

Ancient GM 101

Chapter 101

AGM 0101 – A Promise

As the crowd personally witnessed Qin Wentian passing that painting to Mu Rou, they couldn't help but to silently sigh in their hearts. This fellow was actually willing to give the painting away. They couldn't help but to be jealous of Mu Rou.

Naturally, this proved that what he said earlier was true. This Divine Inscription painting was something he really created. If not, why would he be willing to give it away as a present.

“A good lass was born to the Mu Clan.” An elderly figure smiled to Mu Rou. Upon noticing this figure, Mu Rou involuntarily felt her heart trembled with shock. This person had an extraordinary status in the Royal Capital.

Not only him, several of those who came today hailed from prestigious backgrounds. There were even quite a few 3rd level Divine Inscriptionists mixed in the crowd.

“Haha, lass from the Mu Clan. Not bad.” Another figure laughed. Mu Rou slightly bowed to all those who spoke, indicating her respect.

Suddenly, Mu Rou had become the focus of everyone's attention, causing her to be slightly overwhelmed from all the attention.

“Mu Rou, as for this painting, why don't you sell it to me?”

That ordinary-looking old man clad in simple robes spoke out once again. The volume of his voice wasn't great but as the sound of his voice rang out, it seemed to possess a mystical element to it suppressed the other noises in the hall.

Mu Rou glanced over and upon noting the attitude of the surrounding weaponsmiths toward that old man, she guessed other than having an extraordinary background, he also must be someone highly respected. Involuntarily, she cast a look towards Qin Wentian.

“Little lass, you should understand the logic of holding onto this painting. Even the Elders from your academy all have their hearts filled with greed, not to mention others. If this painting remains in your possession, I’m afraid that it will only bring you endless troubles.” That old man continued.

Although his words were unpleasant to hear, Mu Rou understood that it was true. That Elder from the Royal Academy had an ugly looking expression displayed on his countenance. Today, all of his face had been thrown away.

Mu Rou was silent for a moment. This gift was something Qin Wentian had given to her for her birthday. It wouldn’t be too good if she exchanged the painting for wealth. But since keeping it with her was not an option either, what should she do?

Not to mention these random people. Her clan would also undoubtedly command her to turn the painting over. If that was the case, how could she disobey?

Qin Wentian slightly nodded his head in response to Mu Rou’s silent inquiry.

Qin Wentian had experienced it deeply with regards to the treachery humans were capable of. If this painting had not been made known to the public, there wouldn’t be any problem at all. But now that it managed to even create such waves of commotion, if this gift of his still remained in Mu Rou’s possession, it would undoubtedly be a disaster and not a fortune.

Mu Rou understood the intent of Qin Wentian, as she replied. “This gift has an extraordinary value in my heart. What would senior use in exchange if I’m willing to sell it?”

That old man glanced at Mu Rou, and he replied after a moment of silence. “A promise from me. I promise to accomplish a task for you, regardless of what it is.”

If this sentence had been spoken by someone else, the crowd would doubtlessly jeer the speaker in ridicule. However, when the old man spoke these words, silence descended in the gallery. Especially for those who knew the identity of that old man, their hearts were involuntary trembling.

Sometimes, even riches wouldn’t be able to secure a promise. Especially a promise from that old man.

At this moment, there wasn’t anyone who dared to stand out and vie for the painting with that old man.

Mu Rou's countenance froze as she hesitated, only to hear a voice drifted over from her back. "Mu Rou, agreed to his terms."

The owner of this voice appeared by the side of Mu Rou. And as she saw the figure, she couldn't help but reveal an expression of shock.

"Father."

"Hmm." Mu Rou's father nodded his head. "Agree to him."

"Okay." Noting the solemn expression on her father's face, Mu Rou shifted her gaze towards that old man. "Senior, I agree."

The old man lightly nodded as he stated. "Your clan members should know where to find me."

"Right." Mu Rou walked forwards and handed the painting to the old man.

After receiving the painting, the old man glanced at Qin Wentian as a smile could be seen on his visage.

"The younger generations are fearsome indeed. Little fellow, continue working hard. Your future is boundless. When you have time to spare, you are always welcome to look for this old man for a chat."

That old man nodded to Qin Wentian before departing.

However, his parting words caused an uproar among the remaining crowd.

The first half of his words praised Qin Wentian. The latter half meant that Qin Wentian was welcome to meet with him anytime he wished.

The spectators were all clear on what the words indicated. One must know that among the crowd, there were even some 3rd level Divine Inscriptionists who wouldn't be able to have a chance to meet with the old man, even if they begged for it.

But before that old man left, he actually said that if there was time, Qin Wentian would be welcome to meet with him for a chat!

Other than immense shock in their hearts, many people also felt pity. That heaven-defying creation, there wouldn't be any chance for them to view it in the future.

Unless...Qin Wentian created a similar painting once more.

"Mu Rou, you had it rough during this period of time. Come home with me after this, okay?" Mu Rou's father told Mu Rou.

Glancing at her father, Mu Rou felt some unwillingness in her heart.

"Don't worry. As for the cultivation resources the clan withheld from you, you will be duly compensated for all of them." Mu Rou's father gently smiled. Mu Rou froze. Was this all because of the promise of that old man? If that was the case, wouldn't that be because of Qin Wentian?

"Okay." Glancing at Qin Wentian, she added. "I will return first."

"Right." Qin Wentian smiled.

Mu Rou's father also smiled in response and nodded lightly to Qin Wentian before departing the hall with Mu Rou.

At this moment, Qin Wentian also prepared to leave. Although there were many people here, they didn't welcome his presence.

However, before he departed, Qin Wentian shifted his gaze to that Elder from before. He calmly stated.

"I have a question for you. Are all the Elders in the Royal Academy as shameless as you?"

After completing that sentence, Qin Wentian walked away. His parting words were targeted at that Elder's humiliating words from before. Are all the students of the Emperor Star Academy as shameless as you?

The humiliating tone of that sentence included the entirety of the Emperor Star Academy. Qin Wentian would naturally remember it.

The parting words he left behind at this moment were akin to a loud slap on the face of that Elder.

Not long ago, when Qin Wentian stated that the Divine Inscription painting was his, many tried to make things difficult for him, jeering at him with ridicule and even humiliating him.

The best reply to answer these types of people was to slap their faces with reality.

As Qin Wentian walked towards the exit, the crowd automatically opened up a path for him. Many of those with extraordinary statuses started to surround him, wanting to have a chance to chat with him.

Naturally, among them were several weaponsmiths who had met a bottleneck with regards to their comprehension of Divine Imprints. If they could forge a friendship and have future interactions with the youth who created that heaven-defying Divine Imprint, it would undoubtedly be of immense help to them in the future.

The 'clown' from earlier had somehow obtained such an important status. Even if it wasn't for his talent in inscriptions, just merely his talent for cultivation alone would already be sufficient enough to cause others to respect him.

Ye Zhan and Liu Yan were standing together. Both of them watched silently as Qin Wentian walked past them.

Qin Wentian was chatting to those around him with smiles on his face. He didn't even glance in their directions. Perhaps, they no longer had the qualification to attract Qin Wentian's attentions. The arrogance Ye Zhan had when he first arrived was now crushed into nothingness.

Especially Liu Yan. She was standing with her head lowered, not daring to make a sound. Maybe, they were truly people belonging to different worlds.

Ye Zhan's countenance was filled with anger and even some traces of regret. Previously, Qin Wentian had no interactions with him but had also never humiliated him. But because of the pride in his heart, he had chosen to offend him.

What worth did Ye Zhan have? In the Ye Clan, there were many youths who were countless times more talented than him. If not for the backing of his clan, he would be evaluated as utterly worthless. Just the hard work and talent of Qin Wentian alone had left Ye Zhan far behind in the dust.

This comparison was like a knife that mercilessly stabbed at his heart. However, Ye Zhan forcefully suppressed the emotions of self pity deep within himself.

In reality, Qin Wentian had never even bothered to compare himself with him, because in Qin Wentian's eyes, Ye Zhan was never someone important.

Other than Ye Zhan, Murin and Gretchen were also feeling this way.

She had once nothing but contempt towards Qin Wentian. But after today, she realized that her talent that she was so proud of was nothing but garbage in front of him. Be it combat ability or talent in comprehending inscriptions, Qin Wentian effortlessly smashed her down.

The representatives of the Sky Transport Network silently left as well, while Xue Yuan stood there mutely, not even daring to make a sound.

The Elder from the Royal Academy glared at her as he angrily berated, "Look at what you have done."

At this moment, the Elder really wanted to unleash all the humiliation and rage he felt today on Xue Yuan.

Xue Yuan lowered her head in silence. Although she was wrong on her part, the Elder had no rights to criticise her like this.

Using his status as an Elder of the academy to borrow the painting from her, how could she have dared to disagree? And as for the events that transpired later, weren't they all caused by his arrogance and individual decisions? It had nothing to do with her whatsoever.

Mu Rou could criticise her all she wanted, but this Elder did not have the rights to do so.

However, this world never runned on logic. Facing the Elder's harsh beratement, as an ordinary student of the Royal Academy, she could only silently bear with it. Was this not also a form of tragedy?

Chapter 102

AGM 0102 – Gongyang Hong

Qin Wentian walked towards the exit as Little Rascal strolled leisurely behind him. At the same time, several figures were crowding around Qin Wentian, and the one nearest to him was none other than the guest weaponsmith from the Divine Weapon Pavilion, Lu Feng. Since he was from the Divine Weapon Pavilion, naturally Qin Wentian felt closer to him.

“Senior Lu Feng, who was that old man from earlier?” Qin Wentian curiously inquired.

The old man looked extremely ordinary, but he actually dared to use a single promise to obtain the painting everyone was coveting. And moreover, at that time, no one even tried to vie with him. This unusual development had naturally been observed by Qin Wentian.

“Do you know about the Jun Lin Banquet?” Luo Feng asked as he looked to Qin Wentian.

“Yes, it's the most magnificent banquet that occurs during the end of every year and is held in the Chu Country.” Qin Wentian nodded his head.

“That's right. In the Chu Country, the banquet is an affair of utmost importance. The talent of all the youths who join the banquet can all be discerned clearly in a single glance. Not only that, the champion of the grand banquet will have a glorious future, and many of those champions usually chose to leave the country of Chu.”

Lu Feng slowly continued, “That old man is named Gongyang Hong. Today's younger generations has already mostly forgotten his name. More than 30 years ago, he was the most outstanding talent among all the elites. If I remember correctly, the position of champion in the Jun Lin banquet 34 years ago was obtained by Gongyang Hong.”

Qin Wentian's heartbeat slightly quickened. That old man was actually once the champion of a Jun Lin Banquet?

"Why does he look so feeble and old?" Qin Wentian asked, bewildered. Cultivators were usually filled with vitality, with their blood and Qi in abundance, and would usually look a lot younger than their age. Gongyang Hong should be nearing 60, and thus his looks should be in his forties but his appearance was actually that of an old man.

"No one knows why, but Gongyang Hong was the stuff of legends. The year when he emerged as the champion, the Nine Mystical Palace wanted to recruit him in, but he actually refused." Lu Feng, as he spoke to this point, glanced about uneasily and continued in a low voice. "Gongyang Hong was a man who valued his freedom. After he emerged as champion, he disappeared from Chu."

"This matter by right should have already been at an end. When someone chooses to leave Chu, there would rarely still be any news regarding them. However, a few years ago, Gongyang Hong suddenly returned to Chu. Not only that, he actually became an extraordinary top-tier weaponsmith despite not having any experiences with Divine Inscriptions when he was young. There was only a total of three times when he worked with others to forge weapons, and every time he did, the end products were all peak, 3rd level divine weapons."

"During then, this matter also caused a huge commotion. Gongyang Hong was a legend, and not only did he have astounding accomplishments in the realm of Divine Inscriptions, his own strength, although he had never displayed it in front of others, had most certainly reached such a profound level that one could not even begin to guess at."

Lu Feng sighed as he continued, filled with reverence towards a character such as Gongyang Hong. Qin Wentian also gradually understood why a promise from that old man was so valuable.

Mu Rou's father immediately got her to agree. In the future, if there was any problem that the Mu Clan would be unable to resolve, Gongyang Hong's promise could well be a path of survival for them.

"Wentian, if you have the time, you should really pay a visit to Gongyang Hong and exchange insights regarding your comprehensions towards Divine Imprints." Lu Feng smiled. He chose to use the words 'exchange insights'; naturally, in his heart, he had already regarded Qin Wentian extremely highly.

“Where is the residence of Senior Gongyang?” Qin Wentian inquired.

“Bamboo Lodge.” Lu Feng laughed. In the entire Chu Country, there was only one location named the Bamboo Lodge. This was the residence of Gongyang Hong and was not some well-kept secret. Those who knew of Gongyang Hong’s identity would often try their luck in the bamboo forest surrounding the lodge to meet with Gongyang Hong, but only a privileged few were qualified to meet with him.

“Could you bring me to that place?” Qin Wentian laughed, causing Lu Feng’s countenance to freeze. “You mean, you want to go there now?”

“Since I’m going to pay my respect sooner or later, why not familiarise myself with the road first?” Qin Wentian replied with a smile. Lu Feng naturally would not reject this request, and as they exited the Royal Academy, Qin Wentian bid farewell to the crowd and departed with Lu Feng.

.....

Qin Wentian’s painting caused waves of commotion in the Royal Capital and especially in the world of the weaponsmiths.

And as for weaponsmiths, they had always been talents that the Royal Capital wished to recruit. Thus, the fiasco at the Royal Academy had been closely monitored by many eyes.

No one would have been able to predict that surprising ending. Like before, Qin Wentian was in the limelight once again.

Ever since back then, when the youth stood amidst the falling snow the major powers had already been curious about Qin Wentian. And now, with regards to the mystical painting, Qin Wentian had caused such an upheaval and attracted an incomparably huge amount of attention. The various major powers all began to launch serious investigations regarding Qin Wentian.

Although Qin Wentian’s profile looked simple, how in the world did he become a genius in the world of inscriptions?

What exactly was Qin Wentian’s secret?

Mu Clan.

In front of a desk, an old man was reading a compiled report that had just recently arrived.

“Qin Wentian, adopted son of Qin Chuan, details are unknown regarding his actual background. Was brought to the Qin Clan by a crippled housekeeper when he was a child. At the age of 6, he was discovered to have crippled meridians. At the age of 13, his marriage engagement with Autumn Snow from the Bai Clan was set. At the age of 16, the Bai Clan annulled the engagement, Qin Wentian began to cultivate and eventually condensed an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer.

This report did not contain much detailed information. However, the points it listed were already enough to summarise Qin Wentian’s entire life. His life was pretty ordinary and basically didn’t have any cause for concern until after he entered the Royal Capital.

The old man raised his pen, as he added another sentence at the end of the report. “A genius of Divine Inscriptions, able to forge 3rd level Divine Weapons. Level of comprehension: Demon grade.”

After he finished writing, the old man put the pen down and realised that a servant was standing outside.

“What’s the matter?” The old man asked.

“Young Miss Mu Rou has returned.” The servant respectfully replied.

The old man raised his head as he looked at the servant. “Mu Rou’s birthday, was it yesterday?”

“It is so.” The servant nodded his head.

“Prepare a feast.” The old man instructed, “Make it a big event, and get everyone in the clan to celebrate it together. However, there must be a feeling of family warmth.”

“Roger.” The servant nodded as he bowed and retreated, beginning his preparations.

.....

In a room in the Ou Clan, there was a figure similarly standing in front of a desk, looking at the compiled report as traces of contemplation could be seen in his eyes.

This middle-aged man looked studious and elegant, akin to a simple scholar.

The name on the report he was reading was 'Qin Wentian' as well. Once, he had not seen the need to pay attention to this name. Now, however, he only hoped that the owner of the name would have gone to hell back then.

Although this youth from Sky Harmony City had an above-average talent, the middle-aged man had reason to believe that with Orchon and Yanaro in the Emperor Star Academy, they shouldn't have any problems with extinguishing this genius before he fully matured.

However, this genius matured way faster than his expectations, quickly gaining the attention of the Emperor Star Academy, and now he had even obtained recognition and was protected by the will of academy.

Now, it wasn't going to be so simple if he wanted to remove the youth.

"What's the rate of success if we hire someone to kill him?"

"100%." Behind him stood a figure who calmly replied to the question while nodding his head to the middle-aged man. He dared to guarantee that Qin Wentian would surely become a dead man.

"What's the probability that the Emperor Star Academy would find out?" The middle-aged man continued asking.

"If we directly assassinate him right now, about 90%" That figure replied again, extremely confident with his answer.

"Then, regarding the probability, we will wait till it becomes 10% before we make a move. Of course, it would be the best if we could get someone else to execute the deed." The middle-aged man instructed. Naturally, he would definitely not risk himself with a probability of 90%. Wasn't this courting death?

If it weren't for Qin Wentian's monstrous rate of growth, he would never have even thought of doing this. The Ye Clan should be even more anxious than him by right.

"Yes." The figure standing behind replied.

"If we borrow the hands of others, this matter would definitely not be linked to my Ou Clan. Definitely not, there won't even be the remote probability that we will be suspected." The middle aged man contemplated to himself as he spoke again.

No one was willing to test how deep the waters were and break the will of the Emperor Star Academy. Even the Royal Clan had to step back to some degree and give face to the Emperor Star Academy. His Ou Clan naturally did not have the capacity to act brazenly.

However, he believed that as long as he commanded, the figure standing behind him would surely do a good job. That mysterious figure had never failed at a single task throughout many years and had always excelled outstandingly.

"The date of the Jun Lin banquet was soon arriving. Let's hope that Orchon will be able to attain some accomplishments for the Ou Clan."

Chapter 103

AGM 0103 – Riddle within the painting

In the outskirts of the Royal Capital, there was a region that was overgrown by lush green shoots of bamboo. This bamboo forest was situated right in front of a part of the Dark Forest, and was extremely peaceful and quiet.

Qin Wentian and Lu Feng arrived at this particular location, staring at the bright greenery of the bamboo forest that was filled with a sense of brimming vitality.

"We've arrived, however I'm unable to accompany you inside." Lu Feng bitterly smiled. "No one would dare to barge in and enter the forest unannounced."

Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head as he carried Little Rascal, taking a step forward as he called out. "Qin Wentian of the junior generation pays his respect to Senior Gongyang."

“You may enter.” Within the bamboo forest, a voice drifted out. Qin Wentian only saw the bamboos in front of him seemingly come to life as they shifted their positions, opening up a path through the middle.

“I shall say my goodbyes here.” Lu Feng smiled.

“Many thanks.” Qin Wentian nodded as he entered the pathway, strolling through the bamboo forest.

This pathway was extremely long, and after a certain distance, Qin Wentian noticed a simple-looking lodge in front of him. It was peaceful and quiet, giving people a feeling that it was separated from the rest of the world.

“What a wondrous place.” Qin Wentian silently exclaimed in his heart. As he approached, he noticed that Gongyang Hong was sitting in front of the lodge, inscribing something. In front of him, there were many scrolls of paintings that were inscribed with incredibly complicated runic outlines. It was as though all of them were Divine Imprints.

“Senior Gongyang.” Qin Wentian bowed to show his respect.

“Little fellow, you sure arrived fast. Come over here and take a look at this painting.” Gongyang Hong remarked to Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian nodded as he sat down on the seat. Gongyang Hong passed a painting over to him, causing Qin Wentian’s countenance to stiffen. The painting in front of him was actually yet another Human-type Divine Inscription painting.

“Senior, this is?” Qin Wentian inquired.

“Naturally, it’s a Divine Inscription painting as well. How long would you need to comprehend the Divine Imprints in it?” Gongyang Hong asked.

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows upon hearing the words of Gongyang Hong, as he studied the painting.

In the painting, there was an silhouette of a ravishing beauty pointing her finger forward. From it, one could sense an overwhelming pressure gushing relentlessly forth, stabbing into the eyes of the spectator.

“Buzz!” The mind of Qin Wentian shuddered violently as he involuntarily let go of the painting, his heart trembling with shock.

“I’m afraid that the Divine Imprints in the painting are of 4th level inscriptions. It’s impossible for me if I want to gain any insights regarding this in the short term.” Qin Wentian replied. “Is this painting inscribed by Senior?”

“How could I have such a high level of comprehension?” Gongyang Hong smiled as he shook his head.

“Regarding your painting, how did you successfully inscribe it?” Gongyang Hong continued.

“Under a special state of epiphany, I had wanted to transmit the energy within my body into the painting, and due to a lucky combination of various factors, I managed to succeed.” Qin Wentian respectfully replied.

“Transmit the energy within your body to inside the painting?” Gongyang Hong repeated as a bright light flickered in his calm eyes.

“Yes, and sometimes I wonder, are Divine Imprints not the same as innate techniques? After all, they share several unique characteristics.” Qin Wentian nodded his head as he continued. However, his casual musings actually caused Gongyang Hong to abruptly tremble, as though sudden waves of realisation hit him.

“Divine Imprints, the same as innate techniques?”

Gongyang Hong’s body lightly shook as he wondered about all of the possibilities.

“Innate techniques, innate techniques.” Gongyang Hong mumbled as though he had grasped something, his gaze fixated on the Divine Inscription painting in front of Qin Wentian.

“If this painting was an innate technique, what type of innate technique would it be?” Gongyang Hong murmured, gazing at that painting blankly.

4th level Divine Inscriptions were countless times more intricate when compared to 3rd level Divine Inscriptions. Qin Wentian had no way to decipher them. As he focused his attention onto the painting, he only felt an terrifying sharp, overwhelming sense of pressure gushing towards him.

Qin Wentian sat down cross-leggedly as he closed his eyes, activating the Dreamcast Art as he stepped into his dreamscape. An instant later, he appeared on that patch of shore near the ocean from before.

In front of Qin Wentian, the divine inscription painting of that ravishing woman also appeared.

“Transform.” Qin Wentian’s dream will commanded, and the Divine Imprints in the 4th level painting seemingly came to life. The ravishing beauty manifested inside his dreamscape, inundating the space in front of her with her attacks.

The current Qin Wentian was still unable to decipher what types of innate techniques the 4th level divine inscription painting contained. However, in his dream, he could test his hypothesis, allowing the painting to undergo all kinds of transformations, deducing the nature of the Divine Inscription painting.

After the manifested figure underwent countless transformations, Qin Wentian discovered that if he were to regard each individual Divine Imprint inscribed upon the painting as a unique innate technique, it had an undying energy to it, as though it would never be extinguished. Every attack was as though it could continue on indefinitely.

After he exited his dreamscape, Qin Wentian saw that Gongyang Hong was still in that state of bewilderment from earlier. Abruptly, Gongyang Hong woke up and stared at Qin Wentian, stating, “Use the energy you sensed from the painting to attack me. Quickly.”

The attitude of Gongyang Hong shocked Qin Wentian a little. This Divine Inscription painting seemed to be of paramount importance to Gongyang Hong.

After which, Qin Wentian stood up and stabbed his finger in the space in front of him. The space between them continuously trembled as the finger attack landed on Gongyang Hong’s body.

However, Qin Wentian felt as though he had stabbed his finger right into a wall of steel. He had no way to even move his opponent a little.

“Finger technique, staggered attacks? There’s no such innate techniques. I’m sure of it.” Gongyang Hong’s eyes reflected a struggle.

“Senior, the technique I used was a finger-type innate technique for certain. But what I could sense was merely the tip of the iceberg. There’s a possibility that this might be a spear-type technique or sword-type technique and not only so; within it, there seemed to be an inexhaustible current of energy.” Qin Wentian spoke.

“Spear-type technique, sword-type technique? Inexhaustible, undying energy?” Gongyang Hong deeply immersed himself in his contemplation and after many moments, he abruptly and explosively stepped to the side, piercing out with a sword. In front of him, as his Sword Qi howled with madness, wanting to destroy everything, the wind created from the swing of the sword transformed into a raging hurricane, lacerating everything as bamboo shoots after bamboo shoots were sliced into nothingness in front of him.

“Is it this type of innate technique?” Gongyang Hong inquired.

“Highly possible.” As Qin Wentian felt the sword intent, his heart trembled violently. The strength of Gongyang Hong had already reached such a terrifying level.

“Nine Swords of Life, this is the Nine Swords of Life.” Gongyang Hong was extremely agitated as he glanced at Qin Wentian, before rushing into his lodge in a fluster.

An instant later, Qin Wentian only saw that Gongyang Hong had retrieved three more Divine Inscription paintings as he passed them over to Qin Wentian. “Quickly, help me to take a look and tell me what they contained within.”

Gongyang Hong was an expert weaponsmith and had extremely high comprehension regarding Divine Inscriptions. But the current him seemed to be akin to a mad man. Which paintings was it that could cause Gongyang Hong to be in such a fluster?

“Right.” Qin Wentian lightly nodded as he studied the 2nd painting in his hands.

The figure in this painting extended his palms out, as similarly, a terrible, devastating energy gushed out. However, just like the earlier 4th level Divine Inscription painting, Qin Wentian couldn't decipher anything.

Qin Wentian once again entered into his dreamscape and observed the countless transformations, then exchanged information with Gongyang Hong. However despite this, Gongyang Hong couldn't seem to find a matching innate technique for it.

“Senior, maybe you had never cultivated this innate technique before.” Qin Wentian gently stated as he looked to Gongyang Hong.

“Impossible, absolutely impossible. If what you say is true, that innate techniques are hidden within the Divine Imprint, I would know for sure. I had never cultivated the Nine Swords of Life before as well.” Gongyang Hong replied with resoluteness. According to Qin Wentian's request, Gongyang Hong executed over 100 types of innate techniques, and the whole area in front of him was decimated.

“Senior Gongyang knows too many innate techniques. Even if he has never cultivated them before, he can still instantly understand the essence and meaning of them. How terrifying.”

Qin Wentian felt immense shock in his heart. At this moment, he took another glance at the painting as he mused, “Maybe, could the innate technique contained within this painting be a technique that consists of many different transformations?”

“What did you say?” Gongyang Hong seemed to have understood something upon hearing the words of Qin Wentian.

“Senior, maybe the innate technique itself contains many different kinds of transformations?” Qin Wentian replied. Gongyang Hong drew in a huge breath as he took a step forwards, pushing his palms outwards. This time round, he didn't do anything, but Qin Wentian had a feeling that the next strike of Gongyang Hong would contain a myriad of transformations within it.

“Yes, this was the feeling I felt.” A bright light shone in Qin Wentian's eyes.

“Formless Art.” Gongyang Hong murmured as he spoke to Qin Wentian, “Look at the next painting.”

Qin Wentian nodded. The inscriptions of the 3rd painting were beautifully and wondrous and were also exceptionally mystical. However, it didn't seem like an innate technique. The two of them lost themselves in discussion and even when night descended, they still had no conclusion.

Forgoing sleep, the two of them continue their analysis. And finally, Gongyang Hong made a sudden movement, without any charm or grace, and even seemed to be extremely clumsy. However, this caused the light in Qin Wentian's eyes to brighten.

"There's a high probability that this is it."

"This is the beginning stance of a body movement technique. Its name is Connecting Steps and it's comprised of many changes within."

Gongyang Hong mumbled as he continued, "The last painting."

Qin Wentian nodded his head as he analysed the last painting. This painting was the only painting with a male figure in it. The figure stood in the painting unmovingly, but the eyes of it shone with an incredibly extraordinary light.

Gongyang Hong only cast a few glances at it before sighing, "The three earlier innate techniques, I've only understood them but did not cultivate them before. As for this final innate technique, I know what it is – Eyes of Death.

As the sound of Gongyang Hong's voice faded away, his eyes transformed into tunnels of endless depth. Qin Wentian trembled in fear but in that same instance, Gongyang Hong's eyes turned back to normal.

"This eye-type innate technique is one that I'm most proficient with, while the Nine Swords of Life was her favourite technique. As for the Formless Art and the Connecting Steps, I've also heard of them. Why did I only realise today that these four types of Divine Inscription paintings contained within them four types of innate techniques."

Gongyang Hong drew in a deep breath as he stared at the empty space.

"Nine Swords of Life, Eyes of Death, Formless Art, Connecting Steps." Qin Wentian mumbled, "Life and death are two independent entities. No, instead, it should be – life and death are interconnected!"

As the low voice of Qin Wentian drifted over to Gongyang Hong's ears, it was as though a bolt of lightning flashed past, striking right into his mind, causing him to freeze on the spot, lost in contemplation.

At this moment, Qin Wentian felt a sense of pressure. The whole space seemed to be filled with a horrible silence.

"Life and death are interconnected, HAHAHA, life and death are interconnected! Gongyang Hong, you should be cursed to live a life of eternal damnation!" Abruptly, Gongyang Hong bellowed in anger, as he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood. His Qi roiled chaotically and attacked his heart, as he slumped heavily onto the ground.

His eyes however, remained wide open. In the depths of his eyes, one could see utter despair, as well as boundless regret and hatred!

Chapter 104

AGM 0104 – Heavenly Dipper

"Senior!" Qin Wentian's heart shuddered as he called out in shock. Qin Wentian ran towards Gongyang Hong, then squatted down to check on his injuries.

Gongyang Hong waved his hands in response to Qin Wentian as he stared blankly at that vacant space. In the depths of his eyes, despair, rage, regret and pain could be seen, causing those who saw it to also be able to feel the sadness of Gongyang Hong.

"Senior, you have to take care of yourself." Qin Wentian silently sighed upon seeing the emotions in Gongyang Hong's eyes. Gongyang Hong definitely had an extraordinary past.

"We live and die together, we live and die together..... for over 20 years, I wanted to fully immerse myself in comprehending the insights of Divine Imprints and thus, I begun my research on Divine Inscriptions. But right from the beginning, my path was already a mistake." Helplessness was evident in Gongyang Hong's voice as he muttered to himself.

"If I had known that her intention was not for me to comprehend the imprints within the paintings, but instead was for me to decipher the innate techniques hidden within, I believe that at most, I would have succeeded using only half a year of time. After all, I've seen and knew of these

techniques. Maybe I would have even succeeded using only 2 to 3 months' worth of time... but, I actually used a total of 20 over years."

Gongyang Hong murmured to himself, but Qin Wentian knew that he was right. If Gongyang Hong had known from the beginning that the paintings contained innate techniques within them, he would have understood the concept of the problem from this angle. Based on his knowledge and comprehension level, he would have solved the riddle within half a year. After all, he was familiar with all the four types of innate techniques, and was even capable of executing them at a certain level. However, sadly, Gongyang Hong's direction was already wrong at the start.

"I've always considered myself to be free-spirited, but in reality, I'm inferior, a coward, cold blooded and emotionless. I'm sorry for what I've done to you." From the corner of his eye, a tear could be seen beginning to roll down Gongyang Hong's face. Akin to a corpse, he laid there, unmoving.

There's no greater sorrow than a heart that's already withered. His heart, at this moment, was so cold that the coldness seeped into the bone.

And in this instant, Qin Wentian's heart involuntarily trembled as he saw the dishevelled hair of Gongyang Hong's head slowly turning white.

"Senior, the matter of over 20 years ago has already passed. Why must you torment yourself so?"

Qin Wentian tried to persuade. To what degree would the level of despair and agony be in order to turn a headful of hair white? However at that moment, the headful of white hair actually turned silver, as Gongyang Hong appeared to age more than 10 years in an instant.

Gongyang Hong closed his eyes, as Qin Wentian sat beside him, not knowing what to say.

The "her" in his words should most probably be a female who left behind the words "We live and die together" to him.

However, Qin Wentian didn't understand. Since that female was so emotional, why didn't she just tell Gongyang Hong directly. Instead, she chose to left behind a riddle in the paintings, leaving behind more than 20 years of regret and misunderstanding.

Gongyang Hong currently had his eyes closed, and there were no signs of life visible about him. Qin Wentian sighed but chose not to disturb Gongyang Hong. He sat down at a spot nearby Gongyang Hong, opting not to leave in case Gongyang Hong suffered from any mishap.

Very quickly, another day passed and night arrived. The Astral Light cascaded downwards, landing on Qin Wentian's body. Qin Wentian was currently cultivating in his sleep, his body was bathing in the starlight, his countenance appearing so tranquil and peaceful. The boundless energy of the Astral Light was absorbed into his body, as it circulated along his arterial circular pathways.

At this moment, Gongyang Hong opened his eyes, only to see him inclining his head to look at the vast starry skies, as a sense of loss emanated from him.

"Everything that happened was because of my own mistakes." Gongyang Hong gazed at the stars as he murmured in his heart.

"That year, her talent was monstrous, and she had many suitors. Although you appeared confident and at ease, didn't that originate from your sense of inferiority? If you didn't think of yourself to be inferior to her, why after such a long period of companionship did you still not dare to take the final step. Couldn't you feel the love she had towards you?"

"That year, she rejected 18 marriage proposals, and those she rejected were all demon-level talents from all the grand and powerful sects. Which of them was inferior to you? Why did she still choose to reject them? Why would she still take the trouble to talk about this with you? Your self-pity and cowardice spoiled everything. In the end, you chose to remain silent, afraid to tell her of the feelings in your heart."

"That year, everyone was jealous of you. But why would they be jealous? Wasn't it because you were the only one she was close to? And because of jealousy, they severely injured you. Because of you, she begged her father for help, but yet again, during the 19th marriage proposal, you remained silent. Could it be that you were still blind to her love for you?"

"Even the last time she came to see you, you were still afraid to confess. In the end, you remained silent, the only thing she left behind were the four Divine Inscription paintings, and she still gave you a year of time to decipher the riddle. During that year of time, even if you did not decipher it, as long as you spoke up, regardless of the cost, she would have given everything up and left together with you. All because of the words, 'We live and die together.'"

“But, you did not. You personally witnessed her marriage with some other. You indifferently watched everything happen. Couldn’t you tell what her eyes were conveying when she looked at you? That despair, and coldness and eventually hopelessness. Gongyang Hong, you deserve death.”

Gongyang Hong thought about the events of his past that occurred over 20 years ago. Even after the long passage of time, he still felt pain, as he stared blankly at the night skies, lonely and miserable.

The air of the early morning was slightly wet, dewdrops could be seen on the bamboo leaves in the bamboo forest around them.

Qin Wentian called out, “Senior.” as he opened his eyes. He saw Gongyang Hong sitting there, with a head of silvery hair, appearing to have aged immensely.

“You’re awake.” Gongyang Hong shifted his gaze over and smiled at Qin Wentian, recovering from his earlier state of madness. Qin Wentian, upon seeing this, finally heaved a sigh of relief in his heart.

“Hmm.” Qin Wentian nodded.

“How did you ever find the connection between Divine Imprints and innate techniques?” Gongyang Hong curiously inquired. The her from that year was also a monstrous genius, and was an expert in divine inscriptions, carving out the four Divine Inscription paintings for him 20 over years ago. This was proof that she was the same as Qin Wentian, and had already discovered the interconnection between Divine Imprints and innate techniques.

“Struck by a sudden inspiration. One of my cultivation techniques requires me to borrow the energy of Divine Imprints. After I gained some comprehension regarding Divine Imprints, somehow, unknowingly, I began to link both of them together.” Qin Wentian smiled as he answered.

As Gongyang Hong looked upon the pure smile displayed, he couldn’t help but to think of events of yesteryear. Sadly, after living hollowly for over 20 years, the only thing he had left was regret.

“If you ever meet a girl who can move your heart, do not miss the chance, you must take the initiative.”

Gongyang Hong abruptly changed the topic, leaving Qin Wentian stunned.

Laughing simple-mindedly, Qin Wentian nodded, "Okay."

However, as of now, he still had not met a girl who could truly move his heart. But, on the topic about moving his heart, a scene of a scenery of snow involuntarily floated up in his mind.

Snowflakes were drifting about, as a young lady sat beside him, silently admiring the snow. Calling him a dumbo, before leaving with a smile. That picture was beautiful indeed.

"What am I thinking?" Qin Wentian bitterly shook his head.

"Remember, not to miss the chance. If you do, you will regret it for life." Gongyang Hong deeply sighed as he continued, "Since you could connect Divine Imprints and innate techniques together, why haven't you done the same and linked your Astral Soul together with your attacking-type innate techniques?"

"Senior, the attacks executed by innate techniques, don't they already contain a sliver of Astral Soul energy within them? The Astral Energy granted from the different types of Astral Souls would determine the cultivation art and innate techniques of a cultivator. As for a deeper linkage, this junior has yet to comprehend anything regarding that." Qin Wentian replied.

Although he replied this way, in reality, Qin Wentian already had the thought of linking his Astral Soul with his innate techniques. Back then when he fought against Yanaro and Luo Qianqiu, he had already wanted to incorporate the power of his dream-type Astral Soul into his innate techniques.

"You should know that above the Yuanfu Realm is the Heavenly Dipper Realm. But do you know what the Heavenly Dipper Realm symbolises?" Gongyang Hong asked as he looked to Qin Wentian.

"Junior has no idea." Qin Wentian replied. Now, he was only at the Arterial Circulation Realm. How would he have had the chance to interact with a sovereign of the Heavenly Dipper Realm? Those at the Heavenly Dipper Realm could already be considered as standing at the peak in the entire Chu Country.

"Heavenly Dipper Realm, is to condense stars of the Heavenly Dipper, also known as Astral Nova. At that time your Astral Soul, would be then, your most direct method of combat. For some cases, Astral Novas were even more powerful when compared to using Divine Weapons." Gongyang

Hong explained, as he continued. “Sooner or later, the Astral Soul itself would transform into an attack-type innate technique. However, to condense Astral Novas, a cultivator would require a truly astronomical amount of cultivation resources to step past the gulf that separates Yuanfu and the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

“Many people – including numerous elites and talented geniuses – despite trying for their entire lives, weren’t able to bridge the final gap. If you could incorporate the power of your Astral Soul directly into your innate techniques earlier, when it comes to the time to condense your Astral Nova, you would find it several times easier when compared to others.”

Gongyang Hong guided as Qin Wentian seriously listened. This was the precious insight of Gongyang Hong, obtained through his own experiences.

“Look into my eyes.” Gongyang Hong continued. As Qin Wentian looked into his eyes, he only saw eyes of the dead looking back at him. Instantaneously, he felt a surge of death intent entering his mind, only to dissipate a moment later. However, just an instant of that experience was able to cause Qin Wentian’s heart to palpitate wildly.

Just a single look was already this terrifying.

“That was the combination of my Astral Soul and my ‘Eyes of the Dead’ innate technique. This type of innate technique can only be cultivated if one has a matching type of Astral Soul.” Gongyang Hong continued, “Thus, you must remember to incessantly utilise your Astral Souls. In the future, they will become your ultimate weapons, and similarly, your proficiency with usage of Astral Souls is also the key of stepping into the Heavenly Dipper Realm.”

“Many thanks for the guidance of Senior.” Qin Wentian bowed.

“I’m just speaking from my experiences, how can it count as guidance? If not for you, I’m afraid to say that even now, I still would not have managed to decipher the riddle in the paintings.” Gongyang Hong sighed, “Qin Wentian, your comprehension is in the right direction. Astral Souls, Divine Imprints, Innate Techniques, all of these are part of cultivation. All streams lead to the oceans, all paths eventually lead to the same direction. Continue cultivating hard, and live well with no regrets.

“You, can leave now. And since you were the one who deciphered the riddles of these four paintings, I shall give them to you.”

Qin Wentian gazed at Gongyang Hong as he accepted the paintings. Standing up, he bowed again, as he departed.

“Take care of yourself Senior. In the future, this junior here will visit you often.” Qin Wentian called out as he walked into the bamboo forest. Little Rascal scuttled from the side, following behind the silhouette of Qin Wentian.

Chapter 105

AGM 0105 – Teasing by Luo Huan

The Emperor Star Academy was more lively compared to the past. As the year’s end was approaching, many of the students that were out tempering themselves returned. Under the sunlight, the youthful students chattered and chattered, filling the Emperor Star Academy with a vibrant atmosphere.

Within the academy, the topics of discussion among the students were naturally about the most powerful students currently in the academy, and who would obtain the best result in the Jun Lin Banquet. There were also many who brought up the name of Qin Wentian. This name – Qin Wentian, could be said to be one of the most frequently brought up names in the academy during this year, even more so when compared to Luo Qianqiu of yesteryear.

After all, this year, this new student who had just stepped into the academy had done too many things of great impact.

Many of the returning students expressed admiration towards Qin Wentian after hearing about his deeds. Naturally, there were some as well who expressed disdain and even wanted to spar with this new student to see if the legends about him was true.

All these public discussions caused Qin Wentian to garner much attention whenever he walked through the academy’s courtyard. Especially after he returned from the painting incident caused by the Royal Academy, there were even more eyes focusing on him. Qin Wentian could only smile bitterly in his heart, he finally felt what it is to be like to be a ‘celebrity’.

However, this kind of ‘attention’, where he would be scrutinised anywhere he went, didn’t really feel good.

After he returned to his own residence, Qin Wentian discovered that other than Qin Yao, Luo Huan was there as well.

“Senior Sister, why are you here?” Qin Wentian smiled.

“I’m here to chat with Qin Yao. You this fellow created such a huge commotion outside, and have already become a ‘celebrity’. When will you gift your senior sister a divine inscription painting as well?” A smile that was not a smile appeared on the face of Luo Huan as she replied.

“If Senior Sister really likes it, the next time I create a Divine Inscription painting, I shall personally deliver it.” Qin Wentian laughed.

“Okay, you are not allowed to lie to me.” Luo Huan’s beautiful eyes flickered with a brilliant light.

“Naturally. Not to mention one painting, if Senior Sister wishes for five or six of those paintings, I will also comply.” Qin Wentian reply, causing the smile on Luo Huan’s face to become even more radiant. “Good, I didn’t dote on you for nothing. Come, let senior sister give you a kiss.”

“Er.....” Qin Wentian, looking at the charming appearance of Luo Huan, bitterly smiled. “Senior Sister, you should stop tempting me like this.”

The appeal of Luo Huan was exceptionally great. Qin Wentian had met many beautiful girls before, but only Mo Qingcheng and Luo Huan were capable of moving his heart. However, the beauty of the two of them were in totally different categories. Mo Qingcheng’s beauty was ethereal, akin to a fairy on earth, just looking at her would cause one to be unable to remain calm. Luo Huan’s beauty was more of a sex appeal type, charming and sexy, extremely attractive to men.

Looking at the countenance of Qin Wentian, Luo Huan also began to laugh. Qin Yao stated, “Sister Luo Huan, you should stop teasing this little fellow. Speaking of which, this fellow is already 17, I wonder if he has his eyes on any girls out there.”

“I’m curious as well.” Luo Huan stared at Qin Wentian as she asked.

“Sister, my only focus now is on cultivation, and to save Father. Where would I have time to think about matters of the heart?” Qin Wentian looked at the glances the two beauties shot him, and couldn’t help but feel slightly awkward.

“Refusing to answer? Seems like there is someone in his heart. Wait, let me guess.” The beautiful eyes of Luo Huan flickered as she continued, “Could it be the number one beauty of our Chu Country, Mo Qingcheng? I heard that during the banquet hosted by Chu Tianjiao, she intentionally brought you somewhere else for a chat, causing many males to die of envy.”

“Senior Sister, stop guessing randomly.” Qin Wentian smiled bitterly, as images of his interactions with Mo Qingcheng kept appearing in his mind.

“Why are you so shy to admit it?” Luo Huan continued teasing, “That delicate little lass is beautiful indeed, and fully worthy of the name – the number one beauty of Chu Country. At the very least, I have not met a more ravishing woman inside the Royal Capital. Not only that, her talent is also extraordinary as well. In the Royal Capital, even within the 10 prodigies, there were several that wanted to woo her.”

Luo Huan looked at the seemingly interested Qin Wentian, as she continued, “No matter how I look at it, I still think that only my little junior brother is worthy of that little lass. Do you want senior sister to get Teacher Mustang to play matchmaker for you? That little lass’ grandpa is none other than our grand teacher!”

How could Qin Wentian defend against the barrage of Luo Huan’s powerful teases. Like before, he could only smile bitterly.

“Since you are not saying anything, it means that you’ve admitted it. A young genius coupled together with the number one beauty of Chu. Excellent, excellent.” Luo Huan murmured to herself, as Qin Yao, looking at the embarrassed expression on Qin Wentian’s face, couldn’t help but laugh out loud. In her heart, she was thinking that if Qin Wentian could really marry such a beautiful talented girl, it would naturally be excellent.

“Okay, I shall stop teasing you. But what I said was true. If you want to woo that little lass, your senior sister will support you all the way.” Luo Huan laughed, “Today, there’s a gathering being held at the Emperor Star Monument. Do you want to attend it with me? This way you would be able to interact with the other elites of our academy.”

“What gathering is that?” Qin Wentian curiously asked.

“It’s going to be the year end soon, and as many students tempering themselves outside return to the academy, they would like to gather together, exchanging of pointers and showcasing the fruits of their labour for the year. There would also be sincere people who truly want to interact and extend their social circle. You should go, you may even learn some things from there.”

Luo Huan looked at Qin Wentian as she continued her explanation. “Those who attend the gathering later all have above average martial prowess. At the very least, they will be at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation or they would be embarrassed to sit under the monument. However for you, you are already qualified. Ranked number one among the new batch of students as well as a 17 year old 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist. The Emperor Star Academy has never had such a genius before.”

“Senior Sister, stop praising me.” Qin Wentian bitterly smiled. “I will go with Senior Sister to take a look. After all, I just joined the Emperor Star Academy and might as well borrow this chance to take a look at the other elites of our school.”

“I will go along with both of you to take a look.” Qin Yao laughed.

“Okay, we will all go together.” Luo Huan pulled Qin Yao along as both of them walked shoulder to shoulder, showing their close relationship. Upon seeing this scene, Qin Wentian felt a trace of warmth in his heart. Although Senior Sister Luo Huan loved to joke about, and often ignored boundaries when she spoke, she had always truly cared for him and Qin Yao. This type of caring appeared so ordinary that you wouldn’t be able to feel it unless you experienced it yourself.

Among students of the Emperor Star Academy, who wouldn’t work hard? Where would there be someone who was willing to spend large amounts of time on others? However, Luo Huan was precisely such an individual. Initially, Luo Huan didn’t have any relationship with Qin Yao. But now, not only did she take care of her and form a friendship with her, she also spent time visiting her often, fearing that Qin Yao would be lonely.

This gratitude, Qin Wentian silently engraved it in his heart. If he were to say it out loud, based on the personality of Luo Huan, she would most probably ignore him.

Within the Emperor Star Academy, there were nine stone monuments known as the Emperor Star Monuments. On them were engravings about the 3,000 year history of the Emperor Star Academy.

In front of the monuments, there was a circular field, with a stone stage in the middle. Several youthful silhouettes were currently seated on the stone stage.

Every year, there would be many youthful elites of the academy sitting on the stone stage, looking at the Emperor Star Monuments, basking themselves in the glory of those that came before them. At the same time, they were also determined to be one of those individuals that could create history, leaving stories behind for future students to look at.

And below the monuments, there were even more silhouettes. Their gazes were filled with reverence and admiration as they gazed at the people sitting on the stone stage.

“The seniors above all have a cultivation base of the 7th level of Arterial Circulation or above. I wonder when I will reach the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation.”

“Not only were their cultivation bases at least at the 7th level, all of them have done something impactful or have some history behind them. If not, they would be embarrassed to sit together with the other elites.”

“You are right, our academy has so many years of history, and the new bloods every year are all extraordinary, their talents far higher compared to the rest. Just at merely the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation, we have countless people with cultivation bases at this stage. If you weren’t something special, how could you have the qualifications to even sit with the rest of them.”

Below the monuments, many people were discussing the elites on the stone stage as they gazed upon the silhouettes on the stage. They were evidently filled with great curiosity.

“Senior Luo Huan from the Greencloud Association is here. Senior Luo Huan has mesmerized a lot of people with her beauty.”

“The beauty sitting beside her should be Qin Yao, and the guy that came with her should be Qin Wentian. He is also here today!”

A pathway opened up through the crowd. On the stone stage, many of the elites turned their attention at Luo Huan and Qin Wentian, only to hear one of them saying, “Luo Huan, I heard rumors that you’ve broke through to the 9th level of Arterial Circulation. Quickly come up to the stage.”

“Junior Brother Qin, you are also welcome up here.” Another person smiled.

Luo Huan pulled Qin Wentian along as they ascended the steps, sitting on stone seats next to each other. Upon seeing this, sharp glints of light could be seen radiating from the eyes of many males. Luo Huan seemed to be very close with Qin Wentian, and many of the students wasn’t feeling too good about it in their hearts. After all, Luo Huan’s beauty and talent made her a highly popular goddess whom many wished to pursue.

Feeling the enmity leveled against him, Qin Wentian bitterly smiled in his heart. He silently questioned if Luo Huan purposely did this to tease him. He could feel cold stares trained on him from all directions.

Despite this, his countenance remained normal as he glanced at the silhouettes on the stone stage. There were a total of about 30 elites on the stage, and all of them had a high probability of breaking through to Yuanfu.

Not only that, there were several others like Luo Qianqiu and Orchon who did not appear.

Just the Emperor Star Academy alone already had so many elites. One could only imagine how terrifyingly resplendent the sparks caused by all the elites would be in the Jun Lin Banquet.

Chapter 106

AGM 0106 – Insidious Intent

In front of the Emperor Star Monuments, all of the elites were sat on the stone seats on the stage. The attention of all the other students was riveted onto them.

At this moment, a figure in front of the monument laughed, “Only one more month to the end of the year. Being able to sit here together with my various brothers and sisters to discuss our experiences in cultivation and exchange pointers is really one of the happiest things in the world.”

“Senior Qiu is too polite. Just being able to sit here and chat with Senior Qiu can already be counted as a fortuitous event.” Someone politely added.

“This person is named Qiu Mo, and is extremely powerful. Among the ranks of the 10 prodigies, there are two from the Emperor Star Academy. Qiu Mo is one of them, and he’s ranked 4th within them.” Luo Huan whispered to Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian seriously cast a glance at Qiu Mo. This person looked to be 18 to 19 years of age, and had a scholarly disposition, looking gentle and refined, radiating warmth and approachability.

“And who’s the other one?” Qin Wentian curiously asked

“The other one is standing by the side of Qiu Mo. His name is Jiang Xiu, ranked 10th out of the 10 prodigies in the Royal Capital. However, you cannot underestimate any of the 10 prodigies. The 10

prodigies are all the strongest elites in the Royal Capital below the age of 20, and among all arterial circulation cultivators, their cultivation bases are the closest to stepping into Yuanfu. Their martial prowess is also many times stronger when compared to others at the same level.”

Luo Huan continued, “The 10 prodigies, without a doubt, will attend the Jun Lin Banquet every year. Naturally, the ranking with the prodigies will also change following the conclusion of the grand banquet.”

“Luo Cheng, for the past year you’ve stayed hidden in the Asura Faction, and there haven’t be any traces of you. Your martial prowess must have improved significantly, do you mind sharing your experiences and exchanging pointers with the rest of us?” The 4th ranked among the 10 prodigies, Qiu Mo, was silently regarded as the host of the gathering, and he took the initiative to gaze upon a mature-looking youth.

Although Luo Cheng wasn’t that old, he was already over 20, and had a maturity to him that couldn’t be compared to people his age. Not only that, there were also traces of a frenzied wildness in his eyes.

Those from the Asura Faction were all mad men. They were extremely cruel to themselves and would temper themselves in the Dark Forest for long periods of time, disregarding their lives. Thus, their combat ability and martial prowess were also above the norm.

“Is there anyone who wishes to try?” Luo Cheng calmly spoke, causing the countenance of all to freeze slightly.

Last year, Luo Cheng had a cultivation base at the peak of the 6th level. Rumor had it that currently, he had already stepped into the 8th level of Arterial Circulation and had overwhelming combat abilities.

“Let me try then.” A figure spoke, and momentarily the gazes of the spectators all shifted to him. Following which, Mountain approached the centre of the stone stage as he looked at Luo Cheng, “Let me see how much you have improved.”

“Mountain, be careful.” Luo Huan shouted. Mountain grinned as he nodded to Luo Huan and Qin Wentian.

“What is Senior Mountain’s current level of cultivation?” Qin Wentian looked to Luo Huan as he inquired.

“Peak of the 8th level.” Luo Huan replied.

Luo Cheng rose from his seat and approached Mountain. In his hand, Astral Light coalesced into the form of a great sabre, emitting waves of icy chill.

Boom! Luo Cheng burst forward, akin to a demonic beast. His body sank as the great sabre swung downwards, hacking through the void. A sabre light could be seen trailing behind the arcs of his attack, resplendent and ice cold.

Mountain shouted as his fist exploded forwards, as tough as steel, blasting forth to meet the sabre attack.

However, the sabre lights of Luo Cheng changed direction with the speed of lightning, aiming straight for chopping the throat of Mountain. Even though the sun had not yet set, the spectators could already feel traces of coldness.

The sabre edge was too cold.

“What a unpredictable sabre. Senior Mountain will be at a disadvantage in this battle.” Qin Wentian intoned in a low voice.

Indeed, after a few exchanges, Mountain was already exhausted. The power of his attacks didn't lose out to his opponent, and even exceeded Luo Cheng's. However, the sabre attacks of Luo Cheng were too unpredictable, and extremely mysterious to the extent where one couldn't even begin to identify which innate technique was he using. Not only that, the sabre attacks contained within them a murderous intent, as though it was only used for killing.

“Pu.....” Another beam of cold light flashed by, as both of them halted their movements. The sabre of Luo Cheng disappeared, as Mountain stood dumbly beside him, stating, “I've lost.”

A few strands of hair drifted down from Mountain's head. Mountain trembled as he recalled the last exchange of blows. If Luo Cheng had shifted the angle of his sabre attacks ever so slightly, he would've already lost his life.

“Your attacks are too direct and orderly. Your innate techniques do not contain the slightest bit of concept from your own insights, how could you not be defeated?” Luo Cheng calmly spoke as he walked back to his seat and sat down.

“Many thanks for the guidance.” Mountain recovered swiftly as he smiled at Luo Cheng, before returning to his seat. He didn’t seem to be too bothered by his loss earlier.

In that instant, Qin Wentian understood why these types of gatherings were hosted. An exchange of pointers between geniuses, learning from the experiences of others, understanding where one’s weaknesses lie. This lesson, one would never be able to learn it through normal classes. It was only through directly experiencing it would they be able to understand where their limit was.

“Indeed. Innate techniques were created by people before us. Why couldn’t we incorporate our creativity, concepts and own insights into the innate techniques that we learnt? The sabre techniques of Luo Cheng obviously incorporated his own insights. The insights gained at the border of death through death-like training would naturally have more killing power behind them.” Qin Wentian silently exclaimed in his heart as he thought, once again, of the Divine Inscription painting he had created. In that painting, the pinnacle of his attacks was something he wanted to attain, yet he was still unable to gain enlightenment.

Afterwards, the other elites also started sparring, and each had their own special characteristics.

A youth exerted the strength of Arterial Circulation to its peak. Every part of his body felt as though he could use them for attack. This person caused Qin Wentian to realise that there would be something he could learn from everyone who was qualified to participate in the gathering.

Below the stage, the other students were watching the sparring of their seniors attentively. To them, this was a hard-to-get opportunity.

At this moment on the stone stage, Qiu Mo’s gaze landed on Qin Wentian, as he said with a smile, “Junior Brother Qin’s talent is extremely outstanding. Able to become a 3rd level divine inscriptionist at such a young age, his name resounding throughout the Chu Country. Do you want to share your insights regarding cultivation with any of your senior brothers and sisters on this stage?”

Qin Wentian was still in his first year. Not only that, he was the only new student atop of that stone stage. Naturally, the other elites there were his senior martial brothers and sisters.

“Compared to all the seniors sitting here, my cultivation base is shallow and I don’t dare to speak about the sharing of experiences and exchanging of pointers. Observing and learning from the exchanges of others, this is the thing I should do.” Qin Wentian replied humbly. It wasn’t that he was overly polite. Although his talent was extraordinary, and his martial prowess outstanding, he still felt that he had a lot to learn before he was qualified to seek the guidances of these elite seniors.

“Junior Brother is too modest, using only a year to step into the 6th level of Arterial Circulation from Body Refinement, this is a feat that is incredibly difficult to accomplish. And what’s more, the most impressive thing is that your comprehension in the field of Divine Inscriptions has reached such a terrifying level. Everyone knows that mastering the art of weapon forging requires an exceptionally long period of time, but yet you still managed to reach such a high level. Obviously, Junior Brother is a talent in both cultivation and the field of Divine Inscriptions. You are too overly modest.”

Qiu Mo smiled as he spoke, adopting a elegant demeanour.

“I guess that’s because the first Astral Soul I condensed was a forging-type Astral Soul, and thus I have some advantages when it comes to the inscription of Divine Imprints. In addition, I was also lucky, that’s how it came to be.” Qin Wentian calmly replied.

“I see, but I still have to warn Junior Brother that cultivation isn’t that easy. After all, this is still a cultivation-oriented world. Absolute strength is the only guarantee of true power. Divine Inscriptions are important, but they will take up too much of your cultivation time. And if you immerse yourself too deeply in it, your martial heart will not be pure and you may go astray from your intended path.”

Qiu Mo slowly continued, “After all, on the path of cultivation, there have been countless fallen geniuses. Not only that, there were also many who met a bottleneck after they broke through and were unable to advance any further in their entire lives. Naturally, there were also others who seemed to cultivate at an extremely quick pace, only to slowly become ordinary because their martial hearts were not resolute enough.”

The tone of Qiu Mo was akin to a guiding lecture from a senior to a junior, but many felt that there was something amiss. Qiu Mo should be praising Qin Wentian’s outstanding talent instead. Despite his reminder to Qin Wentian about the pit holes of cultivation, there were many hidden meanings in his words, it was as though he was saying that Qin Wentian would become a fallen genius.

The words of Qiu Mo, be it intentional or not, seemed to contain traces of being against Qin Wentian. It was just extremely well hidden in his honeyed words.

Qin Wentian was not an idiot, naturally, he also felt that something was amiss. However, he didn't quite understand why Qiu Mo would be against him. He had never interacted with Qiu Mo before, how could there be any misunderstandings between them?

However, he wouldn't choose to express his anger in front of so many, so he casually replied with a laugh, "Thank you for the reminder Senior."

"It would naturally be excellent if you could listen to my advice." Qiu Mo nodded his head at Qin Wentian as he continued, "A 17 year old Divine Inscriptionist, you are the first in our Chu Country. You should have met with some fortuitous encounter and been able to obtain several 3rd level Divine Imprints, which eventually led to your accomplishments today. However, on the pathway of cultivation, one shouldn't depend too much on fortuitous encounters, but focus on one's hard work instead."

If one were to say that the traces of Qiu Mo being against Qin Wentian were extremely well hidden in his first statement, there was no mistaking his intent now after he made the second statement.

Within the honey-sounding words of Qiu Mo, to put it lightly, he was suspecting the qualifications of Qin Wentian. Firstly, he said that there was no other 17 year old 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist in the history of Chu, and after which, he said that Qin Wentian met with a fortuitous encounter, and even had many 3rd level Divine Imprints with him that others did not have. Wasn't this openly hinting that the 3rd level imprints in that painting weren't created by him but were instead something which he had already obtained from before?

To put it heavily, this wasn't merely suspecting the qualifications of Qin Wentian, but was also extremely venomous.

The heaven-defying 3rd level Divine Inscription painting that contained a never seen before human-type Divine Imprint. How many types of Divine Imprints did Qin Wentian obtain from his fortuitous encounter?

Within the academy, it was still not too bad. But if news of this was to leak out of the academy, how many powers would want to take action against Qin Wentian for the sake of obtaining those Divine Imprints?

Qin Wentian's eyebrows were furrowed intensely. And Luo Huan beside him also had an unsightly countenance. The intent behind Qiu Mo's words was too insidious!

Chapter 107

AGM 0107 – Deliberate Target

Qin Wentian sat cross-leggedly on the stone stage as the gazes of the other elites landed on his body. The words of Qiu Mo somehow reminded them; was the rumored heaven-defying painting really personally created by Qin Wentian?

If he really could inscribe 3rd level Divine Imprints at the young age of 17, what sort of extraordinary fortuitous encounters did he have?

“Qin Wentian possesses many secrets.” This thought arose in many of the spectators’ hearts as they seriously contemplated Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian could clearly feel the gazes riveted onto him, while a hint of anger blazed in his heart. He was extremely infuriated, naturally, he did have the reason to be so.

Today was the first time he met Qiu Mo. If Qiu Mo merely questioned his qualifications, he could still accept that. But very obviously, Qiu Mo’s malicious intent could be felt hiding under the layers of honey-sounding words, spoken with a caring smile and gentle features. What was his motive exactly?

Glancing at the calm eyes of Qiu Mo, Qin Wentian forcefully stilled his emotions as he replied, “I don’t really agree with the words of Senior Brother.”

“Oh?” Qiu Mo laughed as he continued, “Could it be that Junior Brother Qin still wishes to depend on fortuitous events and has no intention to work hard in cultivation based on your own efforts?”

“Fortuitous events are a type of luck, and luck only comes naturally and infrequently. Naturally, I would not intentionally seek after something so illusory like that. However, don’t you feel that luck is also a type of strength?” Qin Wentian smiled at Qiu Mo as he continued, “Now, if there was a 4th level Divine Weapon, or a heavenly graded innate technique randomly lying on the ground in front of you, would Senior want them or not?”

“I would want them.” Qiu Mo replied.

“Oh? This doesn’t seem to match the logic Senior Brother had expounded on earlier. Why doesn’t Senior Brother depend on your own capabilities instead of fortuitous events to obtain them?”

Qiu Mo looked at Qin Wentian, his expression filled with slight contempt, “Your answers are naught but specious arguments, and total nonsense.”

“Specious arguments?” Qin Wentian continued unperturbed, “The path of cultivation is fraught with numerous dangers. Those that stands at the top, which of them hadn’t experienced countless life and death experiences? Without luck, how would they be able to turn peril into safety, finding their way out of a predicament? And how would they constantly acquire stronger cultivation arts and innate techniques? For those that stands at the top, other than their own talent and hard work, they also need a certain amount of luck. Does Senior agree?”

“Agreed. That’s why I said, fortuitous events are secondary things. The most important thing is to depend on oneself. Why must Junior Brother be in such a hurry to defend yourself?” Qiu Mo laughed.

“The 3rd Prince of Chu, Chu Tianjiao, his birth, to him, isn’t it also a kind of fortuitous event? Born into the royal clan, which allows him to enjoy an almost unlimited amount of cultivation resources. But yet, people of Chu were filled with respect and reverence, and still referred to him as the Heaven’s Pride of his generation. Does Senior dare to stand right in front of Chu Tianjiao’s face, telling him that – your accomplishments today were all the result of you being born into the royal clan. You must remember that you should not depend on fortuitous events but instead depend on your own abilities for cultivation?”

Qin Wentian, feeling neither joy nor anger, tranquilly continued. The atmosphere on the stone stage also subtly underwent a change.

The spectators naturally could feel that Qiu Mo was deliberately targeting Qin Wentian. After all, he was the senior, and also ranked 4th among the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital. Despite his deliberate targeting of Qin Wentian, one almost couldn’t pick up any fault in his words. But who would have thought that Qin Wentian actually used the example of Chu Tianjiao to refute Qiu Mo directly.

“Ridiculous, do you think you have the qualifications to compare yourself with the 3rd Prince?” A cold-sounding voice rang out. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze to the one who spoke and discovered that it was none other than the youth standing beside Qiu Mo! Jiang Xiu was also part of the 10 prodigies in the Royal Capital, but was ranked the last among them. To those who ranked above him, he naturally had respect for their abilities. Not to mention the 2nd ranked Chu Tianjiao.

Qin Wentian used Chu Tianjiao as an example, which also meant that he placed Chu Tianjiao at the same level as him. Naturally, Jiang Xiu felt extremely unhappy about this.

Today, Qin Wentian was merely there to listen and observe the exchange of pointers among the senior elites. But who would have thought that Qiu Mo would have deliberately singled him out to be his target. As a hotblooded youth, in the face of these countless provocations, how could he not be angered? Qin Wentian coldly snorted a reply, "And may I ask, why not?"

"The 3rd Prince, Chu Tianjiao, already stepped into Yuanfu one year ago. And you, what is your level of cultivation?" Jiang Xiu gazed at Qin Wentian, and a cold intent flashed in his eyes.

"I've only been in the academy for a year, stepping into the 6th level of Arterial Circulation from Body Refinement within this short span of time. Defeating the sophomore Yanaro, easily able to hold my own against those at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation. And lastly, how many youths under 20 in the Chu country are able to inscribe 3rd level Divine Inscriptions? How am I not comparable to him? Although now I'm not the equal of him, it doesn't mean this will be the case forever."

The pride in Qin Wentian's heart ignited as he looked straight at Jiang Xiu, refuting him mercilessly. "Based on your logic, those who are weak would never dare to compare themselves with those stronger than them. Could it be that you think weaker cultivators should only compare themselves with people weaker than them? How laughable. If one doesn't even have the guts to chase after those stronger than them, how could they ever improve? No wonder you are ranked the last out of the 10 prodigies, so this was the reason."

"Impudent!" Jiang Xiu was extremely agitated by the words of Qin Wentian, he roared in anger, a cold light flickering in his eyes.

The words spoken by Qin Wentian weren't polite at all, and even went all out to slap Jiang Xiu in the face. Jiang Xiu wasn't as restrained as Qiu Mo, and he involuntarily shouted out. As a member of the 10 prodigies, whenever he appeared in the academy, he always enjoyed looks of respect from others. But at this moment in front of so many students, Qin Wentian as a new student, actually humiliated him to such an extent. Naturally, he felt that he has lost all of his face.

"Impudent? What impudent? Those that pursue the path of cultivation, shouldn't they have unwavering wills and determination, seeking to be the strongest? And as students of the Emperor Star Academy, who would bear to be under the pedestal of others? Today, the reason why Senior Qiu Mo could 'lecture' me with his speech is very simple. All because he is stronger than me."

Qin Wentian slowly continued, causing the crowd underneath the stone stage to agree with him. The words of Qin Wentian were like a needle drawing blood. Qiu Mo could afford to speak to him like this, all because he was ranked 4th within the 10 prodigies while he himself, Qin Wentian, only had a cultivation at the 6th level of Arterial Circulation.

Just like what Qin Wentian had said. If it was Chu Tianjiao, Qiu Mo wouldn't dare to speak in this way. The reason was simply that Chu Tianjiao was stronger than Qiu Mo.

But naturally, if Qiu Mo had kind intentions and merely sought to remind Qin Wentian of the pitfalls, he wouldn't be so angry. But Qiu Mo was obviously deliberately targeting him, harbouring malicious intentions.

The atmosphere became more and more awkward as Qiu Mo's expressions flickered. He did not think that Qin Wentian's rebuttal would be so sharp.

But finally, it was Qiu Mo who broke the silence.

Qiu Mo displayed a smile on his face, as an intermittent pressure began blasting forth. His body slowly began to float up in the air, as an intense Yuan Energy emanated from him.

Gradually, the sitting cross-leggedly Qiu Mo floated up into the air, causing the hearts of the spectators to tremble.

“Yuanfu Realm!”

“Senior Brother Qiu Mo has stepped into Yuanfu. How powerful!”

In the rankings of the 10 prodigies last year, Senior Qiu Mo was 4th whilst Immortal Drunken Wine was ranked 3rd. Now that Immortal Drunken Wine had yet to break into Yuanfu, this year, Senior Qiu Mo would obtain his ranking for sure.

In an instant, discussions erupted within the crowd as many were still in shock.

Going from Arterial Circulation to Yuanfu equated to a stepping across realms. Many geniuses would still need to spend a large amount of time before they could break through to Yuanfu.

Not only that, there were also many geniuses that had outstanding performance in the realm of Arterial Circulation, only to become ordinary after breaking through to Yuanfu. A different realm equals to a different heaven and earth. There was no comparison.

From this perspective, Qiu Mo's lecture to Qin Wentian wasn't wrong. Indeed, there were many fallen geniuses about in the world.

Now that Qiu Mo had stepped into Yuanfu, he undoubtedly had the qualifications to lecture Qin Wentian. Because, he had already stepped through the gap separating Arterial Circulation and Yuanfu, thereby proving himself.

He who was ranked 4th among the 10 prodigies, after stepping into Yuanfu would only get stronger and stronger. Gradually, the distance between him and the rest of the elites that hadn't broken through would only increase. And since Immortal Drunken Wine had not broken through to Yuanfu, the distance between them would only be lengthened.

Naturally, after stepping into Yuanfu, this also meant that Qiu Mo would no longer be able to participate in the Jun Lin Banquet at the end of the year. In comparison to breaking into Yuanfu, the Jun Lin Banquet was not as important. After all, the Jun Lin Banquet was a showdown between the mightiest elites from all over the continent, and only a selected few would be able to obtain the rewards that were given. Stepping into Yuanfu earlier was a more secure path of obtaining power.

And as for Qiu Mo, if he hadn't broken through to Yuanfu, his cultivation base would have been at the peak of Arterial Circulation. But despite this, he wasn't confident enough to say that he would be ranked within the top few among all the various geniuses and elites that were going to be attending the banquet. Since he had an opportunity to break through, naturally he would not intentionally suppress it; it was unknown when he would have another opportunity like that again.

"You are right, I do have the qualifications to lecture you. For no other reason than I'm stronger than you."

Qiu Mo floated in the air as he gazed disdainfully at Qin Wentian. At this moment, his arrogance was overwhelming, with no intention to mask it.

“To think that Junior Brother Qin was so easily angered merely because of a statement, you are still too impatient. In any case, there’s no wrong in my words, there are countless fallen geniuses. Even in the Emperor Star Academy, there are still many that are unable to graduate. Why? Because despite having such a long time, they were still unable to step across the gap into Yuanfu. Now because of fortuitous events, Junior Brother’s path of cultivation has been overly smooth and has not met with any bottlenecks. However, I can tell you for sure if you want to step across the gap to Yuanfu, you will need at least 5 or 6 years. By the time you do so, the disparity between you and others who stepped into Yuanfu earlier will only grow further and further apart. How would you compare with others then?”

Qin Mo’s tone took on the tone of an elder lecturing a recalcitrant child. Him, that had already stepped into Yuanfu, had already unconsciously regarded himself a supreme existence, higher when compared to the other students.

“If Senior Brother truly lectures me for my own good, Qin Wentian would naturally heed your advice. However, from the tone of Senior’s voice, you seemed to have already judged that I only have my accomplishments today due to various fortuitous events, and in your eyes, I’m already a fallen genius. It seems as though you are cursing me.” Qin Wentian looked straight at Qiu Mo as he continued, “I’ve only been cultivating for a short period of time and dared not say that I’ve had any accomplishments. Taking one step at a time on the pathway of cultivation, making each step with a resolute heart. Even though I may have had some fortuitous encounters, my martial heart and intent have never wavered before.”

“What Senior has said is right. After stepping into Yuanfu, naturally you would have the qualifications to lecture me. However, don’t you feel that your attitude is too overbearing for someone just merely at Yuanfu? Those who didn’t know would think that in our entire Emperor Star Academy, only Senior Qiu has broken through to Yuanfu.”

The calm voice of Qin Wentian contained a hint of provocation as he stared at Qiu Mo, “What’s there to be proud of? You merely started cultivation a few years before me.”

As the sound of Qin Wentian’s voice faded, the crowd also went quiet. The words of Qin Wentian became increasingly sharp, as he opposed the words of Qiu Mo with equal harshness!

Chapter 108

AGM 0108 – Exchanging Pointers

Qiu Mo, at the Yuanfu Realm, as well as being a member of the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital, had long established his name.

Qin Wentian was a new blood of the Emperor Star Academy. Within this short span of a year's time, he had become a 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist.

Qiu Mo was the senior, and thus had the qualifications to lecture Qin Wentian. However, his words, weren't lecturing, but were deliberately targeting instead.

Qin Wentian naturally needed to rebut. There were many Yuanfu students within the academy, and in the beginning, Qiu Mo still acted humbly, but soon after, it was if he was the only Yuanfu cultivator within the whole Emperor Star Academy.

“Junior Brother Qin is right, Senior Qiu Mo merely started cultivating earlier than him. But what gives you the right to act as though you are the only Yuanfu cultivator in our academy? Even if we don't mention the year when you first joined the academy, just speaking of your accomplishments last year, they are far from being able to rival Qin Wentian's.”

The sound of Luo Huan's voice rang out, as she smiled lightly. “If it was not for the fact that Senior Qiu started cultivation a few years earlier, you indeed would have no qualifications at all to be even mentioned in the same breath as Junior Brother Qin.”

“Arguments are meaningless. If you remain unconvinced, rather than talking to paint a beautiful picture, why not let us spar to exchange some pointers.” Jiang Xiu coldly continued, “After all, today is suppose to be a gathering where we test out our techniques against each other. A skillful mouth, doesn't really have much persuasion.”

“You really know how to talk big, you want an Arterial Circulation cultivator to spar against a Yuanfu cultivator? Why don't you try sparring against one yourself?” Mountain coldly snorted, rage coloring his voice.

“Exchanging pointers doesn't mean that it needs to be based on combat. If Senior Qiu Mo really wanted to spar against Qin Wentian, naturally he wouldn't be allowed to use his Yuanfu cultivation base.” Someone at the side spoke out. Qiu Mo was already back in his seat, and he involuntarily laughed, “Other than using one's cultivation base to power one's innate techniques, we could merely spar using the stances and moves of our attacks without being powered by our cultivation bases. Victory will be achieved based on one's comprehension, ability to adapt, and reaction speed. Wouldn't that be a beautiful solution?”

“That may be true, however after breaking through to Yuanfu, one's attributes would increase and their senses become sharper as well. Adding into consideration the fact that he should have a deeper understanding of his own innate techniques because his cultivation level is higher, Qiu Mo naturally

would gain an unfair advantage.” Luo Huan scornfully replied. “If that’s the case, it’s the same difference.”

“I have not stepped into Yuanfu yet. Why not let me take the place of Senior Qiu Mo to exchange some pointers with Qin Wentian?” Jiang Xiu abruptly spoke. “Qin Wentian is too arrogant, and in addition to the confidence Luo Huan has in him, why don’t I be the test to see where his true capabilities lie?”

“Luo Huan, if Qin Wentian continues to hesitate, I shall speak of this no more.” Jiang Xiu’s eyes were filled with a cold laughter, provocation could be clearly heard in his tone.

Luo Huan furrowed her brows as she looked to Qin Wentian.

After all, Qin Wentian had only been in the academy for a single year, and had also invested a large amount of time in the study of Divine Inscriptions. Naturally, his understanding towards innate techniques wouldn’t be as profound as others’. Just based on this point alone, Qin Wentian would suffer a disadvantage.

Since they were going to disregard the differences in cultivation base, merely competing with the moves and stances of their innate techniques. In such a battle, naturally the one who was versed in more types of innate techniques would win.

Qiu Mo didn’t continue speaking, as Jiang Xiu has taken over for him. He was naturally content to maintain his silence.

As the gazes of the crowd landed onto Qin Wentian, Qin Wentian’s countenance still remained unperturbed, no one could tell what he was thinking.

Qin Wentian was deep in contemplation at this moment. He was sure he had never offended Qiu Mo or Jiang Xiu before, but why did the two of them seemed to be so against him, overbearingly forceful and deliberately targeting him? Even now, they still wanted to witness him shaming himself to prove to others that the ‘so-called’ talent of Qin Wentian wasn’t able to withstand a single blow if he lost the battle.

Unable to guess at the reason, Qin Wentian decided not to ponder too deeply on it. The crowd only saw him slowly standing up and strolling towards the circular stone stage, as he calmly stated.

“Senior Brother, I await your guidance.”

Qin Wentian stood in the middle of the stage, looking straight at Jiang Xiu. Action always speaks louder than words.

Jiang Xiu glared at Qin Wentian. Standing up, his body erupted with force as he jumped through the air, landing in front of Qin Wentian.

“I won’t be polite then.” Jiang Xiu’s gaze were as sharp as unsheathed swords.

“This junior brother here doesn’t really have a profound understanding regarding innate techniques. What I’ve understood could only said to be the tip of the iceberg. I hope Senior won’t be too harsh on me when we exchange blows later.” The humble reaction by Qin Wentian caught the crowd off guard. This... didn’t seem like the Qin Wentian from moments earlier.

“Hehe, my weapon will be a sword. Choose your Divine Weapon.” Jiang Xiu drew a sword out from his back. Although it was a Divine Weapon, as long as one did not channel energy into it, it was no different from a normal weapon, albeit many times sharper.

Since the two of them agreed not to spar with their cultivation bases, in order to determine the victor, the next best solution was to use a weapon and fight with their weapon-specific style innate techniques. If not, if one were to use a palm-type innate technique, with no cultivation base to power that technique, how could they even blast forth the palm prints? And how could that still be called an innate technique.

“My choice of weapon would be the halberd.” Qin Wentian withdrew the ancient halberd from his interspatial ring with a thought. The ancient halberd wielded in his hands had its tip pointing at the ground, as the crescent blades on the halberd glowed with a cold light.

“Please.” Qin Wentian strengthened his grip on the halberd as he looked at his opponent.

The palms of Jiang Xiu wavered slightly as the sword in his hands emitted an icy light. He then stepped forwards towards Qin Wentian. And every step of his also contained a terrifying pressure. Although he wasn’t using his cultivation base, their fleshy bodies were all extremely powerful due to already passing through the realm of Body Refinement.

The sword in his hands flashed, and as it transformed into a shadow, a sword light filled with coldness pierced towards Qin Wentian.

“Shadow Snow Swordplay.” The elites on the stage were all extraordinary geniuses. Instantly, they were able to tell that this was a low-tier earth-grade innate technique that came from the 4th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

The sword as cold as snow, the sword light like a shadow.

This sword of Jiang Xiu pierced like a bolt of lightning, aiming straight towards the throat of Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian retreated two steps, as he pierced forwards with the ancient halberd, aiming for the tip of the sword, wanting to clash directly with Jiang Xiu.

“How could the wondrous Shadow Snow Swordplay be caught so easily.” The crowd were speculating in their hearts, and as they expected, the sword of Jiang Xiu abruptly changed direction. Like a snowflake that was drifting freely with the wind, it curved naturally, changing its target to the centre of Qin Wentian’s eyebrows, as the body of Jiang Xiu moved together with his sword, graceful beyond comparison.

“Despite not being allowed to use his cultivation base to power his innate techniques, Senior Jiang really exceeds everyone’s expectations. Only in this case would one be able to see the profoundness of Senior Jiang’s sword techniques.” The crowd below couldn’t help but to exclaim in wonder. What a mysterious swordplay. If one were to power it with astral energy, how powerful would it be then?

Qin Wentian continued to retreat, as the ancient halberd he wielded began a dance of its own, transforming into a spiral, as a manifestation of a Xuanwu Black Tortoise appeared. The sword was unable to pierce through its defense that quickly

“This is the mid-tier, earth-grade Berserker Beast Halberd Technique. It’s extremely tyrannical and possesses stringent requirements for users that choose to cultivate it. To think that Qin Wentian actually chose such a halberd technique.”

“Senior Jiang changed his swordplay again, now he is using the Starpoint Swordplay.” The spectators saw the swordplay of Jiang Xiu unhurriedly underwent a change, as the swordlight transformed into a brilliance akin to points of astral light, piercing through the spiral defense of the

ancient halberd. It was as though as long as there was a gap in the halberd's defense, his attack would be able to reach Qin Wentian.

“Vermillion Bird Stance of the Berserker Beast Halberd Technique.”

The ancient halberd that Qin Wentian wielded also changed its stance. As the Vermillion Bird Stance was utilised, the halberd became exceptionally sharp and incomparably agile, wanting to destroy the points of astral light attack for attack. In that short instance, ringing sounds incessantly rang out. It was unknown how many times they clashed within that moment.

“Such close combat is extremely dangerous. One wrong move could cause paralysis or even death to the loser.”

The spectators saw that the speed of their close combat battle was getting faster and faster. Even without being powered by his cultivation base, the sword of Jiang Xiu was extremely tyrannical. Qin Wentian also didn't lose out that much. Although his moves were not as graceful and beautiful as the sword user, his defense was as tough as a stone, his attack as domineering as a dragon and a tiger. And as the two of them clashed against each other numerous times, the Divine Weapons in their hands shone with a luster, having the potential to kill with every strike.

Since they were not using their Yuan Energy, the victor would be determined by their understanding of the profoundness of their innate techniques.

From the circumstances, the sword of Jiang Xiu unleashed different attacks relentlessly, inching closer and closer. Most of the time, Qin Wentian adopted a defensive posture, and if this were to go on, Qin Wentian would undoubtedly be defeated.

However, Qin Wentian did not share the same thoughts as the spectators. Although for the majority of the time, he was in a defensive position, his stance was as steady as Mount Tai, there were no gaps in his defense. Even under the constant onslaught of the explosive, ever-changing swordplay of Jiang Xiu, Qin Wentian didn't even suffer a single injury.

“Seems like Qin Wentian wasn't undeserving of his reputation. Although at first glance, he appeared to be the weaker party, his understanding of innate techniques was not as profound as his opponent, but during every critical moment, he was able to avert disaster and counter with a miraculous counterattack.” The elites on the stage understood more compared to the rest of the crowd. There were two reasons why Qin Wentian could be so steady, making no mistakes even when dueling speed against speed.

Firstly, he was exceptionally familiar with his own techniques, able to execute them to the point of perfection.

Secondly, his senses were extremely sharp, able to clearly sense the path of his opponent's every attack, not missing out on a single one.

“Sword Heart's Lonely Shadow.”

The swordplay of Jiang Xiu transformed yet again. His whole person was indomitably pressing forwards, and his sword, akin to a lonely shadow, lacerated everything in its path, emanating a chill that gushed forward intently.

Qin Wentian unhesitatingly retreated, causing the crowd to sigh involuntarily. Qin Wentian, no matter what, was still going to be defeated. No one had anticipated that Jiang Xiu had mastered that strike, Sword Heart's Lonely Shadow to such a level. The sword in his hands moved at the slightest intent of his will. His degree of accuracy and exquisiteness of that attack had already reached the peak, as Qin Wentian's defense became increasingly flustered.

“You are doomed to be defeated.” In that instant, Jiang Xiu himself seemed akin to a sharp sword, piercing out gracefully.

“Azure Dragon Stance.” Qin Wentian roared in rage, as he stabbed out with the ancient halberd, exuding an aura of dominance. The simplest strike, but yet the strongest attack he could muster.

“Release!” The gaze of Jiang Xiu was as sharp as swords, and the sword in his hand moved according to his will, undergoing 9 transformations in an instant. The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian's hands was flung out by the impact, and within that space of a single breath, the sword of Jiang Xiu inched closer and closer.

“Qin Wentian, has been defeated.” Upon witnessing this sight, the crowd silently stated in their hearts. The sword of Jiang Xiu could end that battle in an blink of an eye.

The swordplay of Jiang Xiu won because of its ingenuity. As for the halberd, without the infusion of Yuan power, it wasn't able to unleash its full tyrannical might.

However, at this very instant, the crowd only saw Qin Wentian advancing instead of choosing to retreat. His palm blasted forward, coming into contact directly with the back of that sharp sword of Jiang Xiu, veering the sword away from him.

“Courting death.” Jiang Xiu coldly snorted, as the sword in his hand swung in a graceful, perfect arc, changing its trajectory and slicing horizontally at Qin Wentian. However, he witnessed the incredibly mysterious movement technique of Qin Wentian saving him. Maintaining the same rhythm as the sword swing, and moving in accordance to it, Qin Wentian avoided that attack. While simultaneously retreating, he extended his other hand, and actually managed to catch hold of the ancient halberd that was flung out of his grasp. All of this took time to describe, but the events happened within the space of a moment.

At this moment, the distance between Jiang Xiu and Qin Wentian was only a feet apart. Jiang Xiu blasted out with his left hand, and Qin Wentian mirrored his actions. At that moment of impact, both of their bodies were instantly forced apart a certain distance. However, during that split-second, the Vermillion Bird Stance of the Berserker Beast Halberd Technique swept out, incomparably swift. The crescent edged blades of that halberd landed on Jiang Xiu’s neck, while the sword of Jiang Xiu was still some distance away from Qin Wentian!

Chapter 109

AGM 0109 – Overbearing

This abrupt change caused the expressions of many to freeze dumbfoundedly, revealing expressions of amazement on their faces. In that instant when the last move by Jiang Xiu swept out, Qin Wentian actually managed to pull off such an incredible movement technique. Even though it was not powered by Yuan Energy, just purely based on his movements alone, it could be said that he had reached the state akin to a fish in water.

What was even more shocking was that he even incorporated a perfect attack directly after; as though everything, including the reactions of his opponent, was pre-planned by him within his mind, ensuring the defeat of Jiang Xiu.

Jiang Xiu’s countenance at this moment was extremely unsightly to behold. This exchange without the use of their cultivation bases truly showcased the understanding of one’s proficiency in using their innate techniques, as well as their senses and talent. Since he was defeated, it meant that he was not at the level of Qin Wentian. Not only that, his arrogant words and impoliteness from earlier still resounded clearly in the ears of the crowd. This blinding contrast really caused him to lose all face today.

“My cultivation base is shallow, and I only have a slight understanding of a few innate techniques. Maybe my luck is good, hence winning by chance.” Qin Wentian smiled as he spoke to Jiang Xiu, his voice unperturbed. However, it was precisely the calmness of his voice that cause his words to sound extremely sarcastic in Jiang Xiu’s ears.

Shallow cultivation base, only knowing a few innate techniques? But the victor was Qin Wentian? Doesn’t that mean that he, the great Jiang Xiu, was even worse when compared to him?

Not only that, Qin Wentian still added a ‘maybe he was lucky’ reasoning at the end of his sentence. Wasn’t that also yet another slap in the face of Qiu Mo and Jiang Xiu. Both of them has been deliberately targeting Qin Wentian from the start, and according to their logic, the reason for Qin Wentian’s win now should be luck.

Jiang Xiu raised his hands and exerted his strength, forcefully pushing the ancient halberd away from his neck. The immense strength of the push caused Qin Wentian’s arms to tremble from the impact.

“Losing by one move, maybe it was luck, or maybe it was because of merely being careless. Both of your understandings are at a high level regarding innate techniques; especially Jiang Xiu, he comprehended the essences and insights of many mighty and mysterious greatsword techniques. If it were not for the restriction of this exchange, in a real battle he would win in merely a few moves. The dominating strength further bolstered by the power of his cultivation base would have long destroyed the pathetic defense of Junior Brother Qin.”

It was as if Qiu Mo had long prepared his speech, stepping out to save the day. From a certain viewpoint, his words weren’t without sense. Earlier, every attack by Jiang Xiu had the potential to kill, and the restriction of not being allowed to use their cultivation bases caused the power of his sword to diminish greatly. If not, even if their cultivation bases were at a similar level, Qin Wentian might not have been able to defend against it.

However, from yet another viewpoint, Jiang Xiu was obviously defeated. And despite that, Qiu Mo actually continued defending him, twisting words and obscuring logic.

At this moment, everyone who had eyes were able to tell that Qiu Mo was intentionally targeting Qin Wentian.

“Since the exchange has already concluded, we might as well have a real battle, what does Junior brother Qin thinks about this?” Qiu Mo smiled as he looked to Qin Wentian.

“Oi.” At this moment, a voice rang out within the crowd. Qiu Mo shifted his gaze over, only to see a fatty approaching the stone stage, halting at the steps of it. That figure planted his hands on his hips while looking at him.

“Senior Brother Qiu Mo, if the rankings between the 10 prodigies were to undergo a change, I believe that Senior would surely be ranked first.” The first sentence from the mouth of the fatty caused the crowd to become silent, as expressions of interested appeared on their faces.

Naturally, there were people in the crowd that recognised who this fatty was. The bosom buddy of Qin Wentian, Fan Le.

In the past, Qin Wentian and Fan Le stood together in the arena, the first time was the killing of Orfon, and the second was facing against Murong Feng and Du Hao. Naturally, there were many that recognised him.

Not only that, the fatty Fan Le’s talent was also extremely high. It was only because he kept appearing with Qin Wentian that the brilliance of his talent was masked. Many in the crowd knew that during this period of time, Fatty frequented the Dreamsky Forest, and the speed at which his martial prowess rose... even the word terrifying wasn’t sufficient to describe it.

And it was also rumored that Elder Mustang wouldn’t usually guide Qin Wentian on his cultivation, but paid strict attention to Fan Le instead. Because, Fan Le was just too lazy.

As for lazy people, of course they would need supervision.

“Why?” Luo Huan laughed as she looked at Fan Le.

“I heard that within the rankings of the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital, Senior Qiu Mo was ranked 4th. There’s no need to speak about those that ranked behind him, and as for the three people ranked in front of him, if they were to fight against Senior Qiu Mo, they might also not win for certain. Even if they won, they definitely must have depended on luck, and thus the result wouldn’t be accurate. Not only that, they surely achieved their current cultivation base through many fortuitous and miraculous encounters, how could they be compared to Senior Qiu Mo, whose cultivation was obtained purely through hard work? Only Senior brother Qiu Mo deserves to be the undisputed number one, breaking into Yuanfu based on his own efforts. Who would dare to compare themselves with him?”

Fan Le spoke frankly with assurance, causing people to be stunned. This fellow... was speaking nonsense with a straight face. But still, the crowd naturally understood the meaning of Fan Le's words.

"What logic is this?" Qiu Mo furrowed his brows. Naturally, he could feel the sarcasm behind the words of Fatty.

"You brushed it off as a fortuitous event, doubting the fact that Qin Wentian could create 3rd level Divine Inscriptions – obtaining the imprints by luck instead of his own creation. He only used the span of a year to reach the 6th level of Arterial Circulation, but you said that he was a fallen genius and wouldn't be able to step into Yuanfu. He agreed to your proposal to have an exchange against Jiang Xiu and won, yet you refuted, saying that it was due to luck and carelessness of his opponent. Afterwards, you conveniently forgot that originally, their spar was supposed to be this way, without the use of their cultivation base – but after that you still shamelessly proposed a real battle. How amazing."

Fan Le laughed as he spoke, looking at Qiu Mo. "In the entire Emperor Star Academy, only Senior Qiu Mo depended on his own efforts to achieve the cultivation base he has today. All the rest can only depend on miraculous events or fortuitous encounters to break through to Yuanfu. I don't really understand Senior Qiu's logic, where did he get his self-confidence from? But I know this for sure: if we were to compare the level of shamelessness, Senior Qiu Mo would definitely be ranked as the first among the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital."

After he finish his speech, Fan Le even pretentiously bowed in the direction of Qiu Mo. This level of sarcasm was so high that it was indescribable, and it caused the expression on Qiu Mo face to turn extremely ugly to behold.

"A win is a win, a loss is a loss. Qin Wentian's mastery of his innate techniques surpassed that of Jiang Xiu, how can it be brushed off as luck? Obviously Jiang Xiu was not proficient enough. Since he was defeated, he should accept it with a big heart and learn from his mistakes." Luo Cheng also involuntarily spoke out, as he couldn't bear it anymore. It was not that he was helping Qin Wentian, but he was just acting in line to his personality.

The word was out on the street that Qin Wentian had enmity with Luo Qianqiu. As a person that hailed from the Asura Faction, Luo Cheng naturally wouldn't intentionally help Qin Wentian. It was just that he couldn't take it anymore either.

“If Jiang Xiu of the 10 prodigies could defeat Qin Wentian because of his higher cultivation base, is there anything to be proud of?” Luo Cheng was very direct, but to Jiang Xiu, it was undoubtedly a provocation filled with sarcasm.

“It seems as though after you made some progress in your cultivation, you actually dared to dream about stealing my position in the rankings of the 10 prodigies. If you really wish for it, there’s no need to wait for the Jun Lin Banquet. Today, I can give you a chance.” Jiang Xiu’s eyes were directed at Luo Cheng. His gaze was akin to swords, incomparably sharp. Although he was ranked last among the 10 prodigies, this ranking was given to him last year. After a year, he has already broken through to the peak level of Arterial Circulation, and had wanted to advance his ranking.

“What do I have to fear?” Luo Cheng’s countenance remained unchanged as he calmly spoke. He wasn’t like Jiang Xiu, who put too much emphasis on victory or defeat. His purpose of attending the Jun Lin Banquet was solely because he wanted to temper himself. It would be an added bonus if he were to rank among the first few places. However, if he could not, it wasn’t a bad thing either as his martial prowess would surely increase.

Since this time Jiang Xiu wanted to bring forward the battle date, why not?

“Fine, wait for me. Before our battle, I will personally teach Junior Brother Qin how to respect his seniors.” The gaze of Jiang Xiu shifted, as he stared at Qin Wentian again. At this moment, the sword in his hands shone with a blinding light, even colder and sharper when compared to earlier. Very obviously, this time round, Jiang Xiu infused his divine weapon with his Astral Yuan Energy.

Qin Wentian was speechless, from the beginning to the end, it has always been Qiu Mo and Jiang Xiu deliberately setting themselves against him. But now, Jiang Xiu actually still wanted to teach him how to ‘respect’ his seniors?

Simply putting, it was still what Qin Wentian had said earlier. Regardless of Qiu Mo or Jiang Xiu, the reason why they dared to be so overbearing was because they were currently stronger than Qin Wentian.

Pu..... A cold ray of swordlight as bright as the shining constellations pierced towards Qin Wentian.

The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian’s hands danced in response, as a Xuanwu Black Tortoise manifested again, while the sword light relentlessly stabbed at it, trying to break down his defense.

The sword moved like a graceful swan. This sword strike of his contained no technique, but rather was a direct stab. As the sound of the sword piercing through the air rang out, the Xuanwu Black Tortoise crumbled into pieces, the defense of the Xuanwu Stance was actually broken by the sword of Jiang Xiu! The cultivation base of Jiang Xiu was the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, while Qin Wentian was merely at the 6th. The disparity was too great, the Astral Energy transmitted through the 9 arterial circular pathways augmented the sword technique of Jiang Xiu's exponentially, his attacks were naturally overwhelmingly tyrannical.

Qin Wentian's silhouette was like a leaf drifting about in the wind, his steps incredibly exquisite, dodging the attack with ease.

"The Nine Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique." At this moment, the spectators realised which movement technique Qin Wentian was using, as they revealed expressions of awe on their faces. Qin Wentian actually chose to cultivate a technique of such immense difficulty. Not only that, his level of mastery was actually at such an incredible stage, his whole person was akin to a real Garuda.

Jiang Xiu continually stabbed out two swords, but didn't manage to hit his opponent. How could he lose his pride like this? His body flickered into motion as sword light flashed again – Sword Heart's Lonely Shadow! In that instant, his whole person seemed to have become a sword, transforming into a phantom, while the mirage of a raging tornado of swords appeared on the stage.

Qin Wentian's expression froze, as he executed the Xuanwu Stance once again to its utmost limit, but only to see it be broken by the sword technique again. This time, as the Xuanwu Manifestation exploded, a huge tear caused by the Sword Qi of Jiang Xiu could be seen on the robes of Qin Wentian.

"How shameless." Luo Huan coldly snorted, as abruptly, the shadow of a whip appeared in midair. It was as though a thread of blinding light descended from the skies.

Jiang Xiu froze as his sword light transformed, piercing through the void, coming into contact with the long whip of Luo Huan.

Peesh. A crisp noise rang out, as the long whip danced around the sword with a movement akin to a python, coiling around the body of Jiang Xiu.

Jiang Xiu furrowed his brows, he didn't realise that Luo Huan's strength was at such a level. It seemed like during this past year, none of the elites had wasted their time.

A cold light flickered in the eyes of Qin Wentian, who was standing by the side. Jiang Xiu had pushed him to such an extent, torn off the mask of mock politeness, and completely disregarded decorum. Why would he bother holding back?

Chapter 110

AGM 0110 – Dumbo

Qin Wentian clutched the ancient halberd in his hands tightly as he infused his astral energy within it, staring at the battle between Luo Huan and Jiang Xiu.

An inch longer equates to an inch of more danger. Senior Luo Huan's long whip danced about like wind and clouds, while Jiang Xiu's swordplay remained incomparably exquisite despite the fact that he was forced into defense. Only upon seeing this did Qin Wentian realise that, that day when he had trained with Luo Huan, she hadn't exerted her real strength.

Just then, the shadows of her long whip filled the sky. Every time it lashed out, a thunderous sound akin to the howl of a demon could be heard.

Qin Wentian slowly walked forwards, and he transformed into a blur of shadows. The spectators only saw a blurry silhouette soaring up to the skies, shooting upwards with the speed of a meteor before finally appearing in the space above Jiang Xiu.

“Buzz.” As the wind billowed wildly, Astral Light coalesced into the form of garuda wings appeared on Qin Wentian's back, and he saw that the ancient halberd in his hand was pointing directly at Jiang Xiu below. With a howl of rage, and a pressure akin to that of a mountain, Qin Wentian executed the Green Dragon Stance as the ancient halberd instantly appeared an inch away from Jiang Xiu's head, causing his countenance to turn bloodlessly pale.

“Despicable.” Jiang Xiu slashed out with his sword, wanting to use his sword light to intercept Qin Wentian's attack. However, the tyranny of the ancient halberd was boundless, the power behind its attack as heavy as a mountain. As it bore forward heavily on Jiang Xiu's sword, the sword broke into pieces, unable to ever be used again.

“Pa.....” A tearing sound rang out as Jiang Xiu's robes were lacerated. Blood flowed like a fountain as the wound of a whiplash could be clearly seen on his chest. Instantaneously, he was flung away by the impact, and he slammed heavily onto the ground. In addition, his shattered sword fragments also scattered about him like a gentle rain.

Although all this took time to describe, everything happened in an instant. The expressions of the crowd froze, as weird and puzzled looks were exchanged. Jiang Xiu of the 10 prodigies had actually been defeated and humiliated to such an extent. This was really a rare piece of news for the Emperor Star Academy.

“Audacious.” Qiu Mo roared in anger, as Yuanfu pressure began emanating forth from his body. Luo Huan stepped in front of Qin Wentian as she stated, “Don’t tell me Senior Qiu Mo wants to use his Yuanfu cultivation base to bully me and junior brother Qin?”

At this moment, Jiang Xiu picked himself up from the ground, as a monstrous sword-intent gushed out. His expression couldn’t be more ugly.

As one of the 10 prodigies, he had actually lost in front of a crowd. To him, this was an extreme humiliation.

Everyone in the crowd witnessed what has happened. If he did not wash clean this shame, how could he have the face to look others in the eye in the future?

“You guys actually went 2-on-1, and even did a sneak attack.” Qiu Mo coldly snorted as he took a step forward. The pressure released by his immense Yuanfu aura, bore down on Luo Huan and Qin Wentian. This pressure was incredibly powerful. The disparity between the Yuanfu Realm and the Arterial Circulation was light years away.

“Jiang Xiu, a genius of the Emperor Star Academy with the status of one of the 10 prodigies, while Junior brother Qin is a mere new student. Earlier when Jiang Xiu made his move against Junior brother Qin, I didn’t see Senior Qiu Mo stepping out to stop him.” Luo Huan’s beautiful eyes stared at Qiu Mo as she continued, “Besides, you can’t tell me that Jiang Xiu actually feels threatened by Junior brother Qin’s 6th level of Arterial Circulation? The 10 prodigies shouldn’t be so weak right? With a gap of 3 levels between them, shouldn’t Jiang Xiu still be able to freely ignore Junior brother Qin’s attack and still have no harm done to him?”

Luo Huan didn’t forget to humiliate Jiang Xiu with her words, and Jiang Xiu’s expression got uglier and uglier.

Indeed, Jiang Xiu, as one of the 10 prodigies and with a cultivation base at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, should by right not be at all threatened by Qin Wentian’s cultivation base at the 6th level. Unless, of course, he was suppressed by the Qin Wentian’s martial prowess .

“Qiu Mo, their battle has nothing to do with you.” At this moment, the sound of Luo Cheng’s voice drifted over. Qiu Mo shifted his gaze, and the light of a cold anger could be seen smouldering in the depths of his eyes.

“Since you’ve already broken through to Yuanfu, you should go look for those Yuanfu Seniors and spar against them. Who do you think you are, acting like a hero here?” Luo Cheng didn’t leave a shred of face of Qiu Mo as he continued. “Moreover, this was a battle Jiang Xiu proposed on his own. If he is still a man, he should settle it himself. Otherwise, the name of the 10 prodigies would all be thrown away by Jiang Xiu, even needing help from others to fight his own battles.”

“The end of the year approaches. After the Jun Lin Banquet ends, the name of Jiang Xiu will never appear within the ranks of the 10 prodigies ever again.”

The voice of Luo Cheng was calm, as though he was speaking about an extremely ordinary thing; However, the content of his words caused the other elites on stage to nod in agreement.

The Jun Lin Banquet that was held every year would result in a change of ranking among the 10 prodigies. Naturally, this year would not be an exception. Luo Cheng spoke bluntly; not only would Jiang Xiu no longer advance within the ranks of the 10 prodigies, he would on the contrary, be totally removed from it, surpassed by others.

“The two of you can come at me together.” Jiang Xiu raged as he released his Sword-type Astral Soul.

His pupils were akin to swords as he glared at Luo Huan and Qin Wentian. At this moment, on his chest, one could see his lacerated flesh, slightly blocked by his clothing that was dyed red with his blood. Jiang Xiu currently was at his boiling point.

As the sound of his voice faded, he took another step forward. The sword Qi howled, and a ray of sword light could be seen slashing out towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian pierced forwards with the ancient halberd as the faint shadow of the Xuanwu Tortoise materialised. The sword slash’s arrival caused the manifestation to crumble as Qin Wentian felt a wave of terrifyingly sharp pressure gushing forth towards him.

“You overestimate yourself.” Luo Huan coldly snorted as anger flashed in her eyes. At the same time she released her Astral Soul, the long whip in her hand also lashed out in attack. It was as

though the whole sky was covered with a storm of attacks, as the shadow of her whip devoured space, suppressing the attacking sword light.

At this moment, expressions of surprises appeared on the faces of the crowd. So in actuality, Luo Huan was this strong? Even without Qin Wentian, Luo Huan alone would have already been sufficient to suppress Jiang Xiu.

“Truly a sad case of overestimating your own abilities. Can’t you see that Luo Huan’s power level has already surpassed yours?” Luo Cheng exclaimed, disdain evident in his eyes as he saw Jiang Xiu preparing another attack. Jiang Xiu was ranked as the 10th prodigy during the Banquet last year. It seems as though the competitors last year had been weaklings, and that was how he had obtained his ranking. However, this year was different; the competition between elites would be many times more intense.

Luo Huan did indeed possess the qualifications to fight for the position if she chose to do so. Not only that, he himself also wanted to fight for it. Furthermore, he understood that the martial prowess of Luo Qianqiu, was definitely stronger than his. Soon after Luo Qianqiu had stepped into the 8th level, he’d entered into self-seclusion again. There was only a single target Luo Qianqiu was aiming for – the first position in the Jun Lin Banquet. During the banquet at the end of the year, there would be no Yuanfu cultivators. How many of those in Arterial Circulation could defeat Luo Qianqiu by then?

Qin Wentian didn’t strike again. Instead, he sarcastically remarked, “10 prodigies? Even if it was the 15 prodigies, Jiang Xiu, you still wouldn’t have the qualifications to be part of it.”

As Jiang Xiu got increasingly infuriated from these words, his swordplay started to be affected. From the surface, it seemed as though its had power increased, but it was obvious he had no way to sustain it. As for Luo Huan, the dance of her whip interweaved through the air perfectly, forming a net so tight that even wind and rain wouldn’t be able to pass through it.

Luo Huan’s lithe figure danced about gracefully. Many began fantasising how good would it be if they could become her man.

However, all of them knew that even though Luo Huan looked ‘easy’ and flirted constantly, there hadn’t been a single man that had successfully wooed her before.

And at this moment, the sound of a bird call drifted over from the far horizons. As everyone’s gazes turned towards that direction, expressions of shock and surprise could be seen on their faces. Who in the world actually dared to ride a flying beast as their steed in the Emperor Star Academy?

And as the sound of the bird call got nearer and nearer, the crowd's eyes rested upon the beautiful silhouette mounted atop of that white crane in the distance.

“Mo Qingcheng.”

Many males in the crowd gazed at her silhouette with their mouths wide open, seemingly having already forgotten the intense battle that was occurring between Jiang Xiu and Luo Huan.

Far away in the distance, the lady clad in white atop the white crane was akin to a celestial maiden. Her beautiful face, coupled together with the white crane and her attire, made her seem like an angel had descended from the heavens and was flying towards the crowd. In the distance,

As in comparison to Mo Qingcheng, Nolan, who was beside her, could only serve the purpose of a backdrop, forgotten by others. It wasn't that Nolan wasn't beautiful, but when being in such a close proximity to Mo Qingcheng, her looks were totally suppressed.

There were so many ravishing women in the Chu Country, but no matter how many beauties there were, none could hold a candle to Mo Qingcheng.

“How beautiful.” Qin Yao also involuntarily praised her. She thought of the words Luo Huan had spoken previously, that Qin Wentian may end up together with Mo Qingcheng. Wouldn't that be a perfect union?

Very quickly, the white crane neared the spectators, hovering in the air.

“Mo Qingcheng also seems to be interested in observing the battle.” Some people commented as they saw the eyes of Mo Qingcheng glancing over at them.

Qiu Mo shot a look at the white crane hovering in the air. As he gazed at the beautiful silhouette, a warm look and gentle smile appeared on his face, causing him to appear extremely approachable.

“Why is she here as well?” Qin Wentian displayed a puzzled expression. Everytime he looked at Mo Qingcheng, he would feel the strings of his hearts being stirred. As a young, hot-blooded male, it was extremely difficult for any to maintain their calmness in front of Mo Qingcheng's absolute

beauty – a beauty that was even capable of toppling empires. After all, their cultivation levels weren't sufficient for them to be at the 'heart like still water' state.

Descending from the white crane in a graceful somersault, the two beautiful girls landed on to the ground, attracting everyone's attentions. The exciting battle between Luo Huan and Jiang Xiu was thrown to the back of their minds, forgotten in the face of absolute beauty.

"Qingcheng, why are you here today?" Qiu Mo walked forward as he smiled at Mo Qingcheng.

"Oi, oi, Qiu Mo, since when was Qingcheng so familiar with you? Please show some respect when you are talking to her." Nolan glared at Qiu Mo, causing an expression of awkwardness to be displayed on his face. But swiftly after, a gentle smile appeared as he recovered.

Mo Qingcheng didn't pay any mind to Qiu Mo, only glancing at him casually. However, Qiu Mo had already anticipated her response. It wasn't just him, Mo Qingcheng couldn't be bothered with most of the members of the 10 prodigies.

However, as he saw Mo Qingcheng walking towards Qin Wentian, Qiu Mo's expression slightly changed as a dangerous glint of cold light flickered in his eyes.

Rumours had it that during the banquet hosted by Chu Tianjiao earlier, Mo Qingcheng's treatment of Qin Wentian was way different from how she treated the others. Didn't that mean that the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital weren't comparable to Qin Wentian? Did Mo Qingcheng, the number one beauty of Chu, really have such a good relationship with Qin Wentian?

Just thinking of this caused the unhappiness and irritation in his heart to surge wildly, silently cursing the dogsh*t luck of Qin Wentian. He'd gotten so many 3rd level divine imprints, as well as obtained Mo Qingcheng's approval.

"Dumbo." Mo Qingcheng called out to Qin Wentian as a light smile painted her face. Every time she looked at the expression on Qin Wentian's face, she couldn't help but feel that this fellow was slightly dumb in an adorable way.

"Hmm....." Qin Wentian blinked. Dumbo?

Involuntarily, he thought of that day he'd spent with Mo Qingcheng, gazing at the beautiful falling snow. Smiling bitterly, he thought to himself, was he really a dumbbo?

At this moment, Qin Wentian could feel numerous gazes filled with enmity pointed at him. Qiu Mo was the same as well, causing Qin Wentian to feel slightly marvelous.

Could the deliberate targeting of him by Qiu Mo be because of Mo Qingcheng?