

“The Qing Jiao Competition always ends sufficiently, and they never allow for any killing. Therefore, you can be assured of that.”

Chu Liuyue heard his words, but she was still doubtful. *They don't allow the participants to kill people, but there are many methods in this world that will make one wish for death instead of staying alive. This Qing Jiao Competition affects the reputation of all the top academies and even their countries. How can this be taken so lightly?*

While the two were talking, Sun Zhongyan had already walked to Nan Feng Academy's area and stood in front of the 'warrior' box. “I'll personally pick the first person to compete in the arena!”

As he spoke, he stretched his hand into the box.

Everyone's gazes were gathered on his body.

This was especially so for the Tian Lu Academy and Tai Yan Academy warrior students. They all held their breaths in anticipation.

“Don't pick me... Please, don't pick me...”

“Please! Don't let it be me!”

“They should pick stronger people for the first match, right?”

Before Sun Zhongyan picked the name, Chu Liuyue could hear all sorts of prayers around her. She could not help but turn around and take a look. As expected, many people's foreheads were engraved with the words 'don't pick me.'

She thought for a while and quickly understood why.

The first match had a different meaning. If one could win the first match beautifully, it would bring utmost honor to themselves and the academy, motivating and energizing everyone else.

However, they would definitely be reprimanded if they lost. Thus, this naturally made the competitors even more stressed out.

It wasn't that bad for the older and stronger students, but the freshmen were all dazed and worried.

...

People from Tai Yan Academy's side stared at Sun Zhongyan's actions closely.

"I heard that their academy's strongest warrior is the Crown Prince—Rong Jin—and he's here today! I just hope that it isn't him!"

"How can there be such a coincidence? There are more than 100 people participating in the warrior competition from their academy. How can Rong Jin be picked first?"

"Hehe, so what if he's picked? We have strong competitors too! Even if they can't win, it's good that they exhaust their strongest participant's energy, right?"

“That sounds pretty logical, hahaha!”

...

Sun Zhongyan finally took his hand out of the box, holding a paper ball in his hand.

Everyone quietened down as they stared at the paper ball. Everyone knew that the paper ball contained the name of the first person that would compete.

The crowd was silent, and the entire square’s atmosphere immediately became nerve-wracking.

Sun Zhongyan slowly opened the paper ball, and his expression changed a little when he saw the name on the paper. *Why is it...*

Quite a few people saw the change in his expression, and they immediately had all sorts of guesses.

Who exactly is this person...?

“Qing Jiao Competition’s first warrior match. The competitor from Tian Lu Academy is...” Sun Zhongyan paused for a while, and he looked in a certain direction with a complicated gaze. “Chu Liuyue!”

Chapter 197: Duel

“Chu Liuyue!”

This name clearly landed in everyone’s ears.

Chu Liuyue heard it and instinctively looked up.

Sun Zhongyan had already opened the paper ball and showed it to the audience.

The people closest to him could clearly see that the paper indeed had the name ‘Chu Liuyue’ written.

The spacious square fell into deep silence for a moment before exploding into commotion. It was as if a bowl of water had been poured into a wok of oil.

“Chu Liuyue? Why is it her?”

“Didn’t she just enter Tian Lu Academy a while ago? Why was she picked for the first match?”

“But I heard that she’s pretty strong... Didn’t she win against Chu Xianmin back then?”

“However, she’s a freshman after all! I think she’s going to lose.”

Everyone in the Imperial City knew Chu Liuyue, so the spectators went into an uproar when they heard her name. However, the people in Tai Yan Academy were mostly dazed.

“Who is Chu Liuyue?”

“I haven’t heard of her before... I don’t think she appeared in the past two competitions. It sounds like she’s a freshman.”

“This name... Is she from Country Yao Chen’s Chu family?”

“Hey, do you remember that rumors have it that Tian Lu Academy recruited a new student who passed all three examinations a while back? I think that’s her name!”

Once this sentence was said, everyone was stunned.

Even though the three academies were in different countries and were pretty far away from each other, they would still be pretty concerned with the other academies’ affairs because of the annual Qing Jiao Competition.

It was originally weird for the academy to accept a student halfway through the semester, let alone the fact that she passed all three examinations.

The students from the other two academies had heard quite a bit about this. So, everyone remembered it when someone brought it up.

“Who is she? I really want to see what kind of person this Chu Liuyue is!”

...

Compared to the other people's enthusiasm and curiosity, Tian Lu Academy's students were deadly quiet as everyone's gaze fell on Chu Liuyue.

Nobody expected that she would be the first one to represent the academy!

Si Yang could not help but give her a thumbs up. "Wow! Your luck is unbelievable!"

Chu Liuyue rolled her eyes at him before decisively standing up. Even though she did not want to be the first to go up, she could only accept it since they had picked her.

Everyone in the area was sitting down, so Chu Liuyue immediately attracted everyone's attention once she stood up.

The originally bustling crowd suddenly turned quiet.

The girl in Tian Lu Academy's uniform had no makeup on, and her hair was simply tied up. However, this still could not hide her beautiful face. She had black brows and a high nose; her skin looked even whiter—similar to snow—in comparison to her cherry lips.

Her eyes contained considerable intelligence and looked like a dazzling river of stars.

Chu Liuyue just stood there and exuded a certain aura that made people admire her, but her vague elegance caused people not to dare mess with her. This was how a breathtaking beauty looked!

“I didn’t expect Tian Lu Academy to have such a pretty girl... Her appearance and demeanor can definitely be compared to Situ Xingchen.”

“Even more than that! I feel that she’s even prettier than Situ Xingchen. Her demeanor is really rarely seen...”

If one said that Situ Xingchen was like a lotus flower that emerged from the water—pure and mesmerizing—then Chu Liuyue was like the sun amongst the clouds, beautiful and dignified. She had a charming yet frightening soul.

Without this comparison, Situ Xingchen could be considered a beauty. But when compared to Chu Liuyue, she seemed to be lacking something and was somewhat lackluster.

Situ Xingchen was dazed. She had never seen a woman prettier than her. *There’s actually such a mesmerizing beauty in Country Yao Chen’s Imperial City... That person must have seen her, right?*

Situ Xingchen pressed her lips against each other but shook her head and laughed. She felt that she was thinking too much.

He isn’t someone who will be charmed by a woman’s beauty.

...

Everyone's gazes shot toward Chu Liuyue as if they wanted to see through her.

Chu Liuyue ignored them, walked to the front, and stood before a box.

Sun Zhongyan shook his head and smiled. "Liuyue, I truly didn't expect the first competitor to be you..."

"I have to compete, no matter what." Chu Liuyue looked very relaxed, as if she was not under any pressure.

Elder Sun sighed. Actually, he was quite surprised that he picked Chu Liuyue. However, he was thankful at the same time. No matter what, Chu Liuyue was the top scholar in the freshmen's warrior assessment. Hence, she was definitely capable.

As long as she picked another freshman as her competitor, she had a high chance of winning.

"You can pick your own opponent." Elder Sun looked toward the box.

Chu Liuyue nodded and stretched her hand into the box.

Tai Yan Academy's students instantly became nervous.

Chu Liuyue was very fast and directly took out a paper ball from within. She opened it up and showed the crowd.

“Lei Mingwei!”

After the temporary silence, Tai Yan Academy’s students immediately erupted into heated discussions.

“Lei Mingwei! It’s Lei Mingwei!”

“Thank God it’s Senior Lei!”

“We’re stable! We’ll definitely win this round!”

Upon seeing their elated appearances, Chu Liuyue raised her brows slightly. *How formidable is this Lei Mingwei to make them so assured that they’d definitely win?*

Very quickly, she saw a tall young man stand up at the frontmost row.

He was a young man, but he looked around 18 or 19 years old. He could still be considered a youth. The young man had a bulky build and looked like a hill. His firm muscles bulged up from his body, and he looked very intimidating.

He clenched his fists tightly and strongly hit them against each other. He then laughed out loud, “Hahaha! I didn’t expect to be the first to go up! I really struck the lottery!”

Everyone could tell that he was really happy. This was because his entire body exuded a strong battle aura!

The students beside him burst into laughter.

“Old Lei, you wanted to be the first to compete the previous time, and it’s finally your turn now! You must put on a good show!”

“Of course! You must win this match beautifully!”

“Senior Lei, don’t go easy on her just because she’s pretty!”

Lei Mingwei jokingly scolded, “Get lost!”

In his heart, winning was most important! As he spoke to his fellow students, he walked to the arena with long steps. “Tai Yan Academy’s Lei Mingwei accepts your challenge!”

Chu Liuyue’s lips curved up slightly. *It seems like he is really looking forward to this competition. He went up to the arena before I even moved.*

On Tian Lu Academy’s side, many people expressed their worries.

“That Lei Mingwei is very powerful! He became a stage-four warrior last year. Liuyue is definitely at a disadvantage in front of him!”

“I think we’ll lose this round...”

Hearing these defeatist words, Mu Hongyu was very upset. Hence, she stood up and loudly yelled, "Liuyue! We believe that you can win!"

"Yes! Crush him into pieces!" Cen Hu yelled with Mu Hongyu.

Chu Liuyue smiled more deeply and said, "Don't worry," before walking up the stage.

The two people stared at each other.

Lei Mingwei sized her up and laughed out loud. *I'm afraid I'll cause her tiny body to fly away with a single punch!*

"Little girl, there's still time for you to surrender!"

Chapter 198: Some Skills

"I'll return you this sentence untouched. If you want to surrender now, I can let you off." Chu Liuyue raised her chin, not afraid at all.

Lei Mingwei's smile stiffened. "Little girl, you're quite young, but you're pretty gutsy. You can put up a front now, but don't regret it later."

Chu Liuyue never did have much patience for people who had confidence for unknown reasons. "Let's begin!"

Lei Mingwei knitted his brows and felt that the girl in front of him was too cocky. He heard that Chu Liuyue entered Tian Lu Academy by passing all three examinations, so it was natural that she was arrogant. However, people with multiple talents might not be good at them.

This was especially so for warriors since they had to use their actual powers to compete. They couldn't use any tricks.

I think this Chu Liuyue is too confident for her own good!

“Okay! Let's 'exchange blows' then! Little girl, there's a saying that goes, 'there will always be someone better than you.' Today, I'll ensure that you properly understand what this means!”

Lei Mingwei then separated his legs and bent his knees slightly, rapidly circulating his force into his fists. The next moment, he leaped off his feet and rapidly charged towards Chu Liuyue!

Lei Mingwei's gigantic fist was hard and strong as it hurled the wind up and went straight for Chu Liuyue's forehead.

“Splitting Sun Punch!”

A stage-four warrior's abilities could not be underestimated. This simple punch alone could make people feel chilly without any weird tricks.

Lei Mingwei traveled at high speed and rapidly narrowed the gap between the two of them. In the blink of an eye, he appeared right in front of Chu Liuyue.

The fist was about to smash into Chu Liuyue's face. However, Chu Liuyue did not move backward. She stood rooted to the ground as if she was going to face the attack head-on.

Tai Yan Academy's students all looked like they were about to witness a good show.

"How can Mingwei be so ruthless in his attacks? What if he injures or cripples the lady?"

"This Splitting Sun Punch is one of Mingwei's strongest moves. I think he directly used it because he doesn't want to waste any time. He probably wants to win this match directly."

"That's true. After all, he needs to win the first match beautifully!"

"That Chu Liuyue is too proud and arrogant. I'm afraid that she'll stop smiling very soon!"

On the other hand, Tian Lu Academy's atmosphere was very suppressed as everyone looked very serious.

If Chu Liuyue lost, it would be humiliating! It would even hurt their morale!

"What's wrong with her? Why isn't she moving? Is she planning on facing Lei Mingwei head-on?"

"Lei Mingwei is a stage-four warrior! Even if she is the top warrior scholar during the mid-term assessment, it doesn't mean that she's his match!"

“Sigh. I’m afraid that she’s in danger today...”

...

Already, Chu Liuyue could clearly sense the powerful punch and the suppression a stage-four warrior brought with them.

Her current abilities were similar to that of a stage-three warrior, so she truly had to use quite a bit of effort to win against Lei Mingwei.

Upon seeing the motionless Chu Liuyue, Lei Mingwei sneered in his heart. *I really don’t know where Chu Liuyue gets her confidence from. She even thinks that she can win against me! The match will be over when this punch lands on her!*

But Chu Liuyue suddenly disappeared from Lei Mingwei’s sight when his fist about to land on her.

Lei Mingwei was shocked.

“I’m here.” The girl’s crisp voice sounded in a teasing manner.

Lei Mingwei immediately turned around and saw that Chu Liuyue had reached another location at some point in time.

He was dazed. *H-how did Chu Liuyue get there? She acted so quickly that I didn’t even see what happened clearly!*

However...

Lei Mingwei was too stunned and could not help but voice out his thoughts. "Aren't you a stage-one warrior?"

"I am." Chu Liuyue honestly admitted to it.

Lei Mingwei was starting to become suspicious. He sensed that Chu Liuyue gave off a stage-one warrior aura when he walked up, so he did not even care about her.

But how can a stage-one warrior be this fast?

"You're lying!"

Chu Liuyue stretched her arms wide open. "What's there to lie about? If you don't believe me, you can ask the academy's teachers and students about it."

The crowd was speechless.

It seems like she really is... However, Chu Liuyue is just a stage-one warrior that can beat a stage-three warrior.

Seeing the spectators' silent consent, Lei Mingwei felt that it was even more unbelievable. In actual fact, he could also feel that Chu Liuyue was telling the truth. However, her speed...

Lei Mingwei clenched his teeth, circulated the force within his body, and the aura around him exploded once again!

Previously, he only used half of his strength. But now...

"He!" hollered Lei Mingwei as he charged toward Chu Liuyue.

This time, his speed and strength were much greater than before. He did not see what Chu Liuyue did, but she easily avoided the attack once again.

Lei Mingwei's second punch landed on nothing once again.

Chu Liuyue raised her brows. "Your punch seems to be a little slow."

This sentence successfully ignited the fire in Lei Mingwei's heart.

Everyone spectating the battle also felt that something was wrong, and their expressions changed.

This was especially so for Tai Yan Academy's students. They had originally prepared to celebrate, but it seemed like Chu Liuyue was not that easy to handle. This unknowingly made them feel awkward.

Cheng Han's expression also became stiff. "What movement technique is Chu Liuyue using? I really can't tell..."

Upon hearing that, Situ Xingchen looked at him in shock. "Mentor, even you can't tell?"

She knew that Chu Liuyue avoided Lei Mingwei's attacks using a movement technique, but even her experienced mentor could not tell what movement technique was.

Cheng Han shook his head. "It looks like she didn't actually move, but her steps are as light as a feather. It proves that she has practiced an advanced movement technique."

It was even better than the ones he had seen before!

However, the more important point was that any movement technique required years of practice. Yet, Chu Liuyue looked like she was 14 or 15. Hence, her familiarized usage of this movement technique surprised the rest.

Since when did Tian Lu Academy accept such a student?

Situ Xingchen knitted her brows tightly, and hesitation flashed across her eyes.

Upon seeing this, Cheng Han laughed and comforted her. "Don't worry. If she's so talented as a warrior, she definitely won't have much of a Xuan Master and heavenly doctor foundation. You're a heavenly doctor, so you don't have to think much about her."

Situ Xingchen lightly nodded.

...

Both of his attacks landed on nothing in the arena, which caused Lei Mingwei's arrogant expression to disappear. He glared straight at Chu Liuyue. "I couldn't tell that you do have some skills! However, this is just a competition. Do you want to continue hiding all the way?"

Chu Liuyue happily said, "That's true. Since you've already attacked twice, it's my turn now."

Lei Mingwei was stunned. "What?"

Chu Liuyue crossed her arms and moved her wrists, which made a cracking sound. "These skills are enough to deal with you!"

Chu Liuyue then stood on her toes, and her tiny body instantly flew out.

The next moment, her hands magically grabbed onto Lei Mingwei's wrist.

The touch of the young girl's soft hands was slightly cold. However, this set off the cautiousness in Lei Mingwei's heart.

He moved her hand back and pushed Chu Liuyue, wanting to back away.

Chu Liuyue hurriedly followed him and pushed his wrist into his forearm.

Kacha!

Lei Mingwei's wrist instantly broke!

Chapter 199: Win or Lose

The sound of the bone cracking echoed in everyone's ears crisply.

Lei Mingwei moaned in pain as his face turned as white as a sheet. He furiously glared at Chu Liuyue.
"You're tired of living!"

His other hand swiftly grabbed at Chu Liuyue's neck as if he wanted to break that thin and long neck.

Chu Liuyue was not afraid as she immediately moved backward, barely avoiding Lei Mingwei's retaliation.

The two people exchanged blows for a moment and immediately retreated away from one another. The most unexpected thing was that Lei Mingwei was the one injured!

When the crowd saw his hand's strange posture, they immediately fell into suffocating silence. Then, they burst into an uproar!

"Am I seeing things? Lei Mingwei is actually hurt, yet Chu Liuyue managed to escape unscathed?"

“Lei Mingwei is a stage-four warrior and has very strong bodily power. How can Chu Liuyue break his hand so easily?”

“God... I didn’t even see Chu Liuyue’s moves clearly. Did you see it?”

“... How can Chu Liuyue have the cheek to say that she’s a stage-one warrior with this kind of abilities?”

The spectators discussed the battle, filled with shock. Originally, they thought that this match’s outcome was confirmed, but it seemed like this was not the case.

Chu Liuyue’s abilities had greatly exceeded their expectations!

When Lei Mingwei heard the various comments, he was very humiliated. If he lost the significant first match to Chu Liuyue—who was a few cultivation stages lower than him—he would be mocked for the rest of his days!

Then, he would definitely be the academy’s sinner! How would he continue staying in the academy?

I must win! When Lei Mingwei thought of this, he gathered all the strength in his body and planned to put in his best effort.

A ball of blue force quickly gathered in his palm, which rapidly formed a long sword.

The difference between a stage-four warrior and a stage-three warrior was that stage-four warriors could circulate their force outside of their bodies to increase their attacking power.

In the past, Lei Mingwei had never thought that he would have to use this method to go against a mere stage-one warrior. However, Lei Mingwei could not care about that at this point. There was only one thought in his head—*I must win!*

His uninjured hand held the longsword as he kept circulating his force into it, exuding a fearful sword aura.

The next moment, Lei Mingwei suddenly thrust his longsword towards the front. “Xuan Zhong Sword!”

Buzz!

When that longsword sliced through the air, the surrounding air immediately narrowed as the intense strength kept flowing into the sword, producing an ear-piercing buzz.

Chu Liuyue felt excruciating pain in her ears, and her entire body’s force seemed to freeze.

The fearful force came toward her, and Chu Liuyue could not hide from it at all, causing her speed to decrease significantly.

A stage-four warrior’s suppression was very formidable!

Chu Liuyue’s sharp gaze landed on the Xuan Zhong Sword that sliced downwards.

Even if there was some distance between the two of them, it would not affect the stage-four warrior's attack at all.

Chu Liuyue swiftly surveyed her surroundings, and a thought popped up in her mind.

I can temporarily use my movement techniques to gain an advantage, but this won't do the trick. Now that Lei Mingwei has recovered his senses, he will definitely give it his all. If we battle for a long time, my force will definitely be depleted first! Thus, I have to end the battle as soon as possible.

Thinking of this, she immediately circulated the force in her body.

When the force went to her limbs, the suppression acting on her body weakened a little.

Taking this chance, Chu Liuyue immediately moved backward.

"You want to escape? It's not that easy!" When Lei Mingwei saw Chu Liuyue rapidly running backward, he immediately understood her intentions. He hollered, "Go!"

The Xuan Zhong Sword immediately cut through the floor!

Tsing!

The sharp blade cut across the white marble floor, producing an ear-piercing sound.

The next moment, a blue sword aura flew out of the sword and went toward Chu Liuyue like a lightning bolt.

The crowd only saw a blue ray of light flash across the white floor, which then instantly appeared at Chu Liuyue's feet.

No matter how fast Chu Liuyue was, she was not faster than Lei Mingwei's attack since she had been suppressed.

The blue sword aura was about to reach Chu Liuyue's feet.

Everyone widened their eyes and stared at the arena closely.

Lei Mingwei had gathered all the strength he had as a stage-four warrior for this attack. Chu Liuyue could not escape this.

Chu Liuyue moved backward, and the sword aura kept following after her.

At some moment, she suddenly realized something and turned around.

Chu Liuyue had reached the edge of the arena!

If she continued to move backward, she would definitely fall out of the arena! According to the rules, she would lose if she went out of the arena's boundaries.

Chu Liuyue stood on her toes and rapidly ran in another direction.

Just when she changed her direction, the blue sword aura seemed to have a mind of its own; it quickly followed her.

It continued to chase after her!

Seeing this scene, Gu Mingfeng—who was quiet the entire time—could not help but knit his brows. “Lei Mingwei is a stage-four warrior. Not only can he circulate his force outside of his body, but he can freely control the attack within a certain range. It looks like his cultivation level had reached the intermediate level of stage four. This spacious arena should be entirely under his control.”

From stage-four warrior and onwards, every cultivation stage would be split into beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels.

Lei Mingwei had become a stage-four warrior last year. Now that a year had passed, he had successfully broken through and become an intermediate stage-four warrior. He had an even bigger advantage against Chu Liuyue.

Cen Hu was shocked. “What? Then what about Liuyue? Wasn't Liuyue very fast just now? Can't she avoid the attack?”

Gu Mingfeng paused before saying, “It's a little hard unless she can leave the arena and get out of Lei Mingwei's control range.”

However, this meant that she would lose.

Mu Hongyu angrily cursed, "This Lei Mingwei is so cunning! He knew that he wasn't Liuyue's match physically, so he used this move!"

Even though Mu Hongyu scolded him, she understood that competitions were cruel. All people would use any methods to attain victory, let alone with this advantage that belonged to Lei Mingwei. He did this righteously.

She could only say that it was too hard for a stage-one warrior to go against a stage-four warrior.

When Tai Yan Academy's students saw how Chu Liuyue was forced to retreat by the sword aura, they all heaved a sigh of relief.

"As expected! When Mingwei shows off his true abilities, Chu Liuyue can't even handle a single attack. Very soon, Chu Liuyue will be exhausted, and she will lose mercilessly."

"It's a pity that Senior Lei's wrist was broken. If Senior Lei knew that Chu Liuyue was this cunning, he should've taken her down from the start!"

"It's not too late as long as he wins! Besides, Mingwei has a really bad temper. Since a mere stage-one warrior broke his wrist, he'll definitely take his revenge. Hah, that Chu Liuyue is going to have a miserable time..."

In the arena, Lei Mingwei could not help but sneer at Chu Liuyue, who kept running away. “So what if you can hide? I don’t believe that you can continue hiding all the way! You’re bound to lose today’s match!”

Upon hearing this, Chu Liuyue suddenly stopped and looked at Lei Mingwei. Her lips curved up into a strange smile. “Oh? Then, I won’t hide anymore!”

Chu Liuyue then raised her hand, and a sharp, cold blade glistened in her hands. It was an extremely sharp dagger!

The next moment, she bent her wrists and flung the dagger out.

The crowd only saw a ray of light flash across the air and directly flew toward the blue sword aura—which was getting close to Chu Liuyue.

Tsing!

The dagger had a ferocious aura and suddenly landed on the floor, harshly slicing through the sword aura.

“Explode!”

Hong!

After a temporary silence, the blue sword aura exploded!

Instantly, millions of blue sparks landed, and the originally fierce sword aura disappeared.

Lei Mingwei felt the recoil, and he was stunned. Suddenly, he vomited blood, his entire face as pale as a ghost.

Everyone was shocked; they could not believe their eyes.

Chu Liuyue actually chose to go against Lei Mingwei head-on, and she actually has the upper hand!

That dagger was very fast and thoroughly crushed Lei Mingwei's attack.

Chu Liuyue did not stop at all as she went straight for Lei Mingwei.

She appeared in front of him in the blink of an eye. Then, she raised her long legs and harshly kicked Lei Mingwei's face.

Lei Mingwei's gigantic body instantly flew backward and landed on the floor heavily, making a low thud.

Lei Mingwei's face turned even whiter, and he vomited out more blood. He widened his eyes and looked at Chu Liuyue fearfully and indignantly.

His lips moved as if he wanted to say something. But after struggling for a while, his eyes rolled up, and he fainted.

No matter how strong one's body was, the head was their weakest body part.

Chu Liuyue's kick directly hit Lei Mingwei's face, becoming a life-threatening attack.

She looked up at the judge. She smiled happily, but her eyes were still filled with cold murderous intent—which made one shudder and not dare to look her straight in the eye.

“Can you announce the winner now?”

Chapter 200: Dagger

The slim girl happily stood in the arena with a smile on her face.

A light breeze blew over, causing her clothes to float in the air.

The scene truly looked as mesmerizing as a painting. If one did not notice the bloody and unconscious Lei Mingwei under her feet, this scene was pretty pleasing.

Silence filled the square.

It was as if thousands of people had lost their voices at this moment. They all stared at the scene in front of them dazedly.

W-what did Chu Liuyue just do?

“Hm?” asked Chu Liuyue lightly again.

The teacher presiding over the match finally recovered his senses and dazedly looked at Lei Mingwei—who had fainted and could not continue battling. The teacher swallowed his saliva with much difficulty and finally found his voice. “The winner of this match is... Tian Lu Academy’s Chu Liuyue!”

The clear and powerful voice echoed throughout the square!

Winner!

Tian Lu Academy!

Chu Liuyue!

Every single person heard every word clearly.

The crowd—who was initially in a trance and filled with disbelief—finally woke up from their dream.

The Qing Jiao Competition’s first match—Chu Liuyue versus Lei Mingwei. Chu Liuyue actually won!

A stage-one warrior won against a stage-four warrior!

This truth was too shocking, even though they had personally witnessed everything, and Lei Mingwei was still unconscious on the floor. After a long time, the crowd was still immersed in the suffocating silence.

“You won! Liuyue, I knew you were the best!” An excited and emotional scream suddenly sounded. Mu Hongyu already jumped up from her seat, and happiness was oozing out of her body. “You did great!”

This sentence immediately made Tian Lu Academy’s crowd recover their senses.

She won! Chu Liuyue won! That means Tian Lu Academy won!

Celebratory cheers immediately sounded and filled the area.

“We won! We won!”

“The first match was beautiful!”

“Oh my, I would never believe that a stage-one warrior can win against a stage-four warrior if I didn’t see it personally!”

“Hahaha! Chu Liuyue first won against Chu Xianmin, a stage-three warrior. Now, she has won against a stage-four warrior. It’s her usual practice! Hahaha!”

“Initially, I thought that she was lucky to take first place in the warrior assessment, but now... I’m convinced!”

Even though everyone did not have much understanding of Chu Liuyue earlier, and they even had some biases against her, they were all naturally happy now that she won. After all, she made the academy proud and made them look good.

The vague doubts about Chu Liuyue—which had existed ever since she entered the academy—had also completely disappeared after this amazing match.

She might have been lucky to beat a stage-three warrior, but winning against an intermediate stage-four warrior definitely proved Chu Liuyue’s abilities.

Hearing the roaring cheers, Chu Xianmin clenched her teeth tightly and wanted to be the one on the stage.

Her hand unwittingly touched her neck, and the rough scar reminded her that the current Chu Liuyue was no longer the one she could bully in the past.

Chu Xianmin suddenly felt helpless in her heart. She did not know when Chu Liuyue had surpassed her and when she had thrown her far behind.

The entire Tian Lu Academy was celebrating. Only a small area at the front few rows was different.

Rong Jin was there.

The people around him all minded themselves, trying their best to minimize their presence.

Everyone knew that Chu Liuyue was once Rong Jin's fiancé, but he had taken the initiative to dissolve the marriage agreement in the end. However, not only was Chu Liuyue not a good-for-nothing, but she had also become the most dazzling talent in the blink of an eye.

Who would feel good about this?

Rong Jin looked at the young girl in the arena with a complicated heart.

As if she had heard the cheers, Chu Liuyue turned around and gave a charming smile—mesmerizing and bright like the sun.

It was as if Rong Jin's heart was hit by something heavy. He could feel turmoil at the bottom of his heart. It was as if his heart had predicted some danger, but Rong Jin could not do anything about it.

If... our marriage agreement was still in place, then her smile would belong only to me...

Noticing what he thought about, Rong Jin immediately recovered his senses and shook his head, wanting to expel those thoughts. However, those thoughts became even clearer for some reason.

...

Elder Sun stroked his beard in satisfaction and finally put down the rock in his heart.

Liuyue really hasn't disappointed anyone before! It's no wonder Uncle-Master—who always refuses to accept disciples—wanted to appreciate her talent. It's a blissful thing for a mentor to have such a disciple.

He laughed out loud. "Liuyue, the first match is over. You should go down and rest. Your name will be put back into the box, so you might have to participate in a second, third, or even more matches. You should prepare for them."

Chu Liuyue smiled. "Okay! Thank you, Elder Sun!"

Then, Chu Liuyue quickly walked to her dagger. She walked a few steps and turned around to speak to Tai Yan Academy's members. "Oh yes, I held myself back when I kicked him, so his injuries aren't fatal. You just have to bring him down and let him rest for half a month. The Qing Jiao Competition always ends appropriately, and we prioritize our friendship over the competition. I remembered this!"

This sentence almost made the Tai Yan Academy crowd puke out blood.

Held yourself back? How can you have the cheek to say that after he ended up in this state?

What 'prioritizing friendship over competition'? That's nuts!

The crowd's expression immediately changed uglily.

Initially, they all said that they would definitely win this match, but it ended up with this result! It was akin to slapping their faces!

Cheng Han lost the initial arrogant aura, and he looked more frustrated. “Quickly, go and bring Lei Mingwei back!”

“Y-yes!” The others hurriedly went forward and carried Lei Mingwei down.

The Tai Yan Academy crowd remained in awkward silence.

Sun Zhongyan cupped his fists towards Cheng Han and laughed. “Brother Cheng Han, thank you for letting us win. This match was so interesting. I believe this year’s Qing Jiao Competition should be even more outstanding than before, don’t you think?”

Cheng Han only thought that he had eaten a fly and was very disgusted. *Sun Zhongyan is clearly showing off! However, I can’t do anything about it since we lost!*

“Hehe, Brother Zhongyan, you’re right. Good shows await us!” Cheng Han was pretty experienced after all, so he revealed a light smile and respectfully answered Sun Zhongyan.

Sun Zhongyan noticed the vague indignance and threat in Cheng Han’s words, but he did not take it to heart.

Tai Yan Academy lost the first match so badly, so this would definitely affect their morale. It was impossible for Tai Yan Academy to maintain their glory from the previous year.

...

Chu Liuyue walked over, bent down, and picked up the dagger. Upon seeing the crack on the arena floor, she raised her brows slightly. *This dagger—which Rong Xiu personally made—is really good! It's even stronger than I thought...*

She put the dagger away and walked down the arena.

On the other end, Situ Xingchen suddenly widened her eyes when she saw the faint pattern on the dagger. *That dagger is—*