

Ancient GM 171

Chapter 171: Confrontation in the Royal Capital

Lincoln was none other than the Disciplinary Student Leader in charge of the Disciplinary Committee of the Royal Academy. Currently, he and ten others belonging to the committee were strolling around the Royal Capital. However, his heart now was filled with worries.

He was naturally very clear about this period of turmoil within the Royal Capital. His action back then, crippling the cultivation of students from the Emperor Star Academy, was forced onto him by the upper echelons in the Royal Academy. In reality, he had not wanted to do so and was unwilling to be pulled into the storm. However, in the face of the orders he received, he had no way defy them.

Hence, at this moment, his heart was filled with worries. He was worried about the revenge the Emperor Star Academy would take. He had already planned to request a transfer from his superiors to see if it was possible for him to temporarily hide away from the erupting storms of conflict.

Ssst~ Abruptly, a surge of monstrously sharp Qi gushed forth, causing Lincoln's pupils to contract. After which he saw numerous arrows falling down from the sky, shining with resplendent Astral Light, giving testament to the fact that these arrows were all manifested from Astral Energy.

Lincoln instantly released his Astral Souls as the aura of an 8th level Arterial Circulation Base emanated forth. He sent out numerous palm strikes targeting the arrows falling from the skies, wanting to destroy all of the arrows. However, it was as though the arrows had eyes of their own. They actually shifted from the path of their trajectory, dodging his palm strikes and piercing through the other ordinary members of the Royal Academy's Disciplinary Committee.

Sounds of piercing unceasingly rang out. The fired arrows penetrated through their throats, drawing fresh blood as Lincoln's emotions instantly plunged to the bottom of the abyss.

He had not expected that revenge would come so swiftly.

An instant later, a sharp sword sliced Lincoln's neck. His body slumped down to the ground, as his eyes closed in eternal rest. This team of cultivators from the Royal Academy were all dead, and the blood flowing from their throats dyed the entire ground red.

Several moments later, when the citizens realised the death of these cultivators clad in armor, their hearts couldn't help but to palpitate wildly. Was the incoming storm finally here?

Ji Qing was one of the Elders in charge of the Disciplinary Committee from the Royal Academy. His cultivation base was at the 3rd level of Yuanfu, and he had extraordinary combat prowess. At this moment, his brows were tightly knitted.

Currently, the entire Royal Academy was in a state of tension. Everyone knew that their war with the Emperor Star Academy was imminent and would break out anytime. Not only that, this dispute would be at an unprecedented level because the upper echelons of the Royal Academy wanted to completely eradicate the Emperor Star Academy's existence.

"Elder Ji." A student within the academy bowed as Ji Qing walked by, to which Ji Qing only casually waved away since he was currently deep in thought.

“Elder Ji.” Yet another student greeted.

“Mmm.” Ji Qing nonchalantly waved the greeting away. As he continued walking forwards, at this very moment, a strong sense of danger assailed his senses.

The ‘student’ who bowed to him instantly closed the distance between them. And because of the close proximity, as well as the fact that Ji Qing never would have expected that there would be people daring to ambush him within the grounds of the Royal Academy, Ji Qing was utterly unable to react in time.

His body glowed with terrifying Astral Light as an armour made from Astral Energy manifested. He only had the time to focus all his strength in defense.

Puchi! A sharp edge of a terrifying black sword penetrated through his armor, right into his heart. After which, the assailant violently twisted the sword and transmitted his Astral Energy into it, causing Ji Qing’s heart to combust. Dumbfounded, Ji Qing could only stare in shock at the cold and unfeeling eyes of his assailant, similar to the god of death.

Even if Ji Qing couldn’t react in time, with his cultivation base at the 3rd level of Yuanfu, in addition to his extraordinary combat prowess, there was no way he would be so easily assassinated. To be able to do this clearly showed that there was only one reason – the strength of his assailant was many times stronger when compared to his own.

The commotion caused those from afar to shift their gazes over, only to see the body of Ji Qing slowly slumping to the ground. Upon seeing this, the hearts of the crowd trembled violently, as panic reflected on their faces. By this time, the unknown figure that was the assailant had already disappeared from the vision of the crowd.

“Elder Ji Qing was assassinated.” A roar rang out, causing the originally already nervous atmosphere to be ignited again. An instant later, several silhouettes appeared next to the body of Ji Qing.

“Lock down the Royal Academy!” someone shouted out in rage.

“It’s useless. Since the other party could easily infiltrate in here and kill Ji Qing in an instant, he would definitely have a way to safely escape,” a person whispered, causing the crowd to turn silent.

Ji Qing was none other than the Disciplinary Elder who crippled the cultivation bases of the students from the Emperor Star Academy. It was obvious as to who the culprit was behind the assassination of Ji Qing.

The Emperor Star Academy didn’t roll out their war drums and hoist their war flags; instead, they directly responded with the most straightforward method. If the Royal Academy wanted to continue playing their little tricks in the dark, the Emperor Star Academy would be most willing to oblige.

Tooth for tooth, blood for blood.

As the news of Lincoln and Ji Qing was spread outwards, that already tight string of tension could snap at any moment.

Finally, on a clear morning, several experts mounted demonic beasts as they flew out from the Royal Academy. Beneath them, there were also crowds of cultivators, all moving towards the direction of the Emperor Star Academy.

The Emperor Star Academy received the news quickly. They were naturally monitoring the movements and action of the Royal Academy extremely closely.

The moment they received the news, those belonging to the Emperor Star Academy also set out.

At the same time, many experts belonging to the Ye Clan and Ou Clan were also making their way towards the Emperor Star Academy.

The intensity of this storm quickly engulfed the Royal Capital. Currently, there were countless gazes watching the Emperor Star Academy as well as the Royal Academy, focused on each and every one of their movements.

Today, both the academies no longer made any movements in the dark. Instead, they openly mobilised all experts they could muster.

Such a news could definitely be compared to the scale of a great earthquake, causing the entire Royal Academy to shake with it.

The Emperor Star Academy wanted to clash directly with the Royal Capital, but everyone also knew that the support behind the Royal Academy was none other than the Royal Clan of Chu.

In the Divine Weapon Pavilion, An Liuyan stood near a window, sighing. Yang Chen stood behind her telling her about the movements of both the academies.

“The crisis the Emperor Star Academy is facing this time around will be many times more difficult to resolve compared to the last.” An Liuyan intoned in a low voice.

“Doesn’t the Emperor Star Academy also have a backer?” Yang Chen inquired.

“I guess the Azure Emperor Palace. But according to what I know, the influence of the Azure Faction, who supports the Emperor Star Academy, within the Azure Emperor Palace is getting increasingly weaker. Back then when Luo Tianya wanted to take action against the Emperor Star Academy, it was also because of the Xiao Clan – one of the three factions of the Nine Mystical Palace. But because of the interference from the Azure Emperor Palace, they had no choice but to compromise. This time around, however, taking into account that Xiao Lan had personally arrived in Chu, it shows that the Nine Mystical Palace already accounted for the interference of the Azure Emperor Palace in their considerations.”

An Liuyan slowly spoke, but Yang Chen was still confused. After all, he only interacted with people of An Liuyan’s level and was unsure of how powerful places like the Nine Mystical Palace and Azure Emperor Palace were. However, he faintly knew that with her capabilities, An Liuyan was no pushover either.

Other than the Divine Weapon Pavilion, the Star River Association as well as the other major powers were all paying close attention.

Within the Royal Capital, on a vast expanse of flat ground, the members belonging to the Emperor Star Academy and Royal Academy all ceased their movements. They were about a few thousand metres apart from each other, each emitting terrifying pressure and their battle intents trying to cow the other.

In the airspace above both academies, flying-type demonic beasts and Yuanfu-level experts hovered in the air. There was a total of over a hundred Yuanfu cultivators altogether, and this was also the first time they would be directly clashing. From this, one could see how strong the two powers were.

Back then when Qin Wentian was still in Sky Harmony City, it was extremely rare to even see a single Yuanfu-level Cultivator.

On the ground, students at the Arterial Circulation realm stood there. Their countenances were solemn and their gazes were heavy as they stood in formation.

The Emperor Star Academy didn't force their students to participate in this upcoming war. However, cultivators of the martial paths all had hearts full of hot blood. How could they stand aside and watch idly, adopting the behaviour of a coward when the academy was going to war? As long as they were at the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation and above, the majority of the students chose to participate, despite the prohibitions laid down by the Emperor Star Academy.

At this moment, both party had several hundreds of Arterial Circulation Cultivators, akin to a small-scaled army.

Both parties stood there, silent. The atmosphere was so stifling that it felt even harder for the spectating parties to breathe than for those who were present.

For the operation this time around, the leader representing the Emperor Star Academy was Ren Qianxing. Although in the past he rarely appeared in front of the crowds, almost everyone knew who he was at this point. Ren Qianxing's real designation was one of the three vice-headmasters of the Emperor Star Academy.

The strength level of the leaders representing the Royal Academy couldn't be compared to Ren Qianxing. However, their statuses were all extremely shocking. They were Xiao Lan from the Nine Mystical Palace, the 3rd Prince of Chu, Chu Tianjiao, as well as the Crown Prince of Snowcloud, Xiao Lù.

The three of them stood atop an incredibly powerful demonic beast, gazing downwards with arrogance in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy. Beside them, there were also several powerful figures belonging to the Royal Academy.

The Emperor Star Academy and the Royal Academy were all sizing up each other. Qin Wentian was also there. He stood at the forefront of a square-shape formation on the side of the Emperor Star Academy.

Within the square-shaped formation, the people there consisted of Qin Wentian, Luo Huan, Fan Le, Luo Cheng, Yu Fei and the other elites. They were going to be the vanguards of the academy, and if war really did erupt, they had to strike fast and hard, directly crushing their opponent's morale.

There was a need to formulate a strategy even in chaotic fights.

A cold glint of light flickered in his eyes as Qin Wentian saw the formations of the Royal Academy. Within one of their formations, he saw Orchon as well as members from the Knight's Association standing within. They were all nurtured by the Emperor Star Academy, but now, they actually stood on the side of the Royal Academy, wanting to take action against the place that nurtured them.

"I can give the Emperor Star Academy one more chance. If you all are willing to merge with my Royal Academy, the terms will still be the same as what I listed out before." Chu Tianjiao's eyes stared at Ren Qianxing with a hint of provocation as he calmly spoke.

Ren Qianxing's only response was to stare coldly back at him.

Chu Tianjiao gave a cold laugh, as he stared at the students of the Emperor Star Academy below. "If you all leave now, I will leave you untouched. Wanting to clash against us based on your level of strength? That's not a wise decision."

As the sound of Chu Tianjiao's voice faded, sounds of war horses galloping could be heard in the horizon. These new arrivals were none other than those from the Ye and Ou Clan. They were willing to stand on the side of the Royal Academy to do battle.

In terms of numbers, the Royal Academy held absolute advantage.

Everyone was motionless but there were some students of the Emperor Star Academy whose hearts had already started to waver. This didn't mean that they wanted to forsake the battle, but their initial confidence of winning was definitely already shaken. Originally, after the merger of the Royal Academy and the Godly General Martial Palace, they already had an advantage in terms of numbers, not to mention now that the joint power mustered by the noble clans of Chu arrived. The Emperor Star Academy was surrounded by enemies from all sides.

Only to see that at this moment, a silhouette stepped out, causing those from the Emperor Star Academy to be stunned.

Qin Wentian took a few steps forwards, standing in front of those from the Emperor Star Academy. He inclined his head, his gaze looking at the silhouettes hovering in the air.

"Despite the support the Royal Academy had from the Royal Clan, they were still sorely suppressed by the Emperor Star Academy for over thousands of years. And now, in order to deal with the Emperor Star Academy, they merged with the Godly General Martial Palace and resorted to several underhanded means in a bid to steal our position." Qin Wentian serenely continued, "Get out of here. There's no one that can replace our position. We are from the Emperor Star Academy."

During his speech, Qin Wentian's ancient halberd was already grasped in his hands as his long hair fluttered behind him, appearing as though he basking in the glory that originated from being part of the Emperor Star Academy. At this moment, those from the Emperor Star Academy could feel the blood in their bodies getting heated up. To deal with them, the Royal Clan cracked their brains and resorted to many underhanded methods. This by itself was already a type of glory.

They, were from the Emperor Star Academy!

Chapter 172: Unrivalled below Yuanfu

Being able to last through the ages up till now, regardless of which era, the Emperor Star Academy was always heralded with glory. Today, they would be facing the most challenging battle of all time in the history of the Emperor Star Academy.

Qin Wentian stood at the very front, with his ancient halberd held in his hands. The blood in his entire body was boiling, as his demeanor became increasingly fiendish. His physique also grew taller and stronger — the demonic aura he exuded made it seem as though he was a monarch, the overlord of all things under the heavens.

His eyes blazing with battle intent, the sight of him caused the blood and spirits of those belonging to the Emperor Star Academy to store. Today, they fought for honor, for the survival of the Emperor Star Academy.

In the direction of the Royal Academy, similarly, there were several silhouettes that stepped out. Among these were Orchon, Hou Tie, Chu Chen, and Leng Ya. Although their troop arrangement was many times more powerful compared to the Emperor Star Academy, when the students of the Emperor Star Academy saw Qin Wentian standing in the lead, their previous worries all melted away. Not long ago, Qin Wentian completely dominated the challenge battle at the Royal Academy.

From both the left and right, the sounds of horses galloping could be heard. The young clansman of the Ou and Ye Clan were stirring, making their moves.

However, despite their disadvantages in numbers, the Emperor Star Academy only recruited students who were Stellar Martial Cultivators. Each and every one of them had an Astral Soul.

Boom! The students of the academy also started to gallop forth. They were grouped into countless smaller formations, with their archers situated at the back, firing their arrows in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy.

The battle finally begun.

Qin Wentian stepped forth, snarling in rage, it was as though all his anger and hatred turned into a boundless terrifying energy that was channeled into his ancient halberd. The ancient halberd transformed into a stream of light as it was flung out, slashing across the void, emitting an explosive sound akin to the roar of an angered demonic dragon.

Orchon and the rest bore the brunt of the attack. As they faced the ancient halberd that flew towards them with stiffened countenances, their bodies dodged to the side. The after-shock caused by Qin Wentian's strike was so sharp that it nicked their faces, causing them to feel a burning sensation.

Puchi. The ancient halberd completely penetrated though a person behind them as the force of the momentum continued forth unabated amidst screams of panic. Sounds of bodies being pierced continuously rang out, stopping only after the third person was killed. The situation over at the side the of the Royal Academy where the ancient halberd flew to momentarily turned chaotic.

Qin Wentian, how terrifying had his strength grown to?

Only to see him taking another step forwards, as a second ancient halberd appeared within his hands. This time around, the ancient halberd he took out was a Divine Weapon shining with resplendent Astral Light. When paired with that tyrannical, fiendishly handsome countenance of Qin Wentian, Orchon and the rest felt a surge of overwhelming pressure gushing towards them as terror struck their hearts. They were actually more than a little afraid of Qin Wentian.

Fan Le and the rest followed closely behind Qin Wentian. Their formation was to be the vanguard of the Emperor Star Academy, consisting of Emperor Star Academy's strongest Arterial Circulation cultivators. They only had one mission — to kill, to ruthlessly kill, and wreak total annihilation.

On both the left and right of them, there were two great formations formed by the Emperor Star Academy's side, acting as protectors for Qin Wentian's team, preventing them from being encircled.

Fan Le also unleashed his Bloodline Limit as arrows explosively rained down from the skies, their appearance akin to golden lightning.

HOWL. Savage roars and howls echoed in the air from the Royal Academy. Beside Orchon, there was another square formation where the cultivators within all released their Beast-type Astral Souls. The roars and howls of their Astral Souls formed a cacophony akin to that of 10,000 beasts roaring in cohesion, exhibiting an extremely overbearing aura.

Qin Wentian didn't bother about them. He took the lead and rushed forwards, arriving in front of Orchon and the others. Fan Le's arrows protected him on his left and right side, the golden arrows following his every steps.

As Fan Le grew stronger, his powers of psyche force had already reach a certain standard. Currently, it was extremely simple for him to control the flight of his Astral Arrows.

The one facing Qin Wentian directly was none other than Orchon. By his side was Hou Tie, while behind him was Chu Chen. Despite the advantage in numbers, when Orchon sensed the aura Qin Wentian was emanating, he felt his body go weak, completely devoid of strength. He had never once imagined that Qin Wentian's aura would be so overbearing to such an extent where he would resemble an indestructible fiendgod.

Bzzz! Qin Wentian made his move, his speed as quick as a bolt of lightning.

The first strike of his was none other than Mountain Splitter of the Great Dream Halberd Art.

Powered by his Bloodline Limit, as well as augmentation granted by the Fiend Transformation Art, the might of this strike was something that far exceeded Orchon's imagination. Not only that, the power of the strike was also increased by the boosting effects of his ancient halberd.

At this moment, however, Orchon could only defend in response. His long Divine Spear exploded forth like a blooming lotus as ten millions filaments of light burst out, inundating the area with silver light.

However, the moment the lotus bloomed, it was immediately shattered by the tyrannical aura of the halberd. The petals of the lotus shimmered as they transformed into fragments, dissipating along with the wind. When the overbearing aura gushed forth, it was as though there was nothing Qin Wentian's ancient halberd couldn't conquer. Orchon's heart was penetrated an instant later, causing

many to be dumbstruck. After which, Qin Wentian let out a roar of rage as he lifted the impaled body of Orchon up in the air.

“Those who block me, die!”

The roar of anger resonated in the air. The movements of those from the Royal Academy slowed as their eyes widened, looking at the body of Orchon propped up in the air.

Death in a single strike.

At this moment, it was as though time completely stopped. The countenances of the Yuanfu cultivators from the Ou Clan who were hovering in the air all went pale white. What a tyrannical slaughter!

Below Yuanfu, other than Qin Wentian, there was no one else able to manifest such a tyrannical aura.

An old man from the Ou Clan convulsed involuntarily as he emitted an intense killing intent. A visible green vein bulged atop his forehead; he wanted nothing more than to tear Qin Wentian apart. However, he couldn't do so.

This was merely a few chaotic clashes between the 'armies' of both sides, and the participants could slaughter those from the other camp freely. The unspoken rules of this war were clear to both the academies. Currently the Yuanfu cultivators on both sides had not join the battle as of yet because they were all afraid. The moment Yuanfu cultivators joined in, killing the Arterial Circulation cultivators in cold blood, the 'end game' would be already set in motion. Those at Arterial Circulation would be mere cannon fodder. Neither of the academies wanted to initiate such a move unless they were sure of their own advantage.

Chu Tianjiao obviously shared the same sentiment; he didn't want the war to enter the 'end game' state yet. Although they held the advantage in terms of numbers, if he were to compare the power levels of experts at the Yuanfu realm, the Royal Academy didn't have as great an advantage as they would like to have. Thus, he preferred to slowly whittle the strength of the Emperor Star Academy, reducing the numbers of their students even more. After all the students of the Emperor Star Academy were dead, the academy wouldn't have any more reasons for existing, right?

On the other hand, if he jumped straight to the 'end game', allowing the scale of the battle to grow even larger, even Chu Tianjiao didn't have absolute confidence in his own safety. What if the Emperor Star Academy had a secret task force of a few old freaks ganging up on him to kill him? Who would dare to say he would still be alive?

And so, until the very last moment, Chu Tianjiao was unwilling to do such a thing. He also knew that there was no way the Emperor Star Academy would initiate by sending out their Yuanfu cultivators. Because the moment they did so, the Royal Academy would respond in kind. One must know that in front of Yuanfu, cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Realm had no way to resist at all. The Emperor Star Academy would definitely not want to see their students dying in a blood bath.

Hence, these unspoken rules were concurred by both parties to allow students below Yuanfu to clash first.

Nobody dared to break that thin line of balance.

After Qin Wentian slayed Orchon, the battle once again erupted in intensity. The spirits of those from the Emperor Star Academy soared up to their brims as they went all out, attacking in a frenzy.

At the same time, many sought to encircle Qin Wentian. Their intentions were obvious with merely a single glance.

If Qin Wentian died in the frenzy of such a chaotic battle, it just meant that he was useless. Even if Gongyang Hong wanted to pursue, who would he pursue? None of the Yuanfu cultivators made a move against Qin Wentian.

But whenever Qin Wentian killed a member of their academy, the hearts of those from the Royal Academy couldn't help but shudder.

The current Qin Wentian was many times more powerful compared to the time when he had competed in the Jun Lin Banquet. No wonder Sikong Mingyue wasn't his opponent, easily getting trounced by Qin Wentian.

Executing the Garuda Movement Technique, Qin Wentian was like the wind. A pressure akin to mountains falling erupted as he blasted forth with his left palms, while the ancient halberd in his right slaughtered out a path of blood. He was unstoppable.

Luo Cheng's sabre, Yu Fei's sword, Luo Huan's control as well as Fan Le's arrows all moved in accordance to Qin Wentian's movements. Their coordination was akin to a killing machine, breaking the formations of students from the Royal Academy.

BOOOM. Deafening roars rang out as a multitude of palm shadows flew towards Qin Wentian, seeking to bury Qin Wentian within. Chu Chen stood behind, amplifying the power levels of those attacking Qin Wentian. In battles like this, the effects of his Astral Soul was one of the best.

The ancient halberd weaved about in a beautiful dance, as an illusory form of the Xuanwu Turtle manifested around Qin Wentian. A series of explosions echoed, but the barrier formed by the Xuanwu Turtle withstood the attacks. Despite the amplifications, their attacks were still unable to breach his defense.

Sizzzz! A resplendent light flickered as the ancient halberd swept out, tracing beautiful arcs in the air. Qin Wentian flickered; he treaded the air, flying towards Chu Chen while simultaneously executing the Fallen Mountain Palms innate technique with both soles of his feet.

Chu Chen's countenance stiffened. He knew that with Qin Wentian's current level of power, if he was determined to kill someone, that person would definitely die.

Chu Chen rapidly retreated, but somehow Fan Le seemed to know what Qin Wentian was thinking and fired his arrows, cutting off the paths of retreat for Chu Chen.

Chu Chen's countenance turned extremely unsightly. Qin Wentian's fiendishly good looking eyes shot out a ray of light into the eyes of Chu Chen. Having lost himself in the endless depths of Qin Wentian's eyes, Chu Chen was unable to muster any semblance of defense.

Chi!

Even when the ancient halberd slashed into his head, Chu Chen was still lost inside his dreams, unaware of his impending doom. That momentary lapse of concentration was already enough to determine his fate.

Orchon was dead, as well as Chu Chen from the Royal Clan.

These two who just died were ranked among the top few cultivators in the Jun Lin Banquet. Upon witnessing such a scenario, the countenances of the Yuanfu cultivators from the Royal Academy turned ashen.

Despite having the absolute advantage in numbers, it seemed that everything was useless in front of Qin Wentian. His team formation alone could cut through the team formations of students from the Royal Academy like a hot knife through butter, displaying absolute strength.

Qin Wentian was too strong within the Arterial Circulation Realm.

Resplendent lights flickered in the eyes of those from the Emperor Star Academy. When Qin Wentian had volunteered to be the vanguard, they were still afraid that he would encounter encirclement. But now after seeing his tyrannical combat prowess, all of their worries melted into the thin air.

If no Yuanfu cultivator stepped out, Qin Wentian was undefeatable.

For those at the Arterial Circulation Realm, even counting those from the Nine Mystical Palace, the current Qin Wentian could be considered the number one existence. He was unrivalled below Yuanfu!

Chapter 173: Scheme

On the battlefield, hovering in the air, Orchon's father had an expression of extreme agony on his face.

Orchon's talent could be considered several times above average; in the Ou Clan, he had been one of the few talented youngster who was truly worth nurturing, and yet now, he was actually felled by Qin Wentian. He would never forget that his younger son, Orfon, had been killed by Qin Wentian as well.

The green vein on his forehead throbbed visibly, as his killing intent soared to its limits.

"That useless Janus." Orchon's father silently cursed. Janus, who had been Orchon's personal teacher, had an extremely close relationship with him. He had secretly provided a large amount of cultivation resources to Janus, and as long as Janus succeeded in the assassination of Qin Wentian, he would arrange Janus's escape as well as provide him with abundant rewards.

However, Janus had failed, which in turn caused the death of Orchon today. He couldn't help but to blame himself; if he had attached more importance to Qin Wentian back then, regardless of the cost, he would have arranged for Yuanfu cultivators to assassinate him long ago.

Currently, Qin Wentian was invincible in the realm of Arterial Circulation. If anyone wanted to kill him, they could only do so by using Yuanfu experts, but Chu Tianjiao wasn't willing to disrupt the thin line of balance that quickly.

Despite their advantage in numbers, the Royal Academy suffered defeat after defeat everywhere. Most of them were equal in strength with the other formations of the Emperor Star Academy and would require quite a lengthy period of time to finish them. However Qin Wentian was different; as long as he saw a slightly stronger formation, he would immediately head over to destroy the students there. He was unstoppable, and if that was the case, the defeat of the Royal Academy would come sooner or later.

Upon seeing this happening, Orchon's father was secretly happy in his heart. He whispered, "Your Highness, if Qin Wentian doesn't die, it'd be extremely tough for us to obtain victory."

Chu Tianjiao cast a glance at Orchon's father. Naturally, he could tell what Orchon's father was thinking. After a few moments, his gaze flickered as he shouted out a command, "Disperse."

As the sound of the command rang out, the students of the Royal Academy were in full retreat. Having seen their opponents retreating, the spirits of the students belonging to the Emperor Star Academy soared even higher. With the taste of victory in their mouths, they chased after their opponents seeking to kill them, but despite of this, they were still clear-headed enough to know when to stop. After all, there were still numerous Yuanfu cultivators around. If they went too far, no one knew what would happen.

Eventually, both camps retreated to their original positions. Corpses lay strewn about in the middle of the battlefield, their blood dying the ground red.

Although the two sides only clashed for a short period of time, the casualties already amounted to over 80 deaths. This was the cruel reality of war.

On both sides, there were many with reddened eyes. Those who died out there earlier were all their friends. Not so long ago, they just gathered together and had been making merry, but to think that now they all became ice-cold corpses. Only now did they understand the cruelty of reality. In the future, if they wanted to become stronger, they would undoubtedly have to experience things that were even worse than this.

Qin Wentian stood in front of the crowd belong to the Emperor Star Academy, raising his head and shifting his gaze to those Yuanfu cultivators standing in the air. The cold arrogance in his eyes was tinged with a terrifying demonic killing intent.

The students in the Royal Capital were all young people. Initially, this place was supposed to be a heaven for those seeking to cultivate, but now, because of the fight for power, it had become a battlefield where the students were slaughtered in cold blood.

Chu Tianjiao and the rest similarly stared back at Qin Wentian, as murderous urges flickered in their eyes. Qin Wentian was already on their list of 'to-be-killed' targets. The reason why they couldn't do so was because of their fear of the reprisal actions the Emperor Star Academy would take.

"Retreat." Chu Tianjiao coldly hollered. At his command, those from the Royal Academy began to withdraw.

"Return to the academy." Ren Qianxing commanded, and those from the Emperor Star Academy also started to withdraw.

Although the Emperor Star Academy won this clash, nobody felt at ease. On the contrary, everyone felt as though they had the weight of a mountain on their back, their hearts all filled with heaviness. This was merely the beginning of the war.

In a hall within the Royal Academy, Xiao Lan, Chu Tianjiao, as well as those from the Ye and Ou Clan were all gathered there.

Xiao Lan's fingers drummed on his arm rest, but he had an extremely heavy look upon his countenance. Naturally, he was exceptionally unhappy with the results of the previous clash.

"I don't wish to stay in Chu for too long. At most, within three months, the Emperor Star Academy must be ours." Xiao Lan's faint voice seemed as though he was giving out a death command that must be accomplished at all cost. To obtain the secret hidden within the Emperor Star Academy by the Azure Emperor, the first step was for the Emperor Star Academy to submit to them. If they refused, destruction was the only remaining way left. However, he didn't have the time to stay here for so long.

He still had many formidable opponents waiting for him within the nine main states. If he remained here for too long, the cultivation of his opponents may outstrip him by miles when he returned. If that was the case, that would be extremely shameful.

“Young Master Xiao, I don’t think there would be anyone that could match Qin Wentian in the Arterial Circulation Realm.” Orchon’s father said, “If we want the Emperor Star Academy, we have no choice but to win the battle with our Yuanfu cultivators.”

Xiao Lan was unperturbed when he heard the suggestion. He turned to Chu Tianjiao and asked, “What are your thoughts on this?”

Chu Tianjiao was silent for a moment before he replied in a low voice, “I will find some extremely powerful Arterial Circulation Realm cultivators from our military and insert them into our Royal Academy before engaging in Arterial Circulation warfare again.”

“And if you still failed to be victorious?” Xiao Lan asked again.

“If that’s the case, we would have no choice but to engage them with Yuanfu cultivators.” Chu Tianjiao calmly spoke. The Yuanfu experts were all talented elites of Chu. If he could avoid the battle at the Yuanfu-level, naturally he would avoid it. Because once the war started, the overall strength of the Chu Country would surely suffer.

“Qin Wentian, he...” Orchon’s father was as though he wanted to intentionally remind Chu Tianjiao.

“If a Yuanfu cultivator killed Qin Wentian, the Emperor Star Academy would surely not sit back and do nothing. And if we infuriated Gongyang Hong, who’s going to bear the brunt of his displeasure?” Chu Tianjiao murmured as he stared straight back at Orchon’s father. He naturally understood what Orchon’s father was hinting at.

Chu Tianjiao also wanted Qin Wentian’s death, but he had to thoroughly consider all possibilities from different perspectives before making his move.

“We do not need to kill him.” Someone from the Ye Clan spoke. He was none other than Ye Liuyang.

“Old Ye, what do you have in mind?” Chu Tianjiao asked as he shifted his gaze to Ye Liuyang.

“There must be secrets hidden on Qin Wentian’s body. We could capture him alive. Even if we fail, the Emperor Star Academy and Gongyang Hong wouldn’t be infuriated. If we succeed, we won’t kill him. With him in our clutches, the Emperor Star Academy would surely restrain themselves from shooting the rats for fear of breaking the vases, and we would then be able to enjoy an advantage. If Gongyang Hong came and demanded Qin Wentian back, we could just release him then. But during this period of time, it will be sufficient for us to accomplish many things.”

Ye Liuyang had a scheming expression on his face, causing Chu Tianjiao’s eyes to brighten as he laughed, “Good plan! But how should we proceed?”

Ye Liuyang swept a glance at Chu Tianjiao. From the serene-looking expression on Chu Tianjiao’s countenance, he understood that Chu Tianjiao had long wanted to capture Qin Wentian alive. He was just waiting for others to make the suggestion. The meaning behind his actions went without saying.

The relationships between Qin Wentian and the Ye and Ou Clan was extremely bad.

“The Ou Clan will take the lead while our Ye Clan will assist.” Ye Liuyang spoke as he and Chu Tianjiao turned their gazes towards Orchon’s father.

Orchon’s father could only silently cursed their craftiness in his heart while maintaining a cordial expression on the surface. “Okay.”

“Since we have decided, you all can discuss and proceed with the plan.” Chu Tianjiao laughed, “No matter whether this succeeds or fails, I won’t make things difficult for the people of both your clans.”

After returning to the academy, Qin Wentian immediately began his cultivation. The

intense battle earlier had exhausted the energy stored in his body at an astonishing rate, so he used Yuan Meteor Stones to replenish his strength while condensing his Divine Yuan Energy simultaneously. When he finally recovered his strength, he could feel that his arterial pathways had seemingly undergone a change, as though they had somehow expanded. It was very obvious that fighting so intensely in such chaotic battles would stimulate his cultivation base, thus steadily increasing his strength.

In his heart, Qin Wentian was still extremely worried since his strength was still insufficient. If he was at Yuanfu, whereby his Arterial Pathways transformed into a spiral, the Astral Energy within his

body would change to a liquid state as the form of his Yuanfu (Yuan Palace) was completed. The consumption of the Astral Energy he expended in the battle would be negligible that it was not worth mentioning.

At the Yuanfu Realm, the Astral Energy within one's body would be transformed into a liquid state. Every droplet of Yuan liquid contained an immense amount of Astral Energy.

At the same time, a Yuan Reservoir would form within one's body. As the Yuan Energy droplets filled the reservoir, one's storage of Astral Energy within the reservoir could be said to be almost limitless, never to be exhausted.

According to the level of one's cultivation, the stronger a person grew, the larger the Yuan Reservoir would expand, thus enabling more Yuan Energy droplets to be stored within. And once the cultivator stepped into the peak of Yuanfu, the Yuan Reservoir would transform into a Yuan Ocean. From there, one could nurture their Astral Soul within the ocean and eventually condense an Astral Nova.

As to what comes after that, Qin Wentian was not very clear. Maybe it would be similar to what he saw in the memory fragments of that tiny Astral Being where the countless mighty existences standing outside of the Qin Heavenly Divine Sect could manifest actual terrifying constellations, but was that the realm after Heavenly Dipper? Qin Wentian couldn't be sure. Qin Wentian was wondering, how strong exactly was his damn old fogey? He should have been at a level so terrifying that was incomprehensible to the current Qin Wentian.

Thinking of this caused Qin Wentian to be slightly depressed. His dad was an extremely powerful paragon, but look at him now, struggling with setbacks at every corner. However, Qin Wentian also knew that true experts only reached where they stood now because they had their feet firmly planted on the ground, moving forward step by step, armed with nothing but determination. He believed that he would reach that level sooner or later.

After finishing his cultivation, Qin Wentian went to the Divine Weapon Pavilion once again. He wasn't worried about his own safety as he knew that Yuanfu experts from the Emperor Star Academy would protect him from the shadows.

An Liuyan personally received him herself. Qin Wentian then summoned several weaponsmiths to aid him in creating Divine Weapons as he inscribed the Divine Imprints onto them at a crazy speed.

Today, those weaponsmiths who witness Qin Wentian in action, were all stunned into silence. Before this, they had heard many rumours about Qin Wentian, but today, after seeing his skill, they were truly impressed, almost to the point of reverence.

In the entirety of Chu, not many powers could afford the materials needed to create so many Divine Weapons. However, An Liuyan unceasingly accommodated his every request. Qin Wentian could only silently note down this favour in his heart.

After returning to the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian and the Elders disseminated the Divine Weapons to the more prominent students in preparation for their second clash against the Royal Academy.

And eventually, the second clash soon started, occurring at the same battlefield as the first.

This time round, there were even more people on the side of the Royal Academy; their numbers were about twice that of the Emperor Star Academy, grandiose and majestic, emitting a fearsome pressure. Those Yuanfu cultivators stood in the air, looking down from above as their killing aura permeated the air.

Qin Wentian stood there on the ground. He could sense the unfriendly gazes of hatred staring right at him. Raising his head, he looked up in the air and saw killing intent flickering in several pair of eyes.

Xiao Lan calmly glanced at Qin Wentian; the expression in his eyes was like someone looking down upon an ant-like existence. He, who came from one of the factions of the Nine Mystical Palace, naturally wouldn't put Qin Wentian in his eyes. Since Qin Wentian spurned the opportunity he offered him, it meant that Qin Wentian's ending was already decided. If not for the deterrence of the Heavenly Dipper Sovereign, he would have sent people to finish off Qin Wentian long ago.

In his eyes, although Qin Wentian's talent could be considered pretty good, he didn't know how high the Heavens were. Not only that, in front of those superior to him, he also didn't know his place.

Chapter 174: Fatal Strike

Those from the Royal Academy separated into three major formations, advancing towards the students from the Emperor Star Academy in order to encircle them within.

Behind them, the archers from the Royal Academy had already retrieved the bows slung behind their backs and had their arrows nocked and ready, able to fire to kill at any moment.

"Are they from the military?" A cold light flickered in Ren Qianxing's eyes, as he shifted his gaze to Chu Tianjiao, coldly stating, "Does Your Highness intend to use the forces from the military?"

The Elders of the Emperor Star Academy all had icy cold expressions in their eyes. Did Chu Tianjiao really want to force this war into the 'end game' state? If Chu Tianjiao borrowed the power of the military, regardless of how powerful their students might be, the military would just overrun them with pure numbers regardless of cost, obtaining a pyrrhic victory.

Luckily, the powers of the rebels were strong as well, making the Royal Academy unable to mobilize a large amount of soldiers to aid them in this endeavor. If not, the students from the Emperor Star Academy would definitely be done for.

“Elder should already know that those who enrolled in the Godly Military Martial Palace are the reserves of the military. Why do you find this so shocking?” Chu Tianjiao laughed, Ren Qianxing wasn’t able to see through him

“Archers.” Qin Wentian coldly shouted. A line of archers appeared behind the formations of the Emperor Star Academy. The skies was colored by Astral Light as arrows fired from both camps filled the skies, resulting in a rain of arrows.

Fan Le glanced at that rain of arrows and sighed. What a pity that his control over psyche force was still limited. If not, he could use the arrows their opponents fired against them. Despite of this, the power of the fired arrows wouldn’t be too great; at most, they could only disrupt the formations.

The Arterial Circulation Realm ‘armies’ of both parties advanced towards each other. Abruptly, a blinding radiance filled the air. Those at the Yuanfu level discovered that all students from the Emperor Star Academy were equipped with various kinds of Divine Weapons!

Qin Wentian had forged spears, swords ,axe, shields, and all kinds of Divine Weapons, allowing the students of the Emperor Star Academy to choose what fit them best.

In the next instant, both ‘armies’ contacted and engaged each other. Rays after rays of cold light flashed. There was sword light, spear light, axe light, all tyrannical beyond comparison. In the blink of an eye, victory went to those belonging to the Emperor Star Academy. They slaughtered several of those from the Royal Academy effortlessly, while sustaining no casualties on their side.

“All of them are wielding Divine Weapons. Not only that, the Divine Weapons are at least of the 2nd-grade and above.” The Yuanfu-level silhouettes belonging to the Royal Academy all had extremely ugly expressions on their faces. Even with the support from the Royal Clan, equipping everyone with 2nd-grade Divine Weapons wasn’t a feat that they could duplicate.

“Seems like these weapons were all provided by the Divine Weapon Pavilion.” Chu Tianjiao’s eyes flickered. He had been tracking Qin Wentian’s movements and knew that he had been to the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

“We need to bring forward the plan.” Chu Tianjiao mumbled softly, as he laughed. “ For this war of students, we can no longer remain on the fence. I have to apologise to the Elders from the Emperor Star Academy.”

The sound of Chu Tianjiao’s voice permeated the air. The countenances of those surrounding him turned solemn. Stepping forwards, the air was filled with a cacophony of cries from demonic beasts.

“What? He wants to force the endgame?” Those from the Emperor Star Academy couldn’t understand. Following the words of Chu Tianjiao, the Yuanfu cultivators who had hidden

themselves away all began to show themselves, surrounding the Yuanfu cultivators from the Emperor Star Academy.

“Prepare for war.” Ren Qianxing calmly stated. The Yuanfu cultivators nodded and spread apart. Battles on the Yuanfu-level naturally required more space.

Very quickly, the entire air space was completely filled with Yuanfu experts. The impact of seeing such a scene was extremely great, causing those spectators viewing the war from afar to involuntarily tremble. The ultimate clash was beginning.

AWOOOOOOO... The roars of the demonic mounts tremble the air as both sides started to clash. Even Chu Tianjiao and Xiao Lan also joined the battle, seeking out their own opponents.

Dazzling Astral Souls were released simultaneously, engulfing the entire air space. The power of Yuanfu cultivators were extremely terrifying.

Qin Wentian’s ancient halberd pierced into the heart of an opponent, finishing him off as he gazed up in the air. For some reason, his heart pounded with unease. He didn’t expect that Chu Tianjiao would choose to force the endgame this fast.

This time round, Chu Tianjiao’s determination was truly great indeed.

Abruptly, Qin Wentian felt his entire body go cold. In front of him, he could see a silhouette dashing in his direction. This person had hidden his identity and was mixed in within the Arterial Circulation cultivators from the Royal Academy. The sense of danger Qin Wentian could feel from him was exceedingly great.

Qin Wentian pulled out his ancient halberd as he retreated with explosive speed. However, the movement speed of the other person was extremely quick. The assailant transformed into after-images as a gigantic palm was blasted in the direction of Qin Wentian. It was as though the assailant wanted to kill Qin Wentian in a single strike.

However, at that exact moment, a black shadow appeared. The black sword in his hands struck out, piercing into the gigantic palm, as a thunderous sound echoed. Remnants of the terrifying aura saturated the area. Evidently, fearing for the safety of Qin Wentian, the Emperor Star Academy had arranged for his protection.

One has to say, Chu Tianjiao’s plan to move against Qin Wentian after initiating the battle of Yuanfu cultivators was extremely brilliant. Once the Yuanfu experts engaged in their battles, how would they have the time to concern themselves with other matters?

“They want to make a move against Wentian.” Ren Qianxing coldly exclaimed. Momentarily, several Elders descended from the air. Their opponents immediately seized the chance to attack, barring their paths to Qin Wentian.

Ye Wuque descended from the air, his tri-colored sword slashed out in the direction of Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian gazed in the direction of that attack. The ancient halberd in his hands weaved about in a dance of frenzy, impenetrable by wind or rain.

Zzzzzzzzz.. A great sword slashed downwards. Qin Wentian was forced to retreat. Beside him, the aura of the previous Yuanfu cultivator exploded forth, his palms aiming to grab hold of Qin Wentian. Success seemed already within his grasp.

“Son of a bitch.” Fan Le raged. He rapidly fired his arrows, controlling them to fly towards the assailant, but each and every one of his arrows were effortlessly deflected by the other party.

The current Qin Wentian naturally didn't hold a chance facing off against Ye Wuque. With the threat of an additional Yuanfu cultivator, his footwork began to get flustered.

“GET LOST.” A roar rumbled the air as Ren Qianxing tread the air with a golden sword equipped in his hands. Abruptly, he swung his sword in a horizontal arc, and a terrifying golden light lacerated the void apart, severing the necks of a few enemy Yuanfu experts as their heads rolled to the ground.

Ren Qianxing flickered as he disappeared from sight, moving in Qin Wentian's direction.

Ye Wuque delivered yet another strike from the air. No matter how powerful one was at the Arterial Circulation Realm, the overwhelming disparity between that and Yuanfu was something that could never be mitigated.

Howling in rage, Qin Wentian's long hair fluttered behind him. His arm travelled in a wild arc as he launched his ancient halberd explosively into the air. However at that moment, Qin Wentian's countenance turned pale. He felt a terrifying sense of impending doom approaching him from behind his back.

He at this moment didn't have time to turn and defend any more. He could only frenziedly dredge up the Divine Energy in his body, circulating it to protect his back.

Puchi! A crisp sound rang out as an excruciating pain wrenched his gut. A dagger pierced inside his body, stabbing his heart. Did they really want Qin Wentian to die?

“WENTIAN!” Their countenances turning pale. Luo Huan and Fan Le stood motionlessly, not daring to believe their eyes. Luo Huan's beautiful eyes lost all hints of their allure as she grasp at the empty air in front of her.

Why? WHY? Why, after Mountain's death? Qin Wentian still had to die?

Fan Le's felt a biting pain in his heart. At this moment, he was completely filled with anguish. That carefree young man who was kind to his friends and family and merciless to his enemies...Qin Wentian was his best friend, his brother. Was he going to die today?

Chu Tianjiao gazed downwards, shock apparent in his eyes. Obviously, killing Qin Wentian wasn't part of his plans.

Then if that was the case, was it the Ye Clan or the Ou Clan that took methods into their own hands?

At this moment, however, confusion appeared on the faces of both the Ye and Ou Clan members. Who exactly was that man who pierced the short sword into Qin Wentian's heart?

“DIE!” Ren Qianxing howled in madness. He had finally caught up and directly slammed his palms into the head of the attacker, exploding his head. The attacker should have already known his fate the moment he decided to kill Qin Wentian. There was no way the Emperor Star Academy would allow Qin Wentian's killer to escape alive.

Ye Wuque had already retreated. He knew that he would be in danger if he continued staying, only to see Ren Qianxing emanating a monstrous killing intent, sending palm strikes in all directions as students from the Royal Academy suffered an absolute massacre.

Ren Qianxing had truly gone mad with anger.

He looked up in the air, staring at Chu Tianjiao. Chu Tianjiao's heart involuntarily shuddered; this had been an accident, not part of the plan. What he feared most had come true, and this ending would undoubtedly drive the Emperor Star Academy into a frenzy.

"I didn't have any intentions to kill Qin Wentian." Chu Tianjiao spoke, but he knew it was useless when he saw the expression in Ren Qianxing's eyes. He could only laugh bitterly in response. At this point of time, explanations were already useless.

Ren Qianxing carried the body of Qin Wentian as he flew up the air, simultaneously using an immense amount of Astral Energy to close Qin Wentian's wounds. He roared out a command, "Return."

The eyes of those from the Emperor Star Academy were all red, their killing intents soaring to the skies. But after hearing the command given by Ren Qianxing, all of them still obeyed.

Chu Tianjiao waved his hands, signalling that no one should pursue. The death of Qin Wentian had completely ignited the madness of the Emperor Star Academy. He was afraid that they would really go all out, choosing to sacrifice everything.

Landing on the ground, he stopped beside the corpse of the killer whom Ren Qianxing had beheaded. It wasn't going to be so easy to determine the identity of this man.

"Things are getting troublesome." Chu Tianjiao murmured. He didn't know if that dagger truly claimed Qin Wentian's life.

However, Chu Tianjiao recovered quickly. Since the deed was already done, it was useless to keep thinking about it. What he needed to do now was to plan how he should handle the retaliations from the now crazed Emperor Star Academy.

"What do you plan to do?" Xiao Lan landed beside him, his countenance calm. He wasn't too bothered; since things already came to this stage, it might be a blessing instead.

"Attacking is the best defense." Chu Tianjiao replied, his gaze flickering. Now, what they should do was to press on with the attack, suppress the Emperor Star Academy, and completely annihilate their roots of trouble.

Xiao Lan cast a glance at Chu Tianjiao, silently remarking in his heart that this person was a genius. This was undoubtedly the most excellent method.

"Since that's the case, prepare everyone for the slaughter of the Emperor Star Academy." Xiao Lan commanded, causing the hearts of those around him to tremble. From now onwards, for both the academies, there was no stopping until death came.

This incident was quickly spread across the entire Royal Capital. Many people were commenting on the madness of Chu Tianjiao's decision. He actually dared to arrange for the assassination of Qin Wentian.

However, they didn't know that Qin Wentian's death was never part of Chu Tianjiao's plans.

Both the Ye Clan and Ou Clan naturally wouldn't admit that the deed had been committed by them. The identity of the killer had become a riddle.

However, the citizens of the Royal Academy were also extremely concerned about the life and death of Qin Wentian. Such a dazzling genius, it would truly be a pity if he really died at such a young age

Chapter 175: Map

Within the Emperor Star Academy, inside a residence, several Elders crowded together as they looked upon the figure lying down on the bed. Worry and anxiety could be seen reflected in their eyes.

"How is he?" Ren Qianxing hurriedly asked as he saw the Elder sitting next to the bedside turning.

"Strange, strange. His life force is overwhelmingly exuberant, and there's a powerful energy in his blood. His blood circulated within his heart, providing protection, and he's recovering now even as we speak," the Elder said in a low voice, his tone filled with wonder. Such a grievous injury, if it was some other cultivators who suffered from this, they would surely already be dead.

"There's no danger to his life?" Ren Qianxing asked again.

"None. With his vitality, he only needs time before he fully recovered," that Elder replied.

After hearing this, the Elders in the room all unclenched their fists, letting out a sigh of relief as the worries melted from their faces.

"Wentian." Qin Yao's tears turned into happiness. She sat at the bedside, gently stroking Qin Wentian's forehead. Her face was tear-streaked; she had almost been frightened to death. The assailant had struck Qin Wentian in his heart.

"Everyone, disperse. Temporarily lock down this news and send men to stand guard here." Ren Qianxing commanded. In response, the Elders left one by one. Only the Elder who was proficient in healing remained behind. Even now, he was still mumbling in amazement; how could someone at the Arterial Circulation Realm have such a level of vitality? Truly amazing.

Luo Huan walked forward with a brilliant smile etched on her face. "Wentian, Mountain has already passed on, so don't you dare leave your Senior Sister here alone."

After saying that, she too turned to leave. The instant she turned, her cheery smile disappeared completely. Replacing the smile was an icy cold expression—the Nine Mystical Palace, the Royal Clan of Chu... This debt of hatred just grew deeper and deeper.

In the blink of an eye, three days passed. During these three days, the conflict between the two academies escalated to an unimaginable extent. As of now, they had already stopped sending formations of Arterial Circulation Cultivators to clash. Instead, Yuanfu cultivators were commanded to directly hunt the students of the opposing academy. Hence, students at the Arterial Circulation Realm all stayed in their respective academy, not daring to go out. Once they stepped out of their zone of protection, only death awaited them.

Both the academies had already completely shred all pretense of cordiality.

Even Chu Tianjiao himself didn't dare to move about rashly. Considering how infuriated the Emperor Star Academy was, there was a high possibility that they may assassinate him.

In these three days, news on the deaths and casualties of both sides unceasingly spread out. The most disastrous battle was when the Emperor Star Academy walked into an ambush laid by the Royal Academy. Luckily, reinforcement arrived in time, and following that battle, a total of four people at the Yuanfu level, and eight people at the Arterial Circulation level had fallen. The tempest of war has truly engulfed the entire Royal Capital.

In the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian was still unconscious. At this moment, there were two extremely beautiful girls sitting by his side.

“Qingcheng, thank you for your efforts these past few days.” Qin Yao had an expression of gratitude on her face as she stared at Mo Qingcheng.

“No worries, this is what I should do. I'm really good at this.” Mo Qingcheng smiled, after which, she continued spoon-feeding Qin Wentian with medicinal soup.

Gazing at Mo Qingcheng's side profile, Qin Yao was slightly stunned before recovering with a smile on her face. “It'd be good if only you could take care of him like this forever.”

“Haha sure, I’d love to.” Mo Qingcheng smiled sweetly, but suddenly, after deciphering the meaning behind Qin Yao’s words, she turned red as she blinked at Qin Yao, “Hmm what I meant was until he awakens.”

“Mmm, that’s what I meant. What do you think I was referring to?” Qin Yao grinned. Mo Qingcheng could only scold herself silently for talking too much.

“Sigh, I don’t know when would he wake up.” Qin Yao’s countenance was painted by worry once more.

“Don’t worry. He will wake up soon.” Mo Qingcheng consoled her. Actually, she also knew of the extent of Qin Wentian’s injuries. No one knew exactly when would he wake up.

“Hmm.” Qin Yao lightly nodded her head. “Qingcheng, I’ll go see if the medicinal soup has been boiled. I’ll bring over a new bowl later.”

After speaking, Qin Yao left. Mo Qingcheng scooped the medicinal soup with a spoon and fed it to Qin Wentian. After which, she gently wiped his lips as she mumbled, “Dumbo, this is already the second time I’m boiling medicinal herbs and feeding you. You have to get well soon, okay?”

Mo Qingcheng propped her chin up with her hands as she stared blankly at Qin Wentian. She had never expected that the fellow she would boil medicine twice for would be Qin Wentian. Maybe, this was fate?

Gazing at that handsome countenance, she thought he looked extremely at peace. She could still remember that the first time she met him, he was still somewhat soft and immature. This year, he had been through a tremendous amount of suffering, and now he had even almost thrown his life away. A real dumbo indeed.

As she lost herself in her musings, Mo Qingcheng somehow unknowingly stretched her hand out and pinched Qin Wentian on his cheek, revealing a mischievous expression. This fellow was not bad looking at all.

It was as though Qin Wentian could feel something. His eyelashes twitched as his eyes slowly opened. After which, he saw a peerless countenance exhibiting an expression akin to panic with her fingers pinching on his face.

Swish! Mo Qingcheng retracted her hands at the speed of lightning. As she saw the bewildered expression on Qin Wentian’s face, her face instantly reddened, wishing nothing more for the earth to swallow her whole right now.

“I’m just trying to test to see if you could feel anything. It seems like I’m psychic, since you really woke up.” Mo Qingcheng acted like professional actress while smiling widely. However, Qin Wentian didn’t say anything, just silently gazing at her, causing the color of her already reddened face to deepen even further.

Looking at the bashful expression on Mo Qingcheng’s face, Qin Wentian’s heart palpitated wildly. Mo Qingcheng, at this moment, was beyond beautiful. She was gorgeous.

“Come here.” Qin Wentian whispered. Mo Qingcheng’s eyelashes fluttered; she blinked her eye as she lowered her head, moving her face closer to Qin Wentian. Her heart was pounding madly, she had never been this nervous before.

Only to see Qin Wentian reaching out with his hands, pinching her cheeks a couple of time before smiling, “It’s only fair now.”

Mo Qingcheng froze, trembling slightly. She was at a loss, unsure of what to do.

“I’ll go get the medicine.” Mo Qingcheng quickly ran away. Seeing that disappearing silhouette, a radiant smile lit up Qin Wentian’s countenance as he replied, “Thank you.”

Today, Mo Qingcheng seemed to be preoccupied and absent-minded. Looking at her bashful expression, Qin Wentian would occasionally tease her about it. Upon seeing this, Qin Yao was extremely happy; it seemed like that was truly a chance for Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng to be together.

In the coming days, Qin Wentian recovered with insane speed. On the fifth day, he could already get up and cultivate. The tempest engulfing the Royal Capital was still unabated, but the violent struggles within seemed to be very far from Qin Wentian.

Mustang, Luo Huan and the rest would occasionally visit Qin Wentian. They refused to tell him news from the outside but rather told him to focus on his cultivation. Not only that, Mustang repeatedly instructed him not to leave this place until he step into Yuanfu, and that he wasn’t allowed to participate in the struggles outside the academy. This caused Qin Wentian to smile bitterly; it was because the Emperor Star Academy feared another similar incident from occurring again and didn’t want him to risk himself.

Qin Wentian also didn’t want to make things difficult for the academy, so he quietly focused on his cultivation. Finally, a month after the incident, Qin Wentian broke through to the 9th level, stepping into the peak of Arterial Circulation. He was now only a single step away from Yuanfu.

After breaking through to the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, Qin Wentian spent a few more days consolidating his foundation while also not forgetting to further practice his innate techniques.

Currently, for the Thousand Hands Imprint innate technique, Qin Wentian had already mastered the 4th stance – the Kuji Imprint. His mastery of his other innate techniques, Falling Mountain Palms as well as Berserker Beast Halberd Art, also grew increasingly more complete.

Today, Qin Wentian once again came to the Heavenly Star Pavilion. Upon passing the guardian on the stairway of the 7th level, he dipped into a respectful bow.

Only to see the old man opening his eyes, as a glow could be seen in his previously cloudy eyes.
“Are you confident?”

“Let’s try.” Qin Wentian spoke. The old man turned his head, closing his eyes as Qin Wentian walked passed him and stood before the door to the entrance of the 9th level, which has never been opened before.

What exactly was the secret hiding within the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion?

Gushing sounds echoed as the Divine Energy in his body circulated in a frenzy. Stepping forwards, he slammed one of his palms into the door, causing it to shudder violently. Upon seeing this, the guardian’s heart trembled as well.

Qin Wentian retreated a step. The Divine Energy within his body continued surging as he struck out once again. This time around, he blasted forwards with both palms, executing both the Falling Mountain Palms and the Kuji Imprint into the door of the entrance.

BOOOM! The resounding echo from the impact caused the structure of the entire Heavenly Star Pavilion to shudder. The students of the academy curiously turned their gazes towards the Pavilion, wondering who was up there.

His ancient halberd appeared in his hands. Despite the boosting effects of a Divine Weapon, the might an Arterial Circulation Cultivator could unleash, still had a limit. Thus, the guardian didn’t stop him from using a Divine Weapon to aid him in his quest.

In that instant, Qin Wentian’s blood began to boil. Taking a step forwards, the aura of absolute obedience permeated the air. His whole demeanor turned demonic as the ancient halberd in his hands explosively slashed out.

Pffft! The old guardian’s eyes abruptly snapped open as as terrifying resplendent light flickered into existence.

Qin Wentian succeeded. He actually forced that door open!

Qin Wentian was also incomparably excited. Walking forwards, he sought to discover what exactly was the secret that was hidden on the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. However, what caused Qin Wentian to be puzzled was that behind the door, there was only a empty space. This place seemed extremely ordinary, so different from the 7th and 8th level. There was only an incredibly ancient-looking map scroll lying there.

Unrolling the map scroll, a bewildered expression painted his face. This... this was a map.

Was the final secret the Azure Emperor hid in the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion actually just a map?

Qin Wentian had never been out of Chu, so he naturally didn’t understand what the map was trying to portray. After keeping it,he walked out, but the old guardian stood in front of him, blocking his path.

“Senior.” Qin Wentian respectfully called out.

“From today onwards, the 8th and 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion shall no longer exist. The 7th level will be opened up to the talented genius students of the academy. As for what you have obtained here, you are not to mention it to anyone else” the old guardian instructed.

“Understood.” Qin Wentian nodded. He fully understood the logic behind why it was a calamity for one to possess secrets that one was powerless to protect.

After this, Qin Wentian didn't immediately leave. Instead, he entered the entrance to the 7th level, heading towards the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds. This time around, he didn't meet many others, only a plethora of demonic beasts.

Qin Wentian didn't know that at this moment, there was a huge commotion within the Emperor Star Academy.

Outside the academy, a line of Elders and students stood together in welcome. In the far off horizons, a line of silhouettes mounted demonic beasts as they rode over, while in the air, several figures soared, stopping in the airspace above the Emperor Star Academy. Their gazes were all imperious and sharp, as though they were unequalled in the world.

If Qin Wentian were here, he would discovered that among the newcomers, there was one person whom he knew. This person was none other than Yue Qingfeng, the genius from the Azure Emperor Palace whom he had met before in the Spirit Beast Testing Ground.

The Emperor Star Academy only received news two days ago that people from the Azure Emperor Palace would be paying a visit to them. As to what was the reason for the visit, they were all unclear. They could only bring people together to welcome this 'reinforcement' from this transcendent power that shared the same root.

Not only the Azure Emperor Palace. Today, there were many powerful experts who came to Chu.

In the Royal Palace, Xiao Lan furrowed his brows. He didn't expect the news would be leaked so fast, the news that the Azure Emperor had hidden his greatest secret within the Emperor Star Academy.

If this secret was truly leaked, not to mention a small country like Chu, even the entirety of the Grand Xia Empire would be shakened.

Chapter 176: The Guest Pressuring the Host

Within the Spirit Beast Testing Ground, Qin Wentian had already slaughtered several demonic beasts, devouring their demonic cores. However his eyes at this moment were incomparably clear.

Before Qin Wentian, a gigantic beast of immense stature appeared. This demonic beast was shrouded in a golden light, with a height of 4 metres. Its palms were as big as praying mats and could easily kill a human with a casual swipe.

Golden Primal Ape, from the Golden Primal Ape Constellation of the 5th Heavenly Layer, ranked 3rd in the Warbeast Index. Equipped with flawless speed and defense, it is feared the most for its terrifyingly quick speed.

However, at this moment the golden ape was suffering immensely as it spat out mouthful of fresh blood. The tiny figure in front of him could actually wound him?

The blood within Qin Wentian's body was boiling as his long hair danced in the wind. Wielding the ancient halberd in his hands, it constituted an imposing scene, akin to an ancient god of war, unexcelled in the battlefield.

After breaking through to the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, in addition to the Fiend Transformation Technique, his strength was many times higher when compared to the him who entered here in the past.

Boom! The golden ape stomped on the earth, dashing forwards, causing fissures to appear as the ground cracked. Its gigantic palms swiped towards Qin Wentian, with a pressure even stronger than that of mountains.

Swish~ A pair of illusory Garuda Wings appeared on the back of Qin Wentian. His speed was as fast as lightning, rushing forwards instead of retreating, appearing in front of the ape. With a roar of rage, his body flew upwards as the might of his ancient halberd exploded forth.

RARRRRRRRRRRRR. The ancient Primal Ape howled in madness. The volume of its roar caused intense pain as the sound waves vibrated within Qin Wentian's eardrums, giving him a splitting headache. With a howl of his own, Qin Wentian blasted forth countless palm strikes, aiming for the mouth of the golden ape, while his ancient halberd slashed forwards and came into contact with a gigantic palm of the golden ape.

The ground trembled and broke apart, giving testament to the ferociousness of the savage battle between man and beast. The surrounding demonic beasts all fled for fear of their lives. After an hour of intense clashes, the golden ape's body was riddled with injuries, but Qin Wentian wasn't feeling too good either. His inner organs trembled violently despite him executing the Garuda Movement Technique, choosing not to clash directly with the Golden Primal Ape.

Puchi~ Chance! Qin Wentian's ancient halberd pierced into the golden ape's eyes as its roar shook the Heavens. The Golden Primal Ape slammed both its palms forward, using the explosive momentum in a decisive choice to retreat. Qin Wentian started a game of cat and mouse, following close behind and after the time it took for a stick of incense to burn out, the Golden Primal Ape couldn't sustain anymore. It was slaughtered unceremoniously by Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian naturally absorbed the beast spirit with no traces of politeness. He was exceptionally joyful and continued hunting prey in the Spirit Beast Testing Ground. After several moments, he finally met the ranked #5 Crimsonblood Thunder Hawk. Right from the start, Qin Wentian pretended to be injured as he retreated unceasingly upon coming into contact with it. It was only because of that that caused the lightning fast Crimsonblood Thunder Hawk to be lured into the trap. Only after absorbing its beast spirit did he departed from the Testing Grounds.

Now after he absorbed so many beast spirits, the demonic aura his person exuded was getting stronger and stronger, especially when he activated the Fiend Transformation Art.

In the outside world, those from the Emperor Star Academy welcomed the experts from the Azure Emperor Palace, showing them around the academy. However, they didn't know that those from the Azure Emperor Palace was naturally not interested in strolling about. Instead, what they wanted was to understand each and every part of the Emperor Star Academy to see where would be the place with the highest possibility for the Azure Emperor to hide his secret within.

In the vast blue skies, a white crane flew by. Mo Qingcheng came to deliver medicinal herbs for Qin Wentian today. Although Qin Wentian was gradually recovering and his pallor was already back to normal, she was still worried. After all, his heart was pierced through, it would naturally be for the best if there was external aid like medicinal herbs and pills to nourish his body after his recovery.

“Grandpa.” The white crane descended. Bewilderment shone on her face upon seeing her grandfather accompanying a group of strangers.

She was naturally clear of her grandfather’s position within the Emperor Star Academy. What statuses did these group of guests have that her grandfather was personally showing them around?

“Qingcheng, quick, come and greet these elders from the Azure Emperor Palace.” Old Gu smiled, reminding her with his words in case Mo Qingcheng said something inappropriate.

“Azure Emperor Palace?” Mo Qingcheng’s heart trembled slightly. She heard of this name before; wasn’t it one of the transcendent powers of the nine states?

“Mo Qingcheng of the junior generation pays her respects to the elders.” Mo Qingcheng bowed. Those from the Azure Emperor Palace contemplated Mo Qingcheng, especially several of the younger cultivators. Their gazes were heated up by passion, sweeping across Mo Qingcheng’s body. To think that there was a beauty of this level in a such small country like Chu; even in their Azure State Capital, there were almost no females that was comparable to her in looks.

“What a beautiful child, is she already betrothed to someone?” A middle-aged man from the Azure Emperor Palace smiled.

“Qingcheng is not yet 18, she’s not betrothed to anyone,” Old Gu politely replied.

“Haha, it’s almost time to talk about matters of marriage engagement and betrothal isn’t it? Mo Qingcheng, what’s the level of your cultivation?” the middle-aged man asked.

“1st level of Yuanfu.” Mo Qingcheng wasn’t feeling too happy in her heart, but she still had to reply.

The eyes of the middle aged man brightened. Not even 18 years of age, yet already stepped into Yuanfu. In addition to the beauty of hers, she was really remarkable. Thinking of here, he cast a glance at Yue Qingfeng who stood by his side.

Yue Qingfeng naturally understood his father’s intentions. His heart was also moved upon seeing the beautiful countenance of Mo Qingcheng.

“Miss Mo, my name is Yue Qingfeng.”

Only to see Yue Qingcheng smiling at her, exuding elegance and politeness. Such a scene caused the hearts of many in the Emperor Star Academy to freeze. Old Gu had wanted to push Mo

Qingcheng and Qin Wentian together. But now, even those who were blind could see the intentions of Yue Qingfeng.

In Chu, although there were many who were secretly in love with Mo Qingcheng, with the status and background of Mo Qingcheng, if she was unwilling, no one would dare to open their mouths and raise the subject.

However, it was different for Yue Qingfeng. He was from a transcendent power, originating from the Azure Emperor Palace.

Mo Qingcheng nodded to Yue Qingfeng and didn't reply, silently scolding herself that she came at the wrong time.

"Hahaha, both of you of the junior generation should communicate more. It must be boring accompanying us these old folks." Yue Qingfeng's father laughed. Taking the hint, Yue Qingfeng stepped forwards, smiling at Mo Qingcheng. "Miss Mo, shall we go for a walk?"

Mo Qingcheng was naturally unwilling in her heart. She didn't reply.

"Qingcheng." At this moment, a silhouette walked over. Mo Qingcheng turned her head, as a gentle smile blossomed on her face. The newcomer was none other than Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian had already noticed the happenings over here earlier. He had already met Yue Qingfeng in the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds and knew that he was from the Azure Emperor Palace. Seeing how he obviously had the intentions to court Mo Qingcheng, Qin Wentian felt extremely uncomfortable in his heart.

Such a feeling, Qin Wentian had never experienced it before.

"What are you doing here?" Qin Wentian walked to the side of Mo Qingcheng as he extended his hands and pulled the dainty hand of Mo Qingcheng along. Mo Qingcheng trembled a little as an expression of shyness flashed in her eyes. She naturally understood what Qin Wentian was planning to do. Going along with his plans, she gently smiled and replied, "I'm here to deliver the medicine for you."

Seeing this scene occurring, those from the Emperor Star Academy grew increasingly worried. To think that the relationship between Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng had gotten closer to such an extent, they wondered whether those from the Azure Emperor Palace would take offence at this.

Yue Qingfeng's eyes narrowed; he naturally recognised Qin Wentian.

"Wentian, quick come and pay your respects to the elders of the Azure Emperor Palace." Old Gu called out. Qin Wentian nodded as he bowed, "Qin Wentian of the junior generation pays his respect to the elders."

The middle-aged cast a glance at Qin Wentian, as his eyes gleamed with a sharp light.

"Let's go." The middle aged man immediately led the group away, walking past Qin Wentian, disregarding his existence. Earlier, he played matchmaker for Yue Qingfeng and Mo Qingcheng, but in the blink of an eye, an insignificant insect from the junior generation came by and spoiled his mood. His face was completely thrown away.

Qin Wentian, the champion of a mere Jun Lin Banquet, how could he possibly put him in his eyes?

“Brother Qin, nice to see you again.” Yue Qingfeng walked to the side of Qin Wentian, offering his greetings while simultaneously sweeping his gaze impolitely over Mo Qingcheng’s figure before leaving. Qin Wentian furrowed his brows as a cold light flickered in his eyes.

After those from the Azure Emperor Palace left, seeing that Qin Wentian was still holding on to her hand, Mo Qingcheng rolled her eyes at Qin Wentian and whispered, “Hey, you are still not letting go?”

Feeling the soft touch of Mo Qingcheng’s hands, Qin Wentian was really unwilling to indeed. Smiling, he pinched her palms gently, causing Mo Qingcheng to blush before he finally let go.

“Lecherous fellow.” Mo Qingcheng scolded in a low voice, then she quickly walked forwards. However, a shallow smile could be seen reflected on her face. The smile also contained traces of shyness, just like a young girl experiencing her first awakening of love.

“I couldn’t help it.” An awkward smile appeared on Qin Wentian’s face as he rubbed his head. Catching up to Mo Qingcheng, he noticed that the beautiful face of hers was intentionally arranged in a frown, with traces of mischievousness mixed in it. Qin Wentian involuntarily became an imbecile as he stared at her, warmth blossoming in his heart.

This was the first time he experienced such an emotion. It felt extremely wondrous, a slight bit of nervousness mixed in with a little warmth. It was truly marvelous.

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace arrived at a great hall. Yue Qingfeng’s father sat in the seat of the host while the others of his group stood by his side.

Those from the Emperor Star Academy were helpless. In actuality, they had contacted the Azure Emperor Palace before. Back then, the incident of Luo Tianya was precisely resolved with the help of the Emperor Azure Palace. However, the Emperor Azure Palace was also split into factions, namely the Azure Faction as well as the Fei Faction. Currently, the power of the Azure Faction was growing weaker and weaker, and they gradually lost their authority within the Azure Emperor Palace. This time round, those who came to the Emperor Star Academy were all from the Fei Faction.

Yue Hanshan sat in the master seat, sweeping his sharp gaze over at those from the Emperor Star Academy. “From today onwards, my Azure Emperor Palace will directly take control of the Heavenly Star Pavilion and Astral River Hall of the Emperor Star Academy. Qingfeng, accompany me to the Dreamsky Forest later.”

The faces of those from the Emperor Star Academy froze, as their countenances become extremely unsightly to behold.

“Why? Is there a problem?” Yue Hanshan coldly asked as he noticed the frowning faces of those from the Emperor Star Academy.

“There are no problems, I only hope that the Azure Emperor Palace wouldn’t disrupt the cultivation of our students.” Old Gu lamented in his heart; they couldn’t afford to offend the powerful Azure Emperor Palace.

“Good. In addition, send out some of your elders to bring my people to the other secret places of the Emperor Star Academy,” Yue Hanshan spoke again. Those from the Emperor Star Academy could only agree unwillingly.

It was as though these people were looking for something.

“Move out.” Yue Hanshan waved his hands, and the others left. Very quickly, only him and his son Yue Qingfeng remained in the great hall.

“Father, is the secret of the Azure Emperor really hidden here?” Yue Qingfeng asked.

Only to see Yue Hanshan frowning. He closed his eyes, replying in a low voice. “Those from the Azure Faction found some notes of the Azure Emperor. Back then, he stopped in Chu several times. There is a very great probability that the secret was hidden here. Qingfeng, if we really discovered the secret, your future would be incomparably glorious.”

Yue Qingfeng’s heart trembled upon imagining it. Back then, the secret as to why the Azure Emperor was ranked first among the 36 starlords, and why his combat prowess was so terrifying—able to stand alone against unending tides of enemies of the same cultivation as him, defeating them with absurd ease—was finally discovered.

The Azure Emperor, did not only have a single Yuanfu.

When the arterial pathways of Stellar Martial Cultivators transformed into a spiral, forming their Yuan Reservoir, there would only be a single Yuanfu (Yuan Palace) within their bodies. This was an unshakable, ironclad law of cultivation.

However the Azure Emperor broke this ironclad law; somehow, he managed to open up several Yuanfu within his body. To Stellar Martial Cultivators, the meaning of having several Yuanfu was extremely clear. This indicated that his body could store several times the amount of Astral Energy others could store, while also giving him the ability to nourish different Astral Novas in his different Yuanfus. How could his combat prowess not be astounding?

Chapter 177: Outrage

There were numerous powerhouses that came to Chu, however, they weren’t here for the struggle between the Emperor Star Academy and the Royal Academy. This was something inconsequential to them, and hardly worthy of their interest.

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace had caused a commotion so great that not even the dogs and chickens were left undisturbed. Although they promised the Emperor Star Academy that they wouldn’t involve the students, they weren’t the least bit polite in the execution of their search. The innate techniques kept within the Heavenly Star Pavilion were all upended and in disarray. The Azure Emperor Palace had also discovered the 7th level and the entrance to the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds. As for the entrance to the 8th and 9th levels, the interior space within had all been destroyed. These levels only contained ordinary innate techniques, without anything of import.

However, the Emperor Star Academy was infuriated to see that whenever those from the Azure Emperor Palace came across a powerful innate technique, they would shamelessly seize it for themselves.

And what was even more outrageous was that they even wanted to tear down the Emperor Star Monuments, the stone tablets the academy stood for. These very monuments symbolised the academy's history.

At that moment, many students gathered in front of the monuments. Ren Qianxing, Old Gu and many of the elders were there as well, even the old guardian from the Heavenly Star Pavilion's 7th Level had arrived.

The Azure Emperor Palace group approached the tablets, only for the old guardian to call out, "This place is the lifeblood of the Azure Emperor, and the place that records the history of our Emperor Star Academy. Please be lenient and show some mercy."

"You must be the current headmaster of the Emperor Star Academy, descendent of the Azure Emperor, the one named Diyi. Am I right?" Yue Hanshan swept a glance at the old guardian, a sharp light flickering in his eyes.

"Indeed," the old man spoke calmly, causing the majority of those from the academy to freeze in shock. This seemingly ordinary, inconspicuous aged guardian was actually the current headmaster of the Emperor Star Academy.

Were all the previous headmasters of the Academy all descended from the bloodline of the Azure Emperor? Had they always been silently protecting the Academy from the shadows?

"Diyi. You should already be aware about the purpose of my visit, and understand that we have no choice but to destroy the Emperor Star Monuments." The gaze of Yue Hanshan was serene, yet an unquestionable steel-like expression gleamed in them.

"How ruthless." The students of the Academy were all outraged but even so, they didn't dare to say a word.

"The Azure Emperor Palace share the same roots as the Emperor Star Academy, how can you be this overbearing?" From afar, Mo Qingcheng and Qin Wentian stood together. Mo Qingcheng's brows were knitted in displeasure. She was truly and exceedingly furious at the Palace's oppressive nature.

"Miss Mo, the Emperor Star Academy holds no sway over the decisions of the Azure Emperor Palace. After all, both parties are not on the same level." Yue Qingfeng gazed at Mo Qingcheng, as a warm and gentle smile appeared on his face. Each time he saw her, he felt a stirring in his heart.

Seeing the besotted expression on Yue Qingfeng's face, Mo Qingcheng could only clench her fist tightly. It was obvious the Azure Emperor Palace was prepared to shred all forms of cordiality.

"What does Miss Mo think about accompanying me to stay at the Palace together? After all, this place is too small. Your talent would only blossom when matched with a place such as ours," Yue

Qingfeng seemingly joked, yet it was glaringly obvious to all the meaning his words hinted at. He was taking liberties with Mo Qingcheng.

“You are too impudent.” Embers of anger sparked in Qin Wentian’s eyes, only to see Yue Qingfeng shift his gaze over with coldness. Staring at Qin Wentian, he laughed coldly, “Does Brother Qin still think that we are within the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds?”

Even before the sound of his voice faded, he transformed into a blur of shadows as a terrifying pressure gushed out towards Qin Wentian. Striking out without warning, and within the grounds of the Emperor Star Academy, it obviously indicated his disdain and contempt for this place.

Naturally, Yue Qingfeng believed that his strength would be able to suppress Qin Wentian. After all, they were already clear about each other’s strength level back when they allied together in the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds.

The strength of Yue Qingfeng’s palm strike was unfathomably ferocious, and gave the impression of being able to conquer everything in its path.

Qin Wentian froze into place as he executed the Falling Mountain Palms. As the two palm attacks collided, a booming sound rang out, and the crowd witnessed Qin Wentian’s body forced back into retreat from the impact. Blood seeped out of the corners of his mouth and a sense of worry filled the hearts of the crowd. Yue Qingfeng was tyrannical indeed, to think that he was able to injure Qin Wentian in a single exchange of blows.

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace merely looked on with disinterest, as though this outcome was only to be expected. After all, the aura Qin Wentian emitted was only at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation. Based on the power of Yue Qingfeng, if he wanted to kill Qin Wentian, he could do so with the same ease as flipping his palms.

However, Mo Qingcheng’s beautiful eyes gleamed as she glanced at Qin Wentian. This fellow was finally getting smarter.

Naturally, she knew that Qin Wentian had already stepped into the 9th level of Arterial Circulation. He intentionally suppressed his own cultivation base in that earlier exchange of blows. If not for this, she didn’t believe Yue Qingfeng could defeat Qin Wentian in combat.

“Tear it down.” At that moment, Yue Qingfeng commanded in a cold voice. Those from the Azure Emperor Palace jointly sent out palm attacks, and amidst a deafening explosion the Emperor Star Monuments shattered, the fragments from the destroyed tablets blasting out in all directions.

“No....” Luo Huan witnessed the stone tablet of Mountain destroyed with the rest. Her eyes reddened as a surge of murderous intent passed through her. She was truly infuriated.

Those from the Palace began searching through the fragments but found nothing hidden within. Snorting with disdain, they flicked their sleeves and departed.

“Qingcheng, if you’re free, let’s go out together.” Before leaving, Yue Qingfeng smiled at Mo Qingcheng. Seeing that beautiful countenance, his heart stirred with feeling. Even if he couldn’t get her to be his wife, as long as he could get her body, wouldn’t that be just as exciting?

At the thought of this, the blood in his body surged. Sweeping his eyes over Mo Qingcheng's figure, his smile gradually widened.

Mo Qingcheng could only bite hard on her lips until her blood flowed, suffering the humiliation in silence. How could she not understand what the smile on Yue Qingfeng's face foreshadowed.

Luo Huan walked forwards, kneeling amongst fragments of the now destroyed Emperor Star Monuments. She appeared absent-minded, as though devoid of all spirit. Her countenance was clearly paler by several shades, her heart sunk with a heavy sense of loss.

Those from the Academy could only stand in silence, tolerating the humiliation and anger in their hearts. Yet, nobody dared to speak out.

Qin Wentian witnessed all of these happenings. Booming sounds rang out as he clenched his hands into fists. A terrifying coldness could be seen within his eyes as he looked at Yu Qingfeng's departing back. That, was truly killing intent.

Qin Wentian reached out and caught hold of Mo Qingcheng dainty hands, and her body tensed up in response. After she recovered, as she turned her gaze towards Qin Wentian, a sweet smile blossomed on her face causing Qin Wentian's state of mind to ripple involuntarily.

"Let's leave." Qin Wentian held on to Mo Qingcheng's hand as they departed the area.

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Within the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds, Qin Wentian once again began his slaughter of the demonic beasts. Even those beasts ranked within the top 10 weren't able to withstand his strength.

At the peak of a mountain, Qin Wentian halted his steps and cast his gaze forwards, surveying the majestic mountain range before him.

An extremely bizarre looking demonic beast was located over there. The demonic beast had the head of a dragon, the body of a lion, the wings of a garuda, the scales of a Xuanwu, the tail of a python and the claws of a Kirin. It's demeanor appeared to be incomparably malevolent.

"Demon Sovereign," Qin Wentian breathed. It was ranked #1 in the Warbeast Index. In the index, there was only a description of its appearance but held no records of its abilities.

Qin Wentian recognised the beast at a single glance. This was a Demon Sovereign.

A cold, sinister light gleamed from the depths of the Demon Sovereign. The fearsome light erupted from its body, and its sinister eyes gave the impression that it could capture souls, seemingly hinting at the possibility that this demonic beast possessed the ability to influence the mental state of others.

With the ancient halberd in his hands, Qin Wentian transformed into a blurred shadow as he dashed forwards to the Demon Sovereign. His purpose of entering the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds was none other than to hunt the top ranking beasts recorded in the Warbeast Index. And since fate had now arranged a meeting with the #1 demonic beast, how could he not seize this golden opportunity dangling right in front of him?

A burst of eye-piercing Astral Light inundated the area and with a tremble, the void shook as space was torn apart. Beside the Demon Sovereign, several other demonic beasts appeared. Together, their howls of rage created a harsh and discordant cacophony, striking fear in the hearts of those who heard it.

Qin Wentian froze, as an expression of shock flashed in his eyes.

“It’s a Summoning-type Demonic Beast. The #1 ranked demonic beast of the Warbeast Index, the Demon Sovereign, was actually a Summoning-type Beast.” Qin Wentian’s heart pounded with excitement. Wasn’t this a beast spirit that anyone would yearn for, even in his dreams? However, he quickly returned to his senses as he noticed several demonic beasts dashing towards him.

Swish~ A raging gust of wind billowed past. Qin Wentian moved so fast it was as though he had transformed into a real Garuda. With the ancient halberd in his hands, he smashed out with the Azure Dragon Stance of the Berserker Beasts Halbard Art, demolishing a demonic beast in front of him. Qin Wentian didn’t pause in his motions, following up his earlier attack with the Vermilion Bird Stance, sweeping the ancient halberd out in a horizontal arc amidst the roars and howls of the demonic beasts.

Two days later, the exhausted spirit body of Qin Wentian exited the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds. He felt extremely uncomfortable; his spiritual consciousness was riddled with injuries and was on the brink of dissipating by the time he defeated the Demon Sovereign. Covered with wounds, and using each and every bit of his skills and innate techniques, he narrowly overcame the Demon Sovereign and absorbed its beast spirit. Despite his exhaustion, Qin Wentian felt exceptionally excited to gain such a reward.

“Wentian.”

As Qin Wentian walked back to his residence at the Emperor Star Academy, a voice abruptly called out. Qin Wentian turned back only to see Mo Qingcheng approaching him. Her initially icy cold face broke out into a smile as she looked at him. However, Yue Qingfeng was also following her from a distance.

For the past two days, Mo Qingcheng could only tolerate his harassment.

Qin Wentian stood at her side, whispering, “Does he keep doing that?”

“Mmhm.” Mo Qingcheng nodded with an expression of unhappiness on her face.

“Let’s go for a walk.” Qin Wentian pulled Mo Qingcheng along with a smile. Mo Qingcheng agreed and they ran off in the direction of the Academy’s exit.

Those in the academy couldn’t help but feel slightly jealous upon seeing the closeness between Mo Qingcheng and Qin Wentian. But despite this, they had to concede that the two of them made a great couple, and hoped that they would have a beautiful future together.

Yue Qingfeng’s eyes narrowed, flashing with a cold light, as he watched Qin Wentian pulling Mo Qingcheng along.

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace were growing more and more insolent. Despite turning the entire academy topsy turvy, they were still unable to find what they were looking for.

Yue Qingfeng felt somewhat bored and decided to walk about the Emperor Star Academy with some youths from the Azure Emperor Palace. However today, a group of blind fools actually dared to antagonise them, which led to a clash erupting between both parties. In addition, those from the academy had Yuanfu cultivators with them, which easily suppressed the group of Arterial Circulation cultivators from the Palace. How could these prideful young cultivators take this lying down?

They were from a transcendent power, to think that there would actually be people that dared to antagonise them, especially from a small place like Chu. They were truly courting death.

In the midst of the escalating conflict, those from the Azure Emperor Palace intercepted their opponents and asked Yue Qingfeng to return for more reinforcements. At the first opportunity, Yue Qingfeng immediately departed the area, but just as he passed by a remote-looking area, a figure clad in black appeared, blocking his path.

The black-clad figure lowered his head, advancing with a long spear in his hands.

“Who are you?” Yue Qingfeng halted his steps as he inquired coldly. He had never imagined that someone would actually attempt to murder him in broad daylight.

Yue Qingfeng wasn't an idiot, he could faintly sense that this person had a bone to pick with him.

“The one that will take your life,” a cold voice echoed in the air. The figure transformed into a blurred shadow as filaments of spear light erupted forth. A monstrous demonic qi permeated the air, the long spear trembling as fearsome spirals began to form at the tip of the spear head. Each spiral seemed to contain boundless energy within them.

Yue Qingfeng inclined his head as he stared at the silhouette dashing towards him. Upon meeting the eyes of his attacker, his heart involuntarily trembled with violence.

“It's you?” Yue Qingfeng raised his arms to attack, his mighty palms directly colliding with the long spear. A piercing sound echoed out, as the long spear ran through his palms with absurd ease and immediately penetrated his throat, pinning Yue Qingfeng to the ground.

“9th level of Arterial Circulation.” Yue Qingfeng's eyes widened in shock as he died with one remaining regret. Not even in his wildest dreams could he have imagined that he would die in such a small place like Chu.

Chapter 178: Travelling together

Within the grounds of the Emperor Star Academy, lay the corpse of Yue Qingfeng. The cause of his death was a long spear penetrating his throat, pinning and locking his body to the ground.

In front of his corpse, Yue Hanshan shuddered violently; he would never have believed, and was still unwilling to believe, that this trip to Chu would lead to the murder of his son, Yue Qingfeng.

His eyes reddened, and a towering aura of killing intent could be felt gushing forth from him. All those from the Emperor Star Academy fled upon witnessing this scene, their hearts involuntarily rejoicing in the face of Yue Hanshan's misfortune. After all, those from the Azure Emperor Palace were insufferably arrogant, as they ravaged through the entire Emperor Star Academy, turning everything upside down. This loss could be considered a punishment for them.

Surely, the reason behind Yue Qingfeng's death must be because he had offended someone. He had sowed seeds of vengeance everywhere, ultimately leading to his death.

“Investigate, INVESTIGATE EVERYTHING COMPLETELY!” Yue Hanshan howled in anger, his infuriated voice resounding throughout the Emperor Star Academy.

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At that moment, Qin Wentian was sitting in the courtyard of his own residence with a map scroll in his hands. Upon hearing the howl of rage, Qin Wentian inclined his head, directing his gaze towards the commotion with an unperturbed expression.

If he didn't kill Yue Qingfeng, Mo Qingcheng would never be at ease in her heart. So, Yue Qingfeng must die.

That once childish young man had undergone too many baptisms under the cruelty of reality, to the point where his heart grew colder and colder. He had no qualms about transforming into a god of blood and slaughter, if a threat were made to the people around him.

Lowering his head, he turned his attention back to the map in his hands. Looking closely at it, Qin Wentian traced his finger to a random location on the map. Over it, there were traces of words inscribed.

“This place is the Demon Continent of the Grand Xia Empire. According to the map, the X marked there should be referring to a forested mountain range within it.” Qin Wentian stared at the terrain; the continent's size was just too vast, with forests and mountain ranges even more expansive compared to some other countries outlined in the map. One such country was the Dark Forest of Chu, a forested region so vast that it even enveloped the entire Royal Capital of Chu within it. It didn't seem possible that anyone could determine for certain the secrets hidden within.

(Change of translation terms: State → Continent e.g. Transcendent powers of the nine states → Transcendent powers of the nine continents)

The X-mark on the map, referred to an extremely huge region made up of an immense forested mountain range.

Qin Wentian studied that part of the map, noting that the X-mark was pointing to a random location within a small city. The map was so clear to the point where the X-mark referred to very specific locations within the city. He wondered what secret the Azure Emperor had hidden there.

“Wentian.” At this moment, a voice drifted over. Qin Wentian turned his head towards the voice and saw Old Gu and Mo Qingcheng descending from the air.

“Old Gu, Qingcheng.” Qin Wentian kept the map as he stood up in greeting.

“Yue Qingfeng died,” Old Gu stated, staring intently at Qin Wentian. Upon seeing the unperturbed expression on Qin Wentian’s face, he sighed silently in relief as he shifted topics. “We’ve also finally discovered the reason behind the Azure Emperor Palace’s visit.”

Naturally, the Emperor Star Academy wouldn’t spend too much effort into investigating the culprit behind Yue Qingfeng’s death.

“Why were they here?” Qin Wentian asked as his eyes flickered with curiosity.

“There are two great Factions within the Azure Emperor Palace. One of them – named the Azure Faction, were the direct descendants that share the same bloodline as the Azure Emperor. The Azure Faction and the Emperor Star Academy were linked in countless ways. Our current Headmaster Diyi is the representative from the Azure Faction, and those that came here to Chu are from the other Faction. From the side of the Azure Faction we received news that of a high probability the past Azure Emperor had hidden his life’s greatest secret within the Emperor Star Academy. Xiao Lan of the Nine Mystical Palace came here because of this news, as well.”

“The greatest secret of the Azure Emperor?” Qin Wentian’s eyes shone.

“Yes, his greatest secret. In the past, the Azure Emperor was unmatched and peerless, regardless of whichever cultivation realm he was in. Easily obtaining victory, even when facing multiple opponents at the same level, he was said to be an invincible existence. The reason for this was because the Azure Emperor had broken the ironclad law of cultivation – he had more than one Yuanfu. After the secret was exposed, countless powerful experts from the Grand Xia Empire

banded together to chase after the Azure Emperor for the sake of obtaining the secret. It was highly possible that before he disappeared, he came to Chu and founded the Emperor Star Academy.”

“More than one Yuanfu?” Qin Wentian exclaimed in shock. According to what he knew, everyone could only cultivate a single Yuan Ocean within their bodies, this was an indisputable fact. After which, the Yuan Ocean would also be used to nurture their Astral Soul until their Astral Nova manifested.

“You are right, but there may be a heaven-defying innate technique to break that ironclad law. It’s just that no one knew of the existence of it,” Old Gu continued, as Qin Wentian’s heart suddenly trembled as he thought of something.

Map. That map from the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

But if that map could really show the hiding place of the Azure Emperor’s secret, shouldn’t Headmaster Diyi be able to deduce it?

In these few thousand years, no one had stormed the door guarding the entrance of the 9th level. Was this the absolute order given by the Azure Emperor before his death?

“However, you need bother yourself no longer with this matter. In any case, Qingcheng wishes to go out for a walk, why don’t you accompany her?” Old Gu sighed.

Qin Wentian glanced at Old Gu before shifting his eyes to Mo Qingcheng. How could he not understand Old Gu’s intentions?

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace thought his strength was merely at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation, and had even witnessed how Yue Qingfeng had injured him. Naturally, they would not suspect him. However, both Old Gu and Mo Qingcheng should have already guessed that he was the one who killed Yue Qingfeng. There was no absolute guarantee that his strength would remain hidden and thus they wished for him to leave temporarily, staying out of the line of sight of those from the Azure Emperor Palace.

And, when talking about leaving, it was about temporarily leaving Chu. Currently, Chu was embroiled in the chaotic struggles between the rebels and the Royal Clan, as well as the feud between both academies. In addition to that, both parties from the Nine Mystical Palace and Azure Emperor Palace had also arrived. In these troubled times, the academy wished for him to be far away from the conflict.

This was the only way so that Qin Wentian wouldn’t be in danger.

After several moments, Qin Wentian nodded his head heavily as he replied, “Okay.”

“Make your preparations, and leave immediately as soon as you’re done.” Old Gu patted Qin Wentian on his shoulders as he departed.

“Let me first say goodbye to my Father and Sister,” Qin Wentian said to Mo Qingcheng.

“I’ll wait for you here.” Mo Qingcheng nodded.

Qin Wentian bid farewell to his family and close friends, instructing those who wished to leave that they must only do so under the protection of the Emperor Star Academy. After which, he met up once more with Mo Qingcheng, and together they sneaked quietly out of the academy, before flying away on Mo Qingcheng’s white crane.

The white crane flew westwards. Qin Wentian stood on top it, casting his gaze at the gradually disappearing Royal Capital. In his eyes, there were traces of attachment and also of reluctance.

Qin Wentian agreed to Old Gu’s suggestions because he clearly knew that in the current situation, he didn’t even have the strength and qualification to battle. Thus, he chose to leave Chu for the time-being.

“I will be back soon. Very soon,” Qin Wentian vowed in his heart. There were already too many people in the Royal Capital that he couldn’t bear to part with.

He was truly reluctant to leave, but he needed to strengthen his power.

“What are you thinking about?” Mo Qingcheng asked in a low voice, standing at Qin Wentian’s side.

“Qingcheng, thank you. We should part ways now, and you should return to the academy. I may need to journey somewhere extremely far away.” Qin Wentian glanced at Mo Qingcheng, a gentle smile adorning his lips.

“But we agreed that you must accompany me for a walk.” Mo Qingcheng pouted as she gazed at Qin Wentian with a hint of rebuke in her eyes.

Qin Wentian could only smile bitterly. As he placed his hands on Mo Qingcheng’s shoulders he spoke with seriousness, “I really need to go to a faraway place, and it may be exceedingly dangerous. I don’t want you to be at risk because of me.”

Mo Qingcheng quietly gazed at Qin Wentian, not speaking a word. Her peerless, unmatched countenance of beauty, was so close to him. Her limpid eyes akin to Autumn water held traces of heartfelt worry in them, causing warm currents to fill Qin Wentian’s heart.

Reaching out with his hands, his fingers moved towards Mo Qingcheng’s visage. His heart was pounding madly; he had never been this nervous in his life before.

Finally, Qin Wentian’s fingers touched her face, her smooth and gentle skin sent shivers down Qin Wentian spine, causing his heart to palpitate even wilder. He looked intently at Mo Qingcheng, as though afraid he had angered her.

“I’ll go with you.” Mo Qingcheng whispered, gazing back at him.

Qin Wentian smiled reluctantly, seeing the resolute expression in the eyes of Mo Qingcheng. The look was mixed with hidden bitterness, as though she was daring him to disagree, and so he could only nod his head in acquiescence.

“That’s better.” Mo Qingcheng smiled, causing Qin Wentian’s heartbeat to quicken. This was the first time he’d seen her smiling at such close proximity. She was too stunning, too breathtaking.

“Have you not taken enough advantage yet?” Pouting, Mo Qingcheng glared at Qin Wentian. Stunned into realization, only now did Qin Wentian remove his trembling hands, as he sat back on the white crane, feeling a sweetness in his heart. Only with Mo Qingcheng would he experience these emotions that seemed a mixture of warmth and sweetness.

Mo Qingcheng sat down beside Qin Wentian, as the white crane increased its speed further. A fiendishly handsome young man sitting together with a celestial beauty, drifting through the clouds like a pair of immortals.

“Where are we going?” Mo Qingcheng asked with a gentle smile on her face.

Qin Wentian retrieved the map, studying the X-mark before replying, “The Demon Continent, we will fly according to the path outlined on the map. I’m afraid we will still need a great deal of time before we arrive.”

“Where did you get this map from?” Mo Qingcheng inquired, as puzzlement painted her face.

“9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. This was left behind by the Azure Emperor, Dicang. When your grandpa told us the secret of the Azure Emperor, I guessed that it had an extremely high probability of being hidden in the location marked on the map.” Qin Wentian pointed to the X-mark.

Mo Qingcheng trembled slightly as her expressions blanked, stunned by the trust Qin Wentian placed in her. Without reservation, Qin Wentian had actually told her the location of the Azure Emperor’s secret.

As she thought of this, sweetness blossomed in her heart, and she smiled and nodded. She was extremely happy that Qin Wentian trusted her so much.

Gentle gusts of wind blew upon their bodies as Qin Wentian held the map. The white crane continued flying westwards, across mountains, rivers, towns and villages.

This place was the furthest Qin Wentian had been to, ever since he could form memories. Similarly, it was the same for Mo Qingcheng. She had never been so far away from Chu before.

Their hearts were filled with apprehension, but despite this, there was also warmth. This was because their travelling companion was none other than each other.

Within both their hearts, for the first time in their lives, the seeds of love began to sprout.

A few thousand li away from the outskirts of the Demon Capital, there was a vast forested region so huge that it seemed without boundaries, stretching across an inexhaustible expanse.

At dawn, atop this massive wilderness, there appeared a white crane.

Mounted on top of the crane, there was a fiendishly handsome young man as well as an extremely beautiful, pure-looking girl. The girl's head rested gently against his shoulders, leaning her body lightly upon his.

The young man gradually opened his eyes, but remained motionless, afraid that his movements would disturb the girl.

These two were none other than Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng.

Mo Qingcheng's eyelashes fluttered, as she slowly woke up. Her eyes were like crystals, sparkling with a pure glow and then flickered, her countenance reddening as she moved her head slowly away from him.

"You woke." Qin Wentian gazed at the somewhat tired face of Mo Qingcheng, and a faint feeling of heartbreak flashed in his heart. On their journey to this place, they had gotten lost, taken many detours, and spent almost a month on the back of the white crane. Although the white crane's flying speed was several times faster than theirs, it still had its limits as it was merely a 7th-level Demonic Beast after all.

"Mm..." Mo Qingcheng nodded lightly. A glow of fascination shone in her eyes, the mountain range was so vast that they couldn't see its end. In comparison, the Dark Forest would at most only fill up a corner of this region.

Qin Wentian retrieved the map and studied it, after which he smiled to Mo Qingcheng. "We will arrive soon, help me guide the crane's flying direction."

"Okay." Mo Qingcheng nodded in agreement as the white crane continued flying forwards. Despite knowing they were close, half a day passed and they still had yet to discover the location marked on the map.

"Maybe we are flying in the wrong direction." Mo Qingcheng furrowed her brows lightly. In this huge expanse of land, there was a high probability they were flying off course by several degrees.

"I see people over there." Qin Wentian pointed as he stared ahead at a group of cultivators, all of them mounted on flying demonic beasts.

The cultivators also noticed the white crane, and flew closer, gradually nearing it. As they took a better look at the two of them, their eyes couldn't help but sparkle. A young man with devastating good looks and a breathtakingly stunning young woman, they couldn't help but stare for several moments at the couple.

"Are you all heading to the Demon Mountain City?" Someone within the group directed the question to both of them.

"So there really is a Demon Mountain City," Qin Wentian quietly mused as he stared at the map in his hands.

“Yes, how far are we from there?” Qin Wentian replied.

“You guys are already quite close to it already,” said a young man within the group as he stared at Mo Qingcheng. Her beauty far surpassed that of his other female travelling companions.

“We need to rush.” said the female cultivator beside him, furrowing her brows in displeasure. The female was tall and extremely beautiful, and elegantly wore a blue dress. However when compared to Mo Qingcheng, her radiance dimmed and could only serve as a backdrop to further enhance Mo Qingcheng’s beauty. Hence, seeing the expression in the eyes of her male travelling companions she was naturally unhappy.

“Fine.” A few of the males were more obedient, steering their mounts away from the white crane. Despite doing so, there was still some lingering attachment in the eyes of the young man from earlier.

Qin Wentian smiled wryly as he glanced at Mo Qingcheng. As the saying went, ‘femme fatale’ – women who are too beautiful would naturally attract the attention of others. He still didn’t know whether it was the right decision to bring her along.

“Are you unhappy?” Mo Qingcheng whispered, noticing his expression.

“I didn’t like the way they kept looking at you.” Qin Wentian shrugged and smiled. “But oh well, their eyes belong to them, I can only try to adapt.”

“Are you jealous?” Mo Qingcheng’s dazzling eyes twinkled. Qin Wentian said nothing, and she took his silence as acceptance, causing a feeling of sweetness to blossom in her heart.

“Did you bring a change of clothes?” Mo Qingcheng abruptly asked.

“Yeah.” Qin Wentian nodded his head.

“Show me your other set of clothes.” Mo Qingcheng smiled, and while he didn’t understand her intent, Qin Wentian still took out the other clothes he prepared for the trip. As he stared dumbfoundedly, Mo Qingcheng wrapped a piece of his clothing around her body, covering her gracefully exquisite figure. Tearing a strip of fabric off yet another set of clothing, she tied up her long hair and wrapped a strip as a bandana around her head. The overall look, appeared somewhat incongruous, yet with also a hint of masculinity.

“How do I look?” Mo Qingcheng spread her hands as she asked.

Qin Wentian contemplated her appearance; her bearing may have resembled the male form, but there was still no way to mask her jade-white skin and beautiful countenance. But in spite of this, her current oddly attired figure wasn’t as attention-drawing as before.

Humans would always love to make themselves look good, so the fact that Mo Qingcheng would choose to dress herself in this way moved Qin Wentian's heart. Reaching out, he held onto the dainty hands of Mo Qingcheng.

Mo Qingcheng and Qin Wentian finally saw the Demon Mountain City as outlined in the map. As the white crane prepared to land, Mo Qingcheng gasped, an expression of wonder shone on her face.

The entire city was surrounded by towering stone peaks, as though it were a part of the mountains, it emanated an air of majesty like a divine work of nature.

The surrounding peaks were all too vast and gigantic, with the effect of diminishing the city's appearance when looked at from the sky. In reality, this city wasn't smaller than that of the Royal Capital of Chu. It was difficult to imagine such a lively city existed out in the middle of nowhere, with many people living within its walls.

"Let's dismount," Qin Wentian said in a low voice, as the white crane landed within the Demon Mountain City. Aside from signs of many humans living within the city, there were also crowds of demonic beasts roaming about. These beasts were not like those that were controlled by humans, but rather, they moved about of their own volition, actually living in harmony with the humans. What a strange place, and how aptly named. It was no wonder they called it the Demon Mountain City.

Qin Wentian retrieved the map once again; the mark indicated a palace of immense size located in the middle of the Demon Mountain City.

"The Azure Emperor's secret wasn't hidden in the Emperor Star Academy. Instead, there was only this map. "If this palace really hides a heaven-defying cultivation art allowing one to have multiple Yuanfus, what sort of tests would be waiting for me?" Qin Wentian thought to himself, as he and Mo Qingcheng strolled about the city.

Suddenly, the earth shuddered. Tremors could be felt as a berserk demonic beast galloped on the pathway, causing the crowd to give way to it.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng turned around in time to see an extremely savage looking Hawk-eye Lion dashing towards them. Immense power could be felt in its steps, and a youth mounted on the lion roared to the crowd ahead, "Get lost!"

They moved to the side of the streets as the Hawk-eye Lion rushed over. The youth mounted on the back of the demonic lion possessed eagle-like eyes, sharp and imposing. He swept a glance over to Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng, and upon seeing the incomparably elegant face of Mo Qingcheng clad in a male's robes, he opened his mouth and spat out flames. The intense flames gushed towards the pair as they both retreated backwards, frowns lining their faces.

A demon-like smile painted the youth's countenance, as he gazed at Mo Qingcheng. "If this is a woman, her beauty is definitely of a higher quality than those from the Celestial Lake Palace."

After which, he laughed uproariously and departed.

Upon hearing his words, the crowd swept their gazes over to Mo Qingcheng. Indeed, although dressed in the robes of a male, anyone could tell that she was a peerless beauty just by looking at her.

Qin Wentian frowned, only to see Mo Qingcheng pulling his hands along. "Let's hurry to our destination."

Mo Qingcheng understood that since they were outsiders, it was better to keep a low profile. Over here, experts were as common as clouds, unlike the small country of Chu. It was always better to be safe than sorry.

"I apologise..." Qin Wentian sighed, blaming himself for his lack of strength. Mo Qingcheng wouldn't have to put up with any of this if he had more power.

"If you are sorry, all the more reason for you to hurry up and get stronger." Mo Qingcheng laughed. They hastened their steps, and as they finally arrived at the map's marked location, their eyes beheld a palace of immense size in front of them. Above the palace gate, was a huge arch inscribed with three gigantic words – Celestial Lake Palace.

This was none other than the Celestial Lake Palace mentioned by the arrogant youth mounted on the demonic lion earlier. This was also the place indicated in the Azure Emperor's map.

"Ai," a voice exclaimed in surprise, coming from a group of cultivators walking in the direction of Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. Accompanying these people, were none other than the young man and woman they had met as they flew here.

"Seems like we have a predestined affinity, do you guys also wish to visit the celestial lake?" the young man inquired. He was extremely happy to see Mo Qingcheng again.

"What kind of place is the celestial lake?" Qin Wentian asked curiously. He wanted to be clear on the exact reason the map of Dicang (Azure Emperor) had marked this place.

"The Celestial Lake Palace is the symbol of the Demon Mountain City, founded by the Demonic Fairy Qingmei 3,000 years ago. With 3,000 years of time, the city gradually developed to what it was today. In the past, this place was a land of desolation, only inhabited by the demonic beasts, but look at how bustling the atmosphere of this place is today. Not only that, there are many celestial beauties within the Celestial Lake Palace, all of them exceptionally beautiful.

The young man laughed as he continued, "Naturally, if those beauties of the Celestial Lake Palace were to compare themselves to her, she would still come out superior."

After which, he swept his gaze over to Mo Qingcheng again, an inscrutable expression marking his eyes.

"3,000 years ago," Qin Wentian mumbled. In that case, she was of the same era as the Azure Emperor. But why was she called the Demonic Fairy Qingmei? Could she be a demonic beast that had eventually taken on the form of a human?

“Since the Celestial Lake Palace only accepts female disciples, why are there so many people coming here?” Qin Wentian inquired again.

“Yeah, Fairy Qingmei only accepts females as her disciples, and they must all be extremely beautiful. To understand her reasons for not accepting male disciples, we must first talk about the legends relating to the Azure Emperor and Fairy Qingmei. In the past, the Azure Emperor was ranked first out of the 36 starlords. Do you understand how awe-inspiring that was? Despite the admiration and love of countless women, he rejected them all for a single woman. A beautiful story about the love between a human and a demon, it touched the hearts of a few but incurred the scorn and hatred of many others. In the end, for reasons unknown, the Azure Emperor abandoned Fairy Qingmei, causing her love for him to turn into hate, to the point where it was rumored she pursued the Azure Emperor, seeking his death. And when the Azure Emperor abruptly disappeared, the Fairy Qingmei could only return to the Demon Mountain City, living in seclusion.”

The young man seemed to be in extremely high spirits, speaking with assurance, as though he intentionally wanted to show off his knowledge. “This humble me is named Yi Xiang, and I come from the Demon Continent. I wonder, how should I address the two of you?”

“I’m Qin Wentian, and this is my girlfriend,” Qin Wentian replied indifferently, but his heart shivered with excitement.

If the Fairy Qingmei really did have a relationship with the Azure Emperor in the past, this meant that he was in the right place. There was no mistake; this palace was the very spot marked on the map of Dicang.

Chapter 180: Ouyang Kuangsheng

Upon hearing Qin Wentian refer to her as his girlfriend, an expression of shyness shimmered within the depths of her beautiful eyes. A sweet smile adorned her face, indicating that her heart had already agreed and approved this relationship .

However, Mo Qingcheng also felt somewhat amazed, had she really fallen in love with this guy? If it were a year ago, she would definitely not feel this way.

Upon hearing his words, disappointment could be seen clouding the features of Yi Xiang. The reason he wormed his way into being friends with Qin Wentian was naturally because of Mo Qingcheng’s beauty.

“I see.” Yi Xiang smiled with a nod, silently cursing the dogshit luck of Qin Wentian. Exactly what kind of background did he have to cause Mo Qingcheng to fall in love with him?

The moment he thought of this, Yi Xiang tried to probe more as he asked, “Doesn’t Brother Qin know the reason we are here? Which state city in the nine continents is Brother Qin from?”

“I truly have no idea, I’m not from any of the nine state cities.” Qin Wentian casually replied, not bothering to explain in detail.

“As to why they named it the Celestial Lake Palace, this was due to the natural celestial lake found within the palace. The lake was of especially great help to cultivators below the Heavenly Dipper

Realm. There was a huge commotion during the year that Fairy Qingmei discovered the lake, with many powerful experts seeking to possess it. But what sort of character was the Azure Emperor? He was ranked first among the 36 heavenly starlords! On account of the Azure Emperor, even the various overlords of the nine continents had to give face, and not fight Fairy Qingmei for the celestial lake.”

Yi Xiang explained, “After news of the Azure Emperor’s disappearance was made known, many other powers began to voice their objections, not wishing Fairy Qingmei to possess the celestial lake alone. Fairy Qingmei then issued a proclamation allowing talented youths from the nine continents to come visit any time. As long as they could pass the tests she designed, they would be able to enjoy the benefits of the celestial lake. It was only then did the other powers cease their protests. After all, no one wanted to offend the extremely long-lived celestial demoness.

Only then did Qin Wentian understand. Demons were different from humans; a majority of demonic beasts had an extremely slow cultivation rate. However, their lifespan was much longer compared to humans. Especially for those demonic beasts that had broken through to the Heavenly Dipper Realm, after obtaining forms of humanity, they would have a lifespan of around 5,000 to 6,000 years. In consideration of that, the other powers naturally wouldn’t dare to push Fairy Qingmei too far.

“If that’s the case, does this mean that all the cultivators are here because they wish to borrow the celestial lake’s powers to aid in their cultivation?” Qin Wentian swept a glance at the crowded streets, and indeed, young cultivators of both genders flooded the area. They were about 25-26 years of age and many had extraordinary demeanors. None of them would dare to come here without possessing a certain level of strength.

Far off in the distance, a gaze was directed over to Qin Wentian as he observed the crowd., The onlooker laughed demonically; it was none other than the arrogant young man from before, the one who rode the Hawk-eye Lion.

Yi Xiang followed the gaze of Qin Wentian, and upon seeing the young man, his countenance underwent a slight change. Speaking in a whisper, “That’s the beastman named Shiki, from the Beast King Hall, one of the hegemonic powers of the Demon Continent.”

“Beastman?” Qin Wentian’s eyes flickered.

Yi Xiang sidled up to Qin Wentian as he lightly remarked, “The master of the Beast King Hall is a demonic lion at the Heavenly Dipper Realm. The beast king is extremely lecherous, and has slept with many human wives and concubines. With both demonic and human blood flowing in their veins, their descendants were known as beastmen. This Shiki is a descendant of the beast king himself.

“Hey brat, what are you mumbling about?” Shiki stated coldly, glancing over at Yi Xiang, causing him to shiver. With a smile, Yi Xiang quickly replied, “Just casually chatting.”

“Oh, is that so?” Shiki shifted his gaze to the young woman behind Yi Xiang, licking his lips, as an expression of lust appeared in his eyes. At his actions, the young woman felt intense anger boiling in her heart; the descendants of the beast king were all incomparably licentious in their shameless behaviour.

At that moment, a few ladies clad in white walked out of the Celestial Lake Palace to stand in front of the crowd, each appearing as beautiful as a celestial maiden.

The crowd's attention shifted over and saw the graceful silhouettes clad in muslin, upon which the majority of people lost their senses as they stared in rapture.

It appeared that the rumours the Fairy Qingmei only accepted exceptionally beautiful women as her disciples were true. In addition to gaining permission to use the celestial lake, those who passed the tests could also choose a female disciple to be their dao companion, provided that the female disciple agreed. This enheartened many to pass, igniting their fighting spirit.

This rule had never been broken despite the passage of thousands of years. Nobody understood the Fairy Qingmei's reasoning for doing this.

"Everyone, please, you may enter the Celestial Lake Palace now." The celestial maidens led the way, as the crowd followed behind, stepping into the Celestial Lake Palace.

The interior of the palace was splendid in its magnificence. The cultivators entered a long hallway with pavilions situated to the left and right. Every pavilion was graceful and unique, with each of them already occupied by people. The majority of the crowd reserved cold looks on their faces, upon seeing the heads of the residents peeking out. These people should be similar to them, coming here to take the test. What foolish dreams they had; the Celestial Lake Palace opens to the public once a month, and only a total of seven people would be able to enter the celestial lake each time.

And this month, there were numerous cultivators coming to try their luck, it wouldn't be easy for anyone to stand above the rest.

Qin Wentian contemplated the Celestial Lake Palace, feeling wonder in his heart. To think that the palace design of Fairy Qingmei would be so charming, it's scenic beauty was akin to a dream-like quality. At the end of the long hallway, they arrived at an area filled with residential buildings, arranged in picturesque disorder. Located right ahead, there was a flight of stairs and at the end of the stairway, was the celestial palace.

"Is Fairy Qingmei still around?" Qin Wentian mused, he could already confirm that the location in the map of Dicang was referring to this place, but had no idea as to what should be done after finding it.

According to Yi Xiang, legend has it that the Azure Emperor abandoned the Fairy Qingmei. However, Qin Wentian had doubts. There should be many things concealed within, otherwise the Azure Emperor wouldn't have left the map scroll on the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, and would not have ordered the headmaster of each generation to stand guard there.

Qin Wentian had a bold hypothesis, maybe the greatest secret of the Azure Emperor wasn't in the Azure Emperor Palace, but was left under the protection of Fairy Qingmei instead.

Naturally, Qin Wentian came to this conclusion only because he had the map of Dicang. Back then, after those powerful old freaks witnessed the Azure Emperor battling it out with Fairy Qingmei, it would never have crossed their minds the possibility of her guarding the hiding place of the Azure Emperor's greatest secret.

“Shiki, you non-human, non-demon piece of shit dares to come here, too? Are you not afraid that I, your father, will turn you into something neither human nor demon?” A loud, clear voice resounded, causing Yi Xiang to tremble in shock. Who was it that dared to publicly humiliate Shiki of the Beast King Hall like this?

Turning his head, Yi Xiang saw a youth clad in blue robes, about 18 years of age. The young man had a squarish face, with huge eyes, and was laughing uproariously at Shiki.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng.” Yi Xiang drew in a breath. The cultivators who came here wouldn’t have too high a level of cultivation. Usually, youths below the 3rd level of Yuanfu would pay a visit to the Celestial Lake Palace; the majority of them would be at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, wishing to borrow the mystical effects of the Celestial Lake to breakthrough to Yuanfu. The Yuanfu formed with the mystical effects of the celestial lake would be larger than usual, enabling the cultivator to store even more Astral Energy within.

Ouyang Kuangsheng was also at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, and considering his age, his cultivation base still being at the peak of Arterial Circulation Realm wasn’t something to be proud of. In the nine continents, there were numerous youths already at the Yuanfu level. However, there was a faction of cultivators who placed more importance in consolidating foundations, done by increasing their level of affinity and sensory abilities first. Thus, in order to ease their future cultivation pathway, there were many who chose to condense an Astral Soul only after a long period of time, resulting in a later age to start cultivation compared to others.

This Ouyang Kuangsheng belonged to the second type of cultivators. He paid no heed to the thoughts of others, and only began cultivation after the age of 16. Not just outsiders, even within his clan, there were many who looked down on him.

However, in one night, Ouyang Kuangsheng shocked everyone when he condensed an Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer. The entire Ouyang Clan was in an uproar, silently admiring Ouyang Kuangsheng’s resolution, having determined that he was a character worthy of being nurtured.

Indeed, in the next two years, Ouyang Kuangsheng’s cultivation advanced by leaps and bounds, quickly reaching the peak of Arterial Circulation. Although he was slower compared to some others, both of the Astral Souls he condensed were from the 4th Heavenly Layer. Thus, his combat prowess was extremely tyrannical and not many on the same level could defeat him.

Shiki was another such tyrannical character; had it been any other cultivator with a cultivation base at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation other than Ouyang Kuangsheng, he would have definitely slaughtered them for speaking to him in such a manner. However, he wasn’t confident he had the ability to defeat Ouyang Kuangsheng.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng, remember what you just said,” Shiki coldly remarked.

“You think as your father, I would be afraid of you?” Ouyang Kuangsheng continued laughing loudly as a beautiful young lady appeared beside him. Upon seeing her, an expression of extreme fascination appeared on the face of Yi Xiang. She too, accompanied Ouyang Kuangsheng.

It seemed that this time around, the journey to the Celestial Lake Palace was filled with crouching tigers and hidden dragons, with the rumor that Yao Sheng from the Skydemon Sect had also arrived earlier as well. He was also an extremely hard-to-deal-with character and at this thought, Yi Xiang gradually lost his confidence, and felt somewhat depressed.

“First off, would everyone please choose your place of residence? You are all welcome to stay in the still empty pavilions. There are still a few more days before the date of the tests,” announced those from the Celestial Lake Palace, and the crowd dispersed, choosing the pavilion that they wanted to stay in.

“Let’s stay there.” Qin Wentian pointed at a pavilion, as he smiled at Mo Qingcheng.

“Okay.” Mo Qingcheng agreed, and together they walked towards and entered the pavilion. It was split into two levels; the first level consisted of a living room while the second level consisted of two bed rooms, just big enough for the two of them.

Walking to the balcony outside the bedroom, Qin Wentian discovered that Yi Xiang and his companion chose the pavilion opposite to them, while Ouyang Kuangsheng chose the residence beside Yi Xiang.

“Hey kid, where are you from?” Curiosity flickered in Ouyang Kuangsheng’s eyes as he fixed his gaze towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian was 17 years of age, fiendishly handsome. His eyes had an incredible depth to them, possessing an air of uniqueness.

“I’m from a very small country, I don’t think you would have heard of it.” Qin Wentian laughed. “How about you?”

Ouyang Kuangsheng stared blankly, but quickly recovered with a grin on his face. Yi Xiang in the next pavilion, suddenly added, “Brother Qin, this person is Ouyang Kuangsheng, a young elite from the Ouyang Clan of the Azure Continent.”

As Yi Xiang made the introduction, he nodded his head towards Ouyang Kuangsheng as though he was intent on expressing his good will. However, Qin Wentian had no concept of the Ouyang Clan’s power, and didn’t know who Ouyang Kuangsheng was.

“The Azure Continent, the Azure Emperor Palace should be located there,” Qin Wentian mumbled to himself, and upon hearing his words, Ouyang Kuangsheng was momentarily startled, before laughing earnestly. What an interesting kid. Although the Azure Emperor Palace was incomparably glorious in the past, their power had gradually waned over the years. How could they still be mentioned on equal terms with the Ouyang Clan?

Yi Xiang was speechless as well. Could it be that in the eyes of Qin Wentian, the Azure Emperor Palace had a higher level of importance compared to the Ouyang Clan?