

Refining 451

Chapter 451 – Too Young, Too Simple

Qi Cheng respectfully delivered the black-robed cultivator away. Then, he hurried back to the main hall, a worried look on his face. He hesitated and said, “Teacher, do we need to meddle in this matter? Although this disciple has great feelings of discontent towards Qin Yu, the situation is simply far too risky. And the Dao Arena’s attitude has been too ambiguous about this.”

Chu Taidou’s face darkened. He coldly sneered, “Do you think I want to interfere? The Ning Family’s treasure is good, but if I can’t obtain it, it doesn’t matter. After all, there is no truly great enmity between me and Qin Yu. But today the one who came was a messenger from the Immortal Sect. In other words, this was something decided by some great figure of the Immortal Sect.

“Yes, the Great Zhao Empire is within the regional influence of the Demonic Path. However, with the Immortal Sect’s strength, dealing with you and I would be as simple as moving a finger in order to send us beyond redemption!” He took a deep heaving breath, “This matter is something I have no choice in. I either comply or die!”

A bitter feeling swelled up from within Qi Cheng, one mixed with fear. Chu Taidou was originally an extremely thick thigh he latched onto, but in front of the Immortal Sect, it was as thin as a stick.

If anything happened to Chu Taidou, as his closest disciple, he would be the first one to suffer!

“Since I have no other choice, I can only wholeheartedly commit myself to handling the Immortal Sect’s matter. Even if I offend the Dao Arena at that time, I can still obtain shelter from the Immortal Sect.” Chi Taidou was a fierce and ambitious man. While he was panicked at first, he quickly calmed down. “So the most important thing we must do is to handle this matter cleanly and perfectly. Otherwise, we will truly die without a burial ground!”

Qi Cheng said in a low voice, “This disciple will follow teacher’s orders!”

Chi Taidou hesitated and said, “Qi Cheng, tomorrow you will go to the Dao Arena and issue a declaration of war against Qin Yu. I will challenge him in alchemy.”

When the sun rose in the east, Qi Cheng arrived at the Dao Arena. This time, he didn’t display the arrogant attitude he did back at the Western Mountain Inn. He respectfully bowed his head and expressed his purpose for coming.

Kang Mingqiao soon obtained the news. His first response was that there was something unusual about this situation. Not to mention that the Dao Arena had already revealed their regards towards Qin Yu, just Qin Yu’s identity as the ninth-ranked on the Ancient Perishment Decree should have been enough to make Chu Taidou forget about any unhappiness and pretend that no conflict had ever occurred.

Even if Qin Yu was targeted by the Immortal Sect and his future wasn’t bright, that didn’t necessarily mean he would die...Chu Taidou was an intelligent man. This could be seen from the way he tried to be close with Qin Yu after his status was revealed.

But today, after a long time of silence, Chu Taidou had suddenly leapt up to challenge Qin Yu. He was using the excuse of having his interest in alchemy piqued by Qin Yu and wanting to have a little spar with him...this seemed like a fair and honest reason, but that in itself was wrong.

After a moment of thinking, Kang Mingqiao ordered to have Qi Cheng wait outside temporarily. If the one who came here was Chu Taidou, then perhaps he would receive him after taking his face into consideration. But for a mere disciple he sent on errands, there was no need to be polite.

Kang Mingqiao stood up and walked away, soon arriving at Qin Yu's training room. Because he had recently been investing his focus in refining pills, his training room was in a sealed condition and no one was allowed to disturb him.

The highest level training room could only be used by honored guests of the Dao Arena. Even if Kang Mingqiao was the Dao Arena Steward, he didn't have the qualifications to randomly open it.

He tried to contact Qin Yu but received no response. Then, he took out a message jade slip and marked down some information. After passing it through a channel in the hall, it entered the training room.

Kang Mingqiao turned around and took a seat. Towards this person that had been just a step away from becoming his master's disciple, he believed he needed to give Qin Yu a certain degree of attention. This was because the world was always changing. While Qin Yu might not be able to become his master's disciple, that was only because of external reasons. As for Qin Yu's talent, that was high enough for an infinite number of possibilities to occur.

He looked down at the challenge jade slip placed on the table in front of him. He had already looked through its contents, and his eyes were heavy with worry.

Chu Taidou had come prepared. Kang Mingqiao hoped that Qin Yu wouldn't be too confident in himself, otherwise he feared he would suffer a great loss.

The Dao Arena's top training room naturally had an accompanying alchemy chamber. Qin Yu flicked his sleeves and the Ninth Province furnace gave a low cry and popped out three pills. These pills had a white gleam shimmering on their surface. Just taking a breath made one feel inspired and their body feel much more relaxed.

This pill was called the Longevity Pill. It was of the seventh-grade and was a relatively difficult one. It could help a cultivator increase their lifespan by ten years. However, the limit was that they could only take three; taking any more was useless.

This was why the Ninth Province furnace only spat out three. Following this, there were loud munching sounds. Qin Yu wryly smiled. He had promised Ninth Furnace that he would give it all excess pills. Otherwise, this greedy and gluttonous little fellow would have gone on strike.

Of course, the advantage was that Ninth Furnace put forth 120% of its pill refining capabilities. This made the pill refining process much easier for Qin Yu. With a flick of his sleeves, the three Longevity Pills were placed into a jade bottle he had prepared ahead of time. It was specially refined and had formidable sealing array formations contained within that would isolate the pills aura so that it didn't emit outwards.

“Hah!” Qin Yu let out a breath, a somewhat weary expression on his face. But, he actually smiled. He had finished refining three Longevity Pills and he would be able to exchange them for another soul treasure. This meant he was that much closer to having the Soul Summoning Bell recognize him as master.

Putting away the jade bottle, Qin Yu prepared to meditate and recover his losses. Seeing a message jade slip floating to the side, he revealed a look of surprise. He lifted his hand and grabbed it.

A moment later, Qin Yu opened the training room’s doors. Kang Mingqiao was standing outside. Qin Yu said with an apologetic expression, “I’m very sorry about this. I was refining pills today, so Arena Steward Kang must have waited a long time for me.”

Kang Mingqiao smiled. “It doesn’t matter. I have a great deal of idle time every day, so it doesn’t matter what I do.” He raised a hand and passed over a jade slip. “This is a challenge jade slip that Chu Taidou issued to you.”

Qin Yu searched it with his divine sense. Several breaths of time later, his eyes brightened and he laid the jade slip down. There was a brief hesitation on his face as if he were contemplating something. But after some time, he couldn’t help but laugh out loud and said, “I never thought that Grand Authority Chu would be such a good person.”

The challenge jade slip clearly stated that Chu Taidou was willing to put forth ten treasures as the gambling stake to challenge Qin Yu. And, these ten treasures were all items needed for the process of the Soul Summoning Bell’s master recognition.

When Qin Yu counted the rewards he obtained from refining pills, even if there was some redundancy, there were still 12 different kinds of soul treasure. In addition to the nine he found in the jade box, that was 21 different soul treasures. That was almost half of what he needed!

As for whether he would lose this gambling bet? Qin Yu smiled. When it came to refining pills, while he wouldn’t call himself the highest in the world, beating up someone like Chi Taidou shouldn’t be a problem.

So if Chu Taidou wasn’t a good person, what was he? Thinking about it, Qin Yu really wanted to draw up a plaque of congratulations and send it to the Chu Residence with drums and a band.

Kang Mingqiao frowned a little. He said, “Fellow daoist Qin Yu, Chu Taidou knows that you are collecting these treasures right now so he specifically put them in the gambling stake because he feared that you would refuse. There is something unusual about this.”

Qin Yu smiled and said, “I thank Arena Steward Kang for the warning. But, I will still decide to accept Chu Taidou’s challenge.” Seeing the worry in Kang Mingqiao’s eyes, he continued to say, “Arena steward, rest assured that if I dare to agree, then I have my own reasons for doing so. No matter what scheme Chu Taidou is trying to hatch this time, he is destined to be disappointed.”

Kang Mingqiao’s eyes flashed. He said, “It seems that my fears were baseless. Since fellow daoist Qin Yu is so confident, I will go and have people send a reply to Qi Cheng. A mere junior like him does not have the qualifications for you to make a personal appearance. Still, I want to remind you of something.

Perhaps Chu Taidou isn't worth anything, but fellow daoist Qin Yu should never forget about those that might be standing behind him.

Kang Mingqiao bid his farewells and left.

Qin Yu's heart warmed a little. No matter what the reason was, this person Kang Mingqiao was trying his best to look after him.

However, if Kang Mingqiao could think of it, Qin Yu could too. His thoughts raced and a cold light flashed in his eyes.

The killing curse didn't work, so they decided to switch things up?

Purple Moon, I will remember every single thing you've done. I'll let you be smug for now, but in the future there will come a time when we settle our debts!

There was no need to investigate. This matter had already been pinned onto the Immortal Sect by Qin Yu.

Qi Cheng waited from sunrise until sunset. Even though he was good at keeping his emotions hidden, he still couldn't help but reveal a bit of worry. This was the situation he worried about the most. If Qin Yu didn't agree, then no matter how great his plans were, no matter how confident they were, they simply wouldn't have any chance to utilize them.

Moreover, what frightened him the most was that the Immortal Sect only wanted a result and didn't care about the process. If things didn't proceed smoothly, he feared the Immortal Sect would turn the tables on them. One didn't need to be a genius to know that he and Chu Taidou would both be in trouble. It was possible for them to lose their lives!

As he was sweating and his thoughts became increasingly chaotic, a cultivator from the Dao Arena suddenly appeared in front of him. "Fellow daoist Qi Cheng, please inform Grand Authority Chu that lord Qin Yu has accepted the challenge. As for the exact specifications of the challenge, prepare them as soon as possible and send someone to inform us in advance."

This sort of feeling was like standing on the edge of a cliff and being nearly about to fall off before being pulled back by someone. Qi Cheng was ecstatic, as if he were someone that had survived a disaster. Of course, he kept a calm expression and said, "Thank you for informing me, fellow daoist. I will report this to my teacher. Thank you and goodbye."

Leaving the Dao Arena, he passed through the great square and streets, hurrying along with the last rays of light. Soon he reached the Chu Residence.

Chu Taidou was all smiles. "Very good! I knew that Qin Yu would find the temptation of those ten treasures impossible to resist. He really agreed."

"Congratulations teacher, the first step in your plan has proceeded smoothly. As long as Qin Yu accepts the challenge, that is the same as being caught in teacher's trap. With your alchemy skills, you will easily defeat him!" Qi Cheng said, his face full of joy.

Chu Taidou shook his head. "It's too early to say that. Qin Yu has recently been refining seventh-grade pills one after another, so his alchemy skills must be immense. I cannot underestimate him."

Qi Cheng said with high praise, "Teacher is too modest. Dozens of years ago teacher already had the ability to refine seventh-grade pills. It was only that the rules restricted you from refining more pills and causing the price of higher grade pills to fall. But in these years, your strength has risen tremendously and you can even refine eighth-grade pills. Defeating Qin Yu will be as easy as turning a hand!"

Chu Taidou smiled, not responding. Qin Yu was young, talented, and successful. This was the period of his life where he would be most high-spirited and arrogant. Moreover, it was said he came from some exiled land so he had no idea what depths he was swimming in. Those that truly stood at the peak of alchemy in the Land of Divinity and Demons all agreed to an unstated rule – to ensure that high level pills would always be in short supply in the world and thus in high demand.

Only in this way could the peak alchemists of this world maintain their own important status. The so-called lowered price of pills was a mere facade to maintain the world order.

To be able to refine seventh-grade pills indeed wasn't bad, and there was also the fact that Qin Yu was so young. But in the Land of Divinity and Demons, the depths and breadth of alchemy was far greater than he could imagine. Even if the Immortal Sect didn't take action, Qin Yu had already committed a taboo by recklessly refining seventh-grade pills and he would be punished sooner or later. It had to be known that when peak alchemists joined forces, they were a powerful force even in the Land of Divinity and Demons.

The young were often too confident in themselves. Now, he was about to be struck by reality, and perhaps a bright and dazzling life would end here.

Too young, too simple...the Master of the Dao Arena once used to love using this popular phrase. Although no one could express why it was a taunt, it was actually fitting to describe Qin Yu's current actions.

Qin Yu, this old man will end you!

Thinking that a peerless proud son of heaven listed on the Ancient Perishment Decree would fall because of him, Chu Taidou's mood was aroused and endless anticipation gushed out from his eyes.

Chapter 452 – Grand Authority Chu Wants to Fly

In one day, news that Alchemy Grand Authority Chu Taidou was challenging the Ancient Perishment Decree's ninth-ranked Qin Yu spread throughout the entirety of Four Seasons City at an incredible speed. At the inn, when Ning Liang obtained news of this her face filled with worry. But when she thought about how Qin Yu had cured her body's cold poison, she knew his alchemy strength must be unfathomably deep. Even if he were to face someone like Chu Taidou, there was still a chance he could win.

As she was relaxing a little, Ning Rufeng suddenly smiled across from her. "You little girl, once Qin Yu is defeated in the challenge, your opportunity will come. You must grasp this chance!"

Ning Liang had an anxious expression. "Grandfather, Grand Authority Qin has amazing alchemy skills. How do you know he will lose to Chu Taidou?"

Ning Rufeng smiled and sighed. "You are still young so there are some things you wouldn't completely understand. Although Chu Taidou is despicable, he is an undeniably smart person. Would a smart person

leap out at this time to seek trouble with Qin Yu? This matter isn't simple at all. If I'm not wrong, Chu Taidou is being pushed from behind by the Immortal Sect."

He paused and then continued, "With the Immortal Sect's strength, since they chose Chu Taidou to act in their place, they must have completed all failsafe preparations. Qin Yu is strong, but he won't win this challenge."

If he couldn't win, then he would naturally lose!

Ning Liang stormed up to her feet. "No, this isn't good. I have to warn Grand Authority Qin and tell him to refuse Chu Taidou's challenge!"

Ning Rufeng waved his hand. "Sit down. Qin Yu has already accepted the challenge so how can he go back on his word? It is already too late."

"Grandfather! We owe Grand Authority Qin a deep graciousness. Even if we are too late, we can't just stare helplessly on as he falls into the trap of others!" Ning Liang started to walk outside.

Ning Rufeng sighed. "You little girl, can't you calm down and see things clearly? Listen to me finish speaking first! Don't lose your rational thinking just because Qin Yu is involved!" His expression became gentle and earnest. "Qin Yu is currently ranked on the Ancient Perishment Decree. In terms of strength, character, and methods, everything he does is first rate. Do you think he hasn't thought of these things already? No, it's just that you don't completely understand. Qin Yu knows perfectly well that there is something strange happening here, but he still dares to agree. It's clear he is confident that he can take the gambling stake that Chu Taidou set forth.

"Qin Yu is young and ambitious. Although he has to worry about the Immortal Sect on the outside, he is surely a proud young man. If you try to persuade him to go back on his word and refuse the challenge, he won't necessarily feel grateful towards you and might even think you are bothersome. Little girl, ponder it carefully. Don't you think grandfather is right?"

Ning Liang bit her lips. She couldn't help but acknowledge that what Ning Rufeng said made sense. "Grandfather, what do we do?"

Ning Rufeng replied, "Wait. Wait until Qin Yu loses, for him to have nowhere else to go."

Ning Liang's eyes widened. Her face was filled with an expression of disbelief and betrayal, as if she had never known her grandfather all along!

"You stinky little girl, what kind of side eye are you giving me? First of all, the reality is that there is nothing we can do, so waiting is our only choice. Moreover, this will be your best time to move Qin Yu!" Ning Rufeng wryly smiled, but his tone was serious. "Once Qin Yu loses, the Immortal Sect will surely have subsequent parties waiting for him afterwards. At that time, you can appear by his side. In the darkest moments of Qin Yu's life, you accompanying him by his side will be proof that you are willing to withstand all of this with him!

"When men are in a fragile moment, that is the best time for them to be moved by women. You can place a mark in his heart that can never be erased. Then, you can tell Qin Yu that the Ning Family is willing to help him. As a noble family of the Demonic Path with an official title, we have our own estate

in the small world of the Demonic Path. As long as he so desires, our Ning Family can bring him in. We can even recommend for him to truly enter the Demonic Path!”

Ning Rufeng’s eyes started to shine with confidence. “In the Land of Divinity and Demons, the Seven Empires are vast and boundless. There is also the Dao Arena, Shadow’s Edge, the Abyss, and other such formidable influences. But out of all of them, the only one that can truly contend with the Immortal Sect is our Demonic Path. Qin Yu will definitely understand this. If he wants to survive and smoothly grow, the best choice will be for him to join the Demonic Path.”

As for the Ning Family, they could borrow Qin Yu’s strength to rise once more and become a true noble family of the Demonic Path. They could recover and even surpass their most glorious years!

Of course, there was no need to tell these things to Ning Liang. If she could maintain a pure conscience then she could be truly relaxed in front of Qin Yu. It was best if she said everything from the bottom of her heart.

Soon, three days passed. The battle between Chu Taidou and Qin Yu would be held in the grand plaza of Four Seasons City. This was the core region of Four Seasons City and most of the city administrative work locations were situated around it. Since the two people ‘sparring’ were not average cultivators, their location had to conform to their status.

Ning Rufeng arrived early with the Ning Family cultivators in tow. Because they spent a considerable amount of money purchasing tickets, they were seated in a relatively good location. They were at the third row from the south and could clearly see the blue stone platform that was constructed in the middle of the grand plaza.

Of course, to use the word ‘constructed’ wasn’t accurate. This was because this grand plaza itself was the key location of Four Seasons City’s grand array formation. It had a consciousness of its own and could easily change its external features. For instance, this high platform. As long as there was permission from the City Lord Mansion and the approval of the array spirit, this platform would appear in just several breaths of time.

Ning Liang frowned. She revealed a worried expression. She looked for Qin Yu, but there was still some time before the competition started so he hadn’t arrived yet.

There could be said to be a sea of people in the grand plaza today. Whether it was Chu Taidou or Qin Yu, they both drew the attention of all eyes onto them. This was especially true after various rumors were widely spread out. All sorts of plots and backstories were made up, causing even more people to rush over here for the excitement.

There was a sudden burst of noise. In the distance, a long convoy of cars slowly glided over. They made a perfect arc around and stopped in a corner of the grand plaza.

Countless doors opened. Numerous black-clothed cultivators stepped out. Each one had a sharp light in their eyes and a formidable aura.

Qi Cheng pushed open the front seat door and quickly walked to the back, respectfully opening the door. “Teacher, we have arrived.”

Chu Taidou sat in meditation with his eyes closed. His eyes slowly opened and a swift light flashed in his eyes, like the reflection of a sword in the dark night. He stepped out from the car, a warm and gentle smile on his face. He wore the long white robes of a high level alchemist, giving him a handsome and elegant demeanor.

Grand Authority Chu had made a spectacular entrance. He deliberately made sure to make this as dazzling an appearance as possible. He smiled at the crowds of cultivators as he calmly walked towards the grand plaza.

This performance immediately drew many loud cheers. As an Alchemy Grand Authority who had been established in Four Seasons City for many years, he had countless fans and thus numerous supporters.

And at this time, another convoy of cars arrived. The scale was no less than Chu Taidou's; it was even a bit more magnificent. On the front of every speedcar, one could clearly see the conspicuous figure of a flying goddess. The figures reflected a seven-colored shine beneath the sunlight. Even from far away one could feel the noble and dignified aura they emitted.

These were the speedcars that were exclusively used by the Dao Arena. It was said that the sect which made these flying goddess speedcars had the Dao Arena standing in the shadows behind them. Although no one could verify this, the Dao Arena recklessly purchasing these speedcars and using them exclusively was a fact.

Flying goddess speedcars had a mind-boggling price point. Similarly, their manufacturing cost was equally high. Not to mention their perfect travel time or their formidable protective frame, just the flying goddess figurine on the hood of the speedcars was an extremely precious treasure. They were said to contain supernatural arts of a descending goddess. Once they were activated, one could choose their offensive or defensive option. The power was comparable to the casual strike of a common almighty being!

This was a representation of the Dao Arena. And right now, Qin Yu was living in the Dao Arena.

The speedcars stopped near the grand plaza. Dao Arena cultivators quickly stepped out of their cars and respectfully opened the door. Countless cultivators widened their eyes. They finally saw a black-robed youth step out from the speedcar. Their eyes filled with shock as they subconsciously stared; so this is what Qin Yu looked like all along.

This could be considered the first time that Qin Yu revealed his true appearance publicly in Four Seasons City.

Many men bitterly smiled. Hey, you are already so fierce but you're even young, handsome, and heroic. How are we supposed to live?

Fortunately, you might suffer some bad luck today. This sort of monstrous heaven-defying genius was born just to demolish the confidence of others. It was best if the heavens took him back as soon as possible!

The eyes of numerous female cultivators brightened. Although the master of the Dao Arena was always mysterious, he had lived in the Land of Divinity and Demons long enough that there were many widely spread and interesting sayings attributed to him.

For instance: Women, whether or not they valued wisdom, cultivation, intelligence, or personality, ultimately they were all members of the Looks Association.

This saying now made sense.

Many female cultivators had righteously supported Grand Authority Chu before this, but now they were actually beginning to hesitate.

Qin Yu looked so handsome, cool, and dashing; he should be extremely fierce, right? But today, Grand Authority Chu had come here with ill intent. If Qin Yu lost, wouldn't he suffer afterwards? Many wide and sparkling eyes began to shimmer with tears and worry.

Many great figures of Four Seasons City who had brought their daughters here to open their eyes suddenly started to bitterly smile. They turned and hurriedly began to give warnings in low hushed tones. Their tone might be mild, they might give long-winded explanations, or they could even be direct and to the point, but all of them said the same thing except for a few minor differences: you can only look at Qin Yu from afar and can't approach him. Otherwise, as your father I will break your leg!

Ning Liang's eyes brightened. It had been a long time since she last saw Qin Yu. Her heartbeat couldn't help but accelerate. She glanced at the crazed women all around her and snorted. Just what were they looking at? If they kept looking she would stab their eyes out! But as soon as these angry thoughts appeared in her mind she was startled out of them. A blush appeared on her face; was this jealousy?

But she was still worried even as she suppressed all of these emotions. She looked at Qin Yu standing in front of the crowd. She understood that if things happened the way that her grandfather said they would, that would be the best possible result for her. But, she didn't want to see Qin Yu lose. Such an outstanding, proud, and heroic young man should be forever glorious; how could he suffer in the shadow of defeat? Qin Yu, you can do it! You can definitely win!

Standing near the speedcar, Qin Yu seemed to sense something. He looked up and met Ning Liang's gaze. The corners of his lips lifted in a smile and he waved his hand in greetings.

"Kyahh!"

"Qin Yu waved at me!"

"What a handsome smile!"

"I'm falling for him!"

The screams filling the air thrust straight into the eardrums.

Ning Liang smiled and nodded at Qin Yu. She swept her gaze over the screeching women all around her and a bit of pride rose in her heart. What are you all excited about? The only one in his eyes right now is me!

"Grand Authority Qin, I am extremely happy that you accepted my challenge. When a person's alchemy skills reach our boundary, it's much more difficult to advance any further. As a result, we should compete more often in the hopes that we can glean a vision of our road to advancement!" Chu Taidou had a sincere expression. His eyes were bright and happy. If one didn't understand the true situation, they really might fall for his nonsensical lies.

A movie star level character was truly good at acting!

Qin Yu smiled. "I also feel that Grand Authority Chu is a good person." He gestured his hand in invitation and walked towards the central blue stone platform first. Chu Taidou was left behind in a confused daze. Why had he been called a good person for no reason at all? Even if Qin Yu wasn't angry, he should still be cold and quiet. Could he be so stupid that he didn't sense anything? Or was he confident? If someone could be ranked on the Ancient Perishment Decree, this clearly proved they had ample brainpower, so it could only be the latter.

Chu Taidou chuckled. Qin Yu was indeed a high-spirited young man, his fearlessness and daring were enviable. But, he would soon discover that reality was always far more brutal than he could ever imagine. He touched a ring on his finger. Feeling the cool sensation, he calmed down a little.

If he was 80% confident in this 'spar' beforehand, then he was now completely confident in himself. The Immortal Sect was worthy of being called the most powerful influence with the deepest background. They actually possessed such a supreme alchemy treasure. With it helping him, there was no chance that Qin Yu could win.

And as long as he could win, the Immortal Sect promised him that he could borrow this supreme alchemy treasure for a hundred years. Although it wasn't being given to him, Chu Taidou was more than satisfied with the conditions. To have such a treasure for a hundred years was already a great stroke of fortune. If things went as he expected, his alchemy skills would rise to a whole new level in the next hundred years.

Chu Taidou shook his head and dismissed these thoughts. He seemed to be thinking too far into the future. Right now, dealing with the present was the most important thing he needed to worry about. First, he needed to obtain victory in today's 'spar' and thrust Qin Yu into an abyss that was beyond redemption. Only such a perfect stepping stone could allow him to soar into the heavens!

Chapter 453 – That Surname Qin Hasn't Even Started Refining A Pill

The Zhao Empire was within the Demonic Path's domain of influence, so they also gained many of the Demonic Path's simple and direct attributes. There weren't many curves or roundabouts in how they handled things. Thus, once today's 'spar' began, both sides went directly to the main topic.

"Everyone, please be quiet!" A middle-aged man in blue robes stepped out onto the blue stone platform. Even in this tense and thrilling situation, a gentle smile still hung on his face, making everyone feel subconsciously warm. This was the Four Seasons City Lord's steward who had appeared outside the Dao Arena that one night – Sun San.

"Today, Chu Taidou has challenged Qin Yu in an alchemy competition. Today, we have invited three esteemed hosts to serve as witnesses for this event. The first is the Four Seasons City Lord, Lord Mei Ruliu." Sun San respectfully bowed.

If one looked at the name Mei Ruliu alone, one would think they were a beautiful young woman. But, the truth was that this person was a sickly and sallow-faced middle-aged man with a weak and feeble aura. Perhaps because he was tortured by pain, numerous black spots covered his face. While he wasn't to the point where he scared anyone that looked at him, his appearance still completely destroyed this name that should have been full of beauty and style.

“I have been troubled by illness recently. I just left seclusion the other day, so if little friend Qin Yu feels that I have neglected you in any way, I ask for you not to be offended.” Mei Ruliu smiled. He coughed several times as he spoke, appearing extremely fragile. However, if anyone really believed that he was weak and suffering as much as he appeared to be, they would really be choosing their own death.

The position of City Lord wasn't a status that a sick and feeble individual could ever hope to ascend to. This Mei Ruliu absolutely wasn't as harmless as he seemed.

Qin Yu cupped his hands together. “City Lord, there is no need to speak so seriously. I cannot hope to accept your words.”

Mei Ruliu laughed. “I'm glad you don't mind. We should talk more in the future.” He turned towards Chu Taidou. “Grand Authority Chu once helped me refine a pill. His alchemy skills can be called mystical. Today, I hope that you can both wholeheartedly compete in this challenge and broaden my horizons.” As he finished speaking he turned and took a seat. There was another fit of coughing as he did, and his face flushed red.

Sun San's manners were incomparably respectful. Once Mei Ruliu sat down, he stood up straight and said, “Second, we have the steward of the Dao Arena's Four Seasons City Branch Division, Lord Kang Mingqiao.”

Kang Mingqiao smiled and walked forward. “Little friend is the honored guest of my Dao Arena, and as for Grand Authority Chu, I have some friendship with him. I hope that when you two compete against each other today, you will consider your safety first and not injure each other.”

These words seemed directed at someone.

Qin Yu looked at Kang Mingqiao as he sat down. A light flashed in his eyes. It seemed that today's 'spar' wouldn't be as simple as he thought.

“The third witness is the Honorary Director of the Zhao Empire's Alchemy Association, Grand Authority Tao Yuan.” As Sun San's voice fell, numerous people within the grand plaza cried out in alarm.

“The Pill Association's Honorary Director. That is almost the highest personal honor that an alchemist can obtain. Every chosen candidate stands on the pinnacle of alchemy!” A cultivator shouted out in excitement. “I never expected that this lord director would appear today. If I can hear him give some comments, that would be a tremendous harvest!”

After hearing this, numerous cultivators started to stir restlessly with excitement. The competition hadn't even begun but the atmosphere within the grand plaza had reached a boiling point.

Tao Yuan had a faint expression. His cheeks were thin and long and his wrinkles seemed chiseled in. He emanated a cold and severe aura. Of course, this could also be interpreted as haughty and indifferent.

Experts of such great skill mostly had cold personalities. Only like this could they display how they were different from all others...but if he kept up this act for the entire time, wouldn't he eventually become tired?

For some unknown reason, when Qin Yu first glanced at this Honorary Director, he felt he was particularly cold. Then after that, he discovered that this Honorary Director didn't seem to have any favorable impression towards him.

"My name is Tao Yuan. I was invited here by the Alchemy Association member Chu Taidou to stand here as witness to today's competition. If your preparations are complete, you may begin." He mentioned Chu Taidou but didn't even glance at Qin Yu. This in itself was the greatest form of neglect.

Kang Mingqiao furrowed his eyebrow but a helpless look flashed in his eyes. To his side, Mei Ruliu kept his head hung down, an exhausted expression on his face.

Chu Taidou cupped his hands together and bowed. "I've troubled Grandmaster Tao Yuan. Then, my preparations are complete."

Qin Yu lightly said, "I am also prepared."

Tao Yuan directly stated, "Today's competition is divided into three rounds. The first round is refining pills. As alchemists, in the end, our alchemy skills are our most vital asset. But since you both have such extraordinary alchemy skills, it is impossible to use common pills as a test. Thus, in the first round, you must refine an eighth-grade pill within 12 hours. The result will be determined by the quality of the pill.

"The second round will test your soul cultivation. For alchemists refining pills, there are extremely high requirements for one's divine sense. And the stronger the soul, the stronger one's divine sense. For the second round, you will enter the Mirage Bead with your divine sense and search for spirit medicines. Those that obtain the most spirit medicines will win. Allow me to remind you; the Mirage Bead has an extremely severe requirement towards one's divine sense. If you don't immediately admit defeat upon weakening, there will potentially be great damage caused to your soul.

"The third round will be to treat a patient's illness. For alchemists, refining pills isn't just for cultivation. Healing illnesses, saving others from pain and suffering, that is also the responsibility of an alchemist. I have found a patient that is in critical condition who cannot be treated using normal methods. Once someone finds the means to cure their illness and this method is confirmed, that person will be considered the winner."

Tao Yuan swept his eyes around. "This method of competition is considered the most common amongst high level alchemists of my Alchemy Association and the best way to conduct a comprehensive examination. Chu Taidou already understands this and has indicated he has no opinion about it. Then, Qin Yu, do you agree? If you have any objections you can raise them now. Otherwise, once we begin then the rules cannot be changed."

Qin Yu smiled. "I agree." He indeed had no opinion, because in his opinion, he was doomed to beat up Chi Taidou in this competition. If so, why did he care about what methods he used to beat others? In any case, the more he spoke the more time he wasted. Every day that he hadn't completed the master recognition process for the Soul Summoning Bell was another day where he couldn't relax.

Tao Yuan finally looked straight at Qin Yu, as if surprised that he agreed so easily. "Very good. Since neither party has any objections, I will announce the beginning of the first round." He turned around, "City Lord Mei Ruliu, I require your assistance."

Mei Ruliu looked up. He smiled and nodded, "Alright." With a flick of his sleeves, two stone buildings rose up from the blue platform. They looked exactly the same. "Grand Authority Chu, little friend Qin Yu, these two stone buildings are connected to the city's array formation and can isolate perception outside. No one will be able to disturb you, so you can refine pills in peace. Of course, if you still don't feel assured you can arrange your own array formations. As long as it doesn't interfere with the pill refining process, everything is permitted."

Chu Taidou cupped his hands together. "I feel nothing but trust towards the City Lord!" He stepped forwards. "Fellow daoist Qin Yu, I will go in first. We will see each other later."

Calm and relaxed, he overflowed with confidence.

Many cultivators in the grand plaza widened their eyes, feeling even more confidence in Grand Authority Chu. In particular, as they thought about how the shadow of the Immortal Sect likely hid behind Grand Authority Chu, their confidence in him only increased.

Qin Yu laughed inwardly. When it came to playing around with the minds of others, this Grand Authority Chu really considered himself a master. Did he want to use this method to subconsciously put pressure on him? How ridiculous!

Shua –

Qin Yu's figure flickered and he flew towards the other stone building. With a flick of his sleeves, the door opened and he stepped inside.

Ning Liang had an intense look on her face. She clenched her fists together. "Qin Yu, you will definitely win!"

The two stone buildings closed one after another, shutting out everyone's line of sight. But the observing cultivators didn't feel bored. This was because Four Seasons City's great array formation could sense the changes of aura within the stone buildings. Although it was impossible to clearly find out what was happening inside, one could understand the general situation and whether or not the pill refining process proceeded smoothly.

Suddenly, in the skies above Chi Taidou, a mass of crimson light appeared. Although this was only a phantom, as everyone saw it they felt their mouths go dry.

"Grand Authority Chu has lit the furnace fire!"

"This aura...just from looking at it, it makes me feel as if I'm being burnt to ashes. This furnace fire must be incredibly uncommon!"

"I heard that in the past, Grand Authority Chu once refined a variation flame of the heavens and earth into his body. It is almost like divine assistance in refining pills. This must be that flame."

An hour later, a trace of green appeared in that red furnace flame. Although it was extremely dim inside that mass of red light, it actually gave off a calm and stable feeling. This was a sign that the aura of the pill had appeared, indicating that Chi Taidou had completed the approximate outline of the pill.

And once this outline appeared, it meant he had overcome the great hurdle in refining the pill. After this, he would only need to fill in the medicinal efficacy to refine the pill.

In other words, Chu Taidou had passed the most difficult part in refining the pill.

Countless cultivators revealed looks of praise. While everyone knew that Grand Authority Chu had unfathomably deep alchemy skills, they still felt frightened by what they saw. Was he going to refine an eighth-grade pill in a single try? It had to be known that this was the eighth-grade. It was regarded as the king of pills, the strongest, supreme rank!

Within the Land of Divinity and Demons, those that could refine seventh-grade pill could be called a Grand Authority. As for those that could refine eighth-grade pills...they were Grand Authorities amongst Grand Authorities. Even in the vast and boundless Land of Divinity and Demons, this was an extremely rare sight.

Tao Yuan was one of these people. At this moment he revealed a look of surprise that soon shifted to satisfaction. Chu Taidou really was a talented alchemist. With such a display of strength, there was no need to worry about the result of this competition anymore. This was also good. It meant he only needed to judge the competition impartially and wouldn't need to go against his own conscience.

Mei Ruliu's eyes flashed and he immediately sighed. "Grand Authority Chu is truly deep. I feel nothing but admiration!"

Kang Mingqiao revealed a shocked look. His eyes immediately clouded over. Chu Taidou might have the strength to refine an eighth-grade pill, but there was no way he could do this so easily!

There must be a hidden factor!

But since there was no warning from Four Seasons City's great array formation, it meant that this method was permitted...Qin Yu, things were going to be troublesome now.

Ning Rufeng sighed. "The Immortal Sect is really dreadful. They can actually have Chu Taidou display a level of alchemy skill that far outstrips his original level. Qin Yu will be defeated!"

Ning Liang's heart shrank and worry flowed in her eyes. Qin Yu...are you really going to lose? This might be good news for me, but why don't I feel happy at all?

But you don't need to worry. Even if you lose here today, the Ning Family will help you. Once you enter the Demonic Path's small world, even the Immortal Sect cannot harm you anymore.

In the skies above Chu Taidou's stone building, the green light within the red grew increasingly thick, giving off a lively and nimble feeling. Two hours had passed, but not a single sound came from Qin Yu's stone building. The furnace hadn't even ignited...it was like he had already given up!

Time continued to pass. Chu Taidou's pill refinement process continued smoothly like passing clouds and flowing water, without any hiccups at all. By the sixth hour, the green light within the crimson was so rich that it seemed it would flow out.

This proved that Chu Taidou's pill was nearing completion.

And as expected, once another hour passed, the aura phantom above the stone building suddenly trembled and vanished from sight.

Countless people stared with wide eyes. They watched as the door to the stone building was pushed open from inside and Chu Taidou walked out, calmly holding a jade bottle in his hand. Besides a slightly tired expression, there was almost no change to him.

Under the gaze of countless people, he faintly smiled and said, "I was lucky and didn't fail. I have refined an eighth-grade pill."

The light voice, supported by a powerful cultivation, spread throughout the entire grand plaza. What followed afterwards was the sound of many people sucking in a breath of cold air.

Although everyone had already guessed this, once they actually confirmed it, they felt their hearts skip a beat. In a single attempt, Chu Taidou had successfully refined an eighth-grade pill. Moreover, the entire process proceeded smoothly and easily. This in itself was enough to prove how formidable his alchemy skills were.

"Great!" Tao Yuan shouted out loud, a wide smile on his face. "Chu Taidou, I never thought that your alchemy skills would rise to today's heights. My Zhao Empire's Pill Association has gained another pillar that can support the heavens. Once this competition is over, I will personally recommend you to be an Honorary Director. This is a status that you deserve."

Chu Taidou smiled and cupped his hands together. "Thank you, Grandmaster Tao Yuan." He wasn't surprised by this result. Although he was happy, he soon composed himself. He turned towards the other stone building, a look of astonishment on his face. "Has Grandmaster Qin Yu not yet started refining his pill?"

Tao Yuan had a cold expression. "Perhaps from the very start he never even tried to refine a pill."

The meaning behind his words was obvious. Everyone's thoughts raced and immediately revealed a trace of disdain.

This surname Qin must have thought that Grand Authority Chu also couldn't refine an eighth-grade pill. This was why he easily agreed to begin with. He probably thought that he would just wait out the time and then both sides would end in a tie. Hum hum! How laughable! If he knew that Grand Authority Chu had only spent six hours to refine an eighth-grade pill, his eyes would probably blow up from widening too much!

A good play would be coming.

Chapter 454 – Where Is Your Pill

Chu Taidou revealed a hesitant look. "Maybe Grand Authority Qin is planning to complete all of his preparations before he refines the pill in one swift attempt."

Tao Yuan sneered. "You and I both know that refining an eighth-grade pill in seven hours is the fastest speed possible. Now, only five hours are left. Even if Qin Yu tried right now he wouldn't have enough time."

"This..."

"Chu Taidou, not everyone is as broadminded and generous as you are. Don't try and speak on his behalf anymore. Bring up the pill you refined and as long as it meets the requirements for an eighth-

grade pill, you will be considered the winner of the first round. There's no need to waste any more time here."

Kang Mingqiao suddenly said, "Since we have set forth a deadline of 12 hours, wouldn't it be bad to announce the final result ahead of time?"

Tao Yuan had a cold and unaffected expression. "Arena Steward Kang may have a formidable cultivation, but when it comes to alchemy, I am more experienced."

Kang Mingqiao's expression didn't change. "I only think that words spoken should be followed. It's never a good thing to break your own word."

Tao Yuan didn't have a mediocre status. As an Honorary Director of the Alchemy Association, he had enough energy to stand tall. But, Kang Mingqiao was the steward of a Dao Arena Branch Faction, thus there was no need for him to care about any hatred he might form with Tao Yuan.

Tension began to sizzle in the air.

Mei Ruliu coughed. He smiled and said, "Grand Authority Tao Yuan may wish to do things in a simple and resolute way, but what Arena Steward Kang says is not without reason. Since there are less than five hours left, we should wait it out."

Chu Taidou was disappointed. Although he knew he would inevitably win, the sooner he crossed this hurdle the sooner he would feel at peace. He had expected Kang Mingqiao to speak up on Qin Yu's behalf, but just what was Mei Ruliu thinking? His thoughts raced and he smiled and cupped his hands together. "Grandmaster Tao Yuan, please be patient. Since the time limit hasn't arrived yet, we should wait."

Tao Yuan coldly snorted and sat back in his seat.

Time slowly passed. There was not a single stir from the stone building Qin Yu was in right now. Soon, only two hours remained.

Tao Yuan's voice was chilly, "I said this is only a waste of time. What about now?"

The anticipation in Kang Mingqiao's face faded a little. He sighed and shook his head, not responding to this taunt.

Qin Yu, it looks like I was a bit too confident in you!

Chu Taidou smiled. "Grandmaster Tao Yuan, there is no need to be angry. There are only two hours left, so try to endure it and wait a bit longer."

No one could refine an eighth-grade pill in two hours. It could be said that he had already locked the victory in ahead of time.

He had won the first round and the second would be even safer. Chu Taidou seemed as if he already saw a vision of Qin Yu being defeated.

So what if he was ranked on the Ancient Perishment Decree? Qin Yu was destined to become the stepping stone that would launch him into the highest heavens!

In Four Seasons City's grand plaza, out all of the watching cultivators, some revealed mocking expressions and others revealed anticipatory expressions. They wanted to see Qin Yu's face after he came out.

"Humph! The Ancient Perishment Decree's ninth-ranked is just a dog fart! What a disgrace!"

"That's right. I originally admired Qin Yu, but now it seems that I was blind."

"After today, Qin Yu's reputation will sweep the floor. I even feel sorry for Arena Steward Kang who spoke up for him. Just as he spoke he must have been feeling regret!"

"Let's see just how he ends things today!"

Ning Rufeng frowned a little. Qin Yu's behaviors today had caused him to lose some of the admiration he felt towards him. Cultivators could be inferior to others. But to play it out like this...it was just a bit too disdainful.

A Ning Family cultivator heard the conversations happening all around him and revealed an awkward expression. Although the Ning Family had received a great graciousness from Qin Yu and were also close to him, his actions today were indeed disgraceful.

Ning Liang bit her lips. She didn't believe Qin Yu would do something like this...but, the facts were placed in front of her. Her thoughts raced like rushing tides and her eyes were blank. This Qin Yu was far different from the one in her heart.

The 12 hours had almost passed. The loud and boisterous grand plaza had become strangely silent. Countless taunting eyes gathered at the center, waiting for the splendid show that was about to occur.

Quietly, the stone building's door opened from the inside and a black-robed Qin Yu walked out, his expression calm and indifferent.

Chu Taidou shook his head' his expression was of bitter heartache. "Qin Yu, if you admitted that you couldn't refine an eighth-grade pill, then we could have changed the rules of the competition beforehand. Why do you need to act in such a pitiful manner? I originally thought you were a peerless alchemy genius, but all I feel in my heart now is disappointment. How could you be so horrible!"

Qin Yu furrowed his eyebrows. "What does Grand Authority Chu mean by that?"

Chu Taidou sighed. He put on an expression as if he didn't want to argue with Qin Yu anymore.

In the grand plaza, numerous boos erupted. Countless cultivators started to shout out loud, their voices booming.

Tao Yuan's expression was icy cold. His eyes revealed loathing. "Qin Yu, did you really think that by making us wait, I wouldn't see through your cheap trick? Chu Taidou used a total of seven hours to successfully refine an eighth-grade pill. Where is your pill? If you don't have one, then can you tell us people who have been waiting here bored just what you were doing in that stone building all this time?"

After a moment, his voice turned even colder. "Looking at your expression, you aren't tired at all and you're full of spirit. Don't tell me that you were sleeping inside to recuperate."

With these words, countless taunting cultivators all cried out together. They couldn't help but feel anger in their hearts. They had all been eagerly waiting while Qin Yu had been sleeping? What a bastard!

"You're a disgrace!"

"You must be blind!"

"How do you still have the face to stand in public!"

The verbal taunts rushed in like a tide.

Chu Taidou cupped his hands together. "The pill I refined is right here. Please judge it so we can get past this farce as soon as possible." He had a helpless expression accompanied with a bit of disappointment. The way he looked at Qin Yu caused even more people to shout out loud.

At this moment, Chu Taidou vividly displayed the image of an alchemy grandmaster who was filled with disappointment and helplessness. He formed a sharp contrast with Qin Yu.

"Surname Qin, hurry and apologize to Grand Authority Chu!"

"That's right, hurry and apologize!"

"You must take responsibility for your actions!"

It was unknown who shouted this first, but the crowd was roused to action. They all began to shout out threats.

Kang Mingqiao furrowed his eyebrows. But after a moment, he didn't move. Qin Yu's actions in the first round had gone over the line. Even if he wanted to help him, he couldn't think of an excuse.

Tao Yuan sneered and received the refined pill from Chu Taidou's hand. He watched as Qin Yu would become the only clown standing on this high platform.

Chu Taidou shook his head. "It's fine. Let's just hurry and finish this competition...hah, I don't have much hope for the following rounds."

"That's also fine. I don't want to face this person for much longer anyways." Tao Yuan opened the jade bottle. After glancing at it, he revealed a look of acclaim. "Eighth-grade Heart Clarity Pill. A cultivator can take this pill to purify their soul and light up their heart to illuminate the shadows around their cultivation. It is extremely helpful in assisting someone to perceive the world's rules.

"The pill is round and clear, and the color and luster are pure without any impurities. The surface shimmers with light. This pill can be called excellent. In addition, the fragrance is gentle and peaceful. Just taking a whiff refreshes the spirit. The medicinal efficacy is perfect. In summary, I believe that this pill that Chu Taidou refined can be rated at the peak of every category. If it took another step further and rule phantoms appeared within the pill's light, it could become a saint rank pill."

Tao Yuan nodded repeatedly, revealing a rare smile. "Good, very good. To refine a peak common eighth-grade pill in seven hours is amazing. If you were given more time and had more careful preparations, you might even be able to refine a saint rank pill. Chu Taidou, your alchemy skills are far stronger than I imagined. In the future you can be considered a contemporary of the same level."

Chu Taidou cupped his hands together. "Grandmaster Tao Yuan overpraises me. I wouldn't dare."

Tao Yuan smiled. "I am merely speaking facts. If you have such strength you can naturally obtain my approval. However, there are those who could cry and beg but I still wouldn't spare them a glance!" He passed the jade bottle to the Four Seasons City Lord and turned around, coldly saying, "Now, Qin Yu, where is your pill?"

Kang Mingqiao sighed. Qin Yu recklessly refining seventh-grade pills had brought forth the retaliation of the Alchemy Association. He feared this Honorary Director likely wanted to kick Qin Yu while he was done. But, at most this was only a loss of face. He wasn't worried if Qin Yu disgraced himself. What truly left him restless was what the Immortal Sect had planned after this.

Once Chu Taidou won, the Immortal Sect wouldn't let go of such a good opportunity. Qin Yu was in for a great deal of trouble today. Should he interfere? Should he not? If he did, what could he do? Hah, the young were just too prideful! If Qin Yu had listened to his advice earlier and refused this challenge, he wouldn't have been placed in this state.

Ning Liang gripped her fists, her body shaking. The radiant image of Qin Yu in her mind was suddenly covered with a dark shadow. She looked towards her grandfather, worried. Ning Rufeng shook his head. Today, Qin Yu only had himself to blame.

At this moment, the entire audience was focused on Qin Yu.

Countless eyes were filled with dark and ill intentions!

Perhaps they wouldn't admit it, but there was always a dark side in the hearts of humans. For instance, watching the originally dazzling Qin Yu with his limitless potential fall to the ground and humiliate himself was something many people were happy to see.

But what disappointed them was that the scared and pallid Qin Yu in their imaginations didn't appear. He remained as calm as before. He welcomed the countless mocking gazes of the audience and remained silent like a steady rock in the sea, not disturbed at all.

His calm demeanor caused many people to whisper in their hearts and sneer repeatedly.

No one doubted the strength of Four Seasons City's great array formation. Since it didn't sense any change in the aura within the stone building, that was sufficient proof that they were right. What was the point of being calm? The truth would eventually come out, and the calmer he remained, the more embarrassed he would be!

"Surname Qin, where is your pill?"

"That's right, take it out and open my eyes!"

"Hehe, I also want to see what pill doesn't need to be refined!"

"Take it out! Stop delaying for time! There is nowhere for you to hide today!"

The corners of Chu Taidou's lips curved in a small smile. The people he arranged to be here were working the audience perfectly. The louder and noisier it was the better. The best situation would be for

Qin Yu to become enraged from shame and embarrassment. If that happened, Chu Taidou's chances of winning the second round would be even higher.

But for Qin Yu to maintain his composure in such a situation, his acting skills weren't bad. Unfortunately, no matter how heaven-defying his acting was, all it took was a single finger to pierce through the bubble of his illusion.

Tao Yuan asked a second time, "Qin Yu, where is your pill?"

Qin Yu furrowed his eyebrows, a bit of impatience in his eyes. As this subtle expression fell into Tao Yuan's eyes, he sneered inwardly. Brat, you still dare to be impatient right now? Today, if I don't blow away all of your self-esteem, then all of my years spent living would be a waste!

Just as he was about to speak, he was coldly interrupted by Qin Yu. "Grandmaster Tao Yuan, I once met someone who had eyes but couldn't see. I thought that kind of person was a rare creature of this world, but I never expected I would encounter another one today. I am curious, how did someone like you obtain your status as an Honorary Director of the Alchemy Association?" He lifted his hand to reveal a jade bottle. "Since I left the stone building, I've been holding this the entire time. Grandmaster Tao Yuan, didn't you see?"

Chapter 455 – Eighth-Grade Saint Rank

Tao Yuan's complexion turned pale and flames of anger blazed in his chest. This person had actually dared to call him someone with eyes but who couldn't see – that was the same as slapping him in front of everyone! This jade bottle was merely a prop to hide the truth but he brought it up to ridicule him; this brat deserved to die!

"Good! Very good! Qin Yu, instead of relying on your sharp tongue, go and open that jade bottle! You must give me an explanation about all of this, otherwise I will never let it go!" Tao Yuan laughed from anger.

Chu Taidou said, "Qin Yu, Grandmaster Tao Yuan isn't someone you can shame so easily. If you dare to destroy the jade bottle in your hands, that would be the same as acknowledging that you deliberately humiliated the grandmaster!"

Qin Yu's lips curled up in a taunting smirk. "It's like you're living in your own fantasies. Why would I destroy this jade bottle? If you want to look then take a look."

He opened the jade bottle and a pill rolled out onto his palm. The sky had already turned dark, but the illuminating array formations in the grand plaza lit up the area so that everything could be seen clearly. Beneath the light, a white pill lay peacefully on Qin Yu's palm. It had an ordinary sheen and could even be called dark, but at this time, as this pill rolled around Qin Yu's finger, light began to shine on its surface. Countless rule phantoms appeared in this light, decomposing, combining, and disappearing in an infinite number of variations.

"Rule phantoms! These are rule phantoms!" A cultivator who had been watching the match lost his composure and cried out in shock. "That is an eighth-grade saint rank pill!"

A single stone stirred up a thousand waves. Countless cultivators widened their eyes, their faces full of disbelief.

Wasn't it said that Qin Yu hadn't refined a pill at all and that he was hoping Chu Taidou would also fail so that they could end up in a tie? How come an eighth-grade pill suddenly leapt out of nowhere? And a saint rank one at that? Hey, who was the scriptwriter of this episode? Come out so I can beat you up!

"That's impossible!" Tao Yuan roared in rage. "Qin Yu, you never refined a pill to begin with! You can give up on taking out an eighth-grade pill just to trick me!"

He stepped forward and reached out his hand. "Give me the pill. I want to inspect it myself. There is no camouflage that can fool my eyes!"

Qin Yu sneered. "If I allow Grandmaster Tao Yuan to examine this pill, I fear you would become angry out of shame and swallow it, and then pretend that you had some mental breakdown." This person was full of hostility towards him; he naturally wouldn't give him any face. He turned and said, "Arena Steward Kang, my pill is right here. I ask you to examine it."

Kang Mingqiao stood up and said in a low voice, "Very well." He picked up the pill and his eyes brightened. Although he wasn't skilled in alchemy, as the steward of a Dao Arena, his eyesight wasn't poor. He could immediately see that this pill was recently refined.

He laughed at himself for all the strange thoughts he had just now, even feeling a bit embarrassed at the fact. He took a deep breath and brightly smiled, "Yes, as the Dao Arena Steward, I announce that there is no problem with this pill that Qin Yu refined." He swept his eyes around. "Of course, I think there are some people that won't believe this. So, I ask the City Lord to confirm this once more."

Mei Ruliu coughed several times and waved his hand. "They say that those who are ill for a long time become doctors. I have taken so many spirit pills in these past years that they could be piled up into a mountain, so I believe I have some skill in judging pills. This pill that little friend Qin Yu produced was refined just recently. There is no mistake about this."

These words were the same as a conclusive judgment. Tao Yuan's complexion sank and Chu Taidou's face stiffened.

Mei Ruliu had no reason to lie for Qin Yu. In other words, he had really refined an eighth-grade saint rank pill!

The situation was instantly revealed. However much these two had ridiculed Qin Yu just now, that was how red their faces were. In particular Tao Yuan was so angry that his vision began to flash black.

Qin Yu said that he had eyes but couldn't see, and the reality proved that his words had been correct. At this time, as countless eyes gathered on him, their shocked expressions made his face constantly twitch.

Right now, Grandmaster Tao Yuan really wanted to dig a hole and bury himself in it.

"This...I know that Qin Yu is ranked on the Ancient Perishment Decree so there must be something special about him. How could he do something so despicable like that? Hum hum! It proves that my eyesight was right all this time!"

"Hey, weren't you the one who just said that Qin Yu was trying to fish for fame, and his reputation was going to sweep the floor and he wasn't worthy of sympathy or something like that?"

"Cough cough, uh, hum, the moon is so beautiful right now."

“It’s cloudy right now...”

Bang –

There was a sudden punch as the man became angry out of shame. “You bastard, are you trying to falsely accuse me of something? Let me tell you, I have always been Qin Yu’s greatest fan and this has never changed!”

Ning Rufeng had an awkward expression. He coughed and said, “Qin Yu is indeed worthy of being a peerless proud son of heaven. He can even refine an eighth-grade saint rank Dao Inquiring Pill. Even if he wasn’t ranked on the Ancient Perishment Decree, this accomplishment alone would be enough for him to look down upon the world with disdain!” He turned around, his expression earnest, “You little girl, you must grab tightly onto this chance! Don’t let him go! The future of my Ning Family might lie in him!”

Ning Yuntao laughed out loud. “Great, I knew that Qin Yu would win all this time. Such a prideful person would never do something so despicable!”

All of the Ning Family cultivators around him started to smile and laugh.

Ning Liang remained silent. Although she was happy in her heart, she could barely keep up a smile. It wasn’t because she had lost her chance to approach Qin Yu because he had won, but because she discovered that she really suspected Qin Yu would lose. She had suspected that he had done something dishonorable.

Didn’t this mean that she really didn’t regard Qin Yu as the man she had chosen? Otherwise, why did she begin to suspect him before the result had even been announced?

Qin Yu had been questioned, isolated, and forced into a corner with so many taunts directed his way. But as for her, she had remained silent the entire time instead of standing by his side and withstanding everything with him.

This line of contemplative thinking caused her face to burn red as guilt and shame filled her heart. As she looked at the black-robed youth standing calmly on the blue stone platform, she thought that she really didn’t have the qualifications to stand by his side and share honor and glory together.

And all of this was because of herself. Ning Liang was silent as bitterness gradually rose in her eyes. She knew that Qin Yu had likely seen her silence today. Perhaps...this meant that it was time for her to wake up from her dream.

The Four Seasons City Lord passed the Dao Inquiring Pill to Tao Yuan, who was barely managing to keep himself composed even as his face was as black as iron. “Grandmaster, please examine this pill. If there is no problem, then announce the result.”

Tao Yuan’s tone of voice was stiff and halting. “No need. I still have my eyesight and I can see that there is no problem with Qin Yu’s pill. But, I still have my doubts.” He fiercely looked up, his eyes as sharp as sabers. “Qin Yu, tell me why Four Seasons City’s great array formation didn’t sense your pill refining process. Could it be that you used some forbidden method?”

Mei Ruliu’s eyes flashed. He smiled and said, “I am also curious about this matter. If possible, can little friend Qin Yu give a small explanation?” As the person who maintained the array formation, he was well

aware of how powerful the protective array was. Even almighty beings wouldn't dare to easily confront the array formation's might.

But Qin Yu was able to completely shield out the array formation's perception; this was simply unbelievable!

Chu Taidou's expression brightened. "That's right, I also hope that Grand Authority Qin Yu can dispel my doubts so that I am fully convinced of my loss."

Qin Yu lightly said, "This subject involves my personal matters, so while it is regretful, I cannot explain further. However, since the great array formation didn't give off any warning, it means that everything proceeded normally. I have won the first round." He glanced at Chu Taidou, "As for whether or not Grand Authority Chu is sincerely convinced or not, sorry, but I simply don't care at all."

"You..." Chu Taidou nearly spat out a mouthful of blood. The anger he felt was one aspect, but another more important one was the panic he began to feel.

An eighth-grade saint rank pill. Even with the supreme alchemy treasure from the Immortal Sect helping him, he still couldn't refine that. But, Qin Yu could. Did this mean that Qi Yu's alchemy strength was far above his own?

He had lost the first round which he believed he had a 90% chance of winning. If another similar incident occurred in the second round, then this 'competition' would utterly collapse. The Immortal Sect would not let him off.

"Don't panic! My soul is powerful and I also have the Immortal Sect's supreme alchemy treasure. It can increase the power of my divine sense, so how can I possibly lose to Qin Yu? Once I win the second round, I will still be the one laughing in the end!" Chu Taidou thought to himself, trying to boost his own mindset. He slowly calmed down and his panic faded away.

Tao Yuan had clearly positioned himself to be standing behind him. If so, then for the third round of treating an illness, Tao Yuan would definitely have ensured that he could win no matter what.

Thinking of this, Chu Taidou became determined. The most important thing right now was to win the second round!

After Sun San confirmed the result, he stepped onto the blue stone platform once more. "In today's competition, the first round is Qin Yu's victory."

The grand plaza was silent. Many people still hadn't recovered from their daze. No one had favored Qin Yu, but he actually won? And it was a result so overwhelming that there was no need to argue about it. Did this mean his alchemy skills were far, far higher than Chu Taidou's?

Sun San continued to say, "For the second round of the competition, both sides will enter the Mirage Bead with their divine sense and seek out spirit medicines within. The person with the highest number in the end will be considered the winner. Both sides may choose to rest for two hours or choose to begin instantly. Please make your decision."

Chu Taidou said, "I want to begin immediately!"

As he said this, many people were left stunned. They instinctively revealed contempt in their eyes. Qin Yu had just emerged from refining a pill, so this was clearly trying to take advantage of him.

Chu Taidou was renowned for being an alchemy grandmaster, but he was actually such a small and miserly person? For many of his admirers, it was like they were seeing him for the first time. The image of their idol loudly collapsed in their hearts.

But Grand Authority Chu's skin was thick and his heart was dark; he didn't care about the expressions of these people. "Of course, if Grand Authority Qin Yu feels that anything is wrong, you may choose to rest for two hours. I have no opinion about that."

Qin Yu lightly said, "The tactic of goading others is very boring and also very useless. If I didn't care, I'm afraid that Grand Authority Chu would be left disappointed...however, I will agree, because today's competition really is tedious. It's best to finish this sooner so you don't waste any more of my time."

To a certain degree, this could be said as returning the words that Chu Taidou said back to him. Chu Taidou's face darkened, but his eyes flashed with a sharp light. Losing face or something like that, he had never considered it a problem to begin with. So what if others looked down on him? In this world, the only thing that mattered was being the last man standing.

One couldn't underestimate these two hours. If Qin Yu wasn't allowed to rest, Chu Taidou's chances of success would be that much higher. After experiencing this eighth-grade saint rank Dao Inquiring Pill, while Chu Taidou was still confident in himself, he didn't dare to belittle Qin Yu anymore.

Tao Yuan flicked his sleeve and a round bead flew atop the blue platform. It hung between the two people. The bead was blue in color with nine holes on its surface. It released a light humming sound.

"This is the Mirage Bead. I announce that the second round of the competition has begun!"

Chapter 456 – Not Just A Dream

The Mirage Bead was produced from a sea snake called the sunflower watersnake. When this snake entered adulthood its body could reach a thousand feet in length. It slumbered in the ice cold waters of the deep sea throughout the year, and only when it needed to step into the next level would it regain consciousness and begin to hunt. The sunflower watersnake could release a mist from its mouth that confused the mind and senses. Even a cultivator with a formidable soul wouldn't be able to luckily escape. They would be lost in the illusion without any awareness or they would be tormented until they exhausted themselves. But in the end, they would eventually become food in the belly of the sunflower watersnake.

The sunflower watersnake's inner core was what allowed it to confuse others and make them fall into illusion. The name Mirage Bead came from the illusory mirages that occasionally appeared over the sea. Every time the sunflower watersnake advanced to the next level, another hole would appear in its inner core and its strength would rise to new heights. The Mirage Bead refined from a nine hole inner core was called a Mirage King Bead; it was called an illusion that no one beneath an almighty being would be able to break.

Chu Taidou sat down cross-legged. He closed his eyes in meditation and his divine sense broke free from his body, rushing directly into the Mirage Bead. Although Grand Authority Chu didn't care about things

like face or honor, that didn't mean he liked to be oppressed and abused. Only by winning the second round could he rid himself of his disadvantage and have all those people who mocked him finally understand that he would be the last one laughing.

Qin Yu calmly took a seat. He looked at the serious Chu Taidou and revealed a look of pity. This person wasn't aware that he had no chance of winning at all. He closed his eyes and his divine sense approached the Mirage Bead. Then, it was pulled in by a strange suction force. What Qin Yu felt next was a warm spring breeze. It was like he was standing beneath a willow tree beside a river in hot summer, feeling the pleasantly comfortable and cool water vapor that rose up.

In this incomparably comfortable feeling, all of a person's exhaustion and weariness would be magnified and released. They would want to close their eyes and have a good night's sleep.

"A divine sense test?" Qin Yu closed his eyes. When he opened them once more, he could see that in front of him was an area covered in the shadow of willow trees. A clear and gentle river quietly flowed below, leaving crisp sounds.

Behind him, hanging between two willow trees was a hammock. There was a clean flower-patterned cloth spread out on the ground nearby. A young woman was squatting on the ground, placing some finely cooked dishes onto it. Her clothes were a little taut against her body, outlining her slender figure.

As if sensing a pair of eyes looking at her from behind, the young woman lifted a hand and cleared the hair away from her eyes. What was revealed was a beautiful face with eyes as gentle as rolling waves. "Husband, are you hungry? The meal is prepared, so come and eat it." This young woman was Ning Ling. Right now she was smiling at him, the image like a painting come to life.

Qin Yu was startled for a moment before he smiled and nodded. He walked over, raising his robes and then sitting near the flower cloth. His eyes swept over the dishes and he praised out loud, "These are all dishes I love to eat."

Ning Ling smiled. "Well you've been working hard studying these days, so you should make sure to keep yourself nourished. I personally cooked this today and even prepared a good wine which you will like. You need to drink a few more cups than usual today." As she spoke she lifted her hand, revealing her pale wrists. She filled a cup of wine for him. The wine was slightly yellow, with a sharp aroma.

Qin Yu's eyes momentarily flashed with a dazed expression. "This is indeed the wine that I like." He drank down the cup, carefully savoring it as it passed down his throat and into his stomach, eventually turning into a warm flow of heat that spread through his body.

"Great wine!" He laughed out loud and pulled Ning Ling over, hugging her. Her cheeks blushed red with a charming anger.

A beautiful woman in his arms, great wine in hand, and delicious food in front of him, this was a free and comfortable life.

There was a servant standing far away, diligently stopping people from walking near by telling them that his master was enjoying a feast with his wife and no one was to disturb them. Occasionally, he turned around and looked at the man and woman sitting on the green grass, and a look of joy would rise in his

eyes. It was a bitter and difficult journey for his family's master and wife to come together, but they had done it.

After drinking a bit too much, Qin Yu was slightly drunk. He leaned on the soft body beside him, smelling her scent and feeling her heartbeat. His eyes closed as he was about to drift off.

Suddenly, a series of chaotic sounds rang out. Qin Yu opened his eyes to see the servant racing over in a flustered panic. He seemed to roll around a few times, heading directly to where Qin Yu was. "Master! Master! Someone went to the mansion and set a fire there! The steward tried to stop them but he was beaten to death!"

They quickly packed everything up and boarded the carriage as they hurried back home. Ning Ling's complexion paled and fear filled her face.

Qin Yu patted her hand. He smiled and said, "Don't worry, you have me."

The mansion had really become a sea of flames. The courtyard, the gardens, the buildings, everything was on fire. Bodies were strewn across the ground, about to be burnt to ashes in the inferno. The red flames seemed stained with blood and a burning heat rolled out, carrying with it a revolting stench that made one want to vomit.

"Husband!" Ning Ling trembled. "It's them, they want to force me back."

The people who started the fire hadn't yet left. Their leader was covered in blood. His thin and sallow face had a respectful smile plastered on it. He bowed and said, "Miss, it's time for you to go home. Please don't make things hard for this servant."

Qin Yu blazed with anger. "How insolent! Everyone below the heavens must follow the law of the land; how can anyone tolerate you setting fires and murdering innocents? I have already sent people to notify the government officials. None of you will be able to escape!"

"Notify the government officials? Oh, I'm so scared." The person wiped the bloodstains from his face, a look of disdain in his eyes. "Miss, why did you choose this trash? Let us leave first today. If you really care about him, you will leave as soon as possible, otherwise you should be well aware of what your family is capable of."

The group swaggered away. In a distant corner, a number of county guards were huddled up in hiding. They looked up at the skies, a completely lost expression on their faces that indicated they had no idea what to do. Only when the first group of people left did they come out shouting. They impatiently called some people over and questioned them, then after stating that they would go and seize the criminals, they turned and left.

The surrounding crowd began to whisper amongst themselves. They all spoke something similar: the Qin Family had offended a noble one, and now they were done for.

That night, Qin Yu lost his extravagant lifestyle. He lived in his carriage for the moment. Ning Ling cried the entire night and he stayed up late comforting her.

The next day when they woke, the servants began to turn in their resignations. They were all people with families to take care of. If they continued to stay in the Qin Family, not only would they die but they would also implicate their relatives.

Soon, the only ones left outside the ruined mansion were Qin Yu and Ning Ling. As they glanced over the still smoldering embers and ashes, sadness rose up from the depths of their hearts.

“Ning Ling, don’t leave me. You are all I have left.”

Ning Ling cried and nodded.

The group that set the fire and murdered servants came back several times. But Ning Ling kept a firm resolve, even threatening to kill herself. They could only helplessly retreat.

The leaves started to turn yellow and fall down. The early autumn wind was like sharp and cold knives, cutting at the cheeks and leaving a stinging pain.

On this day, when Qin Yu rose up from bed, he could hear the restrained coughing of Ning Ling in the courtyard. As he hurried out he could see her forcefully squeezing out a smile. “Husband, don’t worry, I’m alright.”

But Ning Ling wasn’t alright. After coughing for several days, she suddenly had a high fever in the middle of night. She went in and out of consciousness and would vomit out anything she ate. She couldn’t drink a single sip of water.

Qin Yu was panicked. He picked her up and rushed out of the run down and leaking house. He found a well-known doctor. This person was skilled in medicine and in the past they were very familiar with each other, even calling each other brothers.

But today, this doctor he called brother was angered. He kicked Qin Yu out and coldly told him that without money, he wouldn’t help treat anyone.

Pleading with the heavens, Qin Yu could only carry Ning Ling back home. He placed her on worn out but clean bedding. As he watched her face twist with pain in her unconsciousness it was like daggers piercing his heart.

Those people came again.

“Qin Yu, you are just a piece of trash that cannot cultivate. How can you match up to my family’s young miss? Now the miss is severely ill. Let us bring her back to treat her!” The thin and sallow-faced man sneered. He waved his hands and several maids walked forward to carry Ning Ling away.

Qin Yu was stunned. He took several steps forwards but in the end didn’t have the courage to stop them.

Ning Ling suddenly woke up. She pulled out a hairpin from her head and placed it against her own throat. “Husband, they are bringing me away to betroth me to another. If you don’t want me, then I would rather die!”

Qin Yu rushed over and grabbed her, sobbing.

The thin and sallow-faced man stamped his feet with anger but didn't dare to force the issue. He led everyone else away.

The autumn frost deepened. The room gradually turned colder and colder until it was no different from the outside. When one breathed out, their breath condensed into white frost. In this harsh environment and without any materials or money for medicinal treatment, Ning Ling's condition gradually worsened. She rapidly thinned and was unconscious for most of the time. After she used her copper hairpin to create a scar on her face, people from the Ning Family no longer came. It was as if they had acquiesced for her to live out the rest of her days as she pleased.

The first snow came. Qin Yu held onto the thin Ning Ling. He felt it as the last traces of her body heat drifted away and she fell silent.

They had survived autumn but had in the end failed to welcome the spring light. When the first snowfall of winter came, Ning Ling closed her eyes and smiled. Qin Yu could see the unwillingness and longing on her face, as well as release.

There was no greater sorrow than a heart that could never rejoice. Perhaps this phrase could describe Qin Yu at the moment. He hated himself for being a scholar without any strength at all. He hated that he couldn't protect the woman he loved. If time could turn back, he would not let any of this occur. However, it was too late! It was already too late!

His vision flashed dark. Sorrow, rage, unwillingness, all sorts of emotions violently flooded him, causing his consciousness to fall into darkness. After an unknown period of time, he heard a gentle shout from far away. Qin Yu struggled to open his eyes and finally managed to do so.

After a short period of confusion, what entered his face was an extremely beautiful and familiar face. Ning Ling sobbed with joy as she grabbed onto his hand. "Husband, you're awake again!"

Moments later, he heard about what happened from Ning Ling herself. During that spring day when they were outside, he drank too much and fell asleep. As a result he had been infected with a spring cold. His fever had been high and wouldn't recede, and he had fallen unconscious for half a month.

Qin Yu closed his eyes, a little glad that everything he experienced had been a dream. Fortunately, it had all been a dream. Ning Ling was still alive, right in front of him.

But at this time, his body froze. His hand had stroked his arm and he could feel a scar left behind from a scalding burn. This was a mark left behind when Ning Ling had been severely ill. One time, he had been brewing medicine. Because of his tiredness he had accidentally bumped into the stove and this scar was left behind.

Feeling the scar, Qin Yu's heart chilled. Was that not a nightmare? It was real...it was all real...

Then, was what he saw in front of him a chance that came from the heavens? Had they heard his pleas and given him another opportunity?

Yes, this must be it!

Laying back against the warm quilt, Qin Yu revealed a decisive look. He promised that he would protect everything he had so that no one could harm those he loved. He could not allow anything to happen to this woman who would rather stay by his side even if it meant dying from illness.

At this time, a maid came in to report that Doctor Li had arrived.

Ning Ling's eyes brightened. "It's Mister Li. He has come every day to examine your condition. For you to wake up so soon, that's in great part thanks to Mister Li."

Qin Yu was silent for a moment. Then he smiled. "Is that so? Then please ask Mister Li to come in."

Soon, Doctor Li walked into the room, a happy smile on his face as he carried in a medicine kit. He expressed his congratulations and then humbly refused Ning Ling's thanks. Then, he proposed to help Qin Yu diagnose his condition. After a moment he lifted his hand and said, "Big brother Qin is doing well. He has crossed the dangerous stage right now. As long as he takes care of his body he will be able to recover."

Qin Yu smiled. "Then I will have to exhaust brother Li. Once I recover, I must invite you to a drink to express my thanks."

Half a month later, the Qin Family held a banquet and Doctor Li arrived with a black fleecflower root as a gift. He was warmly and personally welcomed by Qin Yu and invited to take a seat. In the Qin Family Mansion, the food and drink were all of a high quality. Moreover, today was a thank you banquet and there were a variety of delicacies and never-ending supplies of wine. Doctor Li soon drank too much.

Qin Yu instructed a maid to bring Doctor Li away to rest. He wouldn't return to his home tonight, but would stay at their mansion instead.

In the deep dark of night, a shrill scream rang out. The maid who was responsible for taking care of Doctor Li ran out into the courtyard, sobbing her eyes out.

The authorities questioned all parties. They finally came to the conclusion that Doctor Li had drunk too much wine and lost his rationality, and then tried to rape the Qin Family's maid. He was sentenced to have his face tattooed and be exiled 3000 miles away.

As the prison cart crossed through the city, Qin Yu sat in a roadside restaurant and watched from a window.

The spiritless and emaciated Doctor Li suddenly seemed to sense something. He looked up to the side. When the gazes of the two met, one person had eyes full of pain and disbelief and the other had eyes filled with cold indifference.

Doctor Li roared out in rage, but he could only cry out strange halting syllables. He couldn't vocalize a complete word at all. This was because while he was in prison, his tongue had been cut out because he had refused to admit guilt.

Ning Ling couldn't bear to watch any longer and her eyes revealed hesitation. Qin Yu turned and hugged her against his chest. He said in a soft voice, "I have my reasons for doing this. This person is not worthy of sympathy."

Holding her warm body, Qin Yu suddenly thought back to that ruined house and her ill and thin appearance. The trace of doubt in his eyes finally disappeared.

Chapter 457 – Four Seasons Samsara of Spring Summer Fall Winter

It was said that while Doctor Li was on his way to exile, he was inflicted with an infection and fell into a dire illness. Before he began to serve his sentence he departed from this world.

When Qin Yu obtained this news, he calmly folded the paper and burnt it to ashes over the oil lamp.

As the paper ashes fell onto the table they were swept away by the wind, as if the final traces of his act were being erased.

Doctor Li had obtained his deserved punishment, but the threat from Ning Ling's family still existed. Qin Yu couldn't allow everything that happened in his 'dream' to occur once again. He had to prepare himself.

He recruited experts to guard his mansion and contributed a massive amount of resources to obtain the protection of a lord in the capital. Qin Yu busied himself for a long time and his cheeks began to turn thin. It was only much later that he finally started to relax a little.

Now, even Ning Ling's family wouldn't easily dare to take action against the Qin Family.

Unconsciously, a year passed. Everything remained peaceful, as if all the nightmares had already faded away.

On this day, the spring weather was just right. He thought about how he had been ignoring his wife lately and ordered his servants to prepare; he was going to take her out on a spring tour.

On the riverbank in spring, the scenery was beautiful and mesmerizing. Qin Yu stood against the coming wind, feeling some satisfaction at having changed his destiny. He smiled. He thought that this time he had to tightly grasp his destiny to prevent the tragedy of his dreams from occurring.

Suddenly, there was a pitiful scream. Qin Yu's heart shrank and he turned around. He saw Ning Ling lying in a pool of her own blood. Her eyes were wide in shock as she looked at the young flower-selling girl in front of her that was staring at her with pure hatred. Slowly, the light faded from her eyes.

Qin Yu didn't know how he ran over. He hugged onto Ning Ling's body that was gradually turning cold, and fear tightly gripped his heart. He had already changed his fate, so why did Ning Ling die again?

The flower-seller girl was struck to the floor by his servants, but she was still happily smiling even as a maddening hatred clouded her eyes. "Qin Yu! When my father treated you and saved your life, there were people that visited him numerous times, trying to intimidate him to secretly harm you so that you would finally depart for the western paradise. My father withstood all of those threats to help you and you finally recovered, but how did you repay him? Today, I have killed your wife! I heard you love her very much. I curse you to suffer sorrow and regret for the rest of your life!"

She bit down on a poison pouch hidden in the back of her mouth and died from blood gushing out of her head. Even when her body stiffened she was still glaring at Qin Yu, a strange and macabre smile on her face.

There was a loud boom in Qin Yu's mind. He looked at the dead daughter of Doctor Li. She had used a simple face mask, and now the mask had torn apart to reveal the face of the little girl who once affectionately called him 'Uncle Qin'. But, her sweet smile was filled with a vicious evil, as if even after she died, she would still be cursing him.

"Master! Master! What is wrong!?"

"Men! Hurry and summon people!"

"Something has happened to the master!"

The panicked sounds all around seemed to become incomparably distant, as if he Qin Yu had separated himself from this world. The figures of the people around him gradually blurred and turned invisible. His field of vision was like a frail mirror, quietly breaking apart into countless pieces. Then, like ice dancing around in boiling water, they quickly disappeared.

Then everything fell into darkness.

He didn't know how much time passed, but bits of light appeared in the darkness. They slowly grew brighter and brighter until the entire world was illuminated and his blurry surroundings became clear once more.

"Husband? Husband?" Ning Ling let out a long breath. "Why did you suddenly fall into a daze? I couldn't wake you up no matter how much I called out to you. Are you not feeling well?"

Qin Yu blinked his eyes, as if he were a mud sculpture that came to life. He looked at his surroundings in a trace. This...this was...did he start over again?

"My wife, where are we going?"

"We're taking a spring tour. Didn't you arrange this? You said that the atmosphere within the mansion had been too stuffy these days so you wanted us to relax outside together."

Qin Yu was shocked. That was today!

He found an excuse to change today's trip, saying that he had something important to deal with. Ning Ling smiled in understanding and turned to lead the maids back home. Qin Yu had a dark expression. He brought some servants and found Doctor Li's daughter. At this moment, she really had put on a mask to change her appearance and she had even hidden a knife in her chest.

It was this knife that had stabbed Ning Ling, causing her to fall into a pool of her own blood!

After an interrogation, the information he obtained was the same. Qin Yu grabbed onto all of the Li Family members and questioned them, the results also the same. He didn't want to believe it and even investigated through other channels. In the end, he found that Doctor Li had indeed been threatened by others several times, but had harshly refused.

But clearly...that time clearly...Qin Yu's headache was so bad it felt as if his mind was splitting apart. He suddenly thought that when Doctor Li first refused to help treat Ning Ling, it was because he had been threatened. And this threat involved the lives of his family members so he had no choice but to agree!

Did he misunderstand the situation? Did he kill Doctor Li for no reason at all? Qin Yu didn't want to think about it any longer. He returned to his mansion and hugged Ning Ling, shivering. An unexplainable fear covered his body.

A month later, the young maid from the Qin Family Mansion who had accused Doctor Li, suddenly stepped forward and voluntarily surrendered herself. She exposed the entire situation. She said that she had been forced by the family head and had no choice but to frame Doctor Li so that he would die in foreign lands.

The evidence was conclusive and caused great public anger. In particular, Doctor Li's family members knelt in front of the magistrate's office, covered in blood as they pleaded for justice! No one could save Qin Yu. Even that great figure who promised to protect Qin Yu returned all of the gifts overnight in order to draw a clear distinction between him and the Qin Family.

The Ning Family members appeared, requesting that Ning Ling leave with them. Otherwise, Qin Yu would die without a burial ground.

In order to save Qin Yu who was in prison and had been sentenced to execution by beheading, Ning Ling dressed back up as a daughter of the Ning Family and left the Qin Family Mansion with them.

Soon, it was finally decided that all of the Qin Family's properties and assets would be seized and Qin Yu would be exiled 3000 miles away.

The day he left the city, along the road he encountered a ten mile marriage procession. He heard others say that the Ning Family was marrying off a daughter and he stood there, stunned.

A corner of the bridal palanquin was lifted up by the wind. As he met the gaze of the person within, without words, a tear fell down his cheek.

"What are you looking at!? The Ning Family is one of the nation's wealthiest families, with a peak level of political power! Even when the Qin Family was still intact, you wouldn't have had the qualifications to touch them, much less now! Let's go. Stop standing there in a daze. The faster I deliver you the faster I can return!"

Qin Yu staggered forwards in an absent-minded haze. He had no idea how he left the capital.

Night arrived. He lay down on the muddy ground, looking up at the starry skies. He watched as a meteor streaked through space, a long tail dragging behind it as it vanished beyond his line of sight.

The elderly had a saying: when someone on the ground died, a star would fall from the heavens. Did someone die? Qin Yu was suddenly terrified. He was ruthlessly beaten up but he managed to wake up the county guards. After saying that he would tell them where the Qin Family had hidden a secret stash of treasure, they agreed to delay for a day and ask around for him.

As the sun set, the county guards returned from the capital. They looked at Qin Yu with a strange look in their eyes. After a moment of hesitation, they said, "After getting married last night, the Ning Family's young miss committed suicide..."

Qin Yu's world began to break apart once more. The look of surprise on the three county guards' faces turned blurry. The bleak forests all around started to rip apart, vanishing piece by piece.

Caught within the vortex, Qin Yu was like a stone. But at this moment, this ice-cold stone seemed to gain some awareness. He blinked, a complex look on his expression. Then, he gently sighed. "So this is the famous Four Seasons Samsara of Spring Summer Fall Winter within the Mirage Bead? The variations of illusions are really infinite. It feels so real that it's hard to distinguish from reality. But from the very start I already knew this was all an illusion."

Atop the blue stone platform, Qin Yu's complexion was calm and serene. Within his soul space, the purple crescent moon sprinkled down a faint moonlight. Bathed in this, Qin Yu's consciousness was divided in two. One part was placed in the illusion, becoming an ignorant part of that dreamland. The other maintained consciousness and observed the infinite fluctuations of the Mirage Bead's illusions.

Qin Yu could originally break apart this dreamland. It was only because he heard that the Mirage Bead could temper a cultivator's soul force that he decided to allow it to continue a little longer. After all, a year within the dreamland might only be but a moment outside.

He recalled all of the experiences from the dreamland. Meeting Ning Ling in his dreams might be considered a comfort, but when he recalled all the accidents that happened, he became aware of one thing: sometimes your eyes would deceive you.

This realization was already worth the delay. A sharp look crossed Qin Yu's eyes and he lightly said, "It's about time to finish this."

Thus, this dreamland that seemed like an illusion that would never end suddenly dissipated like a bubble being popped. Four complete spirit plants appeared. Among them, one of them was very familiar; it was the black fleecflower root that Doctor Li had gifted him during the banquet.

Shua –

On the blue platform, four spirit plants appeared around Qin Yu's body. As the observing cultivators saw this, they all sucked in a breath of cold air.

"Four!"

"This is the Four Seasons Samsara of Spring Summer Fall Winter!"

"Heavens, Qin Yu actually encountered such a terrifying test. I heard that even super powerhouses at the Blue Sea boundary might lose themselves in it if their will isn't strong enough!"

"For Qin Yu to pass the test so quickly, this means that the strength of his soul surpasses everyone's imagination!"

"Chu Taidou has only taken out two spirit plants so far. Whether it is in difficulty or speed, he cannot even be placed on the same level as Qin Yu!"

"The Ancient Perishment Decree's ninth-ranked, that is a seriously horrifying title!"

Kang Mingqiao's eyes flashed with a look of shock and appreciation before a cold intent appeared. "I hear that there is only a one in ten thousand chance that the Mirage Bead will open the Four Seasons Samsara. Qin Yu's luck is quite poor."

Tao Yuan's face paled and a look of consternation came over him. He never thought that Qin Yu would be able to pass the Four Seasons Samsara. It had to be known that even he didn't have full faith he could overcome it.

When he heard these words he suddenly stiffened. He coldly snorted and said, "The Mirage Bead is a precious treasure bred from the sunflower snake. I don't have the ability to tamper with it!"

Kang Mingqiao revealed a mocking look of surprise. "I never mentioned anything about that, so why would Grandmaster Tao Yuan feel such an urgent need to explain? Is it possible that there are some things no one knows about, some things that happen in the dark?"

"You...!" Tao Yuan was enraged.

Mei Ruliu smiled. "Four Seasons Samsara? This actually matches quite well with my Four Seasons City. Perhaps it really is just a coincidence. Little friend Qin Yu's strength is amazing; I must say I admire him. In this competition Grand Authority Chu has really fallen behind."

Tao Yuan coldly said, "It's just a momentary advantage. The Mirage King Bead has nine holes and nine checkpoints. Qin Yu has only broken past the first four checkpoints for now."

"When the Four Seasons Samsara are added together, how can this be merely described as 'first four checkpoints'? Grandmaster Tao Yuan, as the Honorary Director of the Alchemy Association, this is something you should be well aware of." Kang Mingqiao lightly said, "I believe that the results of today's competition can already be concluded."

"Humph!" Tao Yuan sneered, "How about we make a bet ourselves? Let's bet on just who will be the winner in the end?"

Kang Mingqiao's lips curved up in a smile. "If Grandmaster Tao Yuan is in such good spirits, I naturally cannot ruin the mood."

"Good! If Qin Yu wins, I will give this nine hole Mirage King Bead to Arena Steward Kang."

"If Chu Taidou wins, the Dao Arena must help Grandmaster Tao Yuan build three high quality training rooms for free!"

"It's settled then."

"Of course."

Mei Ruliu smiled. "You two seem to be having fun. If so, I will act as a witness for you two."

Kang Mingqiao cupped his hands together, "Thank you, City Lord."

Tao Yuan sneered. The strength of Qin Yu's soul had indeed far surpassed his expectations, but Chu Taidou was sure to win this round.

This was because he already knew of the strength of the Immortal Sect's supreme alchemy treasure many years ago!

Chapter 458A – Black White Grinding Pans

After breaking through the Four Seasons Samsara, Qin Yu's divine sense phantom appeared between two terrifying rivers. They rushed in from afar, racing past the horizon.

Of these two great rivers, one was black and one was white. Looking down, one could see that fierce monster beasts often leapt out from the pure white and pitch black waters. They eyed Qin Yu, cruelty and viciousness in their gazes.

But at this moment, the two originally parallel rivers seemed to bend as if a great invisible force was being exerted upon them. This resulted in the black and white rivers converging upon each other.

As the pure white and pitch black waters collided, they didn't fuse at all. Rather, it seemed as if they were inherently incompatible and repelled each other.

When the two rivers touched, perhaps because of their auras drawing each other in, a vortex began to gradually appear. More and more river water was swallowed and loud rumblings filled the skies. Slowly, they formed into two incomparably massive grinding pans. They spun in sync with each other, creating a terrifying tearing strength. Between these two grinding pans, a crack appeared. The edges of this crack were covered in circulating lights of black and white; it was unknown where it led to.

Qin Yu's eyes flashed, a dignified look on his face. "Yin Yang Black White Grinding Pans...in order to help Chu Taidou win, will you not care about even the most basic form of honor?" After several breaths of time, a taunting smile appeared. "Unfortunately for you, even if you abandon all sense of honor, how can a mere Mirage King Bead trap me?"

Qin Yu stepped forwards. His divine sense phantom didn't hesitate at all as he stepped directly into that crack.

Atop the blue stone platform, the Mirage King Bead faintly trembled. A halo of light shot out, shrouding Qin Yu within. Soon after that, two spheres of black and white appeared. While they revolved without sound, their sight left all the surrounding cultivators shaken. An unstoppable sense of fear rose into their hearts and their bodies stiffened with dread.

"Yin Yang Black White Grinding Pans!" A cultivator screamed out loud, utterly bewildered.

Soon, the entire grand plaza of Four Seasons City was stirred into a frenzy.

It was the Four Seasons Samsara of Spring Summer Fall Winter just before, and now the Yin Yang Black White Grinding Pans had appeared. There was only a one in 10,000 chance that each of these would appear, and for them to appear sequentially, the chances of that...were low enough that it could be ignored. Something that should have been impossible had occurred today. If someone said that there wasn't anything fishy going on, not even a fool would believe it.

Countless gazes fell on Tao Yuan's icy face. Many of the grandmaster's initial supporters began to have complex looks in their eyes. Although they knew that Tao Yuan loathed Qin Yu and that he also stood on the side of Chu Taidou, they never expected that he would completely abandon any sense of honor and blatantly interfere.

This was far too excessive!

Kang Mingqiao smiled in anger. "Grandmaster Tao Yuan, your Mirage King Bead is truly extraordinary. You have opened my eyes today!"

Tao Yuan revealed no expression. He coldly said, "It's just a coincidence. As I've said before, even if I wanted to, there is no way for me to alter the Mirage King Bead."

Kang Mingqiao responded, "Many years ago I raised a dog. This dog loved to eat kingfisher birds, but it could never catch any. It could only whine to me and beg me every day to help it. Because my wife liked the dog very much, I raised that dog and allowed it to eat its fill every day. But afterwards, that dog died because its luck wasn't good and it had eaten a poisonous kingfisher. I told my wife, but she simply didn't believe me. She asked me, how can a dog catch a kingfisher bird?"

Tao Yuan's cheeks twitched. "Kang Mingqiao, don't be so insolent. Even if you are the steward of a Dao Arena, you do not have the qualifications to shame me!"

After venting a little, Kang Mingqiao actually calmed down. He shook his robes and sat back down in his seat. "I was only telling a story about a dead dog. Why does Grandmaster Tao Yuan need to be so angry? However, once this second round ends, I will carefully inspect that Mirage King Bead to see what is so special about it that it could have Qin Yu's luck be poor to such an extent."

Tao Yuan sneered. "If Arena Steward Kang wins the bet, I will offer you the Mirage King Bead with both hands and you can examine it however much you want. But for now, I will have to refuse your offer."

The Four Seasons City Lord suddenly said, "Enough, stop arguing you two. The entire city is paying attention to this event today, so don't disgrace yourselves." His eyes flashed and he revealed a happy expression. "I actually have a great deal of confidence in little friend Qin Yu. If he can break through the Four Seasons Samsara, there is also a possibility that he will break through the Black White Grinding Pans."

Kang Mingqiao didn't speak anymore. Although there was worry in his eyes, there was also some anticipation.

Qin Yu, I hope you can smoothly win today. Perhaps today's 'competition' might not be fair to you, but true equality never existed in this world to begin with. If you want to rise from the dirt and become the most dazzling jewel in the world, you must undergo all sorts of tests and temperings.

Today is also a kind of tempering. If you can rush past this, perhaps you will find unexpected harvests.

Kang Mingqiao looked up towards the direction of the Dao Arena. As the steward of Four Seasons City's Dao Arena, his mind and will had already fused into one with the Dao Arena itself. He could clearly feel a boundless divine sense spanning across an inexhaustible distance to arrive here.

Master, you truly are paying attention to Qin Yu right now. If you really value him so much, why would you ignore him and allow him to cope with this wind and rain alone? Are you testing him?

Above the Dao Arena, a phantom looked towards the grand plaza. His unparalleled beauty was enough to cause 99.99% of all women in this world to go mad with jealousy and think of choking him to death.

Solitary Westgate smirked, the contempt evident on his face. "So many years have passed by but the methods of the Immortal Sect remain as disgusting and repulsive as before. I told this boy Qin Yu that I

am not satisfied with the Immortal Sect...and the truth is that I am extremely dissatisfied with them. What a pity that I don't have full confidence in dealing with them, otherwise I would have torn apart their sect long ago."

His sharp eyes seemed to pierce through all barriers in the world. Distance was no problem for him. He looked at the Mirage King Bead, and after a contemplative moment, he smiled in happiness. "How astounding. I never thought that the purple moon in Qin Yu's soul space would have such marvelous abilities. The Immortal Sect used all the little tricks they could, but I fear they will have to leave with a loss today."

Solitary Westgate smiled, pleased. This was because the more Qin Yu leapt around, the livelier he was, the more miraculous he was, all of this served as evidence that the calculations he made in the past were correct and Yun Niang and Anning would have a chance to live again. This had already become his life's greatest obsession. Only after accomplishing this would his thoughts become smooth and he would have the chance to knock upon the next threshold and become a truly transcendent being.

So whether it was through emotional hardship or the cultivation of the Great Dao, he wanted Qin Yu to live, and live well. He wanted Qin Yu to grow to the point where he could help him. It was just that if some people tried to challenge the rules he set down, they couldn't blame him for bullying the weak and personally taking action.

A cold intent flashed in his eyes. Solitary Westgate's eyes fell onto an area not too far away from the blue stone platform, where the three witnesses were sitting. Being covered by the gaze of an apex powerhouse of the world, the rules in the area had already begun to change. But, the most frightening aspect was that no one realized this at all. They didn't know that their life or death could be decided with nothing but a simple thought.

Chu Taidou opened his eyes, weariness in his face. Then, from a spatial fluctuation around him, a spirit plant appeared. The Mirage King Bead lived up to its reputation. He had suffered severe losses to his divine sense before he was able to pass the test of Fall and find the third spirit plant.

Humph!

For a cultivator, their soul was the most important part of cultivation as well as the most difficult aspect to cultivate. He had diligently trained for numerous years to have his current achievements. No matter how skilled Qin Yu was in alchemy or how great his lucky chance was, he could never compete with him when it came to the soul. Previously when he continuously passed through the tests of Spring and Summer, Qin Yu hadn't made a single sound. He was still trapped in the dreamland of the Mirage King Bead.

Now, Chu Taidou had passed the third test and those people in the crowd would all avert their looks of disdain. They would once again look at him with awe and worship in their eyes. But the cries of alarm and shock didn't appear as he thought they would. An ill premonition started to grow in his heart. He could no longer bother with maintaining the image of a great expert and hurriedly looked all around him.

In the next moment, Chu Taidou was left frozen. He stared empty-minded at the four spirit plants floating around Qin Yu and his mouth dropped open so wide that he could fit an egg inside. His mind

was in tumult and countless thoughts clashed against each other. In the end, only one single thought remained: Impossible...impossible...absolutely impossible...

Unfortunately, even after Chu Taidou took several deep breaths and blinked multiple times, the four spirit plants around Qin Yu were still there. He had no choice but to accept that this was reality and not an illusion produced due to his exhaustion.

“Chu Taidou! Qin Yu has broken past the Four Seasons Samsara and obtained four spirit plants. Now he has opened the Black White Grinding Pans. I have already done everything in my power to help you. You should be well aware what kind of consequences await you once you lose!” Tao Yuan sent an icy cold sound transmission into his mind. Chu Taidou shivered for a moment as shock filled his features.

Four Seasons Samsara...just this alone surpassed his limits. Qin Yu’s soul cultivation was actually this formidable!?

Chapter 458B – Black White Grinding Pans

“Don’t panic!” Chu Taidou roared within. “I have a supreme treasure from the Immortal Sect! I still have the chance to win! Even if I must greatly damage my divine sense, I cannot lose here!”

He clenched his fists. A black ring on his index finger suddenly exuded a cold energy that injected itself straight into his soul. Every emotion immediately disappeared from his eyes, replaced with a cold indifference.

Glancing at Qin Yu one more time, Chu Taidou closed his eyes and his divine sense entered the Mirage King Bead once again. There was no superficial difference in his divine sense, but it now contained that cold energy to it. It was like a river of water becoming a river of ice, causing the intensity and power behind it to increase by a terrifying amount.

But where there were advantages there were also drawbacks. After the intensity of his divine sense increased, if it suffered an impact that surpassed its withstanding limits, it would be like real ice, shattered into countless blocks.

Qin Yu’s divine sense phantom sat down cross-legged. A terrifying suppressive strength roared in from all directions, accompanied by thunderous rumbles. This was the dreadful aspect of the Black White Grinding Pans. Once a person’s divine sense could no longer withstand it, it would grind that person’s divine sense into pieces and cause grievous damage to their soul.

But at this time, outside Qin Yu’s sitting figure, there was a curtain of purple light that was blocking almost all of the oppressive strength from the Black White Grinding Pans. The remaining bits of it fell onto his divine sense phantom and brushed across him like a spring breeze, simply unable to cause any harm.

Breaking past this hurdle was easy to Qin Yu. As long as he left this place that was flooded with a terrifying suppression, he could do so. But breaking past this level with such mind-boggling speed would surely arouse the interest of everyone here, and that wasn’t something Qin Yu wanted. And, another reason was that the suppressive strength of this Black and White Grinding Pan could temper a cultivator’s divine sense, bringing a greater level of clarity to their soul.

The chance to increase the strength of his soul could be considered a lucky chance in itself. Qin Yu's thoughts turned and the curtain of purple light dimmed down. The suppressive strength he withstood increased with it.

Qin Yu's divine sense phantom trembled as if it would collapse at any moment. This was already his withstanding limit. Even though the curtain of purple light seemed incredibly thin, it still helped him resist half of the suppressive strength. It was no wonder his opponent had utterly disregarded any sense of honor to lure him here. The might of the Black White Grinding Pans was immense, but unfortunately it was wasted on him.

He smiled and then closed his eyes, feeling his divine sense being slowly tempered a bit at a time. While this process was painful, it was also incredibly enjoyable.

What was the origin of the purple moon in his soul space? Qin Yu could no longer contain his curiosity towards it.

There was also the blue sun that existed above the Five Element Mountain within his dantian sea. It clearly had some sort of close connection to the purple moon. When the Immortal Sect's killing curse had descended on him, the intermingling light of the sun and moon had shined down on him, saving him. This was something he would never forget.

In the dreamland, if a month passed, if a year passed, if several or even dozens of years passed, it might only be but a moment of time in the real world. Here, time had no real significance. Thus, when Chu Taidou broke through the last test of Winter and took out the fourth spirit plant, only a little more than an hour had passed since this round of the competition began.

Chu Taidou opened his eyes. His faint ice-cold eyes swept over the four spirit plants that were near Qin Yu. He closed his eyes once more and his divine sense continued to deeply explore the depths of the Mirage King Bead.

Moments later, a fifth spirit plant appeared, closely followed by a sixth. Chu Taidou appeared weary, but his expression was serene, so serene that one couldn't feel a single fluctuation of emotion coming from him.

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, Yin, Yang.

If one could pass through six levels of the Mirage King Bead, disregarding all else, it meant that their soul cultivation had reached incredible heights. As long as a person could accomplish it, then unless their soul talent was naturally high at birth or they were using some secret treasure, this achievement meant that they would grow to at least the peak of the Blue Sea realm.

Chu Taidou had succeeded in stunning everyone. Those eyes that had been filled with disdain were now gradually filling back with awe and reverence.

As for the spirit plants around Qin Yu, there were still only four of them. The phantoms of the Black White Grinding Pans still hovered above his head, peacefully spinning around and giving off a suppressive feeling that made one shiver.

Two hours passed in the outside world. Perhaps ten years or even dozens of years had lapsed in the dreamland. Qin Yu still wasn't able to break through the boundary; did this mean he was trapped within?

This wasn't impossible. It had to be known that the test of the Black White Grinding Pans was said to be something that no one below the realm of an almighty being could break out of. Even the Four Seasons Samsara of Spring Summer Fall Winter was more than a level lower.

After all, although the four seasons were complete, how could they compete with yin and yang? From certain cultivation theories, it was said that everything in existence was birthed from yin and yang; they were truly omnipresent forces.

Chu Taidou's face darkened. Even with the supreme alchemy treasure of the Immortal Sect helping him, crossing the two levels of Yin and Yang had caused him to suffer heavy losses. But after a moment of brief hesitation, he closed his eyes once more. This brat Qin Yu was strange and unpredictable. Who knew if he had additional hidden cards up his sleeves? He couldn't underestimate him at all.

He would risk it. Although he couldn't avoid severe damage to his soul, as long as he crossed the seventh level then his victory would be assured.

Mei Ruliu revealed a look of acclaim. "The Mirage King Bead's seventh level is the path of chaos. It is said to involve the abstract and esoteric rules of the world. If Grand Authority Chu dares to attempt it, he must have some confidence in himself. When it comes to strength of the soul, even I have to admit my inferiority."

Tao Yuan's gloomy face revealed a sly smile. "What the City Lord says is true. Those that can rush through the seventh level are all outstanding individuals. I have a feeling that Chu Taidou will succeed." He turned around, a dark and desolate look on his face. "Arena Steward Kang, it seems that those three high quality training rooms are already in my hands."

Kang Mingqiao furrowed his eyebrows before immediately composing himself. "Victory and defeat have yet to be decided. It's best not to say some words too early, otherwise if you were slapped by them in the future, that would be an ugly sight."

Tao Yuan coldly sneered. "Good! Then I will have to personally see just how long Arena Steward Kang can be so obstinate for. The one to win today will definitely be Chu Taidou!"

With the precious treasure in hand, breaking past the seventh level shouldn't be too difficult. Although Qin Yu had surprised him so far, there was absolutely no way he could accomplish that.

And once the third round began...Tao Yuan's heart chilled. Yes, he would really lose face during this trip to Four Seasons City, but in order to complete his mission, he couldn't bother with things like honor or shame.

Qin Yu had to lose!

The Mirage King Bead's seventh level, the path of chaos, was said to be a world of chaos. When one's divine sense fell into this world, they would be like a silent stone before the creation of the world. As long as they successfully awakened, that would be considered as having broken past the level.

But to do this was extremely, extremely difficult. If one's divine sense didn't awaken, they would sleep within forever. Even if a person was forcefully awakened from the outside world, the portion of divine sense that they entered the Mirage King Bead with would thoroughly dissipate.

This was the same as taking a cultivator's complete soul and shearing off a section of it. The pain was agonizing, yes, but the most terrifying aspect was that it would damage a cultivator's soul source and sever their road to perceiving and understanding the rules. If one wanted to recover from this, it would be incredibly difficult and arduous.

Eight hours later, Chu Taidou's wood-like body trembled as he barely managed to force open his eyes. Then, he spat out several mouthfuls of blood. The wrinkles on his face deepened, making him look as if he had aged dozens of years. But, as he vomited blood, a seventh spirit plant appeared beside him. It was a plant that seemed refined from liquid gold. It shined with a luminescent light and exuded a noble atmosphere.

Chu Taidou felt the soul-cutting pain in his soul and hurriedly put away the strength of the Immortal Sect's supreme alchemy treasure. As he did, all sorts of emotions rushed back into him and the pain of his soul became far more difficult to endure. He hacked out a cough and his field of vision flashed black. If it weren't for his firm will, he would have already fainted from this pain.

But in the end he managed to withstand it.

Chu Taidou looked up, his lips moving with difficulty. "I have done my best and this is as far as I can go. If Grand Authority Qin Yu is stronger than me, then I admit defeat."

His voice was weak and feeble, but at this moment, all eyes looking at him were filled with shock and awe.

Cultivators worshipped powerhouses, and this was particularly true for cultivators who followed the demonic path. Chu Taidou had broken past the seventh level of the Mirage King Bead; this act was enough to prove his great strength. And powerhouses were worth forgiving. As for the errors he made before...well, did that even matter? History was written by the winner. All of that light, all of that radiance was destined to only shine upon the final victor!

The process didn't matter. In life, the end always justified the means.

In ten hours, perhaps hundreds of years had passed in the dreamland. For a young cultivator genius, so many years was just far, far too long. It was so long that it could break one's mind and turn them mad.

Qin Yu still hadn't woken up or broken past the Black White Grinding Pans. To the cultivators in the grand plaza, this indicated the worst possible outcome. Perhaps this person who was ranked ninth on the Ancient Perishment Decree, who had stirred up storms throughout the Land of Divinity and Demons, who was a proud son of heaven with a reputation that spread out far and wide, perhaps he would suffer a bitter loss today.

Tao Yuan's lips curved up in a smile and his cold voice was filled with a bit of joy. "It looks like I have won."

Mei Ruliu revealed a bit of regret, but his eyes were calm. He clearly didn't think much about it.

Geniuses, in particular young geniuses, were people who were born to make all others feel desperate and unworthy. They shouldn't exist to begin with.

If they died, perhaps that wasn't a bad thing.

Chapter 459 – The True Meaning of Fierce

Another two hours passed. After the miserable-looking Chu Taidou swallowed some pills and rested, his complexion seemed much better. Now, as he looked at Qin Yu across from him, he had a satisfied expression. While he didn't think he would be forced into such a distressed state today, in the end he would be the last one laughing.

He had personally experienced the terror of the Mirage King Bead. Once his divine sense was lost inside it would be impossible to free himself. The consequences would be dreadful. Perhaps, in today's 'competition', there would be no need to advance to the third round. Thinking of this, Grand Authority Chu's smile widened, becoming much warmer. He had paid a considerable price, but compared to the harvests, it wasn't anything at all.

Ning Liang's hands were twisted together. She gripped her hands so hard that her knuckles turned white, and blue and purple marks were left on her pale skin.

For 12 hours Qin Yu hadn't awoken. If it weren't for the spinning black and white grinding pans floating above him indicating that he hadn't yet given up, she would probably be sobbing with tears right now. However, this sort of deadlock wouldn't last forever. If he couldn't break past the test of the Black White Grinding Pans, his will would eventually collapse.

Ning Rufeng had a dignified expression. There was a trace of worry deep in his eyes. After so much difficulty he had finally seen a chance for the Ning Family to rise back from the ashes, but would this chance be destroyed? Qin Yu had endured so long without admitting defeat that he feared he had already become possessed. Once he couldn't withstand it any longer, the backlash would cause severe injuries and his soul source would be damaged. And once a person's soul source was damaged, then unless they managed to find some heaven-defying stroke of luck to repair it, the rest of their life would be thoroughly ruined.

Kang Mingqiao had a grim expression. He looked at Qin Yu on the blue stone platform and then glanced towards the direction of the Dao Arena. Master, you must know that Qin Yu is in a perilous situation right now, but aren't you planning to save him? If you delay any further, I fear there won't be enough time.

Tao Yuan lightly said, "City Lord, 12 hours have already passed. Can you judge that Chu Taidou has won?"

"No!" Kang Mingqiao automatically shouted in response. He took a deep breath and said, "There was no time limit to the second round to begin with. Since Qin Yu is still there, no one can judge him as having lost."

Mei Ruliu nodded. "According to the rules, what Arena Steward Kang says is correct. Qin Yu hasn't yet lost." After a pause he continued to say, "But, I must say I am leaning towards Grandmaster Tao Yuan's

opinion. If Qin Yu hasn't broken past the Black White Grinding Pans in 12 hours, I fear his current situation isn't good. If things continue like this, Qin Yu might suffer even greater damage."

Kang Mingqiao's face stiffened. He wanted to argue on Qin Yu's behalf, but he had no idea what to say. This was because Mei Ruliu was correct. If they announced the winner and loser of this round right now, they could immediately stop it and forcefully awaken Qin Yu. Although his divine sense would still be damaged, it would prevent his soul source from being damaged.

His silence caused Tao Yuan to smirk. Tao Yuan said, "If there are no more arguments, then I will have to ask fellow daoist Sun to announce the results."

Sun San slightly bowed. He stood quietly behind Mei Ruliu, waiting until the City Lord finally nodded. Then, he respectfully stepped forwards and appeared in the skies above the blue stone platform. However, just as he was about to announce the result of the second round, Qin Yu suddenly opened his eyes and said, "In two hours, I will wake up. There is no need for you to all worry about me."

His pupils were bright and clear and there was no weariness in his voice. This was completely different from how everyone imagined, as if he hadn't suffered any damage at all from enduring the Black White Grinding Pans for 12 hours. This scene left countless cultivators dumbfounded. In particular, those people who already assumed that Qin Yu had lost had even more splendid reactions.

The Mirage King Bead's Black White Grinding Pans! This was the Mirage King Bead's Black White Grinding Pans! It was said to be incredibly difficult for anyone below the boundary of an almighty being to break past it, yet Qin Yu had been stuck in there for 12 hours but hadn't suffered any losses at all? Are you joking with me!? The most terrifying thing was that shouldn't Qin Yu be suffering and barely managing to hold on inside? How come he still knew what was occurring in the outside world!?

Tao Yuan's icy face revealed a shocked expression. His eyes popped open as if he had seen a ghost. As for Mei Ruliu who had been pretending to be weak all this time, he forgot to cough at this moment. Although Qin Yu had only said a few words before he closed his eyes again, the hearts of everyone watching had already changed. Their gazes were now filled with shock and disbelief.

Kang Mingqiao's eyes brightened. He laughed heartily several times. "It looks like Grandmaster Tao Yuan's worries were for nothing. Since Qin Yu is fine, let's wait another two hours. It's way too early to decide the results of the second round right now!"

"Humph!" Tao Yuan coldly snorted and his eyes turned cold. But, in that frosty cold, there was a trace of fear. Listening to what Qin Yu had said, it seemed he was confident he could break past the Black White Grinding Pans in two hours.

This information was too terrifying.

To be incredibly difficult to break through for anyone below the boundary of an almighty being – these weren't words spoken just for fun. If Qin Yu really did break through the Black White Grinding Pans, this would prove that his soul cultivation had reached an inconceivably terrifying level.

If so, then the seventh level, the path of chaos, might not be able to stop him.

Chu Taidou had already lost the first round. If he lost again...a chill surged up from his heart. If he failed today, while Chu Taidou would be the first one to meet with disaster, he himself could also forget about withdrawing unscathed.

Grandmaster Tao Yuan clenched his fists beneath his robe. His face paled as a flustered panic rampaged through his thoughts.

Mei Ruliu smiled. "Since Qin Yu is safe, we should wait for him."

Sun San cupped his hands together in acknowledgement. He revealed a bit of regret in his eyes. Then, he slowly stepped back behind Mei Ruliu, standing as still and quiet as a shadow.

Everyone was waiting in anticipation. At this time, every single moment seemed incomparably long. Even a single breath of time seemed to stretch out for hours.

Beads of sweat fell down Chu Taidou's forehead. He had reminded himself countless times that Qin Yu might not be able to break past the Black White Grinding Pans, and even if he did, he wouldn't necessarily smoothly cross the path of chaos. But no matter how many times he repeated this to himself, his complexion still paled as his back slowly became matted with sweat.

As the end of the two hours approached, an invisible hand seemed to clutch his heart, grasping tighter and tighter. Even breathing was difficult and painful.

Perhaps the flow of time could really be stopped and reversed, but Chu Taidou obviously didn't possess this ability. Thus, no matter how much he hoped for time to stop or how much he refused to acknowledge what was happening, two hours finally passed.

On the blue stone platform, the black and white grinding pan phantoms above Qin Yu's head slowly trembled. His eyelashes gently shivered as he opened his eyes.

Shua –

Two spirit plants simultaneously appeared around him. With the four from before, there was now a total of six. Although he was one away from the spirit plants across from him, anyone could tell that the quality of the two spirit plant groups was as different as the heavens and earth.

First he broke through the Four Seasons Samsara and then he broke past the Black White Grinding Pans. Today, Qin Yu taught everyone within the grand plaza the true meaning of 'fierce'.

Puff –

Chu Taidou spat out a mouthful of blood. His body wavered and a trace of fear and pleading shined in his eyes. He didn't want to die! For such an arrogant and stately figure to express such emotions at this time, it could be seen how desperate he was.

But there were no waves in Qin Yu's eyes; they were as calm and still as a pond, so dark and deep that one couldn't see how far they went, as if these eyes could swallow up everything. He glanced at Chu Taidou, gave him a single look, and then closed his eyes once again. Although he didn't even say a single word, anyone could see the meaning behind them.

In today's 'competition', I have already won!

The seventh level, the path of chaos.

This level wasn't the same as the Black White Grinding Pans; it had no benefits for Qin Yu. Because of the existence of the purple moon in his soul space, half of his consciousness turned into a 'stone' and the other half maintained absolute clarity.

While this sort of experience was interesting, Qin Yu didn't want to waste his precious time on meaningless things. So, after he decided that living as a stone wouldn't be useful to him, he suddenly widened his eyes.

Hum –

A purple lotus throne appeared in front of Qin Yu. It looked as if it had been crafted from the world's highest quality purple jade. Every nook and cranny was lifelike and purple light flowed around it, giving off a sense of pure stability.

The path of chaos was broken!

This was what everyone had already been expecting. A person that could break through the Black and White Grinding Pans would never be stuck here. However, they were still all left shocked. This was because the speed at which Qin Yu broke through this boundary was just far, far too fast. So fast that it seemed they had closed their eyes, and once they opened their eyes again, he had succeeded.

Indeed, the disparity was far too great, so great that it was like the clouds in the skies above were being compared to mud on the ground.

Muddy Chu shivered and he swayed from left to right and back again. His actions were so violent that others feared he might break his neck if he fell over.

However, he remained like a tilting doll, one that stubbornly stared at Qin Yu.

There was a chance! There was still a chance!

Even if Qin Yu broke through the path of chaos, that only made them even. If Qin Yu couldn't break through the eighth level, it would still be a tie.

Once he entered the third round, he could win!

The Mirage King Bead's eighth level was nothingness.

In the pitch black void, the space was completely empty. When one's divine sense entered into this place, it was like falling into an abyss of eternal darkness.

In order to break past this level, the only possible method was for a person's divine sense to sparkle and reach the boundary of eternity. Then, they had to use their divine sense to rip apart the darkness and allow light to arrive in this space.

In this world, only almighty beings whose cultivation had broken into the Calamity Immortal realm could accomplish this. Their souls were bathed in the glorious light of the rules, allowing them to become increasingly formidable, finally transforming and reaching this step.

The step where the soul was like colored glass, glowing in the darkness, shining brightly with pure radiance.

This was the level of an almighty being!

Qin Yu couldn't accomplish this. In fact, he was far from reaching that level. However, there was a purple crescent moon in his soul space, and although this purple moon was small, it spontaneously shined with its own light.

Thus, in the nothingness, the phantom of a curved purple moon appeared above Qin Yu's divine sense. A cold and thin purple light illuminated a small and narrow space.

Within the boundless and inexhaustible dark nothingness, this purple light was as small as a grain of sand in a vast river. But, this tiny and nearly negligible grain of sand was the final straw on the camel's back. With a light cracking sound, countless invisible cracks appeared in the nothingness and began to expand outwards at an accelerating speed.

Then, the nothingness shattered and light flooded in, bathing Qin Yu's divine sense phantom within. When he was suddenly surrounded by light after being in the darkness, he subconsciously narrowed his eyes. He looked up at an object that was floating above his head. After a long time, he was able to make out what it was. His lips curved up in a smile. "Is this the legendary meaningless ninth level of the Mirage King Bead? Huh, just like the stories say, it is really quite meaningless."

Above the blue stone platform, near the purple lotus throne, an eighth spirit plant appeared. It was a pure black flower, one so dark that it seemed as if it were created from all the night in the world, a darkness so rich that it could never be resolved.

As tilting doll Chu Taidou saw this, he simply closed his eyes and fell backwards, slamming into the blue stone platform with a loud thump. But at this moment, no one cared about Grand Authority Chu's distress and despair. They all looked towards that black-robed youth quietly sitting on the blue stone platform with eyes wide open.

Qin Yu was no different from before, but the faces of everyone watching had changed. This was a kind of awe that originated from an extreme state of shock.

To break past the Mirage King Bead's eighth level, this was something only almighty beings were capable of accomplishing!

In all the stories that flowed through the Land of Divinity and Demons, no one had ever heard of such a thing occurring. This was because those that had the qualifications to break past the eighth level had long since stepped into the ranks of the almighty beings.

But today, everything changed.

Qin Yu wasn't an almighty being but he had managed to break past the Mirage King Bead's eighth level. Moreover, he was a peerless proud son of heaven ranked ninth on the Ancient Perishment Decree. When these two factors were combined together, not even the most critical person doubted that Qin Yu would be able to reach the boundary of a Calamity Immortal if given time and step into the ranks of the almighty beings.

Mei Ruliu seemed lost in what he was watching. A hint of bitterness rose in the depths of his eyes. He never expected that the road of the Great Dao, which he had been diligently and laboriously chasing after for all these years but had failed to open, would be broken open by someone in front of him today. He took a deep breath to compose himself and then stood up. He cupped his hands together, "Congratulations, fellow daoist Qin Yu."

This congratulation was congratulating Qin Yu on winning today. But even more than that, he was congratulating him for his assured chances of becoming an almighty being in the future.

This congratulation sounded bitter, but his smile was earnest.

Sun San had been standing silently behind Mei Ruliu all this time like a shadow. He bowed, his face full of praise and shock. However, no one saw that after he lowered his head back down, he gently sighed and his eyes turned faint and cold.

"Hahahaha!" Kang Mingqiao joyously laughed out loud, as if he were declaring to everyone that he hadn't misread the situation. But before he could say anything, his words were interrupted.

As Kang Mingqiao was laughing, Sun San bowed and cupped his hands together. Sun San took one step forward and then an incomparably terrifying aura erupted from his body.

But that was it.

Just a single step.

After that single step, Sun San was no longer able to move. His body that released a terrifying aura was like a low and weak ant, pressed to the ground, unable to make even the tiniest of actions.

Then, in public view of everyone, Sun San blew apart. There were no fragments of bones and there was no flying flesh and blood. Rather, he was like a human-shaped bubble. After popping apart, he vanished from sight, not a single trace of him left behind.

"I said that as long as Qin Yu stays in Four Seasons City, he is a guest of my Dao Arena. No one may touch him. Since you went against my word, don't blame me for killing you. I will never repeat myself a second time, no matter who it is."

A faint and light voice stroked across everyone's faces like a spring breeze. There was no dangerous or violent aura behind it, but within the entire grand plaza, every cultivator stiffened. It was like a million mountains were pressing against their chests, leaving them unable to take a single breath.

Kang Mingqiao straightened his robes and kneeled, his eyes full of reverence and excitement. "Greetings, master."

To have the steward of a Dao Arena fall to his knees and also to have him call someone master, this person could only be that unattainable mountain peak who existed behind the Dao Arena.

When Solitary Westgate first arrived, besides Woodchopper Fu, Qin Yu, and Kang Mingqiao, he hadn't been noticed by anyone at all.

Thus, in response to the arrival of the Master of the Dao Arena, a truly unsurpassed existence, the hearts of every cultivator within Four Seasons City began to shake with endless waves!

In an instant, every person in the grand plaza fell to the ground. Those normally proud individuals who kept their heads high were now tightly pasting their foreheads against the cold floor.

But at this moment, Solitary Westgate's eyes were only looking at the blue stone platform where Qin Yu was sitting. He watched as the nine-holed Mirage King Bead gently trembled and then shattered, turning into a flow of light that entered into Qin Yu's eyebrows.

He couldn't help but smile in happiness.

Chapter 460A – Curse of Identity

Looking at things from another angle, the Mirage King Bead was like a fruit wrapped in layers upon layers of hard shells. Once its defenses were broken through, one could taste the sweet and tasty juices within.

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, Yin, Yang, Chaos, Nothingness.

These were the defenses of the Mirage King Bead. After Qin Yu thoroughly broke into the deepest layer, he found that what appeared in front of him was a phantom of the Mirage King Bead. Without a need for anyone to tell him anything, he understood that this was like a puzzle game, and after reaching the end of the game, this was the reward he earned.

However, the Mirage King Bead seemed to be a little too playful. The reward was itself.

Qin Yu naturally wouldn't be polite. In any case, this was something he earned. His divine sense marked the phantom of the Mirage King Bead. Then, it faintly trembled and shattered.

Afterwards, the Mirage King Bead atop the blue stone platform actually crumbled into countless pieces, turning into a cool strength that drilled in between his eyebrows and fused with his soul.

Near his ears, he seemed to hear a pained cough. But Qin Yu didn't have the thoughts to pay attention to this. As the cool strength fused with his soul, his consciousness trembled and fell dark.

The moment Sun San attacked was when his consciousness had blanked out. From this, it could be seen that Qin Yu's enemies had planned for every possible scenario, even adding a final contingency for the impossible probability. Unfortunately, Solitary Westgate's appearance had crushed this contingency to pieces.

Qin Yu was still alive so he could naturally enjoy the good fortune that the Mirage King Bead brought him. At this moment his soul was shivering and instinctually crying out in joy as it absorbed the strength of the Mirage King Bead, constantly transforming and sublimating.

This was an extremely mysterious taste. In a hazy trance, he had no idea how much time passed. When he opened his eyes once more, there was a battle occurring in his soul space.

In this battle, one side was the curved purple moon and the other was a black mass of fog not too far away. They were like two wild beasts struggling over scraps of food. They both wanted to seize and monopolize the remains of the Mirage King Bead's energy that Qin Yu hadn't absorbed.

Purple moonlight condensed into columns of light. Like solid pillars, they swept out at the pitch black mist. However, as they approached, they were tied down by countless black tentacles.

The beams of light and the black tentacles seemed to have diametrically opposed attributes of strength. Where they touched each other, loud sizzling sounds could be heard. The light beams shook, but they couldn't free themselves from the imprisonment of the black tentacles. At the same time, the black tentacles couldn't cause any true damage to the light beams.

Both sides refused to back down, but neither side stopped swallowing the Mirage King Bead's energy. Slowly, the energy was sucked up by both sides. The purple moon shined bright and it seemed to increase in size. The pitch black fog didn't have any change to it, just that the darkness seemed even deeper and richer.

When the last wisp of energy was split up and absorbed by the two sides, they both seemed to realize they had suffered no loss and backed away. The light beams faded and the pitch black fog withdrew its tentacles.

The purple moon hung high in the skies as usual, sprinkling down purple brilliance like before. There was no change to it after it absorbed the leftover strength of the Mirage King Bead. Not too far away, the black fog tumbled again and again until a figure finally stepped out and all the remaining fog fused into his body.

"Undying!" Qin Yu's eyes brightened with joy.

The purple moon had played a vital role in breaking through the Mirage King Bead. The only reason that Qin Yu allowed the black fog to compete with it was because he felt Undying's aura within.

When he first fled from the Immortal Sect, the Primordial Singular Energy Art's yin yang energies had exploded, causing tremendous damage to Undying and placing him in a state of deep slumber. He never thought that the remaining energies from the Mirage King Bead would help awaken Undying today. To Qin Yu, this was naturally a wonderful thing.

At the very least, since Undying had regained consciousness, he would have another life-maintaining card in hand.

Undying still had a face that had no facial features at all. Even so, he always effortlessly expressed his rich emotions. "The losses are great, the losses are really great this time!" Without any trouble, it was easy for a person's mind to conjure up the bitter expression on Undying's face.

Qin Yu smiled. "The graciousness of saving a life, I will naturally remember it. If there is a chance in the future, I will make sure to pay you back."

Undying nodded in satisfaction. "Little master, I'm glad we happily settled things like that. Well, although I just woke up, I am still very tired, so unless there is anything else to say, I am going to sleep again."

He turned and vanished from sight.

Qin Yu's eyes flashed. Undying was a life form he had summoned by accident and even now he hadn't unraveled his identity. But at the very least, it seemed that Undying didn't have any ill intent towards him. As for the future...that was a matter for the future, so why worry about it too much? All things would be proven with time.

Qin Yu smiled. He looked at the purple moon above his head and slowly closed his eyes.

On the blue stone platform, Qin Yu's eyes opened and a sharp light flashed within them. He felt that his condition had reached an unprecedented new state; the energy of the Mirage King Bead had helped promote his soul to the next level. Qin Yu's final flaw in his road towards the Blue Sea boundary had finally been filled in. He had a premonition that perhaps soon he would be able to complete his breakthrough.

Mei Ruliu was the first to walk forwards. He had a fully apologetic expression. "Fellow daoist Qin Yu, I really am sorry about all of this. Sun San had served me for thousands of years and I never expected that he would be bought by others. Concerning this matter, I will definitely investigate it clearly and give you an explanation!"

To have someone of Sun San's status defect without hesitation and even force him to be desperate enough to risk his life to kill Qin Yu, even an idiot could guess just who the culprit was.

But Mei Ruliu still asked this question. This was a matter of propriety. Still, even if this investigation continued for 10,000 years, there was doomed to be no result from it.

When Qin Yu's consciousness awoke, he learned of everything that happened. When he thought of that highly courteous and humbly smiling Sun San, he felt a chill brush past his heart. He never expected that he would also be one of the Immortal Sect's people. It seemed that if he wanted to feel at ease in the future, he would have to be cautious and more cautious. Who knew? Perhaps the next person he passed by on the road would suddenly turn around and reveal their fangs.

At this time, Qin Yu came to an epiphany. If he didn't want to fall into an endless cycle of assassinations and battles, he would need to do as the Master of the Dao Arena said and discard his identity of 'Qin Yu'. However, with attention from all over, it was incredibly difficult to vanish without a trace. And if he did disappear, that would provoke that most terrifying search mission from the Immortal Sect.

Perhaps the best plan would be to have this status of Qin Yu die, and also thoroughly die in public view. Only then would the Immortal Sect feel relieved. At that time, he could escape and grow in the dark.

Unfortunately, it wasn't easy to fake his own death. He would have to take things one step at a time and see where it led him.

All of these thoughts only took several moments in Qin Yu's mind. He looked up at Mei Ruliu and cupped his hands together. "City Lord, there is no need to speak so seriously. This matter has nothing to do with you."

He stood up and bowed towards the direction of the Dao Arena. Since that person didn't appear it was clear he didn't want to be involved with him. If so, there was nothing much to say.

Kang Mingqiao laughed. "Fellow daoist Qin Yu, congratulations on your victory today. But, there is something I must tell you. The Mirage King Bead you swallowed was already my treasure." He laughed and turned, saying, "Grandmaster Tao Yuan, you don't have a problem with that, right?"

Tao Yuan paled as if he had eaten ten pounds of flies. He gnashed his teeth. "A bet is a bet. Since I lost, I accept the losses."

After speaking these words, he turned and left, completely disregarding any sense of honor or manners. Anger was one part of it, but an even greater reason was fear.

Chu Taidou had lost, so he would be the first to suffer a horrible fate. Whether it was being skinned alive, boiled, burnt to ashes, or any other punishment, Tao Yuan didn't care at all. What he cared about was how to reduce his own punishment as much as possible.

Moreover, he could no longer stay in the Zhao Empire. His actions today had clarified his position of standing on the side of the Immortal Sect. If he didn't leave as soon as possible, the wild dogs from the Demonic Path's Shadow Division would happily take their daggers and quietly slit his throat.

The Immortal Sect and Demonic Path coexisted together; this was an undeniable fact. But, both sides desperately wanted the other side to suffer and die; this was also a never-changing truth. As the two most powerful and lofty influences in the Land of Divinity and Demons, both sides had exhausted all of their skills to place as many hidden agents as possible within each other's sphere of influence. To some degree, this was something tacitly consented to by both sides. This was because only by clearly understanding the dynamics of the other side could one prevent unnecessary misunderstandings.

However, if these hidden agents rose up to the public eye of their own initiative, this was the same as giving up their qualifications to have the other side allow their existence. Following this, both sides would kill these agents without hesitation.

If he wanted to live, fleeing quickly was a key point. However, luck also played a great role in survival.

For instance, Tao Yuan would be such a person with horrible luck. Just after he left Four Seasons City, he would fall into the hands of Hou Yuangou who was hiding in the darkness. He was someone who wasn't an almighty being but could be considered a worthy opponent of one, a super Demonic Path powerhouse whose avatar was slain by Purple Moon. Because of that, he hadn't been in a good mood ever since.

"Brat, consider yourself unlucky. Who told that old witch Purple Moon to be so heavy-handed against me? Doesn't she know that ever since I was a child, I've been someone that is petty and needs to take revenge no matter what?" As he spoke, he turned towards Four Seasons City and bowed, expressing his heartfelt awe towards the apex powerhouse there. Without waiting for permission, he turned and picked up Grandmaster Tao Yuan who couldn't move or speak and could only stare into the distance with a horrified expression. Then, he left.

As for Chu Taidou who had fainted, it was unknown how much willpower he used, but he managed to wake himself up. Without caring for Tao Yuan who had fled on his own, he kept his eyes stubbornly locked onto Qin Yu.

He gasped for breath and lifted a hand, revealing a black ring on his finger. "I have a supreme alchemy treasure from the Immortal Sect that can increase the strength of my divine sense several times over, and even then I was only just able to cross the path of chaos. Qin Yu, you aren't even a Blue Sea realm cultivator so it's impossible for your soul to be formidable to such a heaven-defying degree." Chu Taidou had a strange and queer smile on his face. "You have a supreme treasure of the soul, am I right?"

Qin Yu had no expression. He quietly watched as Mei Ruliu ordered cultivators to take Chu Taidou away by force. From beginning to end, he never showed annoyance, anger, or any other negative emotions.

Even if he did have vicious thoughts in mind, he had to maintain a certain level of tolerance for someone he considered a dead man standing. Without accident, this should be the last time he saw the still gasping for breath Chu Taidou.

Mei Ruliu feebly coughed and smiled, as if he didn't know that someone would soon die in the shadows. He stood up straight and announced Qin Yu's victory along with Kang Mingqiao. Then, as the holder of the ten soul treasures gambling stake, he took them out and handed them to Qin Yu in front of everyone.

Chapter 460B – Curse of Identity

After carefully sensing the storage ring for a long time and not receiving any warning from the purple moon in his soul space or the awakened Undying, he carefully searched it with his divine sense. The ten materials were complete and intact inside, all of them of high quality. Qin Yu took them out and put them away in his own storage space, then directly tossed that considerably high quality storage tool away. Facing the Immortal Sect, he had to be extra careful, 100% careful. He couldn't allow himself to be 90% careful, otherwise he would die a pitiful death someday in the future.

The curtains to the great alchemy 'competition' that had drawn attention from all around finally fell. The splendid process and all the twists and turns that occurred left countless cultivators marveling in awe. In particular, when the Master of the Dao Arena made a move in the end, this caused countless cultivators to feel pride as they reiterated this experience to all of their friends and family.

It had to be known that apex powerhouses of the world had successfully seized their lives from the heavens and become undying beings that coexisted with the stars, the sun, and the moon. They were considered the most terrifying existences in this world. To witness an apex powerhouse take action and even listen to their voice, this in itself was a great honor.

Qi Cheng was also one of these people. But, he didn't feel even a tiny fraction of that so-called honor. Right now, his complexion was pale and there was a horrified expression plastered on his face. Chu Taidou had died in his room. Although he had already expected this, as everything happened quietly and without him noticing, he still felt incomparable fear.

However, the black ring on Chu Taidou's finger was still there. The Immortal Sect would absolutely not forget about this supreme alchemy treasure. This meant that they would arrive soon.

Qi Cheng stood in the opulent and magnificent Chu Family Mansion and he could hear the frightened sobbing cries of women in the rear courtyard. His body gradually turned icy cold. Even if the weather was in a rare state and the sun was shining down brightly on his head, he couldn't feel any warmth from it at all.

Fear and worry tore at Qi Cheng's heart but he had no way to divulge these emotions. Thus, the little blood vessels on his eyes began to fill with blood. A wild and maddening fury started to exude from his body.

Qi Cheng turned and walked away. Because of Chu Taidou's death, the entire Chu Family was in chaos. No one cared about him violating the rules and rushing into the inner sanctum.

He arrived outside a gorgeous courtyard. He lifted his leg and kicked down the front door, knocking unconscious a red-eyed maid. He grabbed onto a young and beautiful concubine with fox-like eyes and dragged her screaming onto the bed...

Soon, her sharp screams weakened and became gentle, even becoming something like a song.

It was unknown when, but another guest appeared in the room. He wore black robes and took a seat at a nearby table. He even lifted a teapot and poured himself a cup of tea. He took a sip, but because the tea seemed to have turned cold, he shook his head and put the cup back down.

He did many things, but the man and woman on the bed didn't seem to notice him at all. He was like a shadow.

After a long time, Qi Cheng grunted one last time and slumped down onto the bed. Sweat dripped down his naked muscles and he asked, "Why didn't you resist?"

The woman held onto his head and gasped. "I know that you want me. I knew it from the first time you came to visit the old man and glanced at me. I won't lie to you. The Chu Family is done for. I need to find someone new to rely on, and that person is you."

Qi Cheng chuckled. "You are quite direct." He fell silent for a moment before saying, "If I don't die, you can stay by my side. Although I won't have the same power and influence I had yesterday, I can still give you a lavish lifestyle."

The woman seemed touched by his words. Her hands wandered across his back. Just as Qi Cheng's breathing deepened and he was about to wage war on the bed once more, he heard someone helplessly say, "Although I don't mind watching another one of your erotic escapades, I don't have much time left today, so I can only apologize and disturb you."

Qi Cheng leapt up from the bed. He couldn't bother with caring about his stark naked body or the woman behind him who was trying to cover herself with the bedsheets in a panic, screaming at the same time. This was because he had a clear memory of this figure. Thus, after seeing the black-robed person, Qi Cheng knelt down without hesitation and said, "I greet the emissary. Is there any way in which I can assist you? I ask that the emissary give me orders."

The black-robed figure laughed out loud. "You really are smart. No wonder Chu Taidou favored you so much. I came here today because there is something I must discuss with you." He paused and then continued to say, "Tao Yuan has died and Chu Taidou has also died. The Immortal Sect hopes to support another person. I have chosen you. What do you think?"

Qi Cheng didn't waver at all. He directly bowed his head to the ground and said, "This subordinate greets the emissary. I am willing to become a dog of the Immortal Sect and faithfully serve!"

The black-robed figure nodded in satisfaction, "In joining my Immortal Sect, we naturally won't treat you unjustly. For now, I will let you manage the ring that Chu Taidou left behind." As he spoke he walked out, his voice light, "The Demonic Path's Shadow Division has already arrived at Four Seasons City. You should be more discreet, otherwise you might lose your small life."

Before his voice fell, his figure had already vanished from sight.

Qi Cheng clenched his fists, excitement in his eyes. He originally thought it would be impossible for him to escape catastrophe, but who knew that after crossing all those winding peaks and paths, he would come across a stroke of good fortune? To join the Immortal Sect and become a hidden agent...there were some dangers associated with it, but in exchange for living, those dangers weren't anything at all. Moreover, he had also obtained the supreme alchemy treasure Chu Taidou had.

Perhaps many years in the future, he could also become a character like Tao Yuan!

He took a deep breath and composed his surging state of mind. He turned and looked at the pale-faced woman on the bed who was still squeezing out a smile. She parted the bedsheet that covered her body a little, revealing a part of her pale and slender figure. Qi Cheng was well aware of what scenery lay beneath those sheets and what happiness that body brought to him. Even though he had just enjoyed himself, he was still ready to make trouble.

Qi Cheng grabbed the bedsheets and tossed them away. For a moment, all sorts of stimulations crashed into his mind. Because of his excitement, his actions were especially fierce. It was only two hours later that he roared out loud and stopped.

The woman beneath his body had already been exhausted and was unable to move. But, her eyes were filled with joy and expectation as she started to fantasize about her future life.

But fantasies were only fantasies. With a light cracking sound, this woman who only had a Nascent Soul cultivation widened her eyes as her neck twisted to the side. She didn't die just yet. She stared at the naked man in front of her with disbelief. They had just been enjoying each other a moment ago. Her lips moved as if she wanted to speak, but no matter how much she tried she couldn't voice a single syllable.

Qi Cheng's voice was cold and his eyes were even colder. "Sorry, but I want to live, and live well, so I cannot allow any mistakes. So, your only choice was to die today." He picked up the bedsheet and then covered the face of the woman staring at him with dead, unblinking eyes. He combed his hair and washed his face, putting on some new clothes before stepping out of the room.

After taking several steps out, Qi Cheng turned back again. He sent the unconscious maid to join her master in the afterlife. Only then did he straighten himself and walk away with a confident stride. There were many matters to process.

As for the promise he made to the woman not too long ago, it was like a gust of wind in the cold winter. It brushed past him and blew to somewhere unknown.

The ways of the world were unpredictable and filled with an infinite number of possible outcomes. No matter how much a person tried to figure it out, life would always leave a person surprised. Who would have imagined that the confident and proud Chu Taidou and the lofty and arrogant Grandmaster Tao Yuan would both lose their lives in a single day?

As for the black-robed figure, after he left the Chu Family Mansion he turned and looked towards the direction of the Dao Arena. He lightly coughed and wryly smiled. He also never expected that he, a person known for his scheming and plotting, would suffer such a great loss at the hands of a young fellow.

Qin Yu had broken through the Mirage King Bead and taken away the treasure which he had worked so much to refine. As a result, he even suffered a backlash because of it. This little fellow wasn't even at the Blue Sea realm but he had managed to accomplish this. Although he had suffered a loss, he actually felt that this situation was now quite interesting.

Suddenly, the black-robed figure seemed to sense something. He turned and stepped away, vanishing from sight.

In the Dao Arena, Solitary Westgate furrowed his eyebrows a little. A cold intent flashed in his eyes. But after a moment of hesitation, he didn't hunt down the aura he sensed. Yes, he did say that he was dissatisfied with the Immortal Sect, but to provoke the Immortal Sect wasn't a wise decision either.

Thus, he could kill Sun San, but this person he couldn't.

"Qin Yu, your current identity is now a curse. Only by ridding yourself of your identity will you be able to obtain a new life. I hope that you are smart and won't be killed off by others."