

Chapter 1271: An Old Enemy

The contestants who had managed to withstand the second attack from Lu Yin's domain rushed through the checkpoint even as more clusters of participants continued to rush toward the mountain pass. Lu Yin used his domain to attack each and every group that approached. Thus, even if they were able to withstand two of his attacks, none were confident in being able to withstand three.

The mountain shook as Lu Yin's domain kept crashing into the participants, sending numerous people flying off of the mountain.

Xi Yue managed to clear the checkpoint by using her battle technique. She eventually rushed through the checkpoint and then turned back to look at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin looked at her as well, as it had been a long time since they had last met.

Xi Yue still remembered their little conflict back in Astral-10's Sand Ocean and how Lu Yin had comprehended battle force during that time.

Back then, the two of them had possessed comparable strength, but at this moment, Xi Yue was barely able to withstand a casual attack from Lu Yin's domain. He had reached an unattainable position compared to her.

During the Sixth Mainland's invasion, most of the Souldream Tribe had been captured, and she had heard from Elder Redmoon that they had been saved by Lu Yin. Thus, Xi Yue knew that she was indebted to Lu Yin.

"Thank you," Xi Yue said.

Lu Yin smiled. "Good luck."

Xi Yue nodded, but then she suddenly went pale. "Watch out!"

Tong Zhan abruptly rushed out from a hidden place near Lu Yin and summoned a sword from star energy. Elder Tong's imprint appeared behind the youth, and a martial print appeared behind his hand. He had been waiting for precisely this moment.

He knew that he did not have much of a chance of success, as Lu Yin's domain was very powerful. However, Tong Zhan nonetheless launched an attack.

At this same time, a girl raced for the checkpoint. She was the same girl who Lu Yin had stopped from killing Kayze. Since Lu Yin had moved against her, she had assumed that Lu Yin would target her. Thus, she had been lying in wait all this time, just like Tong Zhan. However, this girl's goal was not to attack Lu Yin, but rather just to clear the checkpoint.

The two people rushed out at the same time, and they were far more powerful than all the other competitors present.

By the time that Xi Yue had shouted, Tong Zhan had already gotten close to Lu Yin. For someone of Tong Zhan's strength, he should have been able to instantly reach Lu Yin, but the distance had completely destroyed his plans.

Tong Zhan was frozen in the air, and the sword that had just left his hand was also frozen in place. Lu Yin's domain had completely restricted the youth.

The girl was also trapped.

Lu Yin turned to face Tong Zhan. "You're still so unrepentant even after I spared your life in the Daosource Sect's ruins."

He then casually waved a hand, and Tong Zhan flew to the foot of the mountain. While he was still in the air, Tong Zhan's organs were destroyed, rendering him undeniably dead.

Lu Yin ignored the corpse and then turned his focus towards the girl.

The girl bellowed, "I'm from the Jade Great World in the Neoverse! You—"

Before she could even finish speaking, she had been thrown to the bottom of the mountain.

Jade Great World? Lu Yin hated being threatened more than anything.

He had initially intended to let the girl through after a scolding, but she had tried to threaten him. After that, there was no way she would make it through the mountain pass.

ZENITH was divided into two sections, and the first four gatekeepers—Lu Yin, Bu Kong, Zhi Yi, and Yao Xuan—were the barrier sieving through the participants.

From an aerial point of view, there was a single group of people heading for the central checkpoint while another four were rushing to each of the other checkpoints, trying to use sheer numbers to make it through.

However, quantity was not enough to compensate for quality.

Lu Yin's domain, Bu Kong's sourcebox array, Zhi Yi's Vitality Qi, and Yao Xuan's spiritual force. These four powers were filtering away the competitors, and they had already forced a large number of the contestants to fall off of the mountain.

To the gatekeepers, the remaining competitors were not as important as those who were actually powerful, as all of those people were already making their way towards Shang Qing.

Lu Yin looked up as he released his domain. He no longer cared about any of the people still below him.

Yuhua Mavis was the first to rush past Shang Qing.

A short while after she passed by the central checkpoint, she disappeared, only to reappear atop a massive platform.

The platform was one of the three layers on the upper region of Zenith Mountain. Yuhua Mavis had just appeared on the third and largest layer while the second and first layers were still above her, as well as the mountain's peak.

Yuhua Mavis looked around. This platform was huge, and she could not even see its edges. This was not a simple rock platform, as there were actually various biomes in here, including forests, seas, lava, hurricanes, and deserts. She had appeared in the middle of a pile of rocks that only made up one thousandth of the platform's total area.

This stone formation looked like a forest of stone, and each rock had sharp edges with the biome being a region with a radius of ten thousand meters. There was a desert beyond the stone formation, but there was also a visible barrier of light separating the two regions.

These were the various arenas for the competitors to battle within.

This was the next stage of ZENITH. After passing through the five checkpoints, the competitors would appear in the various arenas, according to the order in which they passed. Only one person would be able to win within each arena, and the number of competitors transported to each arena would be determined by the number of competitors who cleared the fifth checkpoint. This was a battle royale.

Lu Yin and the other gatekeepers also needed to clear this next challenge, as there were no exceptions.

Yuhua Mavis was the first to arrive.

The next person to pass through Shang Qing's checkpoint would appear in the next arena, until there was someone in each arena. Then, the next person would appear in the same arena as Yuhua Mavis, and the pattern would continue.

This kind of brawl not only depended on a person's individual strength, but also their luck, as whoever was matched with Shang Qing would be quite unlucky.

After several more people crossed through Lu Yin's checkpoint, they noticed the arenas that had appeared on the screens, and some of the smarter participants immediately started calculating their chances.

At most, there were about a hundred true elites participating in ZENITH. Thus, if a person cleared the final checkpoint after the hundredth person, then their chances of meeting a true powerhouse would significantly drop. The luckiest people would be those who obtained the 500th to the 10,000th positions, as they were essentially guaranteed to not meet up with a powerhouse in their arenas.

Some people sped up while others slowed down as they processed this new information.

Everyone carefully observed Shang Qing. His attitude would determine how many people would be able to clear his checkpoint. If he behaved the same as Lu Yin and the other gatekeepers, then half of the competitors would make it through. However, if he decided to be ruthless, then the numbers might fall drastically.

More and more people began approaching the final checkpoint.

Shang Qing quietly floated in the sky with three strands of qi swirling around him, giving him the appearance of a god.

The sky was still dark at this time, but this darkness suited people like Di Fa and Yōu Qi.

Di Fa was the Bloodburn Realm's Realmling, and he had the Demonfox Bloodline, which allowed him to phase through everything.

Yōu Qi was rather similar to the Realmling, and the only real difference was that Yōu Qi's power came from Burial Garden.

Di Fa had climbed up the southern face of Zenith Mountain. Nobody had seen him clear the checkpoint, but Bu Kong had not caused the Realmling any problems since they were both from the Sixth Mainland.

At this moment, Di Fa was the closest person to Shang Qing.

Di Fa did not hesitate and immediately rushed forward.

Shang Qing's eyes glinted, and the qi surrounding him began to twist about. One strand of qi suddenly shot towards Di Fa.

The people who had participated in the competition for the Cosmic Five knew that Shang Qing had previously used these qi strands to overwhelm the other competitors back then. Only Corpse Beast had managed to force the first Honor Chosen to reveal the true power of the Tri-Yang Technique, as he had never used such tactics against Xia Jiuyou or the others.

Shang Qing did not see Di Fa as someone worthy of his Tri-Yang Technique's full power.

Di Fa had expected Shang Qing to move to stop him since he was from the Sixth Mainland, but he still held some confidence that his Demonfox bloodline would allow him to phase through everything, even Shang Qing's attacks. Thus, unless he attacked first or made some basic mistake, it would be difficult for anybody to land a strike on him.

However, as the strand of qi drew near, Di Fa suddenly felt a sense of danger and reflexively dodged aside. Unfortunately, it was already too late. The strand of qi struck his shoulder, and half of his body went numb. He crashed into the mountainside like a stone, barely able to assert any control over his body as he fell. He pulled himself upright and stared at Shang Qing in shock; how could this be?

Shang Qing was still floating in the sky, and he casually looked down at Di Fa. He waved a single hand, and the strand of qi disappeared. It had been a simple attack, but that had actually only made people more anxious, as they had no idea how they could overcome such an attack.

Half of Di Fa's body remained numb, and he kept dodging around while trying to make it past the checkpoint. An imprint appeared behind the Realmling, that of Bluedome Elder, an Emyrean Imprinter.

The moment the imprint appeared, Di Fa's power spiked, but he did not make any attempt to fight back against Shang Qing. Di Fa's only goal was to make it past the checkpoint.

Shang Qing had wanted to fight against someone from the Sixth Mainland for a long time. Actually, he had wanted to participate in the war efforts back when the Sixth Mainland had invaded, but he had been stopped by the circumstances. Hence, he wanted to stop every single person from the Sixth Mainland from clearing his checkpoint.

Everybody had their own position. Bu Kong and Zhi Yi were both a part of the Sixth Mainland's Daosource Three Skies, which meant that they had not blocked anybody from their Sixth Mainland. Yao Xuan was from the Astral Beast Domain, and since the Celestial Beast Empire was an enemy of the Human Domain, then it was understandable why he would not stop the Sixth Mainland's competitors. However, Shang Qing could not understand why Lu Yin had not stopped them.

Regardless, it did not actually matter. Shang Qing was the Hall of Honor's first Honor Chosen, and he had a duty to stop all of the Sixth Mainland's participants. Not only was he merely fulfilling his responsibility as an Honor Chosen, but he was also demonstrating the Hall of Honor's stance to the rest of the Fifth Mainland.

A strand of qi rushed at Di Fa and blocked his path as he tried to race out of the checkpoint.

The flaw of Shang Qing's qi attacks was that they could not lock onto a target, and even Ku Lei had been able to escape from the strands of qi back in the Mountain and Seas Zone.

Nobody could defeat this technique through brute force, but it was possible to dodge it.

Di Fa tried to use his speed to dodge the attack.

Suddenly, everything in his sight shot away. Di Fa's eyes narrowed as he realized that he was moving further away from the checkpoint—he had been thrown towards the foot of the mountain, where he landed with a bang.

Di Fa could not understand what had just happened to him, but the people watching had all seen that Shang Qing had just used a secret technique.

He had used Banishment, one of the Hall of Honor's secret techniques. Only Xia Jiuyou had been able to withstand this secret technique, just as the Giant Emperor had not been Banished into the distance. Aside from Xia Jiuyou, not a single one of Shang Qing's peers was capable of withstanding this particular secret technique.

Di Fa had been thrown off of the mountain by Banishment.

The competitors from the Sixth Mainland were furious. Shang Qing had used a secret technique just to deal with Di Fa. The Honor Chosen had clearly shown his stance of refusing to allow the Sixth Mainland's participants to pass his checkpoint.

He wanted to single-handedly stop every single one of Sixth Mainland's competitors here.

Chapter 1272: The Invincible Progenitor Chen

Lu Yin had already known that Shang Qing would try to keep all of the Sixth Mainland's participants from passing through his checkpoint, as he was representing the Hall of Honor. If he simply allowed the Sixth Mainland's youths to pass through, then the people loyal to the Hall of Honor would lose morale. After all, the Sixth Mainland had killed far too many of the Fifth Mainland's people.

If Shang Qing truly did his best to block off everyone from the Sixth Mainland, then they would truly have a very difficult time of things.

On the mountain's western face, Zhi Yi frowned; was Shang Qing specifically targeting their Sixth Mainland? Fortunately, he had been forced to use a secret technique against Di Fa, which meant that this person was not as invincible as people believed him to be. If he wanted to stop all of the Sixth Mainland's participants, then he was guaranteed to exhaust himself quickly.

Di Fa had been banished to the foot of the mountain, but that did not mean that he had been eliminated from ZENITH. He was still an active competitor.

It would be much easier for him to clear the first checkpoint now. Furthermore, the southern face's gatekeeper, Bu Kong, was another person from the Sixth Mainland.

Di Fa rubbed his head and stood up. But when he looked around, he noticed that his surroundings did not seem familiar; this was not the southern side of the mountain.

When he looked up at the screen, he was shocked by what he saw. He had not been sent to the bottom of the southern side of Zenith Mountain, but rather to the eastern side! Lu Yin was the gatekeeper of this section.

Di Fa had not expected to be thrown over to the eastern side, and the audience watching ZENITH were also shocked by this development.

Lu Yin was similarly confused, but after thinking it through, he realized that he was the gatekeeper who was the most likely to stop Di Fa from making it through the first pass.

Di Fa was annoyed, as he had interacted with Lu Yin in the past. Back then, he had nearly caused Lu Yin to be killed by Shang Rong, and they had fought a few times in the past as well. To be honest, Di Fa was even more cautious of Lu Yin than Shang Qing, as Lu Yin was an enemy.

When Yōu Qi arrived at the central checkpoint, he successfully passed through. He then appeared in an arena next to Yuhua Mavis.

Shang Qing had not tried to stop him.

However, Yōu Qi was quickly followed by Star Devourer. The beast had made it past Bu Kong with Yao Xuan's help, but he still needed to face Shang Qing.

After being stopped by Bu Kong, Star Devourer had become much more humble, and he had shrunk himself down to a more manageable size before racing through the final mountain pass.

Star Devourer had seen Shang Qing's secret technique, and although the beast looked down upon humans, he still felt threatened by that particular secret technique. Besides, if Star Devourer retained his full size, Shang Qing's attacks would easily hit him. With both considerations in mind, Star Devourer had shrunk down.

Shang Qing did not make a move, and he calmly watched the astral beast pass on by.

The participants from the Astral Beast Domain all felt relieved.

Qiu Shi and Ling Gong rushed through at the same time, and Shang Qing still did not move.

However, the next to arrive was Nan Yanfei.

Shang Qing turned to face the Realmmling.

Nan Yanfei was rendered speechless. He had already been extremely anxious when he had arrived at Lu Yin's checkpoint, and as for Shang Qing's checkpoint, Nan Yanfei was completely certain that he would be stopped by this final gatekeeper.

Countless people were watching him right now, so Nan Yanfei could not back down. He was a Realmmling, and if he stopped, then he would be forever seen as a coward, and he refused to suffer such a fate.

Nan Yanfei charged at the checkpoint.

A strand of qi shot towards him, and Nan Yanfei sighed to himself.

Unseen Light had rushed toward the final checkpoint at the same time as Nan Yanfei, but Unseen Light easily passed through while Nan Yanfei was stopped.

In Chaos Flowzone's western region, all the Sixth Mainland cultivators angrily cursed at Shang Qing, but there were still a few who remained calm.

The Sixth Mainland had a deep enmity with the Fifth Mainland, so it was no surprise that Shang Qing was targeting the Sixth Mainland's youth. At this moment, everything depended on the competitors' individual ability.

Fortunately, Shang Qing was not as invincible as the rumors painted him to be, and he actually seemed less intimidating than Lu Yin. The scene of Lu Yin crushing Little Arrow Saint with just one attack was still shocking and fresh in their mind.

The strand of qi flew towards Nan Yanfei, and he kept dodging around while trying to push forward through the checkpoint. Although the qi strand was unable to land an attack on the Realmmling, it always managed to block him from moving forward, as it was much quicker than him.

"Hey, it's really not realistic for you to stop everyone from the Sixth Mainland all on your own!" Nan Yanfei threatened.

Shang Qing's expression grew cold, and he continued attacking with his qi strand.

Liu Tianmu and Xin Nü soon arrived at the pass. Liu Tianmu smoothly cleared the checkpoint, but Xin Nü was blocked by another qi strand.

Xin Nü's eyes narrowed; there were now two qi strands in action.

When Bai Ling arrived at the checkpoint, Shang Qing's third qi strand blocked her path.

Shang Qing alone was blocking three experts. This was his strength.

However, as far as most people present were concerned, Shang Qing's actions were not sustainable. Even if his three qi strands could block these three experts, what would happen once a fourth person from the Sixth Mainland arrived?

It was also unreasonable to expect him to repeatedly use Banishment.

Sword Scholar arrived, but instead of trying to pass through the checkpoint, he chose to attack Shang Qing with his Scholar Sword.

Everyone's focus turned to Shang Qing. Four of the Sixth Mainland's Realmings were fighting against Shang Qing, so just how would he deal with the situation by himself?

Lu Yin looked up. Progenitor Chen was about to appear.

Further up, on the third layer, Yuhua Mavis looked up at a screen with anticipation. How big of an uproar would the reappearance of Progenitor Chen create? ZENITH was not as simple as the Mountain and Seas Zone. This competition was being broadcast live throughout the entire universe. Progenitor Chen's image would appear before everybody.

Mu En stood up. It was time for the Fifth Mainland's invincible powerhouse to appear: Progenitor Chen.

Sword Scholar's attack brushed past Shang Qing without injuring him, as it had been deflected by a qi strand. The other two strands returned to Shang Qing, leaving only one strand in front of the checkpoint. The four Realmings would be able to clear the final checkpoint if they managed to get past that qi strand.

Nan Yanfei and the others hesitated as they warily stared at the strand of qi.

"I hope that you all can force me to send out a second qi strand. Otherwise, things will just be too boring." The qi strand blocking the four competitors suddenly began to morph. A silhouette appeared. Then, eyes and a nose took shape until, eventually, a handsome yet arrogant man appeared before them.

Once the man was fully formed, Nan Yanfei and the others felt goosebumps. It was as though they were facing a monster.

Yuhua Mavis, Xia Jiuyou, and others from the Fifth Mainland grew solemn; this was Progenitor Chen.

A Progenitor was invincible, and who would dare to claim that they could rival a Progenitor at the same cultivation realm as them? Especially when that Progenitor was the most powerful expert of all: Progenitor Chen.

The moment Progenitor Chen appeared, the battle was already decided.

Illusory black flames burned as an illusory Progenitor Chen appeared in front of Nan Yanfei. The summoned powerhouse attacked.

Nan Yanfei's imprint, Bluedome Elder, appeared behind him, and the youth roared as he activated his Taotie bloodline. He felt truly threatened at this moment.

The ground trembled as Nan Yanfei's attack broke the mountain upon contact. This was the true power of a Realming's attack. However, this attack had no effect on the illusory Progenitor Chen. The figure's palm struck Nan Yanfei's chest, causing blood to spurt out his back as he suddenly flew off of the mountain.

The illusory Progenitor Chen then turned to attack Sword Scholar, who had launched an attack against Shang Qing.

Distance was meaningless to Sword Scholar, and a slash of his sword left behind a crack in the sky.

Progenitor Chen's palm hit the hilt of Sword Scholar's sword, causing the sword to fly out of Sword Scholar's hand. Illusory flames instantly engulfed Sword Scholar the next moment.

Sword Scholar's eyes narrowed, but before he could extinguish the flames, he was thrown from the mountain in the same manner as Nan Yanfei.

The illusory Progenitor Chen's next target was Bai Ling. She was terrified, as this illusory figure had instantly defeated two Realmings. She quickly retreated, but the illusory Progenitor Chen still appeared right before her, gazing at her with cold eyes.

Bai Ling went pale. She felt completely helpless.

Suddenly, the illusory figure disappeared; Xin Nü had attacked Shang Qing, causing the illusory Progenitor Chen to appear behind Xin Nü and retaliate against her.

Nobody could withstand Progenitor Chen's attacks.

Xin Nü's gaze sharpened, and she raised her right palm towards Shang Qing, completely ignoring everything behind her.

Xin Nü was very quick, but Shang Qing was still being protected by another qi strand, rendering her attack ineffective. Behind her, the palm of the illusory Progenitor Chen approached her back.

Suddenly, the illusory figure paused, and the strand of qi protecting Shang Qing also paused. Xin Nü's attack did not land on Shang Qing, but the momentum of her attack pushed her forwards, causing her to clear the checkpoint.

Bai Ling's eyes went wide, and she also raced through the checkpoint.

In just an instant, the two girls had cleared the mountain pass

Many people stared at Shang Qing, as they could not understand what had just happened.

Mu En was confused; could there be a flaw in the Tri-Yang Technique?

Shang Qing had just unleashed his power and eliminated two Realmings by summoning an illusory Progenitor Chen. However, something else had occurred shortly after, and many people were feeling terribly confused.

Shang Qing's expression darkened as he turned to look at Bu Kong, Zhi Yi, and Yao Xuan.

Who? Who had it been?

Someone had used an extremely powerful spiritual force attack to drag him into an inescapable illusion. If not for the power of the illusory Progenitor Chen, then Shang Qing would have been affected by the illusion even longer.

Who was capable of producing an illusion that not even he, Shang Qing, could overcome?

Shang Qing grew solemn as he tried to remember all of the participating experts who possessed powerful spiritual force. His gaze finally landed on Yao Xuan. Had it been him? The Celestial Demons had always been experts in spiritual force, surpassing even the Daynight clan.

Shang Qing was not able to confirm his suspicion, as there was no reason for Yao Xuan to help these people from the Sixth Mainland. However, apart from the Celestial Beast Empire's crown prince, Shang Qing could not think of anyone else who could unleash such a powerful spiritual force attack.

On the eastern side of the mountain, Lu Yin felt relieved, though he looked slightly annoyed. He had only managed to affect Shang Qing for an instant. The summoned Progenitor Chen was truly too powerful.

Fortunately, Xin Nü had successfully passed through the checkpoint, and Lu Yin had managed to repay a favor that he owed her.

Shang Qing might not know who had attacked him, but other people did. For example, the people from Gods' Origin like God Taiyi and God Qingguang had seen Lu Yin's rune lines surround Shang Qing at that moment. Although they could not determine exactly what had happened, they knew it had to be related to Lu Yin.

Yao Xuan also knew, as he was very sensitive to spiritual force.

He was shocked by the sheer power of Lu Yin's spiritual force, as the crown prince had not expected a human's spiritual force to reach such a tremendous level. Yao Xuan completely reevaluated Lu Yin, and he realized that Lu Yin would not be easy to deal with. It would be hard for the participants from the Astral Beast Domain to fulfill their mission, as Lu Yin was truly powerful since he possessed both a strong domain and a powerful spiritual force.

Hmm? Yao Xuan felt that a number of people were looking at him, particularly Shang Qing.

When he met Shang Qing's gaze, Yao Xuan felt that the first Honor Chosen had misunderstood something.

Although Xin Nü and Bai Ling had both managed to clear the final checkpoint, nobody dared to underestimate Shang Qing.

He had defeated two Realmings with just a single strand of qi while there were three swirling around him. The thought of three Progenitor powerhouses was a chilling thought.

Chapter 1273: Poor Di Fa

No matter what, everybody had to admit that Shang Qing was nearly invincible the moment the illusory Progenitor Chen appeared.

"If you really want to pass through this checkpoint, then you can just go. The higher you climb, the further you will fall," Shang Qing calmly stated as he gazed at Bu Kong, Zhi Yi, and Yao Xuan. He had changed his mind.

Bu Kong grew annoyed; Shang Qing had the exact same idea as the Daosource Three Skies. The only reason why Bu Kong had allowed so many people to go past his checkpoint was because he wanted to defeat them on a more impressive stage. Shang Qing had the exact same idea. Fine then—they would find out who was more powerful at that time.

Although Progenitor Chen was invincible, it was still a strand of qi that had no intelligence.

Intelligence was the most important thing for a cultivator, and since the illusory Progenitor was just a humanoid with no intelligence, Bu Kong did not feel threatened by it.

If Shang Qing was able to summon a Progenitor Chen that possessed intelligence, then there would simply be no point in fighting him. People could still have hope when fighting against Shang Qing since he was only capable of summoning Progenitor Chen's power, not the Progenitor's intelligence.

Since the figure that was summoned was just a shell without any intelligence, its strength could not reach the same level that the true Progenitor Chen had wielded.

Regardless, it would still be incredibly difficult to fight against a Progenitor Chen that possessed no intelligence. On top of that, Shang Qing was able to summon more than one Progenitor Chen.

As Shang Qing had said, he would simply allow certain people to pass since the final result would not change no matter what.

However, not all of the competitors from the Sixth Mainland would be able to successfully pass through Shang Qing's checkpoint. Only those who had a certain level of strength, at least comparable to a Realmking's, would be let through. But even this was enough to provide a bit of relief to the people from the Sixth Mainland.

Shang Qing was confident that he would become the champion, and since that was the case, there was no difference between defeating the others sooner or defeating them later. As long as he defeated all of the Sixth Mainland's competitors, he would be fulfilling his duty to the Fifth Mainland.

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The excitement that had suddenly spread throughout the entire Fifth Mainland was soon extinguished, and many people grew disappointed when Shang Qing stopped targeting the participants from the Sixth Mainland. The illusory Progenitor Chen transformed back into a qi strand that eliminated the weaker competitors.

Many people switched their focus back to the mountain's eastern face, as Di Fa was about to reach Lu Yin's checkpoint.

Shang Qing had thrown Di Fa to the bottom of the mountain on the eastern side, and everybody was curious about whether or not Lu Yin would allow the Realmking through the mountain pass.

At first, people had simply assumed that Lu Yin would allow Di Fa through the checkpoint, but then someone dug up some information about the old grudges between Di Fa and Lu Yin. This information even revealed the matters that had happened in the Daosource Sect's ruins.

Most people had never even heard about the Daosource Sect's ruins, and they only knew that Lu Yin and Di Fa were enemies. Little Arrow Saint had also been enemies with Lu Yin, and he had suffered a terrible fate; was it now Di Fa's turn?

Di Fa was also a bit wary of Lu Yin, but he was also confident that his Demonfox bloodline would guarantee his safety as long as he did not pick a fight with Lu Yin. Di Fa's ultimate goal was to simply push past the checkpoint.

Lu Yin stood at the eastern checkpoint where he eliminated batches of competitors with his domain. Tens of thousands of competitors had already been eliminated, but there were still tens of thousands more trying to get past the checkpoint.

Di Fa passed by countless competitors as he climbed up the mountain.

He shot a cold look at Lu Yin, but then he turned his focus onto Shang Qing. Di Fa was determined to not be hit by Shang Qing's Banishment a second time.

However, he still felt very threatened by that illusory Progenitor Chen, which was the greatest obstacle to him passing this first stage. If Shang Qing attacked Di Fa with the illusory Progenitor Chen, it would be very difficult for the Realmlyng to make it past the final checkpoint. The worst outcome was ending up like Sword Scholar or Nan Yanfei.

Di Fa brushed past the majority of the participants and drew closer to the mountain pass. Countless people grew both anxious and excited when they saw that this Realmlyng was about to enter a fight.

Di Fa overtook the other youths and rushed into the pass. He did not even look at Lu Yin as he had no intention of fighting against Lu Yin, and he was also fully confident that Lu Yin would not be able to stop him.

Lu Yin arched a brow; how arrogant. His pupils transformed into runes as he looked at Di Fa and raised a hand.

Out of the corner of his eye, Di Fa saw Lu Yin lifting his hand. He sneered and simply increased his speed. Lu Yin would need to be able to actually hit him if he wanted to stop him.

Di Fa's Demonfox bloodline allowed him to phase through anything, and if Lu Yin had enough time, he might be able to overcome the bloodline. For example, during the battle in the Cosmic Sea, Di Fa had been targeted by Qiu Shi. However, it was impossible for anyone to overcome his bloodline in a short amount of time.

Di Fa suddenly stumbled and then stared down in shock; he had stumbled? How was that possible? He should be able to phase through rocks, so how could he have stumbled?

Lu Yin was staring at Di Fa and erasing a portion of the Realmlyng's runes through Truesight.

Di Fa's Demonfox bloodline allowed him to phase through everything, and this ability increased the number of rune lines that Lu Yin could see on the Realmlyng. Therefore, when Lu Yin erased some of Di Fa's runes, the efficiency of the Demonfox bloodline also decreased.

This was why Di Fa's phasing ability had weakened.

By the time that Di Fa had realized what was happening and reacted, activating his imprint of the Bluedome Elder, it was already too late—Lu Yin's palm had struck him. A Vacuum Palm sent Di Fa flying off of the mountain, and he even broke off a piece of the mountain when he crashed into the bottom. The places he passed by left a trail of blood.

Everyone who saw this scene was stunned, as everything had happened too quickly.

That was Di Fa, one of the Sixth Mainland's Realmling! But despite his status, he had just been defeated in the same manner as Little Arrow Saint: just one attack.

Many of the competitors on Zenith Mountain felt chills run down their spines.

Bu Kong and Zhi Yi both turned to look at Lu Yin. Once again, he had succeeded in just one attack. Just how powerful was that attack?

All of the competitors currently rushing towards the central checkpoint were stunned. Who had claimed that Lu Yin had only been appointed as a gatekeeper because of his background? Even Shang Qing had had to use a secret technique to deal with Di Fa, but Lu Yin had defeated him in a single attack.

The cultivators from the Sixth Mainland were all infuriated.

On the eastern side of the mountain, Lu Yin calmly stood still. Di Fa had been too careless, thinking that his Demonfox bloodline would allow him to simply ignore all of Lu Yin's attacks.

Runes were the nemesis of everything, as anything that could influence the universe could be represented by runes. Thus, Truesight affected the most fundamental level of the universe.

However, it would have been useless even if Di Fa had prepared himself. Fewer than fifteen people participating in ZENITH were capable of withstanding the attack that Lu Yin had just unleashed, and Di Fa was not on that list, even if he was a Realmling at the Enlighter realm.

The gap between him and Lu Yin was simply too large.

ZENITH had gone on for more than a day now, and quite a few powerhouses had already been eliminated. Four of the Sixth Mainland's Realmlings had been eliminated: two by Lu Yin and two by Shang Qing.

Realmlings were comparable to the Fifth Mainland's Ten Arbiters, and the people of the Sixth Mainland had expected their Realmlings to dominate their peers from the Fifth Mainland. However, four of them had already been eliminated before the competition's official start, which was a huge insult to the Sixth Mainland.

In addition to the eliminated Realmlings, a huge number of the Sixth Mainland's youths had died. The Sixth Mainland had committed too many crimes against the Fifth Mainland during the war, and their people would be targeted no matter where they went.

Despite the targeting, some of their powerhouses had still cleared all the checkpoints and appeared on the third layer.

ZENITH would officially begin once all of the active competitors appeared on the third layer. The five checkpoints were really nothing more than a qualifying round for the actual competition.

Another day passed, and the universe was at peace with everyone watching ZENITH.

Some competitors managed to make it past the central checkpoint, while others failed.

Lu Yin calmly watched the show while leaning against a wall. The gatekeepers' mission had already ended, as all those who should have passed had moved up the mountain while the remaining competitors would never be able to get past the checkpoints.

At this time, Lu Yin just had to wait for the competition to officially begin.

Millions of people crowded around at the foot of Zenith Mountain and stared up with envious eyes. They were the competitors who had been eliminated.

Names had started to disappear from Zenith Mountain.

Coco was busily trying to treat people's injuries and offering injections, but nobody paid her any attention. She had been unlucky enough to get caught up in a battle between some powerhouses before being eliminated. There were many people who had suffered the same fate as her.

More and more people appeared on the third layer.

There were already a hundred people in the arena where Yuhua Mavis had appeared. There were both men and women, and they all looked anxious.

Only one person could pass through each arena, and Yuhua Mavis would definitely emerge victorious in her arena. In other words, the people close to her were already aware that their time in ZENITH was about to come to an end.

There were only a few dozens of true elites in ZENITH, but there were tens of thousands of arenas on the third layer. Only some unlucky few would be grouped together with an elite.

Kayze was one of the unlucky ones. His arena was a forest that held a hundred people who would soon be fighting for the single slot to continue onto the next stage of ZENITH. Kayze knew that his journey was over as soon as he saw White Silkworm in this arena.

Kayze had seen White Silkworm before. When the Sightless Clan had invaded the Outerverse, White Silkworm had fought against Lan Si, and Kayze knew that the youth was a true elite. Within the Blackblood Realm, White Silkworm was second only to the Realmking, Shang Rong, and he had always wanted to challenge Shang Rong.

After the monsters had invaded the Sixth Mainland, White Silkworm's temperament had changed drastically. He had let go of his obsession over fighting against Shang Rong, though his strength had certainly not fallen.

Kayze was resigned to his fate. This was the end of his journey in ZENITH.

There was another person in the same arena: An Shaohua. He also felt helpless, and he sighed as he met Kayze's eyes.

They were not the only unlucky participants. The Sword Sect's Long Yun, the Royal Frost Continent's Che Han, and Northline Flowzone's Ah Fan were even more unfortunate, as they were in the same arena as Unseen Light.

Each arena only held a hundred people, but the three of them had all ended up in the same one. Furthermore, their greatest obstacle at the moment was an Arbiter, which meant that it was basically impossible for them to pass through this round of the competition.

Of the tens of thousands of arenas, not many were able to attract the attention of the viewers.

The Cosmic Sect was also quite unlucky, as their third strongest disciple, Yan Kun, had ended up in the same arena as the Technocracy's Wang Yi.

In truth, Yan Kun had felt extremely anxious as soon as he saw Wang Yi because he had climbed up the northern face of Zenith Mountain, the same as Wang Yi. Yan Kun had personally witnessed Yao Gu falling down the mountain, and he still was not able to understand just how Wang Yi had attacked.

Yan Kun surveyed the surroundings. There were tens of thousands of arenas, so why did he have to end up in the same one as Wang Yi?

The Cosmic Sect's second strongest disciple, Mu Ziyang, was also feeling depressed, as he had ended up in the group with Star Devourer.

The beast had returned to his full, enormous size after clearing Shang Qing's checkpoint. His large size meant that he took up half of the arena's space by himself, forcing the rest of the competitors to squeeze into the remaining area.

Mu Ziyang was rendered speechless. This beast had been completely unaffected by the barrage of attacks that the powerhouses climbing up the southern side of the mountain had launched at him. The competitors in this particular arena would definitely work together to attack Star Devourer, but would that even accomplish anything? Mu Ziyang knew that such tactics were clearly useless and that this arena would be the end of ZENITH for him.

As the last competitor fell off the mountain, there was nobody left to attempt to clear any of the checkpoints. ZENITH had truly begun.

Chapter 1274: The Third Layer

For the next elimination round, everybody was required to participate, even the gatekeepers. There were no exceptions.

Shang Qing continued to quietly float in the sky as he looked down at the four people below him.

Lu Yin turned around and started walking towards the central checkpoint. At the same time, Bu Kong, Zhi Yi, and Yao Xuan also began moving towards the upper mountain pass.

Everyone anxiously watched the five gatekeepers; would a huge battle break out between them?

The audience had clearly been overthinking things, as the four were not dumb enough to start fighting each other at this time.

The four arrived at the central checkpoint at around the same time, and they were all quite close to Shang Qing.

Yao Xuan observed Lu Yin with fascination. His master wanted Lu Yin's tamed beast. Initially, Yao Xuan had thought that this mission would be an easy task, but he had come to discover that Lu Yin's spiritual force was surprisingly strong. Although Yao Xuan was still confident that his own spiritual force was stronger, it would not be an easy battle.

Bu Kong's eyes were fixed upon Shang Qing. The Daosource Three Skies were still young and arrogant, and not even the monsters' invasion had changed him. He had complete confidence that he would become a Progenitor in the future.

Shang Qing was the opponent that Bu Kong was the most interested in, as he wanted to fight against Progenitor Chen.

"I hope that your Tri-Yang Technique is truly as powerful as the rumors claim," Bu Kong told Shang Qing.

Shang Qing's eyes moved from Yao Xuan to Bu Kong. "I hope that you guys can force me to use my third qi strand."

"You're saying the same thing over and over again. You'll be humiliated if you end up defeated. You'll be an embarrassment to your Hall of Honor," Yao Xuan replied with a smile. He had an exotic handsomeness to him, and this unique charm was deadly to many girls.

Shang Qing looked at the Celestial Beast Empire's crown prince. "Why are you helping the Sixth Mainland?"

Yao Xuan's gaze grew sharp; Shang Qing truly believed that Yao Xuan had been the one to attack him.

Bu Kong arched a brow and curiously looked at Yao Xuan. Had this guy helped the Sixth Mainland? Was that statement just now supposed to be helpful in some way? Shang Qing was too petty and would never be able to climb to the true heights of power.

Zhi Yi kept an eye on Lu Yin. She had never forgotten about how Lu Yin had ignored her Vitality Qi. "You've improved tremendously. If you're willing, I still can ask the Progenitor of Bloodlines to take you in as his disciple."

Shang Qing and the rest stared at Zhi Yi and Lu Yin in shock.

Lu Yin shrugged. "I'll have to refuse your kind offer. I know myself best, and I'm not fated to be a Progenitor's disciple."

"How dare you," Zhi Yi replied coldly.

Shang Qing looked at Lu Yin. "With your strength, you can get into the top ten. Do your best. You're also one of the Hall of Honor's Honor Chosen."

Lu Yin frowned. He found Shang Qing's overt arrogance quite annoying.

Yao Xuan laughed. "First Honor Chosen, is that how you judge people? Be careful, as your plans might backfire on you."

Shang Qing remained calm. "I'm just being honest. All of you will learn what true desperation is in due time."

“Nonsense. Your cultivation system isn’t even complete. What desperation?” Bu Kong sneered as he walked past Shang Qing.

Lu Yin shook his head and rushed by as well.

Zhi Yi had always been watching Lu Yin. To her, Lu Yin was the most important person here, and so, she followed him through the checkpoint.

Yao Xuan smirked and moved closer to Shang Qing. “Let me let you in on a secret—I didn’t attack you.”

Shang Qing was stunned. “That wasn’t you?”

Yao Xuan laughed and ran through the pass.

Shang Qing stared at Yao Xuan’s back in shock; had it not been him? Then who could it be? Who else was capable of creating an illusion that he, Shang Qing, could not resist? Illusory battle techniques had always been the forte of the Celestial Demons, so who else could have been behind that attack?

Shang Qing suddenly thought of the Daynight clan. In the Fifth Mainland’s Human Domain, they were the best at utilizing spiritual force, just as the Sword Sect was the best at swordsmanship.

Night's End, Daybreak had been the Dayking’s signature battle technique.

Could it have been someone from the Daynight clan?

Shang Qing looked at the third layer, searching for the Dayking descendant who had comprehended Night's End, Daybreak. Could it have been her?

At this moment, the competitors already on the third layer were terribly nervous; the five gatekeepers were about to join them. All of the competitors in whichever arena a gatekeeper appeared in were guaranteed to be eliminated.

Everyone held their breath.

Bu Kong disappeared, and when he reappeared, he was standing above a sea and surrounded by a hundred people.

This particular arena was a sea, and there was no land nearby. There were a few other arenas separated by the barriers of light that were also above the sea.

The hundred competitors groaned when they saw Bu Kong appear in their midst. This was the end for them, as Bu Kong would definitely be the final victor in this arena.

Lulu Mavis covered her face. The competition was over for her. This meant that Grandini would definitely surpass her. How unlucky.

Lu Yin disappeared and reappeared within a dark cave, surrounded by a hundred people.

The people in the cave were all left speechless when they saw Lu Yin. The competition was over for them as well.

A stone in the middle of the crowd wobbled and fell to the ground after seeing Lu Yin appear. “Master, it’s not my fault! The enemy is just too cunning!”

This stone was Little Mountain God. He had thought that he was guaranteed to win this round since the arena was so well suited for him. However, he knew that everything was over for him, as he did not believe that he had any possibility of defeating Lu Yin.

Little Mountain God might have had the courage to challenge Lu Yin before the start of ZENITH, but after seeing what had happened to Little Arrow Saint and Di Fa, he would be happy as long as he was not completely destroyed.

The arena where Zhi Yi appeared did not contain anybody particularly powerful or special.

Yao Xuan appeared in the same arena as Kuang Wang, who had been prepared to use his butterfly topgrass to eliminate the star energy in the area before using his azure dragon tamed beast to secure a victory. However, after seeing Yao Xuan appear, Kuang Wang quietly put his butterfly topgrass away, as there was no longer any point in using it. It would be better to not wastefully use the butterfly topgrass and his azure dragon.

The unluckiest person was the Sixth Mainland's Mojiang Xiao. This expert from the Mo family had been utterly confident in passing this round and continuing further on in the competition. However, the moment Shang Qing appeared, Mojiang Xiao knew that his journey was over.

The true ZENITH finally began after the section with the five checkpoints concluded. There were no judges here, nor anyone to maintain control of the competition. This gave off the impression that ZENITH was being run by Zenith Mountain itself.

Everyone waited silently.

It was not that people did not want to attack, but rather that they were unable to move. They were all being restricted by some invisible force, just like when they had been transferred into each arena.

When Shang Qing appeared in the third layer, everybody was suddenly able to move again. The stage had finally begun.

Many famous powerhouses were immediately attacked, especially anyone predicted to end up as a top ten finalist. Also, the five gatekeepers were attacked by hundreds of people at the same time.

Lu Yin was in that exact situation, as the hundreds of people around him simultaneously attacked him with a variety of battle techniques.

Despite that, the large number of people attacking meant nothing to Lu Yin. He simply unleashed his domain, causing half of the attackers to collapse. The others were barely able to stand, and they all soon stopped attacking.

A round stone quickly shot towards Lu Yin.

Lu Yin's eyes flashed. He had noticed this stone the moment he had arrived in the arena. It had not been because of the stone's rune lines, but rather because it was simply a stone. Even an idiot could tell that a rock was not normal if it could participate in ZENITH. Also, the stone was actually quite famous. It was Little Mountain God, a genius from the Beast Tamers Flowzone who had been in cryostasis for a thousand years, someone who dared to challenge the Ten Arbiters.

Little Mountain God had not been affected by Lu Yin's domain, and it shot towards Lu Yin. A cultivator shattered into pieces as the wind kicked up in the stone's wake accidentally brushed by the person.

Although the stone was small, it had the same power as Bai Wanshan. This was the Mountain God's heir, an elite who had been cultivated by Beast Tamers Flowzone.

Lu Yin was curious about Bai Wanshan, so he raised a hand and tried to grab the stone.

Just when Lu Yin was about to catch Little Mountain God, the stone suddenly transformed into a human covered in stone. The human was the size of a palm and had sharp, distinct facial features. He passed through the gaps between Lu Yin's fingers and punched at Lu Yin with an enormous power that shattered the sky. "You're careless!"

Little Mountain God had unleashed his full power in that punch, and the attack's power level had gone over 300,000. No matter if it was Lu Yin or an Arbiter receiving this attack, they would not be able to endure it unprepared. Little Mountain God was confident that he could at least stun Lu Yin with this punch, which would give him a chance of defeating Lu Yin.

Lu Yin calmly observed Little Mountain God.

Little Mountain God grew uneasy, but he continued with his attack. The punch was supposed to hit Lu Yin's nose, as Little Mountain God wanted to stun Lu Yin with this attack that contained Bai Wanshan's power.

However, his punch stopped in front of Lu Yin. Little Mountain God was right next to Lu Yin, so his punch should have landed, but the distance between the two was insurmountable.

Little Mountain God had not noticed that 726 stars had already appeared around Lu Yin. To Lu Yin, speed was meaningless, and he simply stepped back as the punch neared him, maintaining a constant distance from Little Mountain God.

This was nothing more than a game to Lu Yin, but to Little Mountain God, that had been his sole chance of victory.

Lu Yin flicked a finger and sent Little Mountain God flying backwards as the stars around Lu Yin exploded with a bang.

The other competitors who had managed to remain standing all this time collapsed and lost their ability to continue fighting.

Lu Yin had deliberately not used much of his strength; otherwise, everyone would have died.

Little Mountain God crashed heavily against a wall of the cave, leaving a dent behind. He was covered in stone and had the power of Bai Wanshan, but Lu Yin's attack had almost caused him to vomit blood.

Lu Yin was shocked that Little Mountain God was still conscious.

Little Mountain God pulled himself out of the wall and unsteadily floated in the air while keeping a wary eye on Lu Yin.

“What, do you still want to fight?” Lu Yin laughed. Little Mountain God was the heir of Beast Tamers Flowzone’s Divine Grade Hall, which was one of the eight great flowzones. He was an important person, so Lu Yin did not mind speaking with him a bit.

Little Mountain God gritted his teeth. "I still have a chance!"

The cave shook as bits of stone fell off of the walls and flew towards Little Mountain God.

This stone was all from Zenith Mountain itself, and it was extremely tough,

These stones quickly covered Little Mountain God's body, and he grew visibly larger. One meter, ten meters, a hundred meters... He grew to a thousand meters, at which point he really was a stone giant looking down at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin’s brows quirked up. Judging by the number of rune lines, at this moment, Little Mountain God was comparable to Nightking Zhenwu. It was no wonder why he was confident in being able to fight against the Ten Arbiters.

Unfortunately, Little Mountain God was already too late. Judging by Nightking Zhenwu’s talent, he would have already become an Enlighter if he had been alive. Even without breaking through, he still would have been much stronger than before, just like Lan Si and Unseen Light.

Chapter 1275: Ability And Luck

Little Mountain God cultivated slower than the Ten Arbiters, and his talent could not quite compare to theirs.

However, he was unaware of the gap between his own talent and that of the Ten Arbiters.

“Petrify!” Little Mountain God roared. The rocks on his body trembled, and he rapidly shrank in size. The stones merged together as though they were melting, but his rune lines actually spiked in number.

Lu Yin was stunned; was this guy absorbing rocks? Was this a cultivation method? How interesting.

Little Mountain God shrank down to a height of five meters before finally stopping. Now, his rune lines were comparable to Lan Si’s after he had become an Enlighter, which meant that Little Mountain God had actually stepped onto the same level as the Ten Arbiters.

Little Mountain God swiped a hand at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin looked up. “That’s an interesting battle technique. It’s too bad that this is the end of your journey.”

Little Mountain God’s five meter tall body suddenly flew backwards despite no visible movements on Lu Yin’s part. The stone body crashed against the cave wall, leaving behind a massive crater.

Little Mountain God’s eyes nearly fell out as rocks continuously fell from his body. He eventually turned back into a round rock that tremblingly fell to the ground.

Lu Yin had used Vacuum Palm to defeat Little Mountain God. This rock was quite strong, and he could even fight against the elites expected to enter the top fifty, or even the top thirty. However, his luck was just too bad.

Outside Zenith Mountain, the people from Beast Tamers Flowzone sighed. Little Mountain God had lost in the end, though it had been inevitable since he had been up against Lu Yin.

Within the Divine Grade Hall in Beast Tamers Flowzone, Mountain God sighed. When he had seen that Little Mountain God had been in the same arena as Lu Yin, he had still held a sliver of hope, but Little Mountain God had been utterly defeated. Mountain God watched the screen and prayed that Lu Yin would let his heir live.

In the cave inside Zenith Mountain, Little Mountain God shakily tried to fly up, but he kept failing. Cracks had even appeared on the surface of the rock.

Lu Yin looked down at the stone. "Remember—I can defeat you now, and that will also be true in the future."

Little Mountain God mentally gritted his teeth, but he did not retaliate. He knew how to act in such a situation.

Lu Yin had obviously been the victor, so he looked up at the screen.

At this moment, a few of the arenas were being shown on the screens, as they had attracted the most attention. Among them was Lu Yin's. Other than that, the most interesting arenas included the one where the Cosmic Sect's Yan Kun was fighting against Wang Yi, where the Seven Court's Yōu Qi was fighting against Liu Tianmu, and where the Cosmic Sect's Mu Ziyang was fighting against the Astral Beast Domain's Star Devourer.

The scene in each of these arenas played out exactly like Lu Yin's; everybody tried to attack the Ten Arbiters and Wang Yi the moment the elimination round started.

Lu Yin had not seen the start of the various battles, but as he looked at the screen, he was able to see Yan Kun collapsing while Wang Yi remained standing.

Lu Yin's eyes narrowed. He was curious about Wang Yi, not only because of his abilities, but also because of his surname.

Primeval surnames were always shrouded in mystery for the people from the Fifth Mainland. Even with Lu Yin's current status, he still did not dare to poke too far into the matters concerning primeval surnames, as he had one himself.

The fact that people with such surnames drew the hatred of the entire Fifth Mainland indicated that there was a larger story behind everything.

Since there were people in the Technocracy with primeval surnames, then did the primeval surnames somehow originate from the Technocracy? If that was the case, then was Lu Yin's background related to the Technocracy?

At this time, in another arena, many of the competitors collapsed after being affected by Liu Tianmu's sword qi.

Only Yōu Qin remained standing a hundred meters away from Liu Tianmu with a solemn expression and a thick layer of ice beneath his feet.

Yōu Qin was the only one capable of fighting against Liu Tianmu.

As the inheritor of the Yōu family from the Seven Courts, Yōu Qin's strength was disappointing. Blood flowed from her wounded abdomen, and even the sword in her hand had shattered after only a few exchanges.

The people from the Neoverse were shocked; were the Seven Courts' inheritors all this weak? First, Ku Lei had been defeated by Star Devourer, and at this moment, Yōu Qin was about to lose to someone from the Innerverse. The Court of Seven Names had truly fallen far.

Lu Yin watched Yōu Qin and shook his head. The Yōu family's true inheritor was Yōu Ye'er, as she was the one who had inherited the family's secret technique. She was the true inheritor of the family, but she was also likely the most hidden of all the Seven Courts' inheritors.

Lu Yin suddenly thought of Undying Yushan. If that man was still alive, then he would actually be the most hidden, as not even his own family elders knew what the former emperor's intentions were.

Undying Yushan had become a thorn in Lu Yin's heart; as more time passed, Lu Yin had a more and more certain feeling that the former emperor was still alive. Lu Yin had also guessed that the spiritual force that he had absorbed from Liuying Zishan might be related to Undying Yushan, but that was still nothing more than a guess.

Within a short bush, a girl who looked to be only around ten or so years old turned to look at a screen. She was surrounded by hundreds of competitors who were all lying on the ground. She was Yōu Ye'er.

Upon seeing Yōu Qin's unwilling expression, Yōu Ye'er muttered, "This is your destiny."

In a different arena, Yōu Qi looked up at a screen before looking back down again.

Mu Ziyang had been completely defeated. Despite his innate gift providing him an impressive defense, he had still been unlucky enough to be placed in the same arena as Star Devourer.

Everybody in the arena had attacked Star Devourer at once, but they had all been defeated, and half of them had even died. Mu Ziyang had been lucky enough to stay alive, but he had still been nearly crippled.

Mojiang Xiao had been grouped with Shang Qing, but even without summoning any copies of Progenitor Chen, Shang Qing had still managed to eliminate all of his opponents.

Elsewhere, Lulu Mavis, Kuang Wang, and Long Yun were all defeated as well.

Michelle lost to Little Leaf King.

After losing, Michelle looked at Wen Sansi before looking up at the screen to see Lu Yin. They had once been classmates, but the gap between them had become indescribably massive.

One defeat that surprised Lu Yin was the discovery that Zhuo Daynight had been defeated.

That was not something that Lu Yin had expected.

There was nobody famous in Zhuo Daynight's arena, and she had comprehended Night's End, Daybreak. Even Nightking Zhenwu had succumbed to her illusions, as she was capable of affecting even Enlighteners with power levels of 300,000 to 400,000. Despite all of that, she had been defeated.

The person who had defeated her had a strange name: No. 0007.

Lu Yin's eyes narrowed upon seeing No. 0007. This guy was just a Hunter, so how had he been able to overcome Night's End, Daybreak?

Zhuo Daynight was not famous anywhere except within the Daynight clan.

Nightqueen Yanqing was the only other person from the Daynight clan who had joined ZENITH.

In the Daynight clan's ancestral grounds, the members of the Daynight clan were shocked to see that Zhuo Daynight had been defeated.

Nightking Dijiang was surprised and looked at No. 0007. This person had actually survived through Night's End, Daybreak. There were countless types of innate gifts in the universe, but Night's End, Daybreak had been invincible in a past era.

It seemed that defeating Zhuo Daynight had not been any sort of big deal to No. 0007, as he was calmly gazing at a screen.

There were tens of thousands of arenas spread across the third layer, and there were about a hundred people in each one. Thus, of the roughly million people who had made it past the five checkpoints, which was actually less than a quarter of the people that had initially started in the competition, only ten thousand people would be left after the elimination round on the third layer.

The battles on the third layer continued for an entire five days.

Powerhouses like Lu Yin easily and quickly overpowered a hundred people, but there were less than a hundred arenas that had true powerhouses. In the rest of the arenas, it took a few days to determine a winner, and the determining factors for the winners were not only strength, but also intelligence and background. Various tricks, threats, and bribes occurred everywhere, and thus, it took five days for a winner to emerge from some arenas.

Some of the winners were not even the strongest in their group.

However, most people did not care about such matters. Only a dozen people appeared on the screens at a time on the screens broadcast across the universe.

As the end of the round approached, there would be a higher and higher chance of each battle being broadcast.

People started disappearing from the third layer and reappearing up higher on the second layer. There were two hundred arenas on the second layer, which was fifty times less than the third layer, and there were also only fifty people appearing within each arena.

Fifty people was still a significant number.

The people who appeared on the second layer were all powerhouses. No matter how lucky a person was, no one could reach this stage without a certain level of strength.

According to some people, ZENITH still had not begun, as to them, everyone who had been eliminated so far had been nothing but filler.

Once people arrived at the second layer, they all looked around and checked their surroundings.

There were only two hundred arenas, and not many elites had been eliminated on the third layer. Thus, the chances of meeting other elites on this stage was much higher.

A lot of people were devastated when they saw who was grouped together with them.

Cang Shi's eye twitched. He felt chills run down his spine when Yao Xuan turned to look at him.

In the face of such an opponent, Cang Shi swallowed and let out a sigh. This was the end of his time in ZENITH, as he had encountered a gatekeeper.

In another arena, Lan Baobao felt like crying after seeing that she was in the same arena as Shang Qing.

Shang Qing still looked otherworldly with the three strands of qi swirling around him. He floated in the air, stunning the dozens of people who had been grouped together with him.

They had never imagined that they would ever meet Shang Qing.

Some people actually felt very happy, as they were not very powerful and had only managed to reach this stage through luck.

Instead of being eliminated by other people, they felt proud to end up in Shang Qing's group. That way, after everything was said and done, they would be able to tell others that they had been eliminated by Shang Qing. Who was Shang Qing? He was the Hall of Honor's first Honor Chosen! The true champion! It would be an honor to be eliminated by him.

A fat man anxiously checked his surroundings. "Skinny Bro! Skinny Bro! Where are you?"

The cultivators nearby all looked at the young man with curiosity. Skinny Bro? This guy had to be nuts.

The fat young man was one half of the Greenmen Duo from the Sixth Mainland, and he was currently facing Tian Hou.

Tian Hou was extremely famous, so everyone kept glancing at him.

As for the Greenmen Duo, they were nothing more than two random competitors.

This same scene was happening in another arena, as the other half of the Greenmen Duo kept shouting for Fat Bro, unable to find him.

However, the saddest person on the second layer was Charon. He stared at Lu Yin in a daze; why was this bastard here?

Lu Yin had also not expected to run into Charon in this place. What a coincidence!

Lu Yin missed the time that they had spent together, as they had been schoolmates who had been very, very close.

Chapter 1276: Outlook and Scope

As Lu Yin reminisced about his time in Astral-10, he smiled.

He thought that his smile looked friendly, but to Charon, it was a devil's smile, and a bead of sweat immediately ran down his forehead. Nothing good had ever happened to Charon when he ran into this jerk. This was the end of ZENITH for him.

Lu Yin felt insulted; why did Charon look like he had just seen a ghost? Did Lu Yin look that scary? Why did this guy get more timid the older he got?

Many people's reputations were on the line in ZENITH, and the major powers were directly vying for a scant few benefits. However, to most of the people in the universe, apart from those who were recognized as the strongest amongst the younger generation who were taking part in ZENITH, the entire competition was pure entertainment.

On the other hand, to some of the bookmakers who were handling peoples' bets for the competition, ZENITH had an immense impact on their lives.

After the end of the elimination round on the third layer, an ancient family in Beast Tamers Flowzone was in deep trouble.

Before the competition, this particular family had opened up a betting service, and they had made some calculations about the Little Mountain God's odds. Since they were tied to the Divine Grade Hall and were clearly aware of the Little Mountain God's abilities, they had had high hopes for him.

Therefore, the Little Mountain God's defeat on the third layer had placed the family in huge trouble as well as a significant amount of debt.

They had considered simply reneging on the bets and not paying their debt, but that would lead to even worse consequences as they were unaware of who had placed bets. When they initially refused to pay, a few Enlightener powerhouses had attacked the family while people from the Divine Grade Hall, the First Grade Hall, the Second Grade Hall, First Flowzone, Daynight Flowzone, and many other elite powers had come to ask for their money.

This ancient family collapsed from this one event, and even if they ended up surviving the crisis, it would be difficult for them to return to their former glory.

Also, this was just one small part of the universe.

The universe was too vast. There were countless young geniuses among the Outerverse's seventy two weaves who had joined ZENITH, so the major forces of each weave had each calculated their own odds. Some had made money while others lost it.

These bookmakers had all been confident in their odds, but the ZENITH's current results were already quite different from their expectations.

The young elites that the various bookmakers had been so confident in were mere passersby in ZENITH and were casually eliminated if they were a bit unlucky.

This had led to huge windfalls for those who had bet against those geniuses.

Aside from the Outerverse, similar situations occurred in the Innaverse's great flowzones, various areas of the Cosmic Sea, and even the Neoverse.

The battle on the third layer alone had caused thousands of bookmakers to lose everything, and this was just the beginning.

The real bookmakers had not calculated the odds for random people who might be easily eliminated. Instead, they had focused on the more famous powerhouses. For example, a bookmaker had set Lu Yin's odds to enter the top three as 10:1. That bookmaker had also posted odds for the same category for Bu Kong, Zhi Yi, Yao Xuan, and everyone else who was famous.

Nobody knew who that bookmaker was. There were many guesses, but no one was confident.

Once all of the contestants appeared on the second layer, a woman appeared in the sky and looked at a spacecraft in front of her. "I finally found it."

...

On the second layer of Zenith Mountain, the competition restarted when the invisible force restricting the competitors disappeared.

Just like on the third layer, the moment people were given their freedom, everyone worked together to attack the famous powerhouses like Shang Qing and Lu Yin.

Stars appeared around Lu Yin's body and exploded as he looked at the people attacking him.

The Cosmic Art was the Cosmic Sect's defining battle technique, and most people were unable to endure it. Among those attacking Lu Yin, there were a few people from the Sixth Mainland as well as the Cosmic Sea and the Neoverse. However, only a few remained standing after Lu Yin's initial attack, as the rest had all collapsed.

Charon was one of the ones who had collapsed. Lu Yin had made no efforts to keep an eye out for Charon, as he would be eliminated regardless of anything else.

Charon helplessly glared at Lu Yin. The gap between them had become enormous.

When they had both been at the Astral Combat Academy, Charon had actually been stronger than Lu Yin, and Lu Yin had had to blackmail Charon into protecting him within the training realms. However, Charon could no longer withstand even one attack from Lu Yin.

Two cultivators from the Sixth Mainland used their imprints and rushed at Lu Yin together.

A young girl from the Neoverse maneuvered behind Lu Yin and attacked him at the same time.

Stars vibrated around Lu Yin's body, and the three people instantly passed out.

The battle between fifty people and Lu Yin had concluded just like that.

Lan Baobao had also given up, just like most of the other competitors in her arena once they had realized that Shang Qing was with them.

Battles were still raging in most of the arenas. The most interesting battle at this moment was the one between Lei Nü and Bu Kong. None of the true powerhouses had expected to encounter Bu Kong so soon.

Lei Nü was the Hall of Honor's second Honor Chosen, and she was extremely powerful. She had comprehended a secret technique and even reached the final stage in the Astral Tower, but unfortunately, she had been defeated by Xia Jiuyou at the last moment.

On the other side, Bu Kong was one of the Sixth Mainland's Daosource Three Skies, so naturally, their battle had attracted a great deal of attention, far surpassing the amount paid to the fight between Shu Jing and Wu Taibai or the battle between Ce Jiu and Liquor Hero.

Bu Kong gave Lei Nü a curious look. He had eliminated the other competitors just a moment before, but Lei Nü had still managed to attack him.

He had only heard two words, "Autumn's Sorrow," before her attack had struck him.

This was the first time that Bu Kong had ever been attacked without being aware of the attack.

Lei Nü wore a mask that was half red and half white, and ripples radiated out from her body. Her innate gift was hypnosis.

Bu Kong immediately dodged aside, as he was now wary of this girl.

Bu Kong was eventually surrounded by the ripples and hypnotized. At that moment, he once again heard those two words. "Autumn's Sorrow."

Bu Kong crashed to the ground with a loud bang.

Lei Nü floated in the sky and stared down at Bu Kong.

Countless people grew excited at this sight; the Hall of Honor's second Honor Chosen was truly invincible!

Lu Yin stared at a screen. Lei Nü's Autumn Sorrow was a truly baffling technique. However, after all this time, he had finally gained some understanding as to how it worked. Bu Kong would not be able to understand it so quickly in the heat of battle, so everything depended on if he could counter it.

The participants from the Sixth Mainland grew nervous, as they could not understand what had happened. They had not seen Lei Nü's attack, but Bu Kong had somehow collapsed. They refused to believe that he had been defeated; he was one of the Daosource Three Skies!

Bu Kong slowly stood back and brushed off the dirt that had gotten onto his body before taking another look at Lei Nü. He still could not understand her attack, but that did not matter.

Lei Nü floated in the sky, and ripples spread out from her to cover the entire arena.

Bu Kong raised a hand, and the ripples touching him shattered instead of surrounding him.

Lei Nü's innate gift was hypnosis while Bu Kong's innate gift was decomposition. Thus, he simply decomposed Lei Nü's hypnosis.

There was a difference in their innate gifts and strength, and Lei Nü was inferior by a level.

"I'm curious to see what you look like under that mask." Bu Kong waved his hands as he spoke. Lei Nü was about to move, but she was hit before she could do so. Bu Kong had used a sourcebox array.

Then, Bu Kong appeared right in front of Lei Nü and grabbed at her mask.

Lei Nü was frozen in the air and unable to move. However, one of her hands was facing forward at where Bu Kong had appeared.

Bu Kong's hand had just touched her mask when he suddenly flew backwards and crashed against the barrier of light that isolated the arena.

This was a secret technique: Banishment. It was one of the Hall of Honor's secret techniques, and not even Bu Kong could avoid it.

Lei Nü took this opportunity to escape from the sourcebox array and rush at Bu Kong again. "Autumn's Sorrow."

Bu Kong raised a hand, and although nobody could see what he was decomposing, the space between him and Lei Nü suddenly shattered, forcing Lei Nü to race backward.

Bu Kong sneered. "I already know that your battle technique is spread through sound, so the moment I hear your words, I'll be attacked. It's a pretty good battle technique, but it's useless once a person understands how it works. I just have to stop sound from spreading."

He seized control of the star energy surrounding Lei Nü, and her star energy was completely suppressed.

This was the suppression that a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker possessed over powerhouses within the same realm. Bu Kong was at the Worldliness stage of star energy control, and even Lei Nü could not prevent her star energy from being suppressed.

No matter what battle technique she wanted to use, Bu Kong was able to disrupt the star energy inside Lei Nü. Even if he couldn't injure her, he was still able to prevent her from retaliating.

Bu Kong rushed towards her with a raised hand. As his hand swung down, Lei Nü stared at him without moving.

The two flew back at the same time, and blood spilled into the air.

This blood was not only from Lei Nü, but also from Bu Kong.

He looked at her in shock, his face pale.

This was Discipline, the most infuriating secret technique that the Hall of Honor possessed. It reflected attacks that a person suffered back to their enemy. Thus, Bu Kong's attack had struck both Lei Nü and himself.

“Autumn’s Sorrow.” Lei Nü had braced herself to receive Bu Kong’s attack, as this was the only way for her to defeat him.

Despite her heavy injuries, she still tried to attack Bu Kong right after using Discipline. She was confident that she could defeat him if she could land an attack at this moment.

However, Lei Nü had still underestimated Bu Kong. He was one of the Daosource Three Skies, and although he was the youngest, he was also the most intelligent. He had already managed to thoroughly understand the principle behind Autumn’s Sorrow, along with its flaws, after seeing Lei Nü use it just a few times. Thus, he would not be defeated so easily.

Lei Nü’s Autumn’s Sorrow struck true, and her plan succeeded. However, the results were not within her expectations.

Bu Kong was the disciple of the Progenitor of Secret Arts and had been given many secret techniques. In addition to Time Reversal, he had also mastered Reversal Cycle.

He had started using Reversal Cycle the moment he had been injured by Discipline. Thus, he had already recovered by the time that Lei Nü had attacked.

Autumn’s Sorrow could fatally injure an Enlightener with a power level of 300,000, but it was useless against a perfectly healthy Bu Kong.

“Nobody has ever used so many secret techniques against me, and you are the first person from the Fifth Mainland to injure me. Still, this is the end.” Bu Kong’s voice rang out as he swung his hand at Lei Nü. He was using his innate gift, and Lei Nü would either die or be heavily injured once he touched her.

Chapter 1277: The Hall Of Honor’s Disgrace

Lei Nü’s face was still calm beneath her mask, and her eyes revealed her steely determination. She lifted her other hand towards Bu Kong, still using Discipline.

Bu Kong was shocked, and he quickly averted his attack.

Lei Nü did not end up using her secret technique, and the two competitors pulled away from each other.

“Are you planning to fight me to the death?” Bu Kong asked Lei Nü, curious.

Lei Nü answered, “So what?”

Bu Kong laughed. “Woman, don’t forget that you’re using a secret technique, which you can’t keep using repeatedly. How many times can you withstand my attack? You’ll eventually be struck.”

Lei Nü fell silent, as this was the truth. No matter if she was facing Bu Kong or Xia Jiuyou, her weakness was too obvious, as she did not know many battle techniques. Although Autumn’s Sorrow was a strong battle technique that was difficult to counter, it was also not particularly effective.

As the Hall of Honor’s second Honor Chosen, Lei Nü had spent most of her efforts in mastering secret techniques. That was what had allowed her to surpass Shu Jing and the other young elites within the Hall of Honor. However, once she faced an opponent able to withstand her secret techniques, she lost all of her advantages.

“It seems like you really thought that you’d be able to keep up with me with just your secret techniques. Your innate gift isn’t bad, you know multiple secret techniques, and your battle technique is hard to counter as well. If you weren’t facing me, then you could’ve easily defeated any other opponent. What a shame,” Bu Kong said with a laugh, “You won’t succeed if you try to fight me with your secret technique. Do you know how Lockbreakers fight? Specifically, Boundless Advanced Lockbreakers?”

Lei Nü frowned as she kept a close eye on Bu Kong.

Many people heard Bu Kong’s words and were confused; how Boundless Advanced Lockbreakers fought?

Most people did not know the answer to that, as it was rare to encounter an Advanced Lockbreaker, especially one who had mastered sourcebox arrays.

“The greatest advantage that Lockbreakers have over normal cultivators is our control of star energy. Star energy is the main weapon for all cultivators, but are you sure that you can control your weapon?” Bu Kong mocked gently. The air nearby started swirling about, and the dust on the ground started moving as well. It was not actually wind moving about, but rather star energy. Bu Kong had seized control of the atmospheric star energy in the entire arena.

Lei Nü was stunned. The star energy inside her body had turned chaotic, and although it had only just happened to her, she was still unable to react in time. Her reserves of star energy rushed out of her body, and she collapsed onto the ground, unable to tolerate the sudden change.

The people watching saw waves billow through the arena, which were actually star energy made visible.

Lei Nü’s star energy had been forcibly and completely expelled from her body by Bu Kong.

Everyone was stunned. How was such a thing possible?

In another arena, Wu Dan was astonished. He had not expected anybody from the Sixth Mainland to have such an in-depth understanding of star energy. It was not easy for somebody to accomplish what Bu Kong had just done. Although star energy was a common energy source, it would transform into a unique energy after being absorbed by a cultivator. It was easy for a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker to suppress another cultivator’s star energy, but fully controlling the star energy within someone else’s body was another feat entirely.

Bu Kong’s mastery of star energy was terrifying since he had gained an understanding of the unique characteristics of Lei Nü’s star energy within such a short amount of time. Wait—he had just extracted Lei Nü’s star energy, and she was quite powerful. How could Bu Kong have possibly succeeded so quickly?

The more Wu Dan thought about it, the more worried he became. Were there any competitors in ZENITH who were capable of defeating Bu Kong? Lei Nü was very powerful, and even if she was not a Lockbreaker, she should still have excellent control of her own star energy.

Bu Kong must have done something.

Aside from Wu Dan, Qiu Shi, Xin Nü, and Lu Yin all felt confused as well.

Lu Yin felt that he had great control over star energy, and he had also comprehended more than one sourcebox array. With all that, he was able to easily suppress his opponents' star energy, even if they were powerhouses in a higher realm. However, dispelling the star energy from within an opponent's body was a completely different task.

It was easy to defeat someone, but very difficult to force them to fully submit.

Bu Kong had done so, but how?

Outside Zenith Mountain, the older powerhouses from the Fifth and Sixth Mainlands were also very confused at this time. There were some powerful Lockbreakers among these older powerhouses, but even for them, it would not be easy to achieve what Bu Kong had just done.

Nobody could understand how Bu Kong managed to do it, but he had turned Lei Nü into a normal person in an instant.

Countless people stared at him with respect.

In the arena, Lei Nü knelt on the ground as blood dripped out of her mask. She had been completely suppressed by Bu Kong, and he had even turned her into a normal human.

Bu Kong smirked and looked up at a screen. He saw many stunned faces looking up at various screens, and he knew that they were all focused on him.

This was the feeling that he had wanted to enjoy. He was one of the Daosource Three Skies. He was not just the Sixth Mainland's sky, but also the Fifth Mainland's.

Who else could turn an Enlighter, the Hall of Honor's second Honor Chosen, into a normal person? He was able to do so with just a wave of a hand! He must seem to wield the power of gods to the people watching!

Lu Yin silently observed Bu Kong; that person was a great threat. Lu Yin had some understanding of the battle that had just happened, and Bu Kong had countered Lei Nü's Autumn's Sorrow after she had used it just a few times. In contrast, Lu Yin had spent quite a bit of time trying to understand the technique.

Bu Kong's talent for fighting was absolutely terrifying, but his ability to dispel star energy from within his enemy's body was even more frightening.

Lu Yin could not understand how Bu Kong had managed to achieve that.

However, Lu Yin was certain of one thing; when Bu Kong had made Lei Nü into a normal person, he had immediately become one of the top candidates for ZENITH's champion.

This was what it meant to be one of the Daosource Three Skies.

The battle between Bu Kong and Lei Nü had taken quite a long time, and most of the other battles had already finished. For example, Corpse Looter had been defeated by Yao Xuan. Although Corpse Looter was quite powerful and inferior only to the Realmings, he was still powerless when up against Yao Xuan.

Cang Shi had been in the same arena as Corpse Looter, but he had immediately collapsed.

Elsewhere, Feng Shang had been defeated by Wu Dan, leaving him frustrated. However, the gap between them was simply too great to overcome.

Additionally, Liu Xiaoyun, Avery, Han Chong, and many others had also been defeated.

They were all quite powerful and could be considered elites in the universe, but they were not able to proceed any further in this competition.

Avery was ranked fourth on the Top 100 Rankings and was known as the Second War King. The bookmakers in Soulseal Flowzone had predicted that Avery would finish ZENITH with a high ranking, but he had already been eliminated.

His loss had caused multiple clans in Soulseal Flowzone to go bankrupt.

Avery had been easily defeated by White Silkworm.

At this moment, the battle that attracted the most attention was the fight between Shu Jing and Wu Taibai.

Wu Taibai was another one of the Sixth Mainland's Daosource Three Skies. He rarely showed his abilities in front of others, and Lu Yin's greatest impression of Wu Taibai was from the battle in the cauldron in the Daosource Sect's ruins. Even after Wu Taibai had forced Nightking Zhenwu to use the battle technique that he had learned from the Arrow Progenitor, Wu Taibai had still almost killed Nightking Zhenwu.

Of the three Daosource Three Skies, Wu Taibai was the most mysterious, but despite that, he had only been predicted to place seventh in the competition, only receiving that position due to his status as one of the Daosource Three Skies.

After Bu Kong demonstrated his power, everybody became curious about Wu Taibai's abilities.

Shu Jing was the Hall of Honor's third Honor Chosen, and he had fought against Bu Kong during the battle atop the Champions' Stage. Although Shu Jing was weaker than Lei Nü, he was still considered one of the elites of ZENITH.

Regardless, Shu Jing felt very frustrated during his fight against Wu Taibai, as he seemed to be unable to touch Wu Taibai no matter what battle technique or innate gift he used. Wu Taibai moved around very casually, but he always managed to barely dodge Shu Jing's attack at the last second. This made Shu Jing feel as if he had the ability to land an attack on Wu Taibai, but he failed every time.

Lu Yin's expression fell as he watched the frustrating battle. It was a complete suppression.

This was different from Bu Kong's fight with Lei Nü, as Wu Taibai only ever dodged Shu Jing's attacks with his vast experience. This member of the Daosource Three Skies had not even used any of his own abilities, but he had already managed to force Shu Jing into a corner.

Shu Jing was being played with by Wu Taibai.

Although Shu Jing was weak, he was the Hall of Honor's third Honor Chosen. Yet, his battle with Wu Taibai made him look like a child fighting against an adult.

There was a linear movement that tore the sky apart and streaked into the distance. Shu Jing tucked in his arm, but Wu Taibai still appeared right next to him and grabbed Shu Jing's arm. "Let me feel what Discipline is like."

Wu Taibai quickly retreated with an arm in his hand. He had just torn Shu Jing's arm off of his body.

Sweat dripped down Shu Jing's forehead. "Discipline."

Wu Taibai's expression changed as blinding pain appeared in his right arm. It felt as though his whole arm was going to be torn apart.

This was Discipline, a secret technique that could reflect an opponent's attack back to them.

However, the pain only lasted for a short while before Shu Jing collapsed.

He did not have the strength to fully utilize the secret technique.

Wu Taibai threw the arm away and looked over at Shang Qing. Only the person that had summoned Progenitor Chen would be able to let him feel the excitement of a true battle.

Bu Kong's battle with Lei Nü had been astounding, but Wu Taibai's fight with Shu Jing had been eerily calm.

Lu Yin did not understand Wu Taibai's battle technique.

At this time, Wang Yi was staring at Wu Taibai in confusion from another arena. Was his intuition wrong? Wu Taibai had made Wang Yi experience a familiar feeling just now, but wasn't Wu Taibai from the Sixth Mainland? Why did he give Wang Yi that feeling? This should not be possible!

Outside Zenith Mountain, Mu En was furious.

Both the Hall of Honor's second and third Honor Chosen had been defeated by people from the Sixth Mainland.

Although the first Honor Chosen, Shang Qing, was still widely accepted as the strongest contestant, the defeat of two other Honor Chosen was a disgrace to them.

Oh right, Lu Yin was still there as well.

Mu En turned to look at Lu Yin; he was Hall of Honor's fourth Honor Chosen.

The Hall of Honor would only be able to redeem themselves if two of their Honor Chosen entered the top ten, and one of them became ZENITH's champion.

Mu En immediately sent out orders to publicize the news that Lu Yin was the fourth Honor Chosen. He wanted to recast Lu Yin's image as a genius who had been groomed by the Hall of Honor rather than him being the Alliance Leader of the Great Eastern Alliance.

Although nobody understood what had happened in the fight, the results were as expected: Shu Jing lost.

Chapter 1278: Unique Battle Technique

Lu Yin turned to look at the other arenas on the screen, but then his expression suddenly changed. He saw Ce Jiu collapse, revealing Liquor Hero standing before him.

Liquor Hero looked as drunk as usual, but Ce Jiu had been defeated.

Before, Lu Yin had been paying attention to Wu Taibai and Shu Jing's battle, and he had not even noticed the fight between Liquor Hero and Ce Jiu.

Ce Jiu was from the Seven Courts' Ce family, and he had also mastered a secret technique: Astral Chessboard. Thus, he should not have gone down without a fight.

Of the Ten Arbiters, Lu Yin had seen Liu Tianmu, Wen Sansi, Lan Si, Ling Gong, Unseen Light, and Jin He fight before, so he had an idea of their limits. Liquor Hero, on the other hand, was the only remaining mystery to Lu Yin. She had never shown herself during the battles in the Mountain and Seas Zone.

Lu Yin had looked into Liquor Hero in the past, but he had not managed to uncover any information.

However, it appeared that she had to be quite powerful if she had defeated Ce Jiu this easily.

Many people had the same thought as Lu Yin. Although Ce Jiu was not the most powerful of the Seven Courts' inheritors, the Ce family had still spent a tremendous amount of resources to help him raise his strength after he was selected to enter ZENITH. Thus, at the minimum, he should have been able to enter the top thirty of the competition.

Despite his recent increase in strength, Ce Jiu had still been defeated quite quickly, which made Liquor Hero appear extremely threatening.

Half of the people on the second layer had now been eliminated. There was a much higher chance of two powerhouses running into each other on the second layer. So, while Lu Yin and the rest of the audience had watched some of these exciting fights, they had also neglected some of the other competitors.

Wen Qian'er looked fearfully at a worm crawling in front of her. Although it looked negligible, this worm had already pierced through everybody else in the arena.

Blood continued to leak from her abdomen, and she was in a great deal of pain.

This worm was Bai Mai, and people had already been talking about it before ZENITH's start. However, nobody had been able to find it after the competition had started.

In this arena, Hua Xiao had also been defeated despite being the Cosmic Sect's third disciple. His power was comparable to the Ten Arbiters, and he had also built up an impressive reputation while fighting in the Cosmic Sea.

As soon as Hua Xiao had arrived on the second layer, the other participants in his arena had all attacked him at once since he had been predicted to end up in ZENITH's top thirty.

Despite the group attack, nobody had expected Hua Xiao to suddenly be defeated by a sonic attack. His eardrums were torn apart, and blood bled out from his ears. If not for his opponent holding back, he might have died.

Hua Xiao bitterly looked at the man sitting in front of him. This man was not from the Sixth Mainland, which meant he was from the Fifth Mainland. However, he also was not from the Neoverse.

Since when had so many hidden powerhouses existed in the universe?

Ku Lei had also been defeated by Bai Ling.

Ku Lei would not have been defeated so easily if not for the injury that he had suffered from Star Devourer. As a result, Ku Lei had only been able to use half of his power, which led to him losing to Bai Ling despite them both having the same cultivation.

No matter how indignant Ku Lei felt, he had still been defeated.

Meanwhile, Ku Wei was ecstatic. He had been lucky enough to not be grouped with any elites. Thus, he had actually emerged victorious again on the second layer.

However, he became even happier when he saw that Ku Lei had lost. Ku Wei was so happy he wanted to break out in song.

The battles had already concluded in half of the two hundred arenas, and the ones with elite powerhouses had concluded much earlier. As for the arenas where there were contestants with comparable strengths, it took them much longer to determine a winner.

Lu Yin looked around, and he eventually focused on one specific arena, as he had seen someone familiar there: Tian Hou.

Lu Yin had known beforehand that Tian Hou was participating in ZENITH, but he had not expected the Cosmic Hou to encounter a formidable opponent.

In one corner of an arena of the second layer, dozens of people had collapsed onto the ground. Only ten people were left in the arena, and they all looked at Tian Hou while trembling before turning to look at the fatty who was close by.

Where had this fatty come from? His defenses were incredible!

Tian Hou was a unique creature that was actually a vortex. Nobody could actually attack such a being, and after the competitors had realized that their attacks were ineffective, they had given up on attacking. For a lack of a better target, they had turned to attack the fatty, as they found his size intimidating.

However, the fatty had not been injured in the slightest. In fact, all of the attacks had been reflected as though they had landed on a rubber ball, instantly eliminating dozens of participants.

“Skinny Bro, Fat Bro got even fatter today! I’ll unleash my power, and we’ll meet in the finals!” the fatty roared as he rushed at the competitors around him.

The fatty did not care about using things like battle techniques or innate gifts, and he simply rushed at his opponents.

He bulldozed up to seven competitors at a time while the rest of the people ran around the arena, trying to escape. Most of them ended up behind Tian Hou.

Tian Hou suddenly attacked the fatty, his Phantom Soul Strike enveloping the entire arena. In an instant, all of the remaining competitors had collapsed.

But the fatty was completely unaffected and continued to charge at Tian Hou.

Eventually, the fatty landed on the ground with a bang. He was not able to touch Tian Hou at all.

Tian Hou looked down at the fatty and used his Phantom Soul Strike multiple times.

This attack was similar to Shockwave Palm, and the more attacks that were stacked up, the more powerful the final blow would be. However, Phantom Soul Strike also produced illusions.

Countless Phantom Soul Strikes struck the fatty headon. Most people in his position would have been unable to bear such an onslaught. After all, Tian Hou and the fatty were both Cruisers, but Tian Hou was essentially invincible within his realm.

Despite that, the fatty was also nearly invincible, and Tian Hou's attacks were completely ineffective against him.

The fatty's enormous size made him look like a ball, and nothing happened to him no matter how Tian Hou attacked.

The fatty rolled over and shouted, "Fat Bro is invincible! Attack me! Attack me! Just keep trying!"

Countless people were speechless; this fatty was so thick skinned.

Lu Yin carefully observed Tian Hou. He still remembered that Tian Hou's innate gift was devouring. This Cosmic Hou was able to devour objects, items, battle techniques, and even emotions.

When Tian Hou had devoured Lu Yin's will during their fight in the past, Lu Yin had been overcome by fear at that moment. That was Tian Hou's most terrifying ability.

There were even rumors claiming that one of the Sword Sect's elders had once been devoured by a Cosmic Hou.

When Tian Hou turned to face the fatty, the people who knew about the Cosmic Hous' abilities all stopped watching. The battle was already over; the fatty's five senses and will were all about to be devoured.

However, the very next moment, something surprising happened.

The fatty screamed like a madman, and a middle aged man in a green robe appeared behind him. That man was the fatty's imprint.

After his imprint appeared, the fatty's hands struck Tian Hou and sent him flying backwards.

Everyone who saw this was stunned; what had just happened?

Lu Yin was similarly astonished; how had that fatty hit Tian Hou?

Tian Hou was a vortex, a unique being, so how had he been hit?

This was not the first time that Lu Yin had seen the Greenmen Duo. Xu San had mentioned the pair to Lu Yin in the past, and he had also mentioned that they were quite powerful.

However, at the time, Lu Yin had not paid attention to the two as he had simply thought that they were just weirdos.

Regardless, he was shocked by the fatty who had overpowered Tian Hou with a punch.

Lu Yin could see Tian Hou's rune lines from his position on the second layer.

Tian Hou's runes started to rapidly diminish, and his vortex also began to disappear.

A unique being like Tian Hou possessed an extremely high resistance to most forms of damage, but he had actually been defeated by a single attack.

Then, Lu Yin turned to look at the fatty. His rune lines had increased greatly after his imprint appeared. Both the fatty and the skinny were true elites.

Off in the distance, Wang Yi was feeling quite rattled. This was not because of how powerful the fatty was, but rather because of the battle technique that he had used. "How does he know that move?"

All of the rumors about Cosmic Hous were true; one of them really had devoured one of the Sword Sect's elders who had mastered the Thirteen Swords. The rumors surrounding this creature had been built upon the defeat of countless people from the Human Domain, as it was incredibly rare for a human to defeat a Cosmic Hou within the same realm as them, especially since the creatures' resistance to most attacks increased as they grew stronger.

The fatty had astonished everybody by defeating Tian Hou with one attack.

Those from the Astral Beast Domain were the most shocked, as they were the most familiar with the Cosmic Hou's resistances and abilities. How had the battle ended so quickly?

The skinny guy screamed from where he was on the second layer. "Fat Bro! Fat Bro, you've won! You're even fatter now!"

The fatty vaguely heard these words, and he excitedly shouted back, "Am I fatter? Really? Skinny Bro, you must have grown thinner, too."

"Fat Bro, I can hear you! We're brothers forever."

"Skinny Bro!"

"Fat Bro!"

The people next to the two were all flabbergasted; these two had to be insane.

Everyone watched the two compliment each other and rave about being fat or thin. It was quite a disturbing conversation.

You should die quicker, some people secretly cursed the two.

Tian Hou's defeat had caused another few bookmakers to be cleaned out. These people had started taking bets after seeing who had ended up in each arena, as they did not have the ability to even attempt predicting the overall winners.

Most people were unaware of the rumors regarding Cosmic Hous, so these particular bookmakers had set good odds for Tian Hou's defeat in order to lure people into betting against Tian Hou.

However, they had not expected Tian Hou to actually be defeated at this stage.

A huge surge of star energy destroyed an entire clan on a planet, leaving only an elder remaining.

The elder cried out as he looked at a screen, "I shouldn't have taken those bets! How? How could Tian Hou have been defeated?"

Another man shot the elder a cold look. "If you can't pay me, then die."

He then pressed a hand down, causing the entire place to burst into flames.

More such scenarios would occur as ZENITH progressed.

Nothing was certain when it came to gambling, and this applied to both the better and the bettors. Although the bookmakers had access to more information than the average person, ZENITH far exceeded the scope of the level of information that these bookmakers had access to. Thus, the whole event was a gamble for them as well. Since it was a gamble, then there was clearly the possibility of them losing everything.

Countless people throughout the universe scolded and cursed the fatty when Tian Hou lost.

Arch-Elder Zen calmly watched the fatty's fight on a screen in the Honor Zone. "That's a complicated battle technique, though it looks familiar."

Hightsage Grandmaster was also watching a screen on Eversky Island. Only the top ten in ZENITH would receive that reward, and only ten people from the Fifth Mainland had ever tried to do so since ancient times. However, only a handful from them had ever succeeded, though those who had succeeded would become comparable to him.

The top ten from this competition would become the strongest of all time, since ZENITH included the youths from both mainlands.

In the Cosmic Sea, waves surged beneath a dark sky.

A rugged old ship bobbed atop the waves, constantly being tossed into the sky by them.

This ship was old and seemed like it would be capsized by the waves at any moment, but this ship had existed for a long time. This ship belonged to one of the four most powerful crews in the Cosmic Sea: the Soldier Crew.

Chapter 1279: Gaia's Swamp

Soldier Crew had existed in the Cosmic Sea for a long time, though Leon's Armada was known to be the strongest of the four pirate crews. However, if one looked at the history of the pirate crews, then Leon's Armada had only been formed a little before the Ignition Crew while neither of those two could compare to Soldier Crew or the Longevity Brigade.

On Soldier Crew's dilapidated ship, countless people looked at a screen with steely eyes. Although their faces could not be seen, their eyes were filled with passion and determination.

This crew consisted of a group of old soldiers, but nobody knew where they had come from or who they were working for.

Within the Cosmic Sea sat the Human Domain's darkest prison: Gaia's Swamp.

Gaia's Swamp spread across millions of kilometers and covered an entire region. It was even capable of devouring Hunter realm powerhouses.

This was humanity's worst prison.

Gaia's Swamp did not have any prison cells. Instead, the criminals were simply chained to a wall. These chains were extremely strong, and even Enlighter realm powerhouses were barely able to break them.

There were three thousand chains locking down the Human Domain's captive criminals. This was the darkest place within the Human Domain that housed people who had committed horrendous crimes deserving of execution but were too strong to execute.

Grand Marshal Shui Chuanxiao was one of the people in this place.

In Gaia's Swamp, the Warden was the only ruler, who was the master of Gaia's Swamp. He spent most of his time sleeping and only occasionally woke up.

When he was awake, the Warden's only pastime was using his gadget. He watched movies, television shows, and countless other programs. This was also the only thing of any interest for the criminals incarcerated in Gaia's Swamp.

Whatever made the Warden happy made the prisoners happy.

At this particular moment, everyone in Gaia's Swamp was watching ZENITH on a screen.

Loud laughter erupted throughout Gaia's Swamp. "That fatty's so funny. Hahahaha! His battle technique is very interesting too. He should come to Gaia's Swamp, hahahaha."

"Prison- Warden, please be softer. They can't handle it—your laughter will kill them," a voice shakily spoke up.

"Let them die then. We'll have the space for someone new. It's been so many years, but all those who should die still haven't while those who shouldn't die are all dead. It's so boring," the Warden complained loudly with a voice that shook Gaia's Swamp.

"But- but Master Cha's father won't be able to endure it," the voice nervously protested.

The Warden immediately stopped laughing. "Hmm... Go and take a look then. Make sure that he's still alive."

"Alright." A huge pig rushed into Gaia's Swamp. This pig known as Lord Piggy was allowed to travel through Gaia's Swamp as it was Gaia's Swamp's Assistant Warden.

Lord Piggy was a thousand meters long and a few hundred meters tall. Despite that, it was still only as big as the Warden's toe.

The Warden looked at a particular arena on his screen and said, "You're a representative of Gaia's Swamp, so don't lose too badly."

On Zenyu Star, a huge crowd watched Lu Yin on the screen in awe. They only had eyes for Lu Yin.

The same thing was happening on Earth.

Only one young man looked around curiously. "This is a bustling place. I'll bring dad over to take a look once we're free."

A burly man glared at the young man, but the young man looked over and grinned.

The burly man was infuriated. "This man insulted King Lu last time he was here! Let's kick his ass!"

"Beat him!"

...

The young man was speechless. "Again? I'm leaving."

And with that, he disappeared.

In Ironblood Fort, Elder Lohar and some others were all watching a screen. The border was peaceful, as the Astral Beast Domain was also focused on ZENITH.

As he watched the battles in the various arenas play out, Elder Lohar exclaimed, "It's only been a short while, but even I can no longer defeat Lu Yin. Despite that, he's not even predicted to be in the top ten! The younger generation is really powerful."

Nightqueen Qiuyu stared at the screen with a complex expression, though she only paid attention to Nightqueen Yanqing.

Nightqueen Qiuyu had been trapped in Ironblood Weave when Lu Yin had overturned Daynight Flowzone. She hated him, but there was nothing that she could do about it. Even the entire Daynight clan had been unable to defeat that youth.

At this moment, Nightqueen Qiuyu merely wished that Nightqueen Yanqing would do well in ZENITH and not embarrass her Daynight clan.

It took ten days for the battles on the second layer to finish.

The latest round of ZENITH had attracted a great deal of attention from people, but not because it was exciting. Rather, it was simply because this round had dragged on for too long. There had been a few

arenas with competitors that possessed comparable strengths, and they had been forced to compete in both brain and brawn.

This was the reason why some battles had lasted for ten days.

Despite that, each of the combatants had successfully revealed themselves to the entire universe.

To some people, the actual competition had only begun after the competitors had cleared the five checkpoint, but for others, ZENITH would only start once the one-on-one battles started after the elimination rounds were done.

There were only a hundred competitors remaining now, and the individual battles would take place on the top layer.

From this point onwards, each battle would be one-on-one fight, and each would happen separately. After all, any competitor that had reached this stage was worthy of such treatment.

Avery, who was ranked fourth on the Top 100 Rankings, the Sixth Mainland's Little Arrow Saint, the Fifth Mainland's Ku Lei, and even the Hall of Honor's second and third Honor Chosen, Lei Nü and Shu Jing, had all been defeated. Anyone who had managed to reach the battlestage on the first layer, whether by strength or luck, was worthy of having a featured battle.

Although such a format required more time, it also amply showed the importance of ZENITH.

The goal of ZENITH was not merely to determine the top ten strongest youths, but it was also a means to encourage cultivators in both mainlands to strive for more.

This was the hope of the Sixth Mainland's three Progenitors as well. They would eventually return to reclaim their Sixth Mainland, and they did not want the cultivators from their Sixth Mainland to feel dejected. ZENITH was a means to raise their morale.

After ten days later, the individual battles finally began.

Two people disappeared from the arenas and reappeared on the first layer.

Everyone's focus shifted onto these two people.

The two who had appeared on the first layer were both very nervous. There were countless people throughout the universe who were focused on them at this moment, including their friends, family, enemies, and countless others. Everybody was watching them.

Every single thing that they did would be scrutinized by the entire universe.

They were just Explorers, so nobody had paid much attention to them during the earlier rounds, but at this moment, the whole universe was watching them.

The only fortunate thing for them was that they were both Explorers, meaning that neither of them had to fight one of the elites.

"Hello, I'm Ah San from the Cosmic Sea. Fate has allowed us to meet each other during ZENITH. May I know your name?" one of the Explorers spoke politely. Although he was acting politely, he still looked

incredibly nervous. He wanted to be more courteous than normal since the whole universe was watching him.

One of the broadcasts was definitely being sent out throughout the universe where all of the screens were focused on him.

The moment he thought about this close up, he panicked once again and gulped.

The man across from Ah San looked even more nervous. "I- I am Qian Zou."

Ah San's eyes gleamed—his opponent seemed far more nervous than himself, and his name also sounded weak. He, Ah San, would definitely win this round!

"From- from the Neoverse," Qian Zou finished before gulping. He felt speechless. How had he been featured in the very first round? His reputation was too pathetic, and there were people who wanted to catch him wherever he went. He felt bad for revealing himself in such a major event.

"Neoverse? You're from the Neoverse?" Ah San hesitated.

Qian Zou nodded.

Ah San's eye twitched. He knew that he was in trouble. The Neoverse held the majority of the Human Domain's powerhouses, and anyone from that place who was participating in ZENITH was definitely quite powerful.

While the both of them were thinking about how to defeat their opponent, the audience all started growing impatient.

"Start fighting! What are you waiting for?"

"They're taking too long. We just want to see Shang Qing and Bu Kong fight, so finish up already."

"They should just kill each other and stop wasting time."

...

There was no time limit for the battles in ZENITH, and nobody could rush the contestants no matter how long they took. However, the two already knew that everyone was watching them, and they felt a great deal of pressure.

"I'm sorry, bro." Ah San attacked first.

Ah San was quite powerful for an Explorer. He was likely able to enter the top sixty of the Top 100 Rankings. Despite that, his attack missed. There was nobody in front of him; where had that guy gone?

A punch struck Ah San's face, stunning him. Before he could even respond, dozens of punches knocked him unconscious.

This was Qian Zou's battle technique, Invisible Hands. It was his favorite technique for when he stole—no, borrowed items. He was finally able to put it to good use at this moment, and he had instantly defeated his opponent.

Many people were surprised, as they had not expected Qian Zou to be so powerful.

Qian Zou had also not expected to finish everything this smoothly. He had thought that there was a chance that his opponent might be quite powerful, so perhaps, was he also a powerhouse?

White jumped around down on the second layer. "Good job! You didn't embarrass me."

Black nodded. "Not bad, not bad."

The only highlight from the first battle was Qian Zou's battle technique. Many people were surprised when they saw it, including even Arch-Elder Zen and Highsage Grandmaster. They were not surprised by how quickly the youth had moved, but rather by how unique his movement technique was. He looked as though he was walking forward when he moved backwards, and the reverse was also true.

Many people in the Neoverse felt chills when they saw Qian Zou's performance. Fortunately, they had not been too harsh on him in the past, as it turned out that he was surprisingly powerful.

Many people also gritted their teeth and sighed when they realized that they would never be able to get their stuff back.

White jumped about excitedly on the second layer as she cheered for Qian Zou. Then, she suddenly appeared on the top layer.

She looked around in confusion as somebody appeared in front of her.

Lu Yin sighed as he saw who had appeared in front of White; why was it him? This was the end of White's time in ZENITH.

Many people sighed when they saw who had appeared. The poor girl was going to lose.

White and Black were very likable despite how mischievous they were. Many people doted on the twins and had hoped that they would be able to reach a further stage.

However, Xia Jiuyou had appeared in front of White, which meant that this would be the end of ZENITH for her.

Chapter 1280: Not Living Up To The Name

Upon seeing that her opponent was Xia Jiuyou, White reacted with a show of disgust on her face. "Ugly."

With that, she raised her hand high and said, "I give up."

These three words were loud and clear, and they were spoken with a bright tone.

No one was surprised, and many were actually relieved, as they had been worried that Xia Jiuyou would hurt White.

On the second layer, Black nodded with a serious expression. "That's right, just as Master taught us: don't be stubborn."

In the Neoverse, on Eversky Island, Highsage Grandmaster felt his teeth ache. The next generation really was not very reliable.

Xia Jiuyou remained calm, and he did not care about White's teasing remarks at all. He simply briefly appeared on the first layer before returning to the second layer, not moving once.

There were no powerhouses in the next match, as it was a battle between the third ranked person on the Top 100 Rankings, Qing Longlong, and the Realmking of the Sixth Mainland's Brahman Realm.

The power of a secret technique was too much, and the gap between Qing Longlong and the Realmking was also too large.

Cang Mu ended up going against the Cosmic Sect's Yao Ji, and he was easily defeated. Cang Mu was not even able to withstand a single Cosmic Palm.

Yao Ji was one of the Cosmic Sect's true disciples. Although he was much weaker than Lu Yin and had been bullied repeatedly by Lu Yin, Yao Ji was more than enough to deal with an opponent at Cang Mu's level. Although Cang Mu was a Cruiser, there was still too much of a gap between him and Yao Ji.

Tu Bo was pitted against Shi Zhongjian, which ended in disaster for him.

Black met Toolwielder, and just like White, she did not even try to fight. She immediately surrendered and disappeared after leaving behind one comment: ugly.

Battles continued to play out under the watchful eyes of the entire universe. Some were fast while others were slow.

Time passed, and soon, an entire day had gone by.

The following day, Lu Yin had grown bored. Two figures appeared on the first layer who perked him up and excited countless viewers.

Lan Si was facing off against Yuhua Mavis.

A battle between one of the Ten Arbiters and one of the Neoverse's top elites became the focus of both the Fifth and Sixth Mainlands.

During the events in the Mountain and Seas Zone, Lan Si had essentially been a spectator, much like Lu Yin. However, Lan Si certainly was not weak, and he had only lacked the cultivation realm to stand on the same level as the others atop the golden stage.

At the moment, Lan Si had already broken through to the Enlighter realm, and the Arbiter's cultivation was no longer lagging behind anyone else's in ZENITH.

Up on the first layer, the two contestants stood across from each other.

Lan Si solemnly stared at Yuhua Mavis. This woman had knocked Lu Yin down from the golden stage in the Mountain and Seas Zone with just seven punches, resulting in one of Lu Yin's few defeats.

Yuhua Mavis also viewed Lan Si as someone with great importance. Previously, she had not cared about the Ten Arbiters, but in the Mountain and Seas Zone, she had seen the power of some of the Ten Arbiters like Unseen Light, Ling Gong, Wen Sansi, and Liu Tianmu. Each and every one of them had revealed impressive levels of strength. On top of that, the Hall of Honor had apparently evaluated Lu

Yin, another one of the Ten Arbiters, as even more powerful than Yuhua Mavis. Thus, she no longer looked down upon any of the Arbiters.

"I heard that Lu Yin's Vacuum Palm actually came from you and that you were the first of the Arbiters to face him," Yuhua Mavis said.

Lan Si replied, "He figured it out on his own. I didn't teach him anything."

Yuhua Mavis looked grave. "It's a very powerful palm technique, but unfortunately, it is useless for me."

After she spoke, grass appeared beneath the soles of her feet and spread out in all directions.

Lan Si did not bother talking any more. Instead, he instantly made a move and fired off an invisible Vacuum Palm.

Yuhua Mavis forcefully received the Vacuum Palm. Even if Lan Si had become an Enlighter, the power of his Vacuum Palm should still be somewhat similar to what Lu Yin had used against her atop the golden stage in the Mountain and Seas Zone. This was an intimidating attack, but not for Yuhua Mavis. Although a Vacuum Palm was both fast and unseen, it could not break through her defense.

The green grass in front of Lan Si seemed to weaken slightly, but his Vacuum Palm was only able to disperse a bit of the grass. It was not enough to push all the way through this defense.

Yuhua Mavis raised a hand and smashed a volley of massive green fists at Lan Si. Each punch carried the same level of power that she had used to knock Lu Yin off of the golden stage.

Lan Si was not Lu Yin. Although Lan Si had an impressive physique and had made great progress in the Overlaying Stacks Path, he was not as strong as Lu Yin. His defenses were also inferior to Lu Yin's, and the green fist punched Lan Si to the ground, followed by many more. Over a dozen green fists slammed down on the Arbiter.

Yuhua Mavis had not held back. She was facing one of the Ten Arbiters, and it would be disrespectful to not go all out. Besides, she refused to underestimate any of the Ten Arbiters.

Lan Si was defeated. It was a clean victory.

His most powerful attack was his Vacuum Palm, but it was useless against Yuhua Mavis.

Becoming an Enlighter had only slightly increased the power of Lan Si's Vacuum Palm, and his greatest improvement was that he had gotten rid of the momentary pause before the attack's release that had originally occurred due to the huge momentum transfer. Still, that change was not enough for his Vacuum Palm to be effective on Yuhua Mavis. She had not underestimated her opponent. Lan Si was more powerful than Lu Yin when he had been in the Mountain and Seas Zone.

Lan Si coughed up blood, feeling bitter. He looked out in the direction of the far off Starfall Sea. He had received the Overlaying Stacks Path and Vacuum Palm from the Stacks Dojo, that place actually had a follow-up technique that built off of Vacuum Palm. If the Starfall Sea had not been blockaded, then he could have returned to the Stacks Dojo and learned that next technique. In that case, his strength would not have been limited to what he currently possessed.

Without the subsequent technique to Vacuum Palm, Lan Si had not been able to qualitatively improve his strength. He had not been able to return to Stacks Dojo, so he was much weaker than the other Arbiters. Even if he had attempted to learn a new technique, mastery would have come too late for ZENITH.

Lan Si had basically entered ZENITH with a strength comparable to what the other Ten Arbiters had possessed in the Mountain and Seas Zone, and his progress was not obvious.

As he had expected, he had been overtaken.

On the second layer, Lu Yin shook his head. Why was Lan Si still using the same Vacuum Palm? His innate gift allowed him to turn off his sense of pain, which was incredibly effective when facing opponents of a similar level. If not for Lu Yin's die, he would have lost to Lan Si.

However, a lack of pain was worthless when facing an opponent like Yuhua Mavis who could simply crush Lan Si.

Lu Yin was a bit disappointed in Lan Si. The strength that Lan Si had displayed was not worthy of the current Ten Arbiters.

Lu Yin was not alone, as many people were disappointed with Lan Si.

Yuhua Mavis gently asked, "Is that Vacuum Palm your only technique?"

Lan Si had nothing to say, but he also refused to retreat from his path. Since he could no longer return to the Stacks Dojo, he needed to find a way to learn more powerful palm techniques on his own.

No one could help him, so he needed to figure out a way to help himself.

Countless people throughout the universe stared at their screens. This last battle had not allowed them to see Yuhua Mavis's strength. Rather, it just demonstrated how powerless Lan Si had been before her.

Even in the Inniverse, there were countless people who were disappointed with Lan Si. They felt that ever since this Arbiter had lost to Lu Yin, his performance had not been anything impressive.

He was known as the Divine Fist, but he did not seem to be worthy of such a title.

After Lan Si, Xia Luo was unlucky enough to encounter Bu Kong.

The moment Xia Luo appeared, Xia Jiuyou's entire demeanor changed, and he became extremely focused.

Lu Yin frowned and stared at the first layer.

Xia Luo was not weak, but there was still a massive gap between him and Bu Kong.

Lu Yin had always felt that Xia Luo was somewhat unreadable, but he did not think that Xia Luo's secrets could be enough to pose a threat to Bu Kong.

Bu Kong looked like he wanted to completely crush his opponent, and he raced towards Xia Luo with his hands raised, ready to unleash an attack. Xia Luo avoided the attack and continued to evade several more times.

However, once things reached the point where Xia Luo was unable to avoid the attack, he actually stopped. "You're a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker, right? How about we compete in terms of our star energy control?"

Bu Kong was about to continue attacking, but when he heard Xia Luo's words, he smiled and his expression grew arrogant. "You want to compare your control of star energy with mine?"

Xia Luo nodded. "I'm very curious about how you dispelled Lei Nü's star energy. I won't fight against you, because I definitely can't beat you in combat. So, are you willing to change this to a contest in star energy control? If you don't want to, I won't force things."

Bu Kong sneered. "Fine then, let's see how you compare with me."

As he spoke, he raised his hand. Star energy converged before blasting towards Xia Luo.

This was a pure star energy attack.

Xia Luo's eyes grew solemn as he also raised a hand and gathered a ball of star energy that shot back towards Bu Kong.

Two pure star energy attacks clashed in midair. This was the most primitive way to use star energy, as there were no other energies or techniques affecting it. This was a straightforward comparison in the two people's control of star energy, and the results could be judged by how far each attack penetrated through the other.

Once one's star energy control reached the Worldliness realm, not only would one be able to control their own star energy, but they would also be able to see through their enemies' star energy. Such a person's vision was different from that of ordinary people.

Bu Kong thought that it would be easy for him to suppress Xia Luo, but he quickly realized that Xia Luo had actually blocked his star energy bombardment—Bu Kong's star energy control was not enough to affect Xia Luo in the slightest.

Xia Luo was not a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker, but his control of star energy had already entered the Worldliness realm. Contrary to most people's expectations, the two attacks of pure star energy collided and started to infiltrate each other.

Bu Kong frowned and suddenly looked a lot more serious, as he instantly realized that he could not easily suppress his opponent's star energy. As they continued to fight, Bu Kong grew increasingly astonished. When had so many geniuses appeared in the Fifth Mainland? It was nearly impossible to find a youth who had reached the Worldliness realm of star energy control, as anyone who had reached that level and accumulated enough lockbreaking experience would be able to work to comprehend a sourcebox array.

Any Lockbreaker whose star energy control entered the Worldliness realm would be regarded as a future Array Master.

Bu Kong, Lu Yin, and countless others were all amazed.

Xia Jiuyou was the only one who was not surprised. If Xia Luo's control of star energy had not already reached the Worldliness realm, then it would have been impossible for him to have evaded Xia Jiuyou's attack before ZENITH.

In the Neoverse, in the Lockbreaker World, Xiu Ming stared at his screen in surprise. "This child is very skilled at controlling star energy and is quite talented."

In the territory of the Seven Courts, on the landmass that housed the Xia family's headquarters, the Xia patriarch, Xia Yi, narrowed his eyes; the Nine Clones Technique's flaw had been revealed. Xia Luo was clearly one of the nine clones, but he had resisted Xia Jiuyou's will, and his masterful control of star energy might even cause the Lockbreaker Society to reach out to help Xia Luo.

Xia Yi had already heard about the Ku family. Xiu Ming had stepped in and forced the Ku family to let Ku Wei go. But Xia Yi would never willingly follow in the footsteps of the Ku family and allow Xia Luo to be taken away by the Lockbreaker Society.

Xia Luo was competing in ZENITH, and he was clearly using the competition as a platform to garner the attention of the Lockbreaker Society!

Xia Yi had guessed correctly. Xia Luo had never considered placing high in the ZENITH as a priority, as he just wanted to reveal his control of star energy in order to gain the support of the Lockbreaker Society. That way, he would have a backer to resist Xia Jiuyou with.

He had learned this from Lu Yin. It was useless to try to keep a low profile. This lesson had caused Xia Luo to realize that Lu Yin was quite smart and that he himself needed to find a power to support and strengthen his own position with. How else had some nobody from the Outerverse managed to survive even after being targeted by the Daynight clan?

Being able to fight against Bu Kong and change the battle into a contest of controlling star energy meant that Xia Luo had already succeeded. He was just about ready to admit defeat, but then, his expression suddenly changed as he stared at the star energy that he had released. Is this?

Across the battlefield, Bu Kong saw the change in Xia Luo's expression, and Bu Kong's expression grew sharp as a glint of murderous intent flashed through his eyes.