

## Chapter 9

Although Bashui Prefecture was just one of the 108 prefectures in Tianyan Province, its territory was still vast.

The Sword Marquis Mansion was publicly recognized as the strongest force within Bashui Prefecture. But there was, in fact, another stronger force. However, this force had been keeping a low-profile and never engaged in fights. Thus, the title of the strongest force was given to the Sword Marquis Mansion.

That transcendent force was none other than the Gladiator Arena!

The royals of Tianzong Dynasty were said to be behind the Gladiator Arena. The arena, which was actually the strongest force, was present in every province and county of the Tianzong Dynasty.

In Bashui Prefecture, the Gladiator Arena was located in its very center.

A masked figure wearing white robes and carrying a Long Sword ambled into the Gladiator Arena.

An attendant welcomed him and said, "Your Excellency, what can we do for you?"

"I want a duel," Jian Wushuang replied.

"Duel?" The attendant lifted his brows without any surprise.

The Gladiator Arena ran a variety of events, among which duels were the

most common event.

"Please tell me your name and Cultivation Level," the attendant said.

"Call me Nan. As for my Cultivation Level..." With a flick of his wrist, a jet of Spiritual Power burst out from Jian Wushuang.

"The Fourth Step of the Spirit Path?" The attendant smiled faintly. There were innumerable warriors coming for duels in this place. Warriors in the Transforming Sea Realm or even in Gold Core Realm had participated. Warriors at Jian Wushuang's level were all too common.

"What do you want to bet, Mr. Nan?" the attendant asked.

"This." Jian Wushuang took out the wooden box and opened it.

"Sprit-cultivating pill?" The attendant recognized the item at a glance but didn't think much of it. A few seconds later, his expression immediately changed "This is a First-class Spirit-Cultivating pill?"

"Mr. Nan, let's talk in another place. Follow me," the attendant said, lowering his voice.

Jian Wushuang put away his wooden box and nodded. He followed the attendant into a secret chamber where another servant was waiting. The servant was dressed in black robes, clearly having a higher status in this arena.

"Mr. Nan, our arena is operated in every city of Tianzong Dynasty and our rules are well-known. I believe you're also aware of it," the black-robed servant said, looking at Jian Wushuang.

"I understand. When you take part in a life-or-death duel, your victory and life is your responsibility." Jian Wushuang nodded.

"In that case, I'll arrange a suitable opponent for you as soon as possible. As for that First-class Spirit-Cultivating Pill, please hand it to me now." The black-robed servant looked at Jian Wushuang.

"Sure." Jian Wushuang was already aware of the criteria and he didn't hesitate to hand the pill over. "May I know how many First-class Spirit-Cultivating Pills I can get if I win?"

"It's always one-to-one in our arena. If you bet one pill, then naturally you'll only win one. Of course, you can keep dueling if you're confident," the black-robed servant said.

"One-to-one?" Jian Wushuang frowned and shook his head. "That's too slow. I don't have the time to duel this way. Do you have other special duels that would allow me to win more First-class Spirit-Cultivating pills in one go?"

"Special duels? Yes, we do." The black-robed servant nodded. "If you want to win more pills, there's only one way. That's the rank-skipping challenge." The servant's smile never faltered.

"A victory in the rank-skipping challenge pays tenfold. In other words, you'll get ten pills if you win. But it's not an easy challenge. 99 percent of our challengers don't succeed and most of them end up dead!"

"The rank-skipping challenge?" Jian Wushuang's expression darkened.

Being in the Fourth Heaven of the Divine Path, he needed to fight with warriors in the Fifth Step of the Spirit Path who wanted to have a duel in the arena.

"Although I'm only in the Fourth Heaven, my Heavenly Creation Skill is stronger than my peers. My Spiritual Power is also strong enough to rival the common warrior in the Fourth Step of the Spirit Path. There's still a big gap compared with the Fifth Step, but I have an advantage in Martial Arts Technique!"

Jian Wushuang had absolute confidence in his own swordsmanship.

"My swordsmanship should be enough to compensate for the gap in Spiritual Power. Besides, I also have my trump card!" Jian Wushuang's eyes gleamed, having made his decision.

"Alright, I'll take the rank-skipping challenge. Please arrange it for me!"

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A middle-aged man dressed in a loose purple robe entered the Gladiator Arena.

"Supervisor!"

"Greetings, Supervisor."

Whenever the servants passed by the middle-aged man, they paid their respects with humility.

"Are there any particularly interesting duels going on?" the man asked a Servant.

"Sir, you came right on time. We'll have a unique life-and-death duel very soon. One warrior is at the Fifth Realm of the Spirit Path, but the other is at the Fourth Realm. His breakthrough seems pretty recent too," the servant replied.

"Oh, a rank-skipping challenge?" The purple-robed man raised an eyebrow and nodded as if he was intrigued. "I'll go and check it out."

Large amounts of spectators crowded around a bluestone arena in the heart of this vast place, all intrigued by the rank-skipping challenge. The purple-robed man found a seat amid the crowd at random, staring at the bluestone arena.

With so many spectators around, the atmosphere at the bluestone arena was a chaotic cauldron of noise. The crowd raised an uproar when they saw a dark-skinned man with messy hair stepping onto the arena.

"Spear Devil!"

"Spear Devil!"

Many spectators cheered and howled, filling the whole arena.

The man stood in the arena with his long spear, his brass-bell-like eyes sweeping the crowd. He suddenly grinned, revealing a set of white teeth and an expression teeming with ferocity.

Spear Devil was considered an expert in the Gladiator Arena. In the Fifth Step of the Spirit Path, he had killed two same-level warriors in life-and-death battles using extremely brutal tactics. Due to the excellent use of his spear, he was nicknamed as such.

On the other side of the arena, a masked Jian Wushuang was quietly standing with his long sword. His exposed eyes were fixed on his brutish opponent, keenly feeling the pressure coming from him.

Jian Wushuang appeared grim.

He knew his opponent was not merely a warrior in the Fifth Step of the Spirit Path. The fact that he could win two duels in this insane arena meant his strength was far greater.

He really didn't want to fight with Spear Devil, much less in a life-and-death battle, if he didn't have to. But he simply had no choice.

After all, time wasn't on his side. His unique identity was easily identifiable through his sword arts from the Sword Marquis Mansion. He couldn't participate in duel after duel in this arena at all. That left him only one choice: risking his life to take the rank-skipping challenge and try and win all the First-class Spirit-Cultivating Pills he needed in one go.

"I've never heard of you, masked kid. It's probably your first time fighting in

the Gladiator Arena. But you're really unlucky to meet me." Spear Devil stared coldly at Jian Wushuang as if he was a predator gazing at its prey.