

Ancient GM 151

Chapter 151: A Brewing Storm

Chu Tianjiao left the room his father was in. All the citizens in Chu had no idea that the Emperor of Chu was tormented by illnesses and was always in bed. Even top-grade medicinal pills had no effect on curing the illness.

The Emperor of Chu could still remember that this illness began when Qin Wu passed away. It gradually worsened until its current state.

Chu Tianjiao stood outside a grand hall. Standing upright and attentively on both side of the entrance were a few Blooded Imperial bodyguards who resembled unmoving statues.

“The first task, gather 10 Yuanfu-level Dragon Guards. From today onwards, no one is allowed to get near to my lord father. Remember, no one is allowed. No one.”

“The second task, relay my command on the front lines, implement the beheading plan.”

“The third task, inform the Black Stronghold to strengthen their defenses and send people to monitor Qin Wu. Under no circumstances will he be allowed to break out.”

“The fourth task, send people to monitor the clans that hold military authority in the Royal Capital. If their families shows any signs of strange movements, control them immediately, or annihilate all of them.”

“The fifth task...” Chu Tianjiao went silent for a moment before he continued. “Forget it, I will head over myself personally to negotiate things with the Nine Mystical Palace.”

This time around, the position of the first ranker had been snatched by the Emperor Star Academy, but the Nine Mystical Palace would surely not let their plans die away.

And thus, this should be the time to erode this troublesome academy from Chu. Luo Tianya and Luo Qianqiu would surely be sending people to aid him with this task.

The statue-like guards disappeared without a sound as they left to execute Chu Tianjiao’s order. It was as though they were never there in the first place.

Chu Tianjiao turned his head. He gazed at the depths of the great hall, nodding in satisfaction as he stared at that heavily guarded room. He didn’t believe that there would be anyone able to infiltrate it.

After an unknown amount of time passed since Chu Tianjiao gave his order, the Chu Country was like a machine that got automated. The biggest transport company, the Sky Transport Network, also got livelier.

During the same time Chu Tianjiao relayed his commands, in the depths of the Dark Forest, that silent and dark prison was still as cold and rigid as before as if it had always been there since ancient times.

A horse carriage arrived outside the Black Stronghold, as a figure within took out an authority medallion. Soon after, the gates of the Black Stronghold opened, and a line of silhouettes walked out slowly and entered the Black Stronghold.

This line of unknown figures stopped outside the cell of a certain someone. The prisoner within the cell was sitting on the ground. This prisoner was none other than Qin Wu.

“Open the door.” The person holding the authority medallion coldly stated.

The prison warden stared at the figure, and after some moments of hesitation, he complied and reached for his key, unlocking the door of the cell.

The figure with the authority medallion continued in an icy voice. “Unlock his chains.”

“Impossible.” The prison warden refuted. There was no one who had that level of authority.

Puchi! Even before the sound of his voice faded, a long spear entered him from behind, piercing right into his heart while a hand from an unknown figure pressed against his mouth, stifling his death cries. The prison warden slumped to the ground before closing his eyes forever.

The figure with the medallion searched the corpse for the key, and he unlocked the chains that bound Qin Wu, as well as removing the torn and tattered robes Qin Wu wore.

Qin Wu still had his eyes closed as he stood up slowly. After which, one of the unknown figures took out a set of new clothings and put it on Qin Wu’s body, as if they were doing something that was exceedingly ordinary.

“Prison break!”

Abruptly, sounds of alarm rang out from the patrolling guards. The group of unknown figures also started to move, with killing intent rolling off in waves from their bodies.

Qin Wu’s eyes finally opened. In them, there were no sharp glints of light. On the contrary, extraordinary calmness could be seen within.

“Is everything already prepared?” Qin Wu asked.

“Not yet.” That figure replied. However, there was no fluctuations in Qin Wu’s countenance. It was as though everything was within his predictions.

“After young master Qin Chuan was rescued and the line of equilibrium broke, Chu Tianjiao already made his move. If we don’t take actions fast, Chu Tianjiao may silence esteemed General at any moment. Without a choice, we could only bring forward our plan,” that person replied. Even after all these years, he still referred to Qin Wu as ‘General’.

“In the end, do we still really have to make an enemy out of Chu?” Qin Wu sighed.

“From the moment the Wu King passed away, everything was already determined. The twelve generals all swore to avenge the Wu King’s death, and after the next generations of the generals’ bloodlines grew up, they, too, swore the blood oath. It’s all because General has always been enduring silently and not giving the final command. My father as well as a few other uncles could only use the guise of retreating as a form of advancement, building up their forces in secret and beginning the long and endless wait.

That figure whispered in a low voice, but the words he uttered were filled with a sense of heaviness.

It was as though there was a great secret behind the death of the Wu King.

Once, the Wu King shook the world, aided the previous Emperor to conquer the world, and subjugated the enemy forces in all directions.

However, when the hares were all killed, the hounds would be stewed and eaten.

This piece of history was only known to the generals who stood in the front lines during the times of war.

And as for the citizens of Chu, the truth was distorted before it reached their ears.

No one knew the truth of what had happened. This piece of history, although seemingly quiet on the surface, actually had a violent storm brewing within.

Outside the Black Stronghold, a typhoon of killing intent erupted. A mysterious group of soldiers entered. These troops were all covered entirely in metal, with helmets obscuring their features. The strength of their might was terrifying to an inconceivable degree. These were all shock troops, the elites among elites.

Back when the Wu King had passed away and the Qin Residence relocated to Sky Harmony City, these elite soldiers no longer reported to the Qin Residence, and instead they scattered to the four winds.

Chu Tianjiao naturally knew of these matters. With how prosperous the Chu Country was, its informant network's ability was also extremely powerful.

And thus, Chu Tianjiao didn't have the intentions to kill Qin Wu and Qin Chuan, because he could almost be certain that if Qin Wu were to die, the Chu Country would be embroiled in the center of a terrifying tornado. The might of the hidden power in darkness was sufficient to overthrow their imperial authority.

Chu Tianjiao didn't make a move, Qin Wu also mirrored his actions, which caused a fragile line of equilibrium to be born.

But after events of the Jun Lin Banquet, a gap was pried open in this fragile line of equilibrium, causing the balance between both parties to tilt. Hence, Chu Tianjiao decided to not wait any longer.

Today, the messengers of the Sky Transport Network secretly delivered intelligence to various places in Chu. Not only that, they even stepped into the boundaries of other countries.

It was as though there was going to be a terrifying storm that would happen in Chu very soon.

And in regards to all that was happening, only a privileged few in Chu had any inkling about it. The majority of the citizens still lived their own lives, with no knowledge of what was going to happen.

Even Qin Chuan didn't know about this.

Qin Wu had never mentioned this to him before.

It was the same for Qin He and Qin Ye, who were fighting at the front lines.

Qin Wentian, was naturally in the dark as well.

In his heart, grandpa Qin was a gentle and mild person who didn't even have any slight hints of resemblance to those generals that had experienced countless wars.

To him, Qin Wu loved peace and solitude and had amicable personality. Other than this, there wasn't any other impressions Qin Wentian could remember about Qin Wu.

Even Qin Chuan didn't disturb Qin Wu a lot. The father and son duo didn't frequently meet.

In Qin Wentian's residence in the grounds of the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Yao prepared a table of food and wine. The three of them ate happily and enjoyed the simple pleasures of dining together as a family.

"It's almost time for the commemoration festival again. Yet another one year has passed. I wonder if your mother is still at Sky Harmony City." As Qin Chuan thought of his wife, sadness flashed in his heart. It had already been one year. She must have been very worried about him.

"Father, Mother should have already moved back to Sky Harmony City. When do you plan to travel back? Let's go see Mother and make her happy."

Qin Yao used her chopsticks and passed some veggies to Qin Chuan, as she happily answered.

"Mhm." Qin Chuan nodded his head, "There's also 2nd and 3rd brother. I don't have any accurate news of them, and of course, your grandpa Qin Wu is still suffering inside the Black Stronghold."

"Grandpa will be fine."

Qin Wentian smiled as though he were consoling Qin Chuan.

"Good child, after you mature, you will be even stronger. At that time, even the Royal Clan of Chu will fear you." Qin Chuan ruffled Qin Wentian's hair. After one year, Qin Wentian's features had lost most of their childishness and matured considerably.

But no matter how old he was, in Qin Chuan's heart, Qin Wentian would forever be a child.

On the way back, Qin Yao told Qin Chuan stories of how powerful Qin Wentian was currently. The smiles of exultation filled Qin Chuan's heart with gratitude. He had never expected that Qin Wentian would actually reach this stage in only a year's time.

"Junior brother Qin."

At this moment, a figure appeared, standing in a far-off pavilion as he called out.

"Senior Martial brother, is there something wrong?" Qin Wentian walked over. This person was one of those who was in charge of investigating the assassination, as well as one of the 'protectors' responsible for his safety.

The Emperor Star Academy regarded yesterday's assassination attempt extremely seriously.

"Based on a detailed investigation, the academy already has a few suspects in mind. The results should be out soon."

Qin Wentian's eyes flickered, as a sharp glint of light could be seen in his eyes. "Thank you for your hard work."

“And one more thing. Xiao Lù sent men to demand our Emperor Star Academy to hand over Qin Yao. They want her to return back to Snowcloud with them.”

“Tell them to scram.” The glint of light in Qin Wentian’s eyes grew colder by several degrees. Xiao Lù’s stance had already been made clear as per the events that happened back then in the Jun Lin Banquet.

“The academy will handle this matter. And one last thing, Elder Ren asked, when do you want to visit the Heavenly Star Pavilion?” That senior smiled as though this was the actual reason why he came over today. Ren Qianxing hoped that Qin Wentian would be able to ascend the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion as soon as possible.

“Noted, I will be there as soon as I can.” Qin Wentian replied. He also wanted to know what were the secrets in the 7th level that would cause even a power such as the Nine Mystical Palace to react so strongly, going all out and even using despicable methods to ensure that Luo Qianqiu would be the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet.

“Okay, continue working hard.” The senior patted Qin Wentian on his shoulder and departed. In his heart, he was also extremely curious about the secrets in the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, but what a pity; he wasn’t the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet and had no qualifications to enter.

Chapter 152: Warbeast Index

A day had passed since the event of Qin Wentian’s assassination. Although the Emperor Star Academy was still on their guard, the earlier restrictions and lockdown had been removed as people were once again able to enter and depart freely.

Janus walked out of the academy as he strolled slowly on the streets outside. That reserved and calm gaze of his betrayed none of his emotions, no one knew what he was thinking.

The investigations conducted by the Emperor Star Academy were too terrifying with regards to Qin Wentian’s assassination. All Yuanfu Cultivators had to make known their movements on that day of assassination and had to have at least three other witnesses that could verify their statement.

With such a stringent method, those with no grounds for suspicion would be struck off the checklist. It was only a matter of time before the truth would be out.

However at this moment, Janus seemed as though he was worried about something. His brows were tightly knotted as he muttered to himself.

Suddenly, his footsteps halted and his aura instantly blasted out along with the release of his Astral Souls.

Pstt. At the side of him, a spear akin to a sinister, venomous snake erupted forth with a speed as quick as lightning.

Janus roared in rage as a terrifying hurricane enveloped his body. He continually blasted out with his palms, blocking the tyrannical attack of the spear user.

After which, several Yuanfu Cultivators appeared around him. All of them were cloaked in black and had their features obscured by masks. The killing intent they emitted was readily apparent as they strode towards Janus.

Not a single word was spoken. It was as if they had come for the death of Janus.

These happenings caused the countenance of Janus to turn extremely ugly as he shouted in anger, “What? Do you all intend to silence me by killing?”

As the sound of his voice faded, Janus discovered that the black robed Yuanfu Cultivators had stopped their movements. This scenario caused Janus to tremble in fear, as his countenance turned pale white.

He realised that he had just said the wrong thing.

Indeed, the Yuanfu Cultivators all removed their masks and revealed their true faces. Upon seeing them, the face of Janus, instantly turned black.

“Wh...what are all of you doing?”

Those that appeared were actually Yuanfu experts from the Emperor Star Academy.

Very obviously, Janus had fallen into the trap.

“Elder Janus, there’s no need for you to continue acting any longer.” In front of Janus, Elder Thousand-Hand appeared. His gaze were as cold as ice as he continued, “The investigations showed that you were one of the most suspicious among all the Yuanfu Cultivators. And indeed as expected, you fell into the trap. Janus, who was the one that directed you?”

Since Janus had said out the words ‘What? Do you all intend to silence me by killing,’ it was already sufficient to prove that there was someone behind him that also wanted to kill Qin Wentian.

Although Janus hated Qin Wentian, the grudge between them wasn’t sufficient for Janus to take such a huge risk. Before he undertook the assassination attempt he already knew that if he was successful, everything would be worth it. By then, he would leave the Emperor Star Academy and depart from Chu.

What a pity, he had failed.

“Who do you think had the capability to make me work for him?” Janus coldly smiled.

Thousand-Hand frowned. Janus’ words seemed like they were hinting that Chu Tianjiao may be the one behind this whole thing.

But Thousand-Hand still had some suspicions regarding the truth of his words.

A cold light glinted in his eyes as he stared at Janus. He knew that it would be extremely hard to pry any information from Janus.

“Killing a genius of the academy despite your status as an elder, your crime is worthy of death.” Thousand-Hand coldly announced. “Execute him now.”

As the sound of his voice rang out, intense killing intent gushed out from the surrounding Yuanfu experts.

“Thousand-Hand, you actually didn’t even pause to consider my contributions to the academy. At the very least, I’m still an elder and have toiled for many years. How can you announce my death just like this?” Janus shouted, full of unwillingness, as the expression on his face turned extremely ugly. He had never expected Thousand-Hand to be so ruthless.

However, how could Thousand-Hand still be bothered about him? Turning, with his back facing Janus, he walked in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy while sounds of battle could be heard behind him.

And after a few short moments, a corpse laid quietly on the pathways of the Royal Capital. A person standing beside the corpse commanded, “Give him a decent burial. No matter what, he’s still an elder of our academy.”

The death of Janus was just an extremely minor matter in the whole scheme of things. It was only capable of causing a small wave to ripple through the Emperor Star Academy.

But in reality, his death set many things into motion. The Emperor Star Academy had made their stance clear by their actions. Not only that, they were still relentlessly exhausting their resources in a bid to find out who the mastermind behind this was.

Qin Wentian was thunderstruck when news of Janus’ death reached him. That elder who always made things difficult for him had actually died so silently. Not only that, the assassin was him.

Qin Wentian naturally wouldn’t feel pity for Janus. In that assassination attempt, Janus had almost killed him and severely injured Mo Qingcheng.

That droplet of blood followed by the radiant smile on that countenance of peerless beauty was something Qin Wentian would never be able to forget.

At this moment, within the Emperor Star Academy.

In front of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, Qin Wentian inclined his head as he studied the majestic building before him.

The Heavenly Star Pavilion was separated into nine levels. The higher the level, the more narrow the space was, and for the number of people that had stepped onto the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, they could be counted on a single hand.

Even elders of the academy did not have the authority. And if one wanted to use Yuan Meteor Stones to raise the level of their Jade Medallion, the amount of stones needed was so astronomical that it was an impossibility.

And thus, it was as if the entrance to the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion was solely prepared for the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet.

At this moment, Qin Wentian took a step forwards and entered the pavilion.

After he obtained the number one position in the banquet, the level of his Emperor Jade Medallion was upgraded to the 7th grade.

Before he stepped onto the 7th level, Qin Wentian chose to stop on the 6th level first. Over on the 6th level were the best Yuanfu-level cultivation arts and supreme top-level earth-graded innate techniques.

Qin Wentian was here only for one purpose: he wanted the Yuanfu-level Index of the Garuda Movement Technique. After he found it, he borrowed it and placed it inside his interspatial ring. As for the other innate techniques, Qin Wentian didn't bother to even look at them. Because for his other innate techniques, he hadn't even mastered them to their peak of perfection yet. It was meaningless for him to spend time to gain more insights into other types of innate techniques.

Although the grade of an innate technique correlated with the level of power it possessed, the higher the grade, the stronger the innate technique, it was still meaningless if one didn't have the ability to control the power. On the contrary, it might even backfire.

One example was his Great Dream Halberd Art. Although the grade of it wasn't that high, but because he was the one who created it, the level of power it contained and the might displayed when Qin Wentian unleashed it were exceedingly high.

As he walked up the stairs situated on the 6th level, at the top of the stairs, Qin Wentian saw an old man who was quietly sitting there. The body of the old man was covered in dust, and even his hair had become a silvery-grey colour. It was unknown how many years he had already been sitting there.

"Senior." Qin Wentian called out.

"You may proceed." It was as if the old man recognised Qin Wentian, as he spoke in a low voice.

Qin Wentian didn't say anything else and bowed to the old man. The 7th level was forbidden, and there would surely be those of the younger generations who coveted access to it. Thus, the protector here would undoubtedly be one of the supreme experts of the academy.

And after Qin Wentian arrived on the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, he saw a bookshelf that was filled with many Indexes of cultivation arts and innate techniques.

Other than the bookshelf, in the other direction there were three other entrances. And above these three entrances, from left to right the words 7th, 8th and 9th were engraved atop the entrances respectively.

It was as though these three entrances on this level represented the 7th, 8th and 9th levels of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

It was as though this level was the limit, there wasn't any other way to proceed upwards.

As for this mysterious 7th level, Qin Wentian had speculated and had many conjectures regarding it, but who would have thought that it would be so simple.

Three entrances and a single bookshelf.

Qin Wentian firstly went to the bookshelf for a look. After a short moment, his heart trembled with indescribable emotions. These were all Heavenly Dipper level Cultivation Arts, and any single one of them appearing was sufficient to shake the entire Chu Country.

And other than this cultivation arts, Qin Wentian noticed a volume slot beside them. On the surface of the volume, a few large font words were inscribed.

“Warbeast Index.”

Qin Wentian flipped it open, and very quickly, he was engrossed by the contents written inside.

“In the Nine Heavenly Layers, there were countless Martial Constellations. Each of these constellations had its own merits. Powerhouses would use stronger constellations while weaker powers would use more inferior constellations. However, there was clearly a line of division between the different types of Martial Constellations. The Venerate Heaven Sect once gathered countless peerless existences of the Grand Xia Empire that had condensed Beast-types Astral Souls before. Out of those, they selected the most powerful 360 types of Beast-types Astral Souls to be recorded into the Warbeast Index, ranking the Astral Souls respectively.”

This paragraph was the primer, and was also the reason why the Warbeast Index was created.

“Venerate Heaven Sect, Grand Xia Empire.”

Qin Wentian murmured. The Venerate Heaven Sect should be an exceptionally powerful sect while the Grand Xia Empire should similarly be a place of unimaginable might.

Not only that, ever since he was young, Qin Wentian had been under the tutelage of Uncle Black. He was exceedingly familiar with and had even analysed the constellations of the 5th Heavenly Layer and below. Naturally he knew that the power of the Stellar Martial Cultivators directly depended on the type and might of their condensed Astral Souls which hailed from the Martial Constellations.

But Uncle Black had never once grouped the Astral Souls together in their respective types and had not specially told him to study beast-type Astral Souls, and their individual rankings.

Qin Wentian flipped the Warbeast Index open. The pages were filled with pictures as well as text.

“Double Winged Horned Python, ranked number 360. Martial Constellation located in the 4th Heavenly Layer. Those that condensed an Astral soul from it would gain tremendous boost in their agility, as well as a tyrannical increase in both defense and attack. The increment in stats from the Astral Soul could said to be extremely balanced, with no apparent weakness.

“Skyember Demonic Lion Astral Soul, also at the 360th rank. This constellation resides in the 4th Heavenly Layer, and Stellar Martial Cultivators that condensed an Astral Soul from it would have a reduction in speed. However, their attacks would be strengthened to an inconceivable degree while their defense would be upgraded too.”

The Skyember Demonic Astral Soul was slightly stronger compared to the Double Winged Horned Python, the advantages it had in attack power, mitigated the slight deficiency in speed.

“To think that the descriptions were all detailed to this extent.”

Qin Wentian slowly flipped the pages. He already had a great deal of knowledge regarding Astral Souls, but if one wanted to write a Index like this, knowledge alone was insufficient. One still needed to update the index periodically as there were new and stronger constellations being discovered every now and then.

Qin Wentian was somewhat bewildered. Why would an index like this appear on the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion?

Chapter 153: Azure Emperor Palace

Qin Wentian detailedly flipped through and read the pages of the Warbeast Index, awe appeared in his heart as he studied and memorised them.

After he finished reading the Warbeast Index, he took up another extremely thin piece of paper at the side as he studied the words inscribed upon it.

“For the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, behind that entrance, there’s one of the 18 testing grounds of the Grand Xia Empire – the Spirit Beast testing grounds. For those below Yuanfu, you have a single chance to enter within. If you die in there, you lose the opportunity to take the test again. For those that manage to obtain a Beast Spirit that’s ranked with the top 10 rankings, they are eligible to enter the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.”

The strokes of the written words were all bold and strong, containing a graceful yet imposing aura. It should have been something written by an almighty expert from the past.

This paragraph was also signed off by a certain person. The Azure Emperor.

“The founder of the Emperor Star Academy, the Azure Emperor.”

Qin Wentian’s heart trembled violently. These instructions were actually left behind by the founder of the academy.

Then doesn’t that meant that the Heavenly Star Pavilion was also his creation?

“The first entrance should be referring to the one on the left.” Qin Wentian gazed at the number ‘7’ inscribed on top of the entrance.

He could never have imagined that the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion was actually an entrance.

“One of the 18 testing grounds of Grand Xia Empire, the Spirit Beast testing grounds.” Qin Wentian strode forwards in the direction of the entrance and extended his palms, placing them on the door of the entrance as a bright glow of light burst into life.

After the door was opened, right in front of Qin Wentian was a prayer mat. And on the top of the prayer mat were inscriptions of complex runic lines, as though it was some sort of mysterious Divine Imprint.

Qin Wentian walked in and then sat down cross-leggedly on the top of the prayer mat. An instant later, the door of the entrance slammed shut as the runic lines revolved about, giving birth to a blinding light that shrouded Qin Wentian’s body within. He felt as though his consciousness was being forcibly pulled out. This feeling was extremely uncomfortable, but he continued enduring it.

“What is this exactly?” Qin Wentian felt as though his consciousness had already left his body. He had no way to control any part of his body, and this kind of feeling without the freedom to act independently was almost an unbearable agony.

Buzz! His body abruptly sank down. Qin Wentian finally felt his body responding to the will of his consciousness. But when he finally came to his senses, he couldn't help but be dumbfounded as he studied his surroundings.

“Is this the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds?” Qin Wentian raised his arms as he looked at his hands. This place was akin to reality, but his body had never once moved after he went through the entrance.

Or was this place similar to the Skydream Forest, a dreamscape?

However at this moment, he felt that the reality here was many times more real compared to that of a dreamscape, it was as though his real body had been transported here.

He was certain that this was his true body, it wasn't a dream, nor an illusion.

Qin Wentian was standing in a vast expanse of flatland, and around him there were also several other people. They also instantly discovered the presence of Qin Wentian as their gazes swiftly shifted onto him. Expressions of bewilderment appeared on their faces.

Why was there one more unknown person appearing inside the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds?

Qin Wentian also naturally discovered the presence of the crowd. These people here were all youths, about 17-18 years of age on average. For those that were younger, they were about 15-16 while for those that were older they were about 19-20.

Not only that, they obviously belonged to different camps of people. The leaders of each camp gave off an extraordinary air. Even Qin Wentian could feel a sense of danger emanating forth from the leaders.

This caused Qin Wentian to speculate – by entering the Spirit Beast Testing Ground via the Entrance of the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, he had come into contact with others that were from outside of Chu.

“We agreed to meet here. Everyone belonging to the different powers have arrived right?”

A youthful-looking cultivator spoke. This youth was extremely handsome and was about 17-18 years of age. His long hair had a slight curl to it, and a bewitching light seemed to glint in his eyes.

“I think everyone has arrived.” Another youth lightly replied, gazing at Qin Wentian with an expression of interest.

In the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds, those that were powerful enough to obtain the qualifications were all already here.

But then why were there someone extra? Who the hell was he?

This scenario caused many to feel extremely interested.

“Oi.”

A voice drifted over. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze in the direction of the voice and he saw a beautiful young lady looking straight at him.

This lady appeared to be of a similar age to him. Her robes bespoke that she had an extremely high status. The light smile on her face gave off a slight sense of seduction.

Elegant and beautiful, this was what Qin Wentian felt.

“What’s your name and where are you from?” The girl smiled as she curiously inquired.

“Is this place the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds?” Qin Wentian didn’t reply but asked a question of his own instead.

“Aikk, you actually knew that this place was the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds?” A glow of amazement flashed past the eyes of the girl as she continued laughing, “According to what I know, those with the qualifications to enter this place are all already here. But... who are you? Where did you come from?”

“Chu Country.” Qin Wentian replied. He wanted to know if these people knew of the existence of Chu.

“Huh? What is Chu?” Bewilderment was reflected on the countenance of the girl.

“Have any of you heard of that place before?” She turned and gazed at the others, but no one knew.

Very obviously, to them the Chu Country was too insignificant.

“Do you all know the Nine Mystical Palace?” Qin Wentian added. The Nine Mystical Palace was the controller of Chu and surely would be considered a powerhouse of sorts at the very least.

“You are from the Nine Mystical Palace?” The girl giggled as she looked at Qin Wentian. “Don’t lie to me! Those from the Nine Mystical Palace wouldn’t even have the qualifications to step inside here.”

Qin Wentian’s heart trembled with shock as he heard her reply. With the power of the Nine Mystical Palace, they actually didn’t even have the qualifications to step inside this place? If that was the case, then what was the background of the other cultivators here? Was their background even more tyrannical compared to the Nine Mystical Palace?

“Cut the crap, kill him.”

At this moment, the handsome youth from before interrupted. His gaze was filled with total disregard for Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian’s appearance merely caused him to be slightly curious, but since Qin Wentian had no answers for them, there was no need to waste any more time.

After the sound of his words faded, behind him, another youth walked out. This youth similarly gave off a demonic presence as he lunged towards Qin Wentian.

Boom. A multitude of fist lights exploded out. Qin Wentian felt a surge of Demonic Qi gushing over. It was as though a flood dragon had rushed out of the oceans, wanting to devour him.

A cold light glinted in Qin Wentian’s eyes. Lifting his palms, he abruptly sent out the 3rd Stance of the Thousand-Hands Imprint, the Forgotten Imprint, smashing apart the pressure emitted by his opponent’s attack.

“DIE.” His opponent stabbed forth with a finger akin to a sharp sword, aiming for the head of Qin Wentian. This finger attack was as quick as lightning and struck out with the force of a thunderbolt.

With a twist of his body, the footwork of Qin Wentian was marvelous to an inconceivable extent. After avoiding the attack of his opponent, he executed the Falling Mountain Palms and a manifestation of a mountain peak heavily slammed downwards.

ROAR. His opponent bellowed, the force of that roar was akin to the roar of a flood dragon, and almost burst Qin Wentian's eardrums.

An exceptionally cold ray of light flickered in Qin Wentian's eyes. With a stomp onto the ground, his body flickered as he transformed into a blur of shadows.

Qin Wentian's eyes were closed and he gave off a mysterious feeling. Piercing out with his finger, his finger attack was akin to a strike by an ancient halberd, piercing right through the middle of his opponent's eyebrows. All this occurred in an instant. His opponent froze in mid-motion, and after which, the corpse slumped down upon the ground.

This battle was extremely short-lived. Qin Wentian slew a person in an instant, but the gazes of the crowd didn't change. It was as though they were watching a play.

Qin Wentian could also not confirm whether the death in this place was true death. But this place was indeed many times more realistic when compared to the Skydream Forest. It didn't seem to be in a dreamscape.

And although he swiftly killed his opponent, he knew that the dead guy undoubtedly had the power to fight for one of the top nine rankings if he participated in the Jun Lin Banquet.

Just a random lackey already possess strength of this level. How could Qin Wentian not be shocked.

"Interesting." The girl laughed as she saw what happened, before turning her gaze onto that handsome youth from before.

A cold light flashed in the eyes of the handsome youth. All of a sudden, his silhouette disappeared from its original spot. Qin Wentian only felt a demonic ray of light flying rapidly towards him. His opponent had his palms extended and wavering slightly. An instant later, Qin Wentian felt as though his body was bound by the filaments of demonic light rays, causing him to be powerless, unable to even move a muscle.

"Break." The Divine Yuan in Qin Wentian's body surged as the filaments of demonic lights were extinguished. He took a step forward as his aura frenziedly soared upwards.

However, the handsome-looking youth seemed as though he wasn't the slightest bit affected by it. A spirit-type Astral Soul that was akin to a specter continued closing in the distance as it gently sent out a palm.

Qin Wentian retaliated with his Falling Mountain Palms. As both palm strikes collided together, the slightly thin figure of that handsome-looking youth actually didn't even waver in the slightest. Qin Wentian could feel a mysterious surge of energy gushing out from his opponent's palms, rushing right into his body. It was as though that mysterious energy wanted to destroy his meridians from within and even attack his heart.

"What, his attack could ignore my retaliation attack and defense?" Qin Wentian froze as the Divine Energy in his body surged. The Mountain-Type Divine Energy in his body flowed towards the

mysterious energy, acting as a barrier and successfully dissipated it. Qin Wentian's heart trembled and he retreated continuously.

Within his body, an extremely unbearable feeling appeared. Qin Wentian stared at the handsome-looking youth, only to see that his opponent's countenance was as normal as before, without the slightest hint of disturbance.

"How powerful." Qin Wentian silently exclaimed as he cast a glance at the surrounding cultivators. Were their strength all this terrifying?

If their background was from some places even mightier than the Nine Mystical Palace, it wasn't surprising that the handsome-looking youth had a level of power even stronger than Luo Qianqiu.

The handsome-looking youth involuntarily furrowed his brows as an expression of puzzlement appeared on his face when he saw that Qin Wentian was actually still standing, with no signs of much damage taken.

How incredible, there was actually someone at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation able to receive one of his strikes without dying.

His body once again strode forwards to Qin Wentian. His palms gently extended outwards, appearing soft and weak, devoid of any strength.

Qin Wentian's ancient halberd abruptly appeared in his hands. With a shift in his steps and a speed as fast as lightning, he executed Mountain Splitter, advancing forwards with all his might.

The steps of the handsome youth suddenly stopped, and as the ancient halberd slashed out, the continual attacks caused his body to unceasingly retreat, as killing intent crazily gushed out of his body.

"F*CK OFF."

The ancient halberd was flung out of Qin Wentian's hands as the handsome youth successfully evaded. The halberd was stabbed directly into the ground. Qin Wentian didn't choose to retrieve it, but instead, he turned and left with incredible speed.

His movements were akin to that of a Garuda, disappearing in the blink of an eye. The purpose for him coming here was to obtain the spirits of warbeasts.

"The Nine Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique?" The girl from earlier exclaimed in shock, and the countenance of the handsome youth also stiffened. Their gazes were all riveted on a line of youths standing at the side.

"Is he someone from your Azure Emperor Palace?" The handsome youth coldly inquired.

"No, I do not know of such a person." Someone among the group replied.

"How interesting this matter has become. Other than those from the Azure Emperor Palace, how could there still be others that cultivate this Garuda Movement Technique – the movement technique that enabled the Azure Emperor to hail winds and command clouds back in his days – to such an incredible extent?" The crowd of cultivators were silently speculating in their hearts, feeling that things were becoming increasingly interesting.

Chapter 154: Grand Xia Empire

Qin Wentian ran at his full speed. At this moment, he was in a mountainous region, with no others in sight.

He wanted to find someone so he could understand the situation, but those cultivators from earlier had already unconsciously rejected him. There was no way for him to get any information from them.

However, since the Azure Emperor allowed him to enter this place, collecting the spirits of warbeasts, there should be still some hidden meaning within it.

Abruptly, Qin Wentian felt a sense of cold Qi. Shifting his gaze over, he noticed a gigantic python.

Not only that, on the back of this python, there was actually a pair of wings, and even a horn growing on its head.

“Double Winged Horned Python. The 360th ranked demonic beast in the Warbeast Index.” Qin Wentian’s gaze froze as he stared at the demonic warbeast in front of him. This creature was indeed the Double Winged Horned Python recorded in Warbeast index. The Spirit Beast Testing Grounds, was it a land of wonder?

The body of the Winged Python hovered in the air, as a sinister light flickered in its eyes, staring at Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian could clearly sense the hatred that was surging explosively in its eyes.

In the Nine Astral Heavenly Layers, there were many beast-type constellations. The beast-type constellations would usually have a similar counterpart in the world. No one knew if the beast-type constellations existed first or if the demonic beast itself existed first.

Maybe only those at the true pinnacle of cultivation would be able to unravel this mystery.

The wings of the Winged Python flickered as it hovered in the air. Hissing loudly, the immense body of the python flew towards Qin Wentian with terrifying speed.

In that instant, the Double Winged Horn Python was as though it was a terrifying raging dragon.

Qin Wentian’s countenance became heavy as his aura exploded forth. The Forgotten Imprint of the Thousand Hands Imprint technique blasted out, clashing directly with the horn of the Winged Python. However, the manifestation of his palm strike actually shattered.

The power of that collision forced Qin Wentian into retreat. The Double Winged Horned Python was a peak 6th grade demonic beast, and could be considered as a peak Arterial Circulation cultivator.

Even after Qin Wentian was forced to retreat by the impact, the Double Winged Horned Python was still in attack mode. Its gigantic tail swiped passed with a terrifying speed.

Qin Wentian executed his Garuda Movement Technique to its utmost limits, narrowly avoiding the tail strike of the python with a speed fast as lightning.

Chi... Only to see the Winged Python opening its bloody maw as it spat out numerous earth lances in the direction of Qin Wentian.

An illusory image of a Garuda flickered into existence behind Qin Wentian. Soaring into the skies with a single step, Qin Wentian dodged the hidden attacks of the earth lances and he dashed towards the python.

“DIE!” Qin Wentian spat out a sharp Sword Qi as rays of sword light slashed out in the direction of the Winged Python. The Doubled Winged Horned Python once again spat out earth lances, as its immense body smashed towards Qin Wentian. With that incredibly sharp horn, augmented by the power of its stature, if Qin Wentian was gored by that horn, he would definitely suffer a grievous injury.

Releasing his Astral Souls, a Heavenly Hammer appeared in Qin Wentian’s hand as it weaved about in the air in an intricate dance. The Mountain-type Divine Energy in his body was also frenziedly channeled, and with a thunderous sound smashing through the air, the Astral Heavenly Hammer slammed downwards with brutal might.

The Python let out a low roar of anger, while the Heavenly Hammer in Qin Wentian’s hands shattered after that blow, turning back into star light.

This strike of his smashed the Double Winged Horned Python senseless. Qin Wentian once again circulated his Qi as he rapidly sent out palm strikes at the python’s brain, before summoning a mountain peak which crushed the head of the python into pieces. Thunderous rumbling sounds echoed out through the air as the immense body of the Doubled Winged Horned Python slumped to the ground. Its body flickered in and out of existence, gradually turned into something illusory.

“Is this the spirit of a warbeast?”

Qin Wentian’s heart couldn’t help but tremble as he witnessed the body of the Double Winged Horned Python actually turning into something illusory from reality. After which, a spiral appeared on Qin Wentian’s palm. He placed his palm above the horn of the demonic python, absorbing the war beast’s spirit. In this instant, a terrifying Demonic Qi gushed forth from the body of Qin Wentian as a demonic light flickered in his eyes.

“This is, Spiritual Consciousness?” After he finished absorbing it, Qin Wentian felt as though his body was enhanced with the warbeast’s spirit. The feeling was extremely vivid.

“The last ranked Double Winged Horned Python in the Warbeast Index is already so powerful, what about those that ranked in the top ten? How strong would they be?” Qin Wentian was extremely startled. Moreover, the Double Winged Horned Python Astral Soul hailed from the 4th Heavenly Layer, and should be something summoned by a summoning-type Stellar Martial Cultivator, with a cultivation base that was at least at the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

And as for this particular Double Winged Horned Python, its power was suppressed to the peak of Arterial Circulation.

Qin Wentian's gaze shifted over, and he noticed the beautiful silhouette of a woman standing far away gazing at him. This woman was none other than the one that conversed with him earlier.

"Are you really from the Nine Mystical Palace?" The beautiful silhouette of the woman strode forwards, she was clad in sky-blue robes and had a cape over her shoulders.

"No." Qin Wentian replied, "How about you, where are you from?"

"Are you kidding? You know that this place is the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds, but you don't know who we are?" That female stared at Qin Wentian, her countenance as cold as ice. "The first batch of people with the qualifications to step into the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds from the Grand Xia Empire were the 36 Heavenly Starlords from the past. Only the clans and sects which they belonged to had the qualifications to enter here. And after that, many of their keys were destroyed or snatched away by others and up 'til now, there are only nine great powers with the capabilities to enter. And you actually don't know who we are?"

"I'm not familiar with the Grand Xia Empire." Qin Wentian replied. It seems that the Chu Country was really too small.

"What tier of power does the Nine Mystical Palace belong to in the perspective of the Grand Xia Empire?" Qin Wentian asked again.

"The land space of the Grand Xia Empire is boundlessly vast, and it has more than ten million countries. Among them, there were nine main states. And among the nine states, there were naturally some transcendent powers." The girl indifferently continued, "The Nine Mystical Power is one of the transcendent powers of the Qingzhou State, and has control over a few small countries.

Qin Wentian listened seriously, as he recalled the big circle which Mustang drew, and roughly understood the scope of the Grand Xia Empire.

So the Chu Country was nothing but a small auxiliary country of a greater power.

Indeed, he needed to widen his perspective, the Chu Country was too small.

"The power she belongs to, the Greencloud Pavilion, was also a transcendent power in the Qingzhou state. Not only that, their power is much stronger when compared to the Nine Mystical Palace." A voice drifted over from a distance away. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze and saw a silhouette walking over.

"Yue Qingfeng, what are you doing here?" The girl lightly smiled as she regarded the bunch of people. These people were all from the Azure Emperor Palace.

"Why can't I be here?" Yue Qingfeng laughed, as he turned to look at Qin Wentian, "I know where you come from."

Qin Wentian stared at Yue Qingfeng, as a strange glow flashed in his eyes, waiting for the other party to continue speaking.

“A place called the Emperor Star Academy.” Yue Qingfeng continued, causing astonishment to flicker on the countenance of Qin Wentian.

“You are?”

“My name is Yue Qingfeng, I’m from the Azure Emperor Palace. You should know who the Azure Emperor is right? He single-handedly created the glorious Azure Emperor Palace thousand of years ago, and was the first among the 36 Heavenly Starlords.”

Yue Qingfeng continue speaking, causing Qin Wentian’s heart to tremble.

The Azure Emperor, the first among the 36 Heavenly Starlords.

The Azure Emperor was also the founder of the Emperor Star Academy.

“I’m indeed from the Emperor Star Academy, my name is Qin Wentian.”

To think that he would actually meet someone who hailed from a variant branch in a place like this naturally caused Qin Wentian to feel a sense of kinship. One could say that the roots of the Azure Emperor Palace as well as the Emperor Star Academy were from the same source.

“Brother Qin, the Spirit Beast Testing Ground is exceedingly dangerous. Do you want to travel together? At least we can help each other when needed. How about it?” Yue Qingfeng straightforwardly spoke.

Qin Wentian nodded his head, he wanted to find someone to ask so he could clearly understand this place that was the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds.

“Qian Mengyu, do you wanna tag along?” Yue Qingfeng gazed at the female as he asked.

“No thanks.” The girl replied faintly as she turned and departed.

“Have you already obtained a beast spirit?” Yue Qingfeng turn his gaze on Qin Wentian and asked.

“Yeah, what use do the beasts’ spirits have?” Qin Wentian asked, bewilderment painting his voice.

“Back then, the peerless figures sealed the spirits of the 360 warbeasts in the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds. Over here, the demonic beasts aren’t the true body of the actual demonic beast, but are a projection of a spiritual consciousness. It was rumoured that these demonic beasts were actually summoned from the Nine Astral Heavenly Layer, and for those that obtained a warbeast’s spirits, they would be able to communicate with the consciousness of the Astral Warbeasts, and would easily be able to sense the existence of the beast-type constellation, thus increasing the probability of forming an Astral Soul from it.

Yue Qingfeng continued explaining, “You should understand that, when cultivators of the Arterial Circulation Realm break into Yuanfu, they would be able to condense their 3rd Astral Soul. And usually a Yuanfu cultivator would only be able to condense an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. And as for those with stronger talents, they would be able to condense one from the 4th Heavenly Layer. However, it wasn’t so easy to find and communicate with the constellations that represented the demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index.”

“Oh, is this similar to the principle of the usage of a Yuan Meteor Stone?” Qin Wentian somewhat understood.

“This effect is many times more powerful compared to Yuan Meteor Stones. For a cultivator who can normally condense Astral Souls from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, with the aid of the spirits of the Astral Warbeasts, their consciousness would be able to survive in the 4th Heavenly Layer for a short period of time. This is because the respective constellation that represents the astral warbeast would form an innate link that would result in successfully condensing a much more powerful Astral Soul compared to an Astral Soul at the 3rd Heavenly Layer.”

Thus, to Stellar Martial Cultivators, the temptation of obtaining warbeasts’ spirits were extremely great.

“Understood.” Qin Wentian nodded his head.

“Brother Qin, you should have already experienced how powerful the warbeast earlier was. These warbeasts hold immense hatred for us and would also want to devour us to upgrade their own powers. So, the danger we face would naturally escalate if we somehow meet those astral warbeasts that are in the stronger rankings. And as for those warbeasts ranked within the top ten, they are virtually invincible existences.”

Yue Qingfeng continued, “Thus, we wish to combine our strengths to face the warbeasts together.”

“I understand.” Qin Wentian nodded as he replied. The group of cultivators continued to walk forwards, entering the depths of the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds.

And at this moment, in Chu, a news of great import was spread around the country.

Qin Wu from the Qin Residence actually successfully escaped the Black Stronghold. The guards of the Black Stronghold were either dead or heavily injured, causing shock and terror in the Royal Capital.

The Black Stronghold was a secret prison that was rumored to be unbreakable. But despite this, Qin Wu actually escaped safely, causing people to feel as though there was an undercurrent working in the dark.

Not only that, but at the same time, two well-known martial academies in Chu, the Royal Academy as well as the Godly General Martial Palace, just announced their plans to merge.

And in this case, after the merge, they would surely have the power to contend against the Emperor Star Academy.

In reality, that was exactly what they wanted to do. They wanted to have a showdown with the Emperor Star Academy.

Chapter 155: Barbaric Warbeasts

And on the day of the merging of the two martial academies, there was another piece of important news. The crown prince of Snowcloud wanted to have a marriage engagement with the princess of Chu.

The princess of Chu had an extremely high probability to be the main wife of the crown prince of Snowcloud.

Despite this, Xiao Lù still didn't give up his earlier notions. He still sent men to the Emperor Star Academy requesting for them to return Qin Yao. The reason being that Qin Yao was one of the candidates to be the main wife of the crown prince of Snowcloud, they had to get her back no matter what.

The Emperor Star Academy naturally refused, and thus, the Royal Clan stepped in. They would send someone to visit the Emperor Star Academy.

Such a scenario occurring caused those with sharp senses to feel faint traces of danger in the air. Was the Royal Clan finally planning to make a move against the Emperor Star Academy?

And this wasn't the greatest variable. On the 2nd day after Qin Wu escaped, news of great importance spread from the battleground between the Qin Residence and the Royal Clan. The Royal Clan launched a powerful offensive, while sending experts to assassinate Qin He and Qin Ye. The end result was Qin He lost his remaining arm and suffered grievous injuries. If not for a mysterious expert helping him, he would already have died.

Not only that, rumors also spread that the other great troops station on the borders of Chu began to stir, and had started to make their way towards the Royal Capital.

Their slogan was, "The Chu emperor is a tyrant, killing loyal subjects, slaying the generals that sacrificed so much for him, killing the hounds once the hares are hunted, and is no longer fit to have the mandate of heavens."

And one hand, the news about the Wu King was bestowed death by the Emperor back then was also disseminated out, shaking the entire Chu Country. It created an immense amount of discussions and shook the hearts of the citizens. This, in addition to the visible actions that the Chu Royal Clan took when they dealt with the Qin Residence of Sky Harmony City, supported the fact that the current emperor was a tyrant and no longer fit to have the mandate of heavens. The country needs a transference of power.

The only news that was beneficial to the Royal Clan was that Snowcloud sent their troops and aid Chu in guarding their borders. At the same time, this was also telling the other countries that Snowcloud and Chu were in an alliance.

Those in high positions with great statuses could smell the brewing of the storm in the air. They had never thought that an innocuous event like the Jun Lin Banquet could actually spark such a terrifying chain reaction.

And regarding the storm that was brewing in the external world, Qin Wentian in the Spirit Beast testing grounds had no inkling of it.

After spending a day in there, he gradually familiarised himself with these testing grounds. There were several warbeasts' spirits over here and it was impossible to obtain them all without a certain level of strength.

And he also understood that these testing grounds weren't a real world. He was the same as those demonic beasts, a physical body manifested by dream-will. His consciousness entered the testing ground via a dream, but here, the sense of reality was many times stronger than what he experienced before. Not only could he absorb the spirits of the beasts, similarly the warbeasts could absorb him.

At this moment, he was in an alliance with Yue Qingfeng and the rest, and was hunting another warbeast.

The ranking of this particular warbeast was not weak, it was actually a Flowerrock Leopard that was ranked at number 241. If one were to condense an Astral Soul from it, their body would be as tough as real granite, obtaining terrifying defense. Not only that, one's speed, agility and attack would also be augmented tremendously.

"Brother Qin, there are still three others over at my side, after they absorbed beasts' spirits, the next one will be yours. After all, you already ingested a spirit right after you entered." Yue Qingfeng explained, this was already the 5th warbeast they had hunted together.

"It's fine, I wish to travel alone now." Qin Wentian replied. After they travelled together for a single day, although Yue Qingfeng was extremely courteous towards him, and although people of the Azure Emperor Palace shared the same root as the Emperor Star Academy, he could still feel disdain in the expressions of his party members as though they were looking down on him. Arrogance and pride lingered in the air faintly, creating an uncomfortable situation for Qin Wentian.

After all, although they shared the same roots, their statuses were completely different. They, were from the Azure Emperor Palace, while he was only from a martial academy in a small country.

This point could be clearly felt and seen when they distributed the warbeast spirits. However, Qin Wentian didn't have much to add. He couldn't change the perspectives of these people so easily. In that case, he might as well travel alone.

"Brother Qin, you should understand that this place is exceedingly dangerous." Yue Qingfeng persuaded.

"I will be cautious." Qin Wentian nonchalantly replied.

"Since this is the case, I will no longer obstruct brother Qin, but please do not let a moment of anger lead to the sacrifice of one's life. Cooperation exists only because of benefits, but it's just a matter of who is prioritised." Yue Qingfeng added.

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows, the words of Yue Qingfeng seemed to be hinting at something. He didn't reply as he turned and departed from the area.

"What a reckless fellow, he doesn't know what death is. A mere cultivator from the Emperor Star Academy dares to put on such airs. He didn't even know that we saved his ass and yet still wanted to be on equal standing with us from the Azure Emperor Palace, how laughable. But I wonder why the Azure Emperor back then wanted to found such a academy." Someone beside Yue Qingfeng impolitely remarked, not bothering to suppress his voice so as to ensure that Qin Wentian had heard him.

Increasing his speed, Qin Wentian left the area, Although he knew that the danger was greater if he travelled alone, he wasn't willing to lower his head and be part of their party just because of safety.

Qin Wentian arrived at a spacious grassland with a mountain range in front of him. However, at this moment, he could clearly sense danger nearing.

In front of him, a demonic beast slowly walked out from the mountain range.

This was actually a huge Roc, whose body shone with a resplendent light. The light in its eyes was sharp and cold as it stared at Qin Wentian.

“Silvery Roc, #98 in the Warbeast Index.” Qin Wentian frowned. This was the first time he had met a demonic beast in the top 100 rankings.

And not only that, behind him, there was also a sense of extreme danger.

Turning back, he discovered a gigantic demonic bear that was emitting terrifying waves of Demonic Qi.

And on the body of this demonic bear, it was as though there was a silvery armor covering it. Even its sharp claws were silver in color.

“Silver Armored Bear King, rank #97 in the Warbeast Index.” Qin Wentian froze. Both demonic beasts were extremely formidable opponents with rankings in the top 100, yet he was actually stuck between them. How unlucky.

Buzz. His body was akin to a Garuda as Qin Wentian dodged to the side.

The Silvery Roc flapped its wings as it transformed into a silver flash of lightning, moving with a speed even faster than Qin Wentian. That steps of the Silver Armored Bear King caused a tremor in the earth as booming sounds rang out, but the speed it possessed was only slightly slower when compared to Qin Wentian.

The top 100 rankings of the Warbeast Index were all terrifying existences.

The Silvery Roc soared above Qin Wentian. Yet another ancient halberd appeared in his hands. Although this place wasn't reality, there wasn't much difference compared to it. In the external world, he always had a spare ancient halberd hidden within his interspatial ring.

Puchi! The Silvery Roc spat out a silver ray of light, slashing out with crazy speed towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian abruptly halted his movements, as he summoned the energy within his body, blasting out with his palm strikes in response, colliding with the silver ray of light.

The gusts of wind strengthened, the sharp claws of the Silvery Roc descended with lightning speed, aiming to grab Qin Wentian's head.

Qin Wentian's Mountain Splitter erupted forth, as sounds of steel clashing rang out, blocking the claw of the Silvery Roc.

"How strong." Qin Wentian managed to repel the Silvery Roc, but in response, his arms were numb, trembling badly from the impact. However at this moment, the Silver Armored Bear King had caught up, causing the earth to tremble with each step. Upon seeing Qin Wentian, it let out a bellow of rage as it swung its silver-colored paw directly at Qin Wentian.

"Falling Mountain Palms." Qin Wentian rapidly sent out palm strikes with his left palm, as the Divine Energy in his body surged wildly. An instant later, his body was slammed heavily to the ground by the impact, as his left arm felt as though it was about to crumble into pieces.

The attack power of the warbeasts in the top 100 ranks was just too barbaric.

Despite falling to the ground, Qin Wentian was still in extreme danger. The Silvery Roc swoop downwards, as a silver ray of light pierced out from its beak. The cold eyes of the Roc were as though they could kill.

"If i die here, I won't have this chance again."

Qin Wentian was silently thinking in his heart. If he died here, he would lose the qualifications and would be expelled from the testing grounds. Luo Tianya back then should have also died inside this testing grounds, and as such, he wanted his son to succeed where he had failed.

Executing the Berserker Beast Halberd Art, impervious to wind and rain, Qin Wentian's bloodline was seething. His body strengthened as it grew in size. His black hair fanned out behind him, and the ancient halberd in the air stabbed out in the air.

The Silvery Roc once again collided with Qin Wentian's halberd. However, this time round, the Roc was blasted backwards and it tumbled through the air. One of its silver claws disintegrated into dust and it shrieked in madness, apparently wounded.

Despite this, Qin Wentian's situation was far from good. The Silver Armored Bear King once again sent out a powerful attack, dashing towards Qin Wentian.

“F*CK OFF.” Executing the Forgotten Imprint to its utmost limits, powered by the Mountain-type Divine Energy in his body, a thunderous sound rang out as the immense body of the Bear King was blocked. However, Qin Wentian was slammed to the ground once again.

“Top 10 warbeast spirits, Azure Emperor, you are damn ruthless indeed.”

To step into the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, Qin Wentian needed to obtain the warbeast spirits of demonic beasts ranked in the top 10 ranking of the Warbeast Index.

He didn't even dare to imagine the level of power the top ten warbeasts wielded. They should be the representation of constellations from the 5th Heavenly Layer, and if he could condense an Astral Soul from there, when he broke into the Heavenly Dipper Realm he would be able to summon the manifestation of the warbeast. How powerful would he be then?

The two warbeasts once again rushed towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian gingerly wiped away the traces of blood at the corners of his lips as his silhouette flickered, executing the Garuda Movement Technique to its utmost limits, transforming into afterimages. At the same time, the ancient halberd in his right hand slashed out beautiful arcs, while his left palms shook relentlessly, sending out countless palm imprints. Despite his valiant attempts, his body was quickly riddled with injuries. Under the siege of the two warbeasts, he feared that he would die sooner or later.

However, at this exact moment, a gust of wind billowed and a graceful figure clad in sky-blue robes appeared. A sharp sword appeared in her hands as she sliced towards the body of the Silvery Roc. Her Sword Qi warred with the claw of the Silvery Roc, as they intermingled together, before the Sword Qi dissipated. However, her sword will wasn't extinguished yet, and even more Sword Qi was generated. It gave an undying sense, growing and multiplying without end.

The pressure on Qin Wentian was lessened as he focused his attention on the bear king. Without the support from the swift Roc, although the attacks of the bear king were still powerful, it wasn't nimble enough. Qin Wentian easily dodged its attack while counterattacking with his ancient halberd, causing the bear to suffer from his attacks time and time again.

The battle continued for several long moments as two rows of silhouettes appeared near the battlefield. These newly appeared figures had no intention to help as they surrounded them, content with watching the battle of the warbeasts against Qin Wentian and Qian Mengyu.

They belonged to two different groups. One was the handsome-looking youth who fought with Qin Wentian earlier and his party members, as well as Yue Qingfeng and the rest.

After it saw the appearance of the cultivators The Silvery Roc soared towards the skies. It had the ability of flight – these people could never be able to pursue it.

The Silver Armored Bear King lashed out in a panic. Qian Mengyu gazed at Qin Wentian and spoke, “Let’s give this up. You may be able to defeat it, but I don’t think you will have the chance to absorb its beast spirit.”

Qin Wentian naturally also noticed the eyes of the other cultivators flickering with greed, as though they were akin to a tiger staring at its prey. However, how could he be willing to give up now?

Puchi. Abruptly, Qin Wentian’s ancient halberd stabbed into one of the bear king’s eyes, causing roars of agony to resound through the air. Twisting his ancient halberd that was in an eye of the bear king, Qin Wentian stabbed directly into its brain, causing the body of the bear king to grow indistinct, becoming something illusory.

With a shake of his palms, a familiar spiral appeared in the centre of his palms as he started absorbing the warbeast’s spirit. The Demonic Qi emanating from him got stronger and stronger as his black hair danced about in the wind.

“Truly, does he not know death?” The people from the Azure Emperor Palace had mocking expressions on their faces seeing that Qin Wentian still actually dared to absorb the warbeast spirit in front of them.

So what if he absorbed it? All the people here were bodies made from spirit consciousness.

As long as they absorbed the consciousness of Qin Wentian as he faded away in death, they could still absorb the warbeast spirits that he had absorbed before.

Chapter 156: Ranked #9 in the Warbeast Index

Qin Wentian’s black hair fluttered behind him, as he gazed at Qian Mengyu, he asked. “The sword technique you used earlier, was that the Nine Swords of Life?”

Qian Mengyu was startled. “How did you know that?”

Qin Wentian said that he came from a small country, how would he know that the sword technique she used earlier was the Nine Swords of Life?

“I once saw someone executing that exact sword technique.” Qin Wentian replied. This set of sword techniques was what Gongyang Hong had displayed back then when they were attempting to crack the riddle of the paintings. Eventually, they discovered that this particular sword technique was the favourite sword technique of the girl Gongyang Hong loved most, but what happened to them exactly, Qin Wentian couldn’t be sure.

“Thanks for your help earlier.” Qin Wentian smiled.

“You should start worrying about yourself.” Qian Mengyu shifted her steps away. Although Qin Wentian recognised the Nine Swords of Life, she had no reasons to help him further. It wasn’t that easy for her to enter the testing grounds and naturally she wouldn’t want to die here.

Qin Wentian glanced at his surroundings. Indeed, this was not going to be so easy to resolve.

Psst! Abruptly Qin Wentian’s body flickered, as the pair of illusory Garuda wings appeared on his back, retreating in the direction of a narrow gap.

Only to see two people stepping up, intending to block his path. Qin Wentian didn’t slow in the slightest. He blasted out with his Mountain Splitter, aiming at one of the two that obstructed him.

Puchi! A crisp sound echoed in the air as one of the bodies of the blockers turned illusory after suffering a halberd strike right through his brain. At the same time, Qin Wentian sent out a palm imprint to his left.

BOOM! A tremendous force could be felt. Borrowing the power of the impact, Qin Wentian soared into the skies, then landed outside the encirclement and frenziedly dashed away.

“What a marvelous usage of the Garuda Movement Technique, he should have already cultivated that to the Great Perfection Level at the Arterial Circulation Realm.”

The countenances of those from the Azure Emperor Palace all changed. One by one, they all followed after Qin Wentian using the exact same movement technique – the Garuda Movement Technique.

And as for that handsome-looking youth and his sidekicks, they came from the Sky Demon Sect. When they executed their movement techniques, sounds of a raging tornado could be heard. Their speed was actually also incredibly fast.

“Nice guts. It isn’t good to make an enemy out of those from the Sky Demon Sect.”

Qian Mengyu executed her own movement technique too as she followed after.

Qin Wentian clearly understood that the people in this testing grounds were not cultivators of Chu. And those who stood at the pinnacle of the Arterial Circulation Realm in Chu were nothing compared to the elites in here. No matter which of those that was in the testing grounds, as long as they were placed in Chu, they would definitely be the elites among the elites, and especially for that handsome-looking youth with a hint of demonic air in his eyes. Earlier when Qin Wentian exchanged blows with him, he was stunned by the incredible prowess of that guy.

He wasn’t so blind in his self confidence to handle the encirclement earlier with just a cultivation base at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation. And as such, he could only choose to escape first with the Garuda Movement Technique.

Currently, after he cultivated to the large success stage of the Garuda Movement Technique [Arterial Circulation Realm], there shouldn’t be anyone at the same realm able to overtake him in speed.

As a result, his pursuers became fewer and fewer as most couldn’t keep up. Among those that could keep up, the most notable ones were the handsome youth from the Sky Demon Sect, Yue Qingfeng from the Azure Emperor Palace and Qian Mengyu from the Greencloud Pavilion.

During the way, they also met other experts. And upon seeing the situation, the other experts also decided to chase after Qin Wentian together.

There was a river in front of Qin Wentian. Gathering his momentum, Qin Wentian rose sharply from the ground as he soared into the skies like a garuda, landing on the opposite bank.

The other pursuers all caught up, and respectively executed their innate techniques as they crossed the river.

Very quickly, Qin Wentian galloped into a forested region which caused the faces of his pursuers to turn unsightly. There were so many experts within the group of pursuers, yet they had no way to continue chasing him.

Instead of spending such a huge amount of time chasing him to no avail, they might as well be killing the warbeasts.

Yet they didn't know that at this moment, the embers of fury were burning deep within Qin Wentian's heart. In this testing grounds, how many warbeast spirits were there that were stronger than the one he absorbed? Why did they have to force him to such an extent?

At the end of the forested region there was actually a stone mountain with a waterfall cascading down from it. Lakes were on both the left and right sides of it, this was actually a place with no paths of retreat.

Qin Wentian slowed his steps as he halted. Behind him, he could hear sounds of panting. The handsome-looking youth from the Sky Demon Sect was the first to catch up with him.

Yao Sheng had a pair of illusory wings belonging to the legendary Roc behind his back. His gaze held hints of demonic air within them as he drifted in the air towards Qin Wentian; the gentle palm power of his was sent out once again.

Buzz! Qin Wentian's ancient halberd smashed forwards with all he had, piercing out with a speed akin to lightning.

Yao Sheng shook his palms as Demonic Qi frenziedly erupted. His palms transformed into a gigantic bear paw as it smashed forwards, colliding with the ancient halberd of Qin Wentian. Yao Sheng's body was light beyond comparison and at the moment of impact, he redirected the force and shot forwards, brushing past the ancient halberd and getting closer to Qin Wentian. Releasing a demonic light screen, the rays of his attacks enveloped Qin Wentian, and he blasted forth with that seemingly weak and gentle palm strike once again.

Qin Wentian didn't retreat. The bloodline that had the dominance of a monarch surged crazily in his body. Replying to the palm attack with a palm strike of his own, he smashed forth with the strength of a mountain peak.

BOOM. A scary afterwind billowed in the surroundings. Both of them were forced back by the impact. Qin Wentian's arterial pathways were shuddering, while his heart was palpitating madly. The innate techniques of his opponent were too mysterious and crafty.

Yao Sheng was forced by a single step and a strange glow flashed in his eyes. Soon after, the glint of coldness in his eyes became stronger and stronger.

A towering surge of Demonic Qi exploded out, and a plate of scaly armor formed on the sides of his arms as demonic light gushed forth from his eyes. The wings of the roc on his back materialized again, as the demonic light it exuded became increasingly bright. At this moment, he didn't seem like a human anymore, but rather a demon.

With a strong gust of wind, Yao Sheng lunged again towards Qin Wentian.

"Fallen Star Stance." The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian's hands exploded forth with tyrannical might, as terrifying spirals formed at the tip of his halberd.

The palms of Yao Sheng stuck out forwards and thunderous sounds rocked the air. His body was akin to an agile snake, actually evading Qin Wentian's strongest attack, as he transformed into a blur of shadows.

"DIE!" A shrill voice spat out. Yao Sheng's arms somehow lengthened as they transformed into sharp claws, slashing towards Qin Wentian's head.

The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian's grasp trembled and he spat out a sword beam. With a roar of rage, his left palm unleashed the Falling Mountain Palms as both of their attacks frenziedly clashed together. Qin Wentian was once again ruthlessly forced backwards by the impact.

Despite using the power of his bloodline limit, he was still forced into retreat. Staring at the body of Yao Sheng, Qin Wentian could also faintly sense the presence of another bloodline limit. However, the blood in Yao Sheng's body seemed strange. It was as though... the blood in his body was that of a beast!

The other pursuers gradually caught up and couldn't help but be dumbfounded seeing that Qin Wentian had not been killed by Yao Sheng's hands yet. This mysterious person that ought not to be here in the testing grounds actually had a strength level that was so astounding.

BOOM! And at this very moment, tremors shook the earth. The hearts of the crowd shuddered as they turned their gazes ahead, only seeing something akin to a mountain moving.

Rumbling sounds rang out as huge rocks and stones from the mountains fell downwards like meteorites from the skies. The sounds made by the falling rocks were extremely scary while a terrifying Demonic Qi blasted out to the surroundings.

ROOARRRR~ An earth-shattering howl rang out, causing the ground to split apart. The water in both the lakes frenziedly gurgled and underneath the waterfall, a terrifying demonic beast appeared, its movements causing huge waves to crash down like a tsunami.

The body of this beast was serpentine in nature, and was coiled underneath the waterfall. The body size of this beast couldn't be determined yet, its body was covered by armor of scales and there were sharp stings embedded on the scaly armor. Both of its arms were huge and ended in five claws. Its body shape was long and sinuous, curved like a hook, emanating a cold and sharp sensation.

At this moment, this demonic beast opened its maw and roared in rage. The sharpness of its jagged teeth struck fear and terror in the hearts of the crowd. This was many times stronger compared to the other demonic beasts that they had seen.

“Blue-scaled Flood Dragon, ranked #9 in the Warbeast Index.”

The hearts of everyone were trembling as they looked at the demonic beast. A spirit belonging to one of the top 10 beasts in the warbeast index was what all these cultivators wanted to achieve the most.

But, the combat prowess of the top ten demonic beasts could be considered heaven-shaking and earth-shattering, and almost invincible in the realm of Arterial Circulation.

“What a powerful demonic beast, if I absorbed its spirit, wouldn't that give me a tremendous boost to my sensory abilities, allowing me to form an innate connection to the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon Constellation in the 5th Heavenly Layer?” A fluctuation arose in Qin Wentian's heart. If he guessed correctly, he had already decided which Astral Soul to condense for his 3rd Astral Soul.

There were so many demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index, and would allow cultivators to easily sense the existence of the demonic beasts' respective constellations in the Heavenly Layers, for those that were successful in condensing a beast-type Astral Soul, their physical combat prowess would undoubtedly heighten immensely.

But even so, no matter what beast-type astral soul it was, being able to summon the physical aspects of it was a different ball game altogether.

Qin Wentian understood the reason why summoning-type cultivators were so rare. It was because of the immense difficulty. If one didn't have enough talent, the physical form of the beast they summoned wouldn't be much help at all.

In the perspectives of many people, summoning-type Astral Souls were all trash despite the fact that there were some genius summoners that possessed terrifying strength.

At this moment, the desire to be a future beast summoner became stronger and stronger within Qin Wentian's heart.

If one day he could summon different types of imposing warbeasts whose roars shook the Heavens and Earth, how awe-inspiring would that be?

Naturally this was merely a small bud of thought in his heart and was far off in the future. What he needed to do now was to deal with the situation that was in front of him.

The ranked #9 Blue-scaled Flood Dragon wasn't ranked number #9 for nothing.

Inclining its proud head, it glanced down with disdain at the human cultivators. That pair of demonic sharp eyes brimmed with killing intent.

Pssst! Abruptly, the flood dragon began its movement. Its immense body appeared in front of Qin Wentian in an instant, as the thick and scaly arms shot forth, the terrifying claws breaking apart the mountain peaks, piercing towards Qin Wentian's body.

Qin Wentian's bloodline limit roared in protest, as he exploded forwards with Fallen Star. The ancient halberd howled in madness as it met the claw strike of the flood dragon head on.

BOOM!

The body of Qin Wentian was flung through the air as Qi and blood roiled haphazardly in his body, causing him to involuntarily spit out a mouthful of fresh blood. The ancient halberd in his hands shuddered, as though it had almost reached its breaking point.

“How powerful.” Qin Wentian’s heart trembled. Although its power was suppressed to the pinnacle of a 6th level demonic beast, the might it possessed was actually ridiculous to such an extent.

Was this the power of the top 10 ranking beasts? It seems that it was going to be unfathomably difficult for Qin Wentian should he wish to ascend to the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. At the very least, it was almost impossible for him at this moment.

The Azure Emperor’s requirement for one to step onto the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion was that one had to obtain the spirit of one of the top ten ranking demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index. This requirement was undoubtedly several times more difficult compared to obtaining the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet.

Despite the fact that he could obtain the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet, his power was still far from being able to slay a demonic beast ranked within the top 10.

One could see how great the disparity was between the difficulty of the two tasks. What on earth did the Azure Emperor leave behind on the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion?!

Chapter 157: Plunder

Yao Sheng didn’t continue attacking Qin Wentian, not with one of the top ten demonic beasts standing in front of him. If he could somehow absorb the spirit of this warbeast, he would most assuredly be able to condense an Astral Soul belonging to a constellation in the 5th Heavenly Layer.

Filled with wild ambition, Yao Sheng’s heart was roaring with excitement. Unlike the others, he didn’t feel much fear or terror.

After all, in these testing grounds, if he really were to die, it was only his spiritual body that would dissipate and would lose the chance to ever come in here again, but he himself wouldn’t face true death.

To the people of the Sky Demon Sect, the lure of one of the top ten ranked demonic beasts was so great to the extent that they wouldn’t hesitate to risk their lives.

“Everyone, how about cooperating?”

Yao Sheng gazed at Yue Qingfeng, Qian Mengyu, and the surrounding people as he suggested.

The gazes of the crowd were flickering. It wasn't impossible to cooperate, but if they really did so, who would the spoils belong to in the end?

If one of them really did absorb the warbeast spirit, the others would most probably gang up on the one who did so.

Not long ago, this exact scenario just happened to Qin Wentian.

“Ye Yue, what are your thoughts on this?” Yue Qingfeng gazed at a youth standing by his side as he inquired. This youth was clad in a robe embroidered with the picture of a river of constellations.

This person was from the Venerate Heaven Sect. As for the rankings of the 36 Heavenly Starlords, they were precisely determined by the Venerate Heaven Sect.

Within the Grand Xia Empire, the Venerate Heaven Sect was the one with the most authority. They had absolute influence over the ranking charts of cultivators, and their decisions would affect numerous countries. An example was Chu – a ranking system referred to as the rankings of the ten prodigies.

“Let's cooperate.” Ye Yue took the lead, and a sharp light glinted in his eyes as he stared at the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon.

The group of people split up and surrounded the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. All of them released their Astral Souls.

The flood dragon let out a howl of rage as it smashed its way towards Yao Sheng, only to see Yao Sheng's beast blood start surging up. A towering demonic Qi filled the air. The wings of the legendary Roc flickered as he turned into a stream of light, similarly dashing towards the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon.

Puchi! The flood dragon's sharp claws missed Yao Sheng. Yao Sheng was actually hovering in the air, and after he found the appropriate angle, he dashed forth, appearing in front of the dragon's head in an instant. Yao Sheng's nimbleness and agility left Qin Wentian astounded.

But even so, the reaction speed of the flood dragon was extremely punctual as well. Wrenching its maw open, it chomped towards the direction of Yao Sheng, wanting to devour him in a single gulp.

Brnnn! A resplendent sword light exploded forth as Qian Mengyu soared into the skies. Columns and columns of undying sword rays frenziedly pierced into the maw of the flood dragon.

This scenario caused the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon to have no choice but to close its maw. At the same time, Yao Sheng's palm strikes transformed into a gigantic bear's paw as it swatted downwards, targeting the brain of the flood dragon.

Yao Sheng and Qian Mengyu was of two different camps, yet their cooperation was exquisite. The timing and rhythm of each attack complemented each other perfectly.

The head of the flood dragon reared backwards. Yao Sheng's combat prowess was exceptionally terrifying, and there was also an additional vibration effect. For a short period of time, the flood dragon was stunned due to the rattling of its brain, and after it recovered, it swept out its gigantic tail like a whip. The spikes embedded on it were all akin to sharp swords.

Yue Qingfeng also dashed forwards while executing the Garuda Movement Technique, avoiding the immense body of the flood dragon. His target was also the brain of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon.

Ye Yue did the same as well.

Their individual attacks seemed to somehow meld into a perfectly tacit understanding, with each complementing the other. Everyone was aiming for the brain of the Blue-scaled Dragon Flood King. If one strike or two strikes didn't work, they would attack until it worked.

"Everyone is an elite, but if we are talking about one on one, there would definitely be no one able to contend against the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. But when they cooperate, the augmentation effect isn't something so simple as one plus one equals two." Each of their individual attacks synergized so well that they caused the tyrannical, powerful attacks of the flood dragon to be utterly mitigated.

Qin Wentian personally witnessed the fascinating fight between the elites and the flood dragon. The flood dragon let out a huge bellow of rage as its immense body twisted and turned in the air. Its long, sinuous neck stretched out. Its maw chomped towards Qian Mengyu, disregarding the attacks of the other elites who was targeting its body.

“DIE!” Qian Mengyu’s palms shook as Astral Light metamorphosed into sword rays, manifesting countless sharp swords that flowed continuously like a beam of light, slashing out against the maw of the flood dragon.

The flood dragon moved its head downwards and continued rushing towards her. Qian Mengyu’s sharp swords actually managed to draw blood, but ultimately they were still not enough to seriously wound the dragon.

Qian Mengyu spun a full circle, wanting to retreat. But at this moment, the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon in front of her was already enraged to the point of losing its reason. It frenziedly pursued her, disregarding the attacks of others. It definitely had to kill one of the elites first before it could have a chance, and this troublesome human who excel in sword arts was too irritating.

Qian Mengyu’s countenance turned extremely unsightly as she saw the flood dragon relentless pursuing her. She had no way of evading the dragon’s ferocious attacks for much longer and could only choose to muster all her strength for defense.

Qin Wentian was standing not far from Qian Mengyu’s side. Upon seeing this scenario, the look in his eyes grew cold, extremely cold.

“Over here.” Qin Wentian called out to Qian Mengyu.

Qian Mengyu’s graceful figure dashed towards Qin Wentian, while the flood dragon followed close behind, unwilling to give up its pursuit. Wrenching open its huge maw again, its neck extended forwards with terrifying speed, wanting Qian Mengyu to crumble under its bite.

Bsst! A raging wind blew past as Qin Wentian executed the Garuda Movement Technique to its utmost limits. He actually dashed right into the waiting maw of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon.

A cruel light flashed in the dragon’s eyes as it snapped its maw shut. The dragon wanted to lacerate Qin Wentian into pieces with its jagged teeth.

“Wu...” A pitiful sound whimpered out. Qin Wentian moved like the wind as he retreated from the huge maw of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. An ancient halberd appeared in the space where Qin Wentian should have been in. Its tip pierced the dragon’s upper jaw and stood erect, propping the maw of the dragon wide open.

“Success.” Qin Wentian saw the giant tail of the dragon rampaging about as it let out howls of agony. His silhouette flickered, and he instantly appeared on the snout of flood dragon as he smashed down with his Falling Mountain Palms, driving the ancient halberd even deeper with each palm strike, causing the flood dragon to be almost driven mad by the intense agony.

“Do it.” The others also rushed ahead, targeting their attacks at the head region of the flood dragon as the ancient halberd in its maw finally penetrated through its snout. The force of its rampaging tail grew weaker and weaker.

“This fellow, how lucky is he.”

Everyone was exclaiming how lucky Qin Wentian was in their hearts. He actually managed to stick the ancient halberd inside the maw of the flood dragon just when it was snapping its maw shut, causing the ancient halberd to be stuck there. This was what created the opportunity for them to freely rain their attacks on the dragon.

The body of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon gradually started to lose its form as it slowly started turning illusory and transformed into a beast spirit.

Qin Wentian retrieved his ancient halberd, and at the same time, his palms wavered as he prepared to absorb the beast spirit. His actions were mirrored by almost all the cultivators around him.

One of the top ten ranked beast in the Warbeast Index, everyone wanted it for their own.

ROAR. The spirit of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon let out a terrifying roar as it lunged towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian felt his consciousness trembling violently as he too started turning illusory.

Explosively retreating, this finally caused him return back to normal, but his countenance was extremely unsightly.

The spiritual consciousness of the flood dragon has already turned into a beast spirit, but it was still so tyrannical. It directly entered his mind sea and attacked his consciousness. Although he had a

flesh and blood body, in here, everyone was made from spiritual consciousness. And as long as one's consciousness was injured, they too would fade away.

Thunderous roars rumbled the Heavens and Earth. Qian Mengyu, Yao Sheng and the rest were also forced to retreat. Their countenances were exceptionally ugly to behold as they had never encountered a beast spirit that was this hard to deal with.

The body of Yao Sheng surged with his beast blood as he flew towards the beast spirit, wanting to devour it for himself.

Buzz! The spirit of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon dashed away, its cold eyes disdainfully glaring at the others. Even though it had been reduced to spirit form, no one should even think of absorbing it.

Blue-scaled Flood Dragon's beast spirit was too tyrannical.

Its eyes narrowed dangerously as it stared at Qin Wentian. It was precisely this human who caused its fleshy body to be destroyed.

OWWWWWWWWW! The beast spirit howled as it once again dashed towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian felt his consciousness trembling. Spirals appeared on his palms, and at the moment he made contact with the flood dragon, he channeled all his might into absorbing its spirit.

Those cold bestial eyes stared cruelly at him, and it attempted to blast Qin Wentian's consciousness into smithereens, causing Qin Wentian's body to turn illusory, flickering in and out of existence.

Upon seeing this, Yao Sheng and the rest stood by and didn't attempt to help Qin Wentian. Nervousness could be seen in Qian Mengyu's eyes, but she had no idea how would she be able to handle such a tyrannical beast spirit.

"Vile creature, you still dare to be so savage even when you are reduced to spirit form." Icy coldness filled Qin Wentian's eyes as he stared at the flood dragon. His Great Dream Astral Soul was released, and an instant later, he transported himself and the flood dragon spirit into a dreamscape of his own creation.

Inside the dream, Qin Wentian was an unrivalled existence, like the Monarch of all under the Heavens, as he stared at the tiny pitiful beast spirit with contempt.

“Vile creature, submit to me.” Qin Wentian roared. Thunder howled, and lightning struck down from the Heavens, smashing into the spirit form of the flood dragon, causing it to convulse violently in pain.

It was currently reduced to a spirit form and had absolutely no way to defend against the abuse of Qin Wentian’s dream-will. The power of dreams was also a type of consciousness and will, allowing opponents to believe what they experienced was real.

How could a mere spirit body be able to withstand it?

Outside the dreamscape, the spirit of the flood dragon grew more and more indistinct, as though it was slowly being absorbed by Qin Wentian. The once tyrannical beast spirit seemed to have no more fighting spirit, having lost its previous rage as it obediently prepared to submit.

“What’s happening?”

Their gazes were all fixated on the spirit of the warbeast, which was fading in and out of existence, as though it would dissipate any second. This caused them to feel a sense of foreboding.

Could it be that this fellow actually already absorbed the spirit of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon?

Psssth~ The beast spirit transformed into a column of blueish smoke that entered into Qin Wentian’s body. The demonic Qi that Qin Wentian currently was emitting was even stronger than that of Yao Sheng.

“No good, he’s trying to exit the testing grounds.”

Yue Qingfeng shouted in a panic. When he had been in a party with Qin Wentian, he remembered Qin Wentian casually asking him how to exit from the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds. He didn’t thought much of it then, so he explained to Qin Wentian that one merely needed to be aware and gradually force one’s consciousness to awaken, peeling away the testing ground’s false strips of reality. But this needed a certain amount of time to accomplish.

Qin Wentian obviously made use of the gap of time during the absorption of the beast spirit to simultaneously prepare for his exit.

Yao Sheng and the rest lunged forwards when they discovered this, but much to their surprise, they found Qian Mengyu brandishing her sword and blocking their path to Qin Wentian.

“Qian Mengyu, what the hell are you doing?” Yue Qingfeng coldly hollered.

“He has the most credit when it comes to killing the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. There’s nothing wrong even if he absorbs the beast spirit.” Meng Qianyu coldly replied.

“Get out of the way.” Yao Sheng strode forwards.

“There’s no more time.” Ye Yue spoke in a low voice. They saw Qin Wentian’s body turning illusory as he completely disappeared from within the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds.

Seeing this occurring caused the countenances of the crowd to turn incomparably ugly.

Qin Wentian left with the beast spirit belonging to the number nine demonic beast, the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon!

Chapter 158: Fiend Transformation Art

In the Emperor Star Academy, the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

Within the entrance, Qin Wentian’s eyes abruptly snapped open as a demonic light flickered in his eyes. His aura and presence seemed to be heavily tinged by a sense of demonic Qi.

Qin Wentian didn’t take any other actions. He knew that he was successful in bringing back the beast spirit. At this moment, he could feel a savage aura contained within his sea of consciousness.

“Will I be able to sense the existence of those more powerful beast-type Astral Souls within the Heavenly Layers after I absorb the spirits?” Qin Wentian mumbled in his heart. After this, he gradually stood up. He pushed open the door and strode out of the entrance.

“I left of my own volition, and thus my spirit body wasn’t destroyed. I can still enter the testing ground in the future.” Qin Wentian gazed at the entrance of the secret realm. Back then, Luo Tianya hadn’t been so lucky, and his spirit body must have been destroyed. That was why he had hoped that his son would be able to continue what he had failed, stepping onto the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

How sad was it that what Luo Tianya couldn't accomplish had been accomplished by Qin Wentian instead of Luo Qianqiu?

Qin Wentian shifted his gaze onto the 2nd entrance with the numeral '8' inscribed on top of it. According to that thin piece of paper, so long as one obtained one of the top ten ranked beast spirit listed in the Warbeast Index, that person would have the qualifications to enter the 8th level. If this was the case, he should have cleared the requirements.

Lifting his foot, Qin Wentian walked towards the second entrance. As he got closer, he noticed that above the entrance, there were several murals. These murals were actually none other than the top ten ranked demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index.

"How do I get in?" Bewilderment painted Qin Wentian's countenance. The door to entrance of the 7th level was open. So as long as one stepped onto this level, they would be able to enter there. However, the door to the entrance of the 8th level was tightly shut.

"Insert the beast spirit into its respective mural." A voice drifted over. Qin Wentian turned back his head, but there was no one. The owner of this voice should have been the guardian of the 7th level whom Qin Wentian had met earlier.

Qin Wentian once again shifted his gaze towards the mural of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. Soon after, demonic light glinted in his eyes as he retrieved the spirit consciousness of the flood dragon from his sea of consciousness, inserting it within the mural. In an instant, the mural shone with resplendent light as the door to entrance of the 8th level slowly opened.

"It's opening."

Qin Wentian crossed the entrance and entered a vast expanse of sealed space. Above his head, there were murals of numerous demonic beasts shining with Astral Light. They were so vivid that it was as though they were alive.

In the center of the sealed space, there was a prayer mat. Qin Wentian sat down cross-leggedly as the Astral Light from the murals shrouded his body, flowing into him.

Upon seeing such an unfathomable event occurring, Qin Wentian closed his eyes. As the Astral Lights entered his body, he experienced a sensation that was extremely familiar to him.

This was a memory fragment left behind by the Azure Emperor.

"The myriad of creatures of Heavens and Earth are all capable of cultivation, regardless if one was a human or a demon. Even so, there are marked differences between the two races. The degree of talent in certain aspects, for example, the strength of the fleshy body, defense, and regeneration, are all many times higher for demonic creatures compared to humans. As for humans, their level of insight and comprehension far surpasses that of demons. Humans created many different kind of powerful innate techniques, enabling them to stand on par with or even surpass the demonic beasts, becoming the favored sons of Heaven."

"At a certain point of their cultivation, after the demonic beasts break into the Heavenly Dipper Realm, they will be able to metamorphose into a human and learn the innate techniques of the human race. In this manner, demons seemed to pursue humanity as their goal. But even so, they

would never be able to have the same level of insights and comprehension that humans are born with.”

“Humans who were originally demons still have no way of combining the advantages of the two different races perfectly. In that case, in order to pursue perfection, the only method left was to use humanity as the base while cultivating demonic arts. If human cultivators were able to have the powerful fleshy bodies of demons in addition to their high level of comprehension and variety of powerful innate techniques, how much would their strength be augmented by?”

While the memory fragment was asking, Qin Wentian’s heart palpitated wildly with excitement.

What an insane idea, using humanity as the base to cultivate the power of demons.

“In reality, for human cultivators, there are already some who advanced towards this idea. Those cultivators were none other than Beast-type Astral Souls Stellar Martial Cultivators. Astral Souls granted a possibility, enabling them to possess the ferociousness of demonic beasts. But despite of this, there’s still a limit. If one wanted to use demonic energy to fully bring out the potential of humans, firstly, one must possess a tyrannical Demonic Beast-type Astral Soul. If not, there would be no meaning to it.”

This unknown voice drifted into his ears. Qin Wentian somehow understood why the test of the 7th level was to hunt for one of the top ten ranked demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index.

The Azure Emperor hoped that only those who obtained one of the top ten ranked demonic beast spirits would be able to enter here. Only with qualifications like this would one be able to absorb the ferocious Demonic Beast-type Astral Energy.

After that, another memory fragment entered Qin Wentian’s consciousness as the light atop his head gradually darkened.

After several moments, Qin Wentian fully absorbed the memory fragment. A light of incomparable sharpness flickered in the depths of his eyes. In his mind, there were only three words – Fiend Transformation Art.

“Fiend Transformation Art!”

“A bold creation, an insane cultivation method.” Qin Wentian’s heart had huge waves arising within it. An unknown sense of respect and reverence surfaced in his heart for the creator of this cultivation art. This was just too perverse.

Human cultivators were terrifying indeed.

He remembered the last sentence the Azure Emperor left behind in the memory fragment.

“Back then, because of a series of lucky coincidences, I obtained the Fiend Transformation Art. With awe and shock in my heart, I knew that if this cultivation art were to be imparted, the Sky Demon Palace would definitely send their men to pursue those who cultivate it. And thus, I cultivated this in secret. Only in moments of extreme danger did I unleash the technique. But if one day, if I truly pass on without leaving behind an inheritor to this technique, I would have sinned. To avoid calamity, I didn’t pass this cultivation art down to the members of my Azure Emperor Palace, but I wasn’t willing to let this cultivation art disappear along with the passing of time.”

Qin Wentian understood. The value of this Fiend Transformation Art was the same as his Spiritual Refinement Method. If people knew about this, a calamity would definitely descend on the one who possessed the techniques.

Luckily for him, there's no visible external effects of cultivating the Spiritual Refinement Method. To outsiders, it would only seem that his attacks were a lot stronger compared to others at the same level.

There were three levels to the Fiend Transformation Art.

The first level, Fiendish Body Realm. Channel demonic Qi and circulate it within the arterial pathways, energy channels, and meridians of your body to cast and refine a fleshy body that was as tyrannical as that of demonic beasts. Not only just the exterior of the fleshy body, one's five viseras and six inner organs also had to be strengthened to the point of something akin to a demonic beast, immensely boosting one's vitality. After all, the life-force of demonic beasts were many times stronger when compared to humans at the same stage of cultivation.

The second level, Fiendish Emergence Realm. Use the supported of tremendous Demonic Yuan Energy and condense a true demonic body, covering one's real body. This realm would be much more powerful if it was assisted and complemented by a powerful Beast-type Astral Soul.

And the third level, Fiend Transformation. At this level, one could easily access demonification, taking on demon form, and perfectly combine the two most ideal traits of demons and humans into one body. One could grow real Garuda Wings on their back and soar through the universe, or transform into a demonic dragon with world-shaking might.

Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath as his heart pounded in his chest. The Azure Emperor actually left such a tyrannical technique on the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

After learning about everything, from Qin Wentian's perspective, he now felt that the demonic beasts ranked ninth and tenth in the Warbeast Index didn't seemed to be powerful enough to be used for cultivating the Fiend Transformation Art. The best choices were undoubtedly being able to condense the respective Astral Souls for those top ranking demonic beasts. Only then would the demonic Yuan Energy be sufficient to drive the Fiend Transformation Art.

However, this realization made things difficult for Qin Wentian once more. Initially, he had already planned on condensing a Summoning-type Astral Soul for his third condensation. But to cultivate the Fiend Transformation Art, a tyrannical Beast-type Astral Soul would definitely be much more suitable for it.

"I shall ignore it for now." Qin Wentian didn't bother to think further, but instead, he started cultivating the first level of the Fiend Transformation Art. The creator of this transformation art was exceptionally familiar with the breathing techniques of demonic beasts and had created a special breathing method and Qi circulation technique solely for the Fiend Transformation Art.

With his eyes closed, Qin Wentian calmed his heart down as he cultivated. His breathing wasn't even, sometimes slow, sometimes ragged, but it eventually came to a point of balance. His heart pounded in tandem with every breath he took as the Astral Energy flowed and circulated about in his body according to the Qi circulation method. Every time he breathed, his viscera and inner organs would also lurched violently in accordance to the pounding of his heartbeat,

Qin Wentian gradually entered into an incredible, extremely marvellous state. He didn't realize that the blood within his body gradually started to heat up, automatically circulating around his entire body, complementing with his breathing methods and the Qi circulation technique.

Two days later, after Qin Wentian awoke from that marvellous state, he discovered that his cultivation this time around had produced astonishing changes. He couldn't help but be puzzled. Could it be he was really so talented? That his physique was exceptionally suitable for cultivating the Fiend Transformation Art?

"It's about time to leave." Qin Wentian stood out and exited the Heavenly Star Pavilion. The first level of the Fiend Transformation Art required an astronomical amount of cultivation resources in order to master. After he exited the pavilion, Qin Wentian went to the Sky Transport Network to send a letter to Francis, giving him free reign to handle minor matters like this. After which, he continued cultivating in closed door seclusion, focusing all his attention to raising his cultivation.

In the Heavenly Layers far up above in the galaxy, Qin Wentian's consciousness arrived in the 5th Heavenly Layer. In front of his eyes, there were countless stars interweaved together to form the constellation representing the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon, which contained tremendous Demonic Beast-type Yuan Energy within.

"Indeed, it's almost effortless to find and form an innate link with this constellation." Qin Wentian finally understood why so many students and disciples of the great powers wanted to go the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds. After obtaining the beast spirit, condensing an Astral Soul from the respective constellation it represented was almost guaranteed.

And now, outside of Qin Wentian's residence, Fan Le arrived. Qin Chuan and Qin Yao were there as well.

"Uncle, is Wentian still cultivating?" Fan Le inquired as he spoke to Qin Chuan.

"Yeah, this fellow is really hard working. Immediately entering into closed door seclusion right after his return from the Heavenly Star Pavilion...perhaps he gained some insights." Qin Chuan replied. Currently, there were many matters on his heart. He clearly understood the changes that were currently happening in Chu and felt complicated feelings of frustration in his heart. Based on his intelligence, of course he knew that his father had concealed some matters from him, all of which were of great import.

But now, he couldn't even step out of the Emperor Star Academy. The members of the Royal Clan were all watching him closely.

Currently, the pressure caused to him and Qin Yao by the Royal Clan was shouldered by the Emperor Star Academy.

But now, the Royal Clan wanted to deal with the Emperor Star Academy. This uncontrollable variable that was the Emperor Star Academy had already become a thorn in the eye of the Royal Clan.

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In one of the states of the Grand Xia Empire, the Qingzhou State, home of the Nine Mystical Palace. Today, there were many from the Nine Mystical Palace who mounted their demonic beasts, heading towards the Chu Country.

Other than the Nine Mystical Palace, the Qingzhou State still had other transcendent powers. One example of that was the Greencloud Pavilion.

The tip of the Greencloud Pavilion rose straight up above, almost touching the clouds. The Greencloud Pavilion was situated above nine towering mountain peaks and consisted numerous grand halls standing erect among the clouds, resembling an immortal realm.

At this moment, in some location of the Greencloud Pavilion, a young lady stood there. This young lady had a grandeur of nobility and appeared cool and elegant. Although she was young, she emitted incomparable charisma.

“Miss, do you have any commands for me?” A person stood before a young lady as he respectfully asked.

“Investigate the Nine Mystical Palace. Find out if there’s a small country named Chu under their administration. If there is, I want you to give me a full detailed report about this person named Qin Wentian.” The young lady was Meng Qianyu. That fellow snatched the warbeast spirit ranked number nine from the eyes of so many people, so it could be said that his luck was good. However, his actions and demeanour also caused her to be exceptionally interested; she wondered if he would enter the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds ever again.

Chapter 159: A visit

After the yearly day of offerings passed, the Chu Country welcomed the start of a new year.

However, at the start of this new year, the citizens of Chu weren’t as peaceful as before. The majority of the citizens were embroiled in violence as struggles of all forms of intensity broke out in Chu.

As for the unruly, powerful troops stationed near the borders of Chu, many of them had already begun to raise flags of rebellion against Chu. No one would have expected that such torrential waves of unrest, turmoil and chaos would rock the country of Chu in a mere short few days, just right after the new year.

The authority to govern Chu was wavering as though it was ready to collapse at any moment.

Naturally, there were those with sharper senses who could already tell that the wars of flames would rage through the entire country in a few days’ worth of time. These happenings surely weren’t something that happened overnight. Behind this chaos, there should have been preparations that had been carefully planned out throughout the span of several years. The moment those in the dark passed down the commands, all subterfuge would be abandoned as the troops of the rebels would

openly attack the cities in Chu, leaving the citizens of Chu untouched and sparing the Chu troops that surrendered. Their only target was the Chu Dragon Guards, who were directly under the command of the royal clan.

In this cultivation-oriented world, those who cultivates weren't very concerned about who ruled which country.

The royal clan was the strongest power within a country. But even so, nobody cared about who had the authority to rule or not. As long as the ruler did not impede their movements, the cultivators could care less. If the ruler somehow infuriated the cultivators of a particular country, their authority to rule would also be shaken if the cultivators were to join hands.

Even when the flames of war were raging strong in the various cities around Chu, talented youths still rushed towards the royal capital of Chu.

This was because all the great martial academies in Chu had started recruiting. This was an opportunity that the young talented cultivators had all been waiting for. Compared to who the authority to rule ended up with, they would naturally be more worried about their own future.

And thus, to some of the extremely talented youth, the choice between enrolling in either the Royal Academy or the Emperor Star Academy became a problem. After the merger between the Royal Academy and the Godly General Martial Palace, their overall level of strength stood shoulder by shoulder, on par with the Emperor Star Academy. And now, the competition and struggle between the two academies was already public knowledge.

The young men and women of Chu gathered at the boundary of Chu's royal capital as a piece of news was spread from the royal capital.

Today, after the merger, the elites of the Royal Academy would be paying the Emperor Star Academy a visit. Such a piece of news instantly shook the entire royal capital, attracting the attention of countless gazes. This visit was of extreme importance to the choice of the younger cultivators.

Today, Qin Wentian ended his closed door seclusion. Although Francis delivered plenty of valuable resources to him, it was still insufficient for him to use them to cultivate his Fiend Transformation Art.

Cultivating in the Fiend Transformation Technique required an extremely harsh, almost astronomical number of demonic cores. However, one good news that made Qin Wentian happy was that he discovered his body was exceptionally suitable to cultivate the Fiend Transformation Art. It was as though this particular cultivation art had been tailor-made for him. His blood seemingly boiled with an unknown sense of excitement.

Qin Wentian created a Divine Inscription Painting as well as a letter that he sent to the Divine Weapon Pavilion. He believed that his Divine Inscription Painting should be able to aid him in obtaining the cultivation resources he needed.

After walking to the center of the courtyard, Qin Wentian suddenly drew in a deep breath of fresh air. A white blur of shadows flashed past, and the blurry silhouette suddenly jumped into his bosom.

“Little fellow, did you miss me?” Qin Wentian rubbed Little Rascal on its head as he smiled.

The large eyes of the snowy puppy gazed at Qin Wentian. It licked his face, appearing extremely adorable.

“Wentian.” Upon seeing Qin Wentian ended his seclusion, Qin Chuan and Qin Yao immediately came over.

“Father, Sister.” Qin Wentian smiled. After seeing Qin Chuan’s tightly knitted brows, he couldn’t help but ask, “Father, is there something wrong?”

“Wentian, during these few days when you entered closed door seclusion, there were many things that happened in Chu.” Qin Yao pulled Qin Wentian to a seat as they sat down before filling Qin Wentian with the information of what happened during these past few days.

After hearing Qin Yao’s words, great waves appeared in Qin Wentian’s heart before subsiding.

“Seems like Grandpa Qin made his preparations long ago.” Qin Wentian sighed. During the past year, he had always been working hard, wanting to save his father and grandpa out from imprisonment. But in reality, there was no need for him to make any moves at all. Even if he didn’t intervene, nothing would have happened to Qin Wu and Qin Chuan.

“Wentian, regarding these plans, I have no idea as well. Your grandpa kept many things from me.” Qin Chuan sighed.

“The struggle for power, he has no choice as well. If our ancestor Qin Wu had really been a victim of Chu back then, if Grandpa didn’t do what he did, our Qin Residence would have been slaughtered on a whim. This was what a true hero should do.” Qin Wentian murmured.

“There’s something fishy behind the death of our ancestor. If not, based on the capabilities of your grandpa, there’s no way he would be able to convince so many powers to rebel. Only our ancestor back then had this kind of prestige.” Qin Chuan sighed again.

“Mhm, the lives of mankind should be like the blaze of a firework and with a clear conscious. How could anyone live a life as someone’s puppet?” Qin Wentian smiled. The royal clan of Chu didn’t have good character.

“Yes, if our Qin Residence didn’t rebel, we would only be awaiting death.” Qin Chuan stood up as he exclaimed with the aura of a hero. The loyalty of their ancestor wasn’t that important to him. First, the suspicious death of his ancestor Qin Wu, followed by the evacuation of their Qin Clan to Sky Harmony City, as well as the suppression from all the other powers. This was already a case of killing the hounds after all the hares have been hunted. They might as well just rebel and get on with it.

At this moment, footsteps drifted from outside the courtyard. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze over, only to see Fan Le approaching. Upon seeing Qin Wentian, Fan Le let out a joyful shout, “BOSS, you’ve finally finished your closed door seclusion. Chu Tianjiao wants to bring people to pay a visit to our Emperor Star Academy today. It’s said that the purpose of his visit is to bring sister Qin Yao

away. This piece of trash is just too arrogant; what dogshit visit, he obviously intends to provoke us.”

“Snowcloud is also ridiculous. Who is Sister Qin Yao to them? Do they think they can take her away just by saying it? To think they still wanted to use paying a visit to the Emperor Star Academy as an excuse.” Rage burned in Qin Wentian’s heart. Don’t even mention the fact that the Crown Prince of Snowcloud betrayed Qin Yao. Even if the betrayal didn’t occur, Qin Yao was also unwilling to be with him. Could it be that just because of his face, and the pride of Snowcloud, he intended to force Qin Yao to comply?”

Who did Xiao Lù think he was?

“That’s what I think as well. How arrogant is he? Let’s hope our Emperor Star Academy snubs their spirit. Boss, let’s go and have a look.” Fan Le exclaimed.

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded.

“I’m coming as well.” Qin Yao walked forward and pulled Qin Wentian’s hands along.

Qin Wentian gazed at Qin Yao as he smiled, “Sure, who does the Crown Prince of Snowcloud think he is? How could he be worthy of my sister?”

“Yup, my brother in the future would be many times more outstanding compared to the Crown Prince of Snowcloud.” The smile on Qin Yao’s face had traces of mischievousness in it.

An expression of gratification appeared on the countenance of Qin Chuan when he witnessed how close Qin Wentian and Qin Yao were. He was very satisfied. Even though Qin Wentian was his adopted son, Qin Wentian’s status in his heart didn’t lose out to Qin Yao’s; he was akin to a real son of his.

Chu Tianjiao brought members of the Royal Academy after the merger to pay a visit. Since everyone already knew about this, the Emperor Star Academy naturally didn’t reject. On the contrary, they opened their doors wide as they welcomed the guests.

Since there were people intending to provoke them, they could only respond in kind.

In the central arena of the Emperor Star Academy, there was already a crowd gathered over there. Many students were discussing fervently below. Today, they saw many elite Yuanfu seniors appearing. Usually, these seniors would rarely appear in the grounds of the academy, but today, many of them stood there as a testament showing the amount of pressure the new Royal Academy was putting on the Emperor Star Academy.

In the distance, a line of silhouettes slowly approached. These people were all youths about 20 years of age, and each of them had an extraordinary demeanor. When they walked together, a sense of destiny seemed to surround them, emitting a formidable surge of aura.

Those who knew of the situation understood that those who came today, not only were they the elites of the new Royal Academy, there were also experts and geniuses from Snowcloud. Not only that, there were even some elites from the Nine Mystical Palace within the group.

This naturally put tremendous pressure on the Emperor Star Academy. At this moment, Old Gu sat atop the spectator stand and had his brows furrowed as he stared at the slowly approaching silhouettes. This time around, things were not looking good.

The Emperor Star Academy would find it hard to deal with such an entourage.

“Wentian, you are here.” At this moment, Old Gu noticed Qin Wentian’s arrival, and he involuntarily smiled.

Qin Wentian could be said to be one of the most monstrous elites he had ever witnessed ever since the time Old Gu was in the academy. Naturally, he would favor Qin Wentian.

“Old man Gu.” Qin Wentian nodded in respect as he walked towards him. Upon nearing him, Qin Wentian respectfully bowed once he saw Mustang. “Teacher.”

“Come, sit beside me.” Old Gu laughed, as he beckoned Qin Wentian over. The crowd below could only sighed in envy and admiration. Currently, Qin Wentian’s position within the academy had already exceeded that of the Elders. Back then, following the assassination attempt, the Elder Janus was slaughtered on the spot as a warning to those who would dare to move against Qin Wentian.

“Wentian shall be impolite then.” Qin Wentian humbly stated as he sat beside Old Gu.

“I’m actually waiting to see when it would be your time to be impolite.” Old Gu stroked his beard as he laughed, “That granddaughter of mine is too mischievous. When will you help me to rein her in?”

“Er...” Qin Wentian was stunned as he blinked rapidly.

“What? Are you unwilling to?” Old Gu exclaimed in mock anger.

“No, I’m willing, I’m willing to.” Qin Wentian hurriedly added.

“Haha, since this is the case, this means you’ve agreed. I will tell my granddaughter about this someday.” Old Gu continued, causing the countenance of Qin Wentian to freeze, followed by a bitter laugh. It seemed that he had just fallen into a trap..

“Old Gu, you are really...” Qin Wentian was speechless.

“What’s wrong with that? From my perspective, Wentian, your temperament matches Miss Mo really well.” Qin Yao, who was standing at the side, laughed.

“Yes, your sister agrees with me too.” Old Gu also laughed. His tightly knitted brows finally relaxed.

Chu Tianjiao from the Royal Academy hoped that the Elders of Emperor Star Academy were still doing well.

At this moment, the sound of a voice drifted over. Momentarily, the joy Old Gu felt, was disrupted, only to see a cold expression on his face as he shifted his gaze over, looking at the silhouettes who, at this moment, had already arrived at the bottom of the spectator stands.

All these people harboured malicious intent, but despite of this, they still had their etiquette. All of them gave a bow in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, indicating their respect to their Elders.

“May I ask the 3rd Prince, for what reason are you visiting the Emperor Star Academy today?” Old Gu stared at Chu Tianjiao and asked in a clear voice.

“The Crown Prince of Snowcloud, Xiao Lù, is here to welcome Qin Yao back to Snowcloud in glory. However, he suffered setbacks time and time again because of the Emperor Star Academy. Thus, we had no choice but to organise a visit. We hoped that the Elders of the Emperor Star Academy wouldn’t make things difficult for him and spoil the relationship between Chu and Snowcloud; However, I understand that my words are light and are insufficient to influence the decisions of the Elders. Thus, I could only bring some of my fellow disciples from the same sect, hoping to receive pointers and guidance from the Emperor Star Academy.”

Chu Tianjiao politely spoke, his words watertight, without any flaws. He was here in place of the 3rd Prince of Chu, as well as in the name of the Royal Academy, to ask for guidance.

Chapter 160: Issuing challenges to five Yuanfu

Old Gu stared right at Chu Tianjiao as he laughed, “Your Highness, I don’t really understand your words. Xiao Lù wanted to fetch Qin Yao back to Snowcloud in glory, but did Qin Yao agree?”

“How can marriage matters of the Crown Prince be a joke? Since there was a prior agreement, even if Qin Yao changed her mind now, she would still have to return to Snowcloud with him before anything else.” Chu Tianjiao calmly replied.

“Do you mean that if Qin Yao disagrees, Snowcloud will forcibly make her into Xiao Lù’s concubine? Not only that, will Chu be Snowcloud’s accomplice?” Old Gu countered. “This old me here has lived for so long, but this is still the first time I’ve heard such filthy conduct being packaged into something that sounds so righteous. And what’s more, our Crown Prince of Chu was the one who said the words. Has the royal clan of Chu declined that much?”

Old Gu’s words were extremely sharp, especially that last sentence of his—it was as though he was condemning Chu for their current actions, subtly hinting at the rumours about Chu killing the Wu King. His words placed a huge hat on Chu Tianjiao’s head. The surrounding people couldn’t help but comment in their hearts that the more aged a ginger was, the more spicy it would be.

Chu Tianjiao didn’t expect Old Gu’s counter to be so sharp and straight to the point. A cold light flashed in his eyes as he stated, “Old Gu’s words left me speechless indeed. Such conduct! How

could matters of marriage be nothing but a joke? Hearing the words straight from the mouth of the most respected Elder in the Emperor Star Academy similarly made me blush with shame.”

“What nonsense, when did I ever have a marriage engagement with Xiao Lù?” Qin Yao, upon seeing how Chu Tianjiao kept harping on her engagement with Xiao Lù, involuntarily replied in rage. “I’ve only agreed to interact with Xiao Lù, but in reality we don’t even have a close relationship between us. From your words, I’ve already become something like an accessory to him; how utterly ridiculous.”

Old Gu coldly snorted as he continued, “Chu Tianjiao, have you heard clearly?”

“The main point was that the people of Snowcloud already knew of the marriage between Qin Yao and Prince Xiao Lù. This is already sufficient to prove my point.”

“What a load of bullshit.” Unable to bear it any longer, Qin Wentian called out. “According to the logic of 3rd Highness, if I start a rumour here today saying that the princess of Chu had a marriage engagement with me, and the second day, this piece of news is known by everyone in Chu, does that mean that the princess of Chu is already mine?”

“Impudent. What is your status, and who do you think you are? How are you worthy of the princess?” Sikong Mingyue’s gaze was as sharp as a sword as he directly refuted Qin Wentian. “And what status does Crown Prince Xiao Lù have? The news of Qin Yao and Crown Prince is already known to all. How can she not return with us to Snowcloud?”

“Hur hur, that is merely your perspective. In my eyes, who the f*ck is the princess of Chu? Who the f*ck is the Crown Prince of Snowcloud? They are not worth a fart, how can they be compared to my sister?” Qin Wentian gazed at Sikong Mingyue, as he coldly laughed. “And as for you, bloody loser, you still have the face to speak in front of me?”

After this, a glint of contempt flashed in Qin Wentian’s eyes. Qin Wentian had seen the memory fragments of the tiny Astral-Being, had seen the grand fantasy of that mysterious green-robed elder, and had also received the inheritance of the Azure Emperor by competing with others in the Spirit Beast testing grounds, widening his perspective. How could he still be awed by Chu or Snowcloud? The world out there was so immense that the Crown Princes of both Chu and Snowcloud could really be considered nothing. In the other places out there, the transcendent powers of the nine states, their statuses were nothing but crap, like that of an ordinary commoner.

To him, the word 'genius' no longer meant the same to him. These 'geniuses' in front of him were even weaker compared to Luo Qianqiu. And if Luo Qianqiu himself were to be compared to those he met in the testing grounds, he would only be considered someone ordinary.

This way, he could remind himself that he must not lose himself in arrogance or flaunt himself as a genius.

He, Qin Wentian, was merely one person in a world full of so many others. He didn't have the qualities to underestimate anyone, but also had no need to look up to anyone. Step by step, footprint by footprint, he would trudge along on his own path of cultivation using his determination and will.

Sikong Mingyue's killing intent gushed out after being insulted in the open by Qin Wentian. He dashed towards Qin Wentian as he shouted in anger, "Come, fight me once more."

"You are not worthy." Qin Wentian serenely gazed at Sikong Mingyue. A look of pity flickered in his eyes, disdainfully looking at him. Seeing such a look in the eyes of Qin Wentian caused Sikong Mingyue's killing intent to surge even higher.

Xiao Lù gazed at Sikong Mingyue as he waved his hands, signalling for Sikong Mingyue to be quiet. Only now did Sikong Mingyue manage to suppress his boiling anger and curb his killing intent. Chu Tianjiao continued as though there had been no interruptions, "There's no point in talking any further. Today the Royal Academy paid a visit to the Emperor Star Academy for only one purpose. These five Yuanfu Realm cultivators wanted to spar against the elite students of the Emperor Star Academy and exchange pointers."

"Why I don't see the five Yuanfu students from your Royal Academy?" Old Gu swept his gaze at Chu Tianjiao.

"Ye Wuque, 1st level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against Qiu Mo from the Emperor Star Academy." Ye Wuque spoke. He was ranked 5th among the 10 prodigies of Chu while Qiu Mo was 4th.

"Wang Teng, 2nd level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against the leader of the Greencloud Association, Lin Hua." Another silhouette stepped out as his intent to battle surged, immediately issuing a challenge to Lin Hua of the Emperor Star Academy.

"1st Sword, 2nd level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against guest elder Rainy of the Emperor Star Academy."

“Wu Chong, 2nd level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against the leader of the Asura Faction, Du Yidao.”

“Xiao Lan, 3rd level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against the leader of the Heavenly Demon Association, Xanxus.”

Standing aside Chu Tianjiao, the five silhouettes all spoke. In an instant, a mighty surge of pressure blasted out as their intent to battle soared to the Heavens

The five of them directly spoke out, issuing their challenges to those who had the same level of cultivation as them. Not only that, those who they challenged all had high standings within the Emperor Star Academy. Three of them were none other than the leaders of the associations and faction in the Emperor Star Academy, another one was ranked 4th among the 10 prodigies of Chu, and the last was a guest elder of the Emperor Star Academy.

“When did 1st Sword become a member of your Royal Academy? And why have I never heard the names of Xiao Lan and Wang Teng before?” The countenance of Old Gu turned sharp.

“Since the Royal Academy merged with the Godly General Martial Palace, there would naturally be people Old Gu is not familiar with. And as for 1st Sword, it’s because today’s business is related to Snowcloud. I’m unwilling to bully the Emperor Star Academy, and thus, both Xiao Lù and I won’t compete today.” Chu Tianjiao slowly enunciated his words, causing the pupils of the crowd to contract. What an arrogant speech.

Indeed, Chu Tianjiao was ranked 2nd in the 10 prodigies of Snowcloud. With the addition of Xiao Lù, who was one of the Duo Prides of Snowcloud, there was no need to doubt their power.

If both Chu Tianjiao and Xiao Lù entered the battlefield, they would definitely cause more headaches to the Emperor Star Academy.

However, both of them actually chose not to battle.

This was a battle among Yuanfu realm experts. Regardless if they were from the Emperor Star Academy or from the Royal Academy, Yuanfu realm students could most certainly be considered the backbone of their respective academy. Students at this level were the true elites of the academies.

From a certain viewpoint, the scale and scope of this battle would definitely not lose out to the Jun Lin Banquet. Five against five, all extraordinary opponents.

Ye Wuque, one of the Yuanfu experts within the 10 prodigies.

1st Sword, the head of the three swords in Snowcloud.

Wu Chong, a genius disciple in the Godly General Martial Palace.

As for Wang Teng and Xiao Lan, they were not simple either. Especially Xiao Lan, who was already at the 3rd level of Yuanfu and actually dared issue a challenge to the leader of the Emperor Star Academy's Heavenly Demon Association.

"Emperor Star Academy, do you dare accept our challenge?" Chu Tianjiao's crisp voice sounded out, resonating in the air.

They had already investigated the details regarding the cultivation levels of the elites from the Emperor Star Academy. Since they dared to issue a challenge to the five of them, they would surely have a certain level of confidence in their own success.

The gazes of the students in the Emperor Star Academy were all riveted on the Elders on the spectator stands. As things stood now, how could they reject?

"Are all of you willing to battle?" Old Gu didn't make the decisions for the elites of the Emperor Star Academy.

"Let's fight."

Only to see Qiu Mo walking out as he appeared on the arena. His sharp gaze was directed at Ye Wuque. Since he was ranked higher than Ye Wuque within the ranks of the 10 prodigies, he had no reason not to accept his challenge.

"Ye Wuque, ranked 5th. Don't you know that the rankings before you are hard to displace?" Qiu Mo gazed at Ye Wuque as he indifferently added.

Ye Wuque looked back at him, his countenance calm. After which, he released his 3rd Astral Soul, which was cloaked in a golden radiance.

“Golden corona, it must be from the 4th Heavenly Layer.” Qiu Mo froze upon seeing this sight. Not only did Ye Wuque successfully open his 3rd Astral Gate, the Astral Soul he condensed was actually from the 4th Heavenly Layer.

This Astral Soul was in the form of a golden sword. Its resplendent glow was so sharp that it was bone-piercing.

Pssst! A terrifyingly monstrous sharpness erupted forth completely. Ye Wuque slowly strode out, emitting an exceptionally powerful sense of pressure that pressed against Qiu Mo. Behind Ye Wuque, a pair of silvery wings were formed, and the light they emitted was extremely blinding. This was his 2nd Astral Soul, and after stepping into Yuanfu, his previously illusory pair of wings had transformed into something closer to reality.

For Stellar Martial Cultivators, after they broke through to Yuanfu, their arterial pathways would transformed into a whirlpool, and their Astral Energy turned into liquid form. Every droplet of Yuan liquid was formed through the condensation of immense amounts of Astral Energy. These Yuan droplets would then appear within the Yuan Palace inside the body of the Stellar Martial Cultivator as he built up the form of a complete Yuan Palace and began to nurture a Stellar Array.

The amount of Astral Energy a Yuanfu realm cultivator could use far surpassed that of Arterial Circulation. This was a qualitative evolution.

With immense amounts of Astral Yuan Energy, it would naturally support the cultivator in executing even more innate techniques. Even their Astral Souls would seem as though they were more real. Once the Stellar Array of the individual cultivator was fully nurtured, the cultivator would then step into the Heavenly Dipper Realm and have an Astral Nova, which was manifested from a ‘real’ Astral Soul instead of something illusory.

Chi... The moment Qiu Mo lost focus, Ye Wuque instantly stepped out. In the blink of an eye, inexhaustible amounts of golden colored sharp swords gathered together as they amalgamated into a gigantic Heaven Punishment Sword, slashing towards Qiu Mo. The aura the sword emitted was golden in colour as well. The might contained within was akin to that of a terrible, terrible storm.

An Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer, in addition to its augmentation effect, was undoubtedly terrifying when used to attack.

Qiu Mo released his Astral Soul as well, directly facing Ye Wuque's attack. However, he soon discovered that every defense he mounted was easily destroyed by Ye Wuque's attacks. A heavy sense of disappointment flickered in his eyes. The position of 4th prodigy was going to have a change in ownership.

Towards the end, the attacks of the two opponents clashed together. With only a single strike, Qiu Mo was blasted off the arena, causing everyone in the crowd to be thunderstruck.

Was the disparity in power levels between the 4th and 5th prodigy that great? Not only that, the 5th prodigy was even stronger.

The Emperor Star Academy actually lost the first battle.

Ye Wuque turned his gaze in the direction of the spectator stand as he bowed. "I won only through a fluke."

After which, he retreated and returned to his original spot. However, as the sound of his words drifted to the ears of the crowd, the words became extremely ear-piercing and contained extreme sarcasm.