

Ancient GM 181

Chapter 181: Entrance to the Celestial Lake

Yi Xiang stared at Qin Wentian as he stated, “Brother Qin, although the Ouyang Clan and the Azure Emperor Palace were both situated in the Azure Continent, their levels cannot be compared to each other. The Ouyang Clan’s power can be ranked amongst the top few within the Nine Continents. Not only that, out of all the younger generations of the Ouyang Clan, Brother Ouyang could be considered one of their top talents, with both his astral souls condensed from the 4th Heavenly Layer.”

Qin Wentian’s heart thudded slightly as he cast a glance at Ouyang Kuangsheng. It was extremely rare for someone to condense both their Astral Souls from the 4th Heavenly Layer; the Nine Continents were indeed a place filled with crouching tigers and hidden dragons.

“Stop kissing my ass, look at my age, I’ve not even stepped into Yuanfu. There’s nothing for me to boast about.” Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed straightforwardly, as though he didn’t give a damn.

Yi Xiang’s lips trembled; his intention to fawn seemed obvious from his tone and choice of words.

“Brother Qin, although this time around there’s no hope of you seizing the opportunity to dip into the celestial lake, you can still consider this to be a widening of your perspectives.” Yi Xiang quickly shifted the conversation back to Qin Wentian, his tone sounding slightly boastful, as he felt gratified to see how seriously Qin Wentian listened to him.

After chatting for a while longer, Qin Wentian returned to his room with his heart involuntarily filled with worry regarding the storm in Chu.

Compared to those characters out there, the geniuses from Chu undoubtedly lost their splendor. And with his current strength, he was unable to be of any help regarding the chaotic tempest brewing in Chu. Although he had inherited the map of Dicang from the Azure Emperor, he was still totally clueless as to what he should do next. Qin Wentian could only take one step at a time now.

“What are you thinking about?” Mo Qingcheng entered the room. Upon seeing her incompatible attire, Qin Wentian couldn’t help but laugh, causing Mo Qingcheng to glare at him.

“I’m thinking that if your clan members knew that I’ve kidnapped you to such a faraway place, would they go all out and fight me to the death?” Qin Wentian gently smiled.

“Pfft, in that case, you’d have to bear the responsibility.” Mo Qingcheng laughed.

“Bear the responsibility?” A bright light shone in Qin Wentian’s eyes, as he stared at Mo Qingcheng intently, causing the mischievous expression on Mo Qingcheng’s face to turn into one of extreme shyness as she replied, “You rascal.”

After which, Mo Qingcheng ran out of the room in a fluster, causing Qin Wentian to smile with fondness.

In the following days, there would be numerous people arriving daily. Qin Wentian glanced down from his balcony and saw two rows of silhouettes walking in a line. A cultivator leading one of the lines was a girl of extreme beauty and upon seeing her, Qin Wentian couldn’t help but freeze slightly in surprise before he smiled and called out, “Hey, Qian Mengyu.”

Qian Mengyu glanced upwards and at the sight of Qin Wentian, an expression of astonishment appeared on her face. Ever since that escapade in the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds, she had sent people to investigate news of Qin Wentian. The information report returned stating that in one of the countries under the administrations of Nine Mystical Palace, there was indeed a person named Qin Wentian in Chu. It was also reported that he was exceptionally famous, but other than that, she didn’t know anything else about him.

“What are you doing here?” Qian Mengyu smiled. So a small country like Chu also knew of the existence of the Celestial Lake Palace?

“The same reason as you.” Qin Wentian laughed. Being able to meet here could also be counted as a form of fate, and thus Qin Wentian’s attitude was much warmer now compared to back then in the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds. After all, Qian Mengyu had aided him once, not to mention her sword technique, Nine Swords of Life, may indicate a possible connection to Gongyang Hong.

“Then, I will be staying there.” Qian Mengyu pointed to a pavilion beside that of Qin Wentian, as she walked up to the second level.

“This time around, Greencloud Pavilion sent out many disciples. The tests of the Celestial Lake Palace are exceedingly dangerous, so why don’t you join us? At the very least, we can keep a look out for each other,” Qian Mengyu remarked. In her heart, she wanted to help Qin Wentian. This fellow didn’t have any kind of powerful background to speak of, he must have faced countless dangers before making his way here. Since they had crossed paths, it was natural for her to extend a helping hand to him.

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded his head, not thinking too deeply into it as he asked, “Can I ask you something? Is the Nine Swords of Life a unique sword-type innate technique belonging to your Greencloud Pavilion?”

“It can be considered so.” Qian Mengyu nodded, continuing, “This set of sword techniques contain many transformations, and an undying will. For me, my mastery level is only at the tip of the iceberg, however back then my aunt had cultivated this sword technique to an incredible heights. She was able to manifest the sword energy of this technique to attack using a sword-type divine imprint, further enhancing its might.”

“Aunt?” Qin Wentian’s heart pounded. Could her aunt be the woman Gongyang Hong loved?

To be precise, weren’t the four human-type Divine Inscription Paintings inscribed by the woman Gongyang Hong loved?!

“Why do you ask? Do you train in sword techniques as well?” Qian Mengyu laughed.

“No, just casually asking. Your aunt must be very powerful,” Qin Wentian remarked.

“Yeah! Not only is my aunt extremely beautiful, her talent in cultivation is exceedingly high as well. There are many others out to pursue her but sadly, she’s trapped by matters of the heart.” Qian Mengyu sighed, before stiffening. Why was she talking to Qin Wentian about such things.

Seeing the warm smile on Qin Wentian’s gentle countenance, Qian Mengyu could only laugh bitterly in her heart before abruptly turning away. Although this young man’s talent wasn’t unacceptable, if he were to truly fall in love with her, she would certainly reject him. She was only helping him out because of their coincidental meeting.

Qin Wentian was unaware of the mistaken thoughts running through Qian Mengyu’s mind. Seeing that she had no more interest in continuing the conversation, he too turned to walk back into his room as he saw Mo Qingcheng quietly sitting there.

“I once had a chance meeting with her, and there’s a high probability that she has some connection with Senior Gongyang,” Qin Wentian explained. Mo Qingcheng gazed at him as she nodded and laughed; the sound of her laughter was extremely endearing.

Qin Wentian retrieved one of the four paintings gifted by Gongyang Hong. This painting was none other than the Divine Inscription Painting of the Nine Swords of Life, however, the inscriptions etched in the painting only contained a kind of concept; there was no way to use it for attacking purposes. Qin Wentian had once received memories of divine imprints before. If he could utilise some of the complicated 3rd-level imprints stored in his memory, how tyrannical would his attacks be then?

Qin Wentian had already established in the past that divine imprints and innate techniques shared the same roots.

His eyes gradually brightened, but his excitement was soon replaced by a look of unease. If he wanted to use 3rd-level divine imprints as a direct attack, the power behind such a move would be extremely dominating. The downside was that it would require him to exhaust a large amount of his Divine Yuan Energy. Before stepping into Yuanfu, he would only be able to execute this kind of attack a couple of times at the most, before running dry of energy.

A gentle smile appeared on Mo Qingcheng's face as she saw the serious look of contemplation on Qin Wentian's countenance. What was this fellow thinking of to be so engrossed within his thoughts?

"At the Astral River Hall, after seeing the attack of the multitude of fist-lights, I comprehended the concept of the second stance of the Great Dream Halberd Art – Fallen Star. However, if I were to use a sword-type Divine Yuan to amplify my attacks..." A sharp glint of light flashed in Qin Wentian's eyes; if what he imagined was reality, Yuanfu realm opponents may not be undefeatable after all.

Inclining his head, Qin Wentian saw Mo Qingcheng smiling at him with a tender look of gentleness in her eyes. Warmth filled his heart, and a sudden impulse overtook him.

"What are you thinking about?" Mo Qingcheng still hadn't noticed the peculiar look on Qin Wentian's face. As the sound of her voice faded, Qin Wentian had already enveloped her into a hug, gently kissing her on the cheek, causing her to be stunned as though struck by a bolt of lightning.

Abruptly, Qin Wentian stood up and ran away. Only then did Mo Qingcheng come back to her senses. Her face instantly flushed with redness, giggling as she stared at Qin Wentian running away. She couldn't imagine a moment more beautiful than this.

Qin Wentian didn't come out from his room after that. Mo Qingcheng occasionally peeked in on him, only to see him silently meditating with Yuan Meteor Stones clutched in his hands.

Currently, Astral Energy was unceasingly being gathered within Qin Wentian's body, condensing into sword-type Divine Yuan Energy, as an aura of unparalleled sharpness emanated out from him.

All sword attacks were incredibly sharp, and if he were to augment his existing attacks with his present sword-type, Divine Yuan Energy, the power of his attacks would undoubtedly rise to another level. However, to forcibly convert all his Astral Energy into Divine Yuan Energy would exhaust a great amount of Yuan Meteor Stones. Luckily, the current him wasn't lacking in cultivation resources.

Apart from this, he could create a dreamscape, to observe whether his idea was correct.

The next day, people from the Celestial Lake Palace arrived to extend an invitation to them. Everyone left their pavilions and stepped into the long hallway, walking in the direction of the Celestial Lake Palace.

“So many people.” Qin Wentian cast a glance at the long hallway swamped with people. There was at least several hundreds in the crowd.

“This amount can’t be considered many. The Grand Xia Empire is too vast, and the celestial lake is of paramount importance to cultivators at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation. Even young elites belonging to powerful clans and factions will make the trip to here. Firstly, they can immerse themselves in the waters of the celestial lake. Secondly, they can use the opportunity to temper themselves through the dangers faced on their journey over here,” Qian Mengyu explained in a low voice.

“This place is open to all? Doesn’t the Celestial Lake Palace reject anyone?” Qin Wentian asked, curiosity evident in his voice.

“Yup, this was the promise Fairy Qingmei made back then. Also, she had no need to obstruct those who came, because the weaker ones wouldn’t even see their deaths coming until too late,” Qian Mengyu explained.

The current Mo Qingcheng was dressed up as a man to avoid unnecessary trouble. She had also smeared something on her face, causing her to look even more unusual, but fortunately it completely masked her stunning countenance.

Qian Mengyu and the girl beside Ouyang Kuangsheng were also extremely beautiful. Although their beauty was just half a step inferior to Mo Qingcheng’s, they had no need to conceal their features because they were not afraid of trouble.

The Celestial Lake Palace representatives led the crowd towards a great hall. The interior was decorated extravagantly: gigantic stone pillars stood erect, and the outer edges of the hall was designed to look like the starry skies.

All the girls in the great hall were peerless in their beauty.

The crowd gathered within, and directly facing them was a pool of Astral Lake Water. This pool was extremely beautiful to gaze upon, reflecting a dazzling, radiant sheen of starlight.

“This is the entrance to the Celestial Lake. Indeed, it is a mystical place. The waters of the celestial lake are completely filled with inconceivable amounts of Astral Energy.” Many people gasped in shock.

Ahead of the great hall, a beautiful woman sat atop an Astral Throne, smiling at the crowd.

“We greet the Palace Mistress.” The crowd bowed to show their respect. A majority of the crowd snuck glances at the girls that stood to the side of the beautiful woman, expressions of unconcealed admiration evident in their eyes.

Too breathtakingly beautiful, they were akin to fireworks in the mortal world. Just merely standing there caused people in the crowd to feel ashamed of their own inferiority.

The majority of females within the crowd seemed to have lost their splendor, and even Mo Qingcheng's eyes flickered as she commented, "They are all so beautiful."

"We've finally found a female whose looks are comparable to yours." Qin Wentian nudged Mo Qingcheng, whispering into her ears, causing her to roll her eyes at him.

"Yeah, but doesn't her demeanor seem a bit cold?"

"Right." Qin Wentian nodded lightly. The woman before them radiated an aura of indifference, her frigid demeanor an unapproachable wall that looked impossible to surmount.

Chapter 182: Dangers of the Refinement Grounds

One was unable to determine the age of the Palace Mistress merely from looking at her features. It was rumored that she was the successor of Fairy Qingmei, but no one knew whether or not this was true.

After Fairy Qingmei decided to live in seclusion, she created the Celestial Lake Palace and accepted female disciples, imparting her knowledge and techniques over the generations. Despite doing so, outsiders rarely caught a glimpse of her. It was as though she had already truly seen through all secular affairs and worldly attachments.

At this moment, the Palace Mistress of the Celestial Lake Palace smiled and nodded to the crowd. "If you wish to enter the celestial lake, all of you should already comprehend the danger within. I wonder how many of the young elites here are from the transcendent powers of the Nine Continents?"

"This junior over here originated from the Azure Continent, I'm Ouyang Kuangsheng from the Ouyang Clan. My clan lord inquires after the well-being of Fairy Qingmei." Ouyang Kuangsheng exclaimed straightforwardly, taking a step forwards. After which, the girl beside him also spoke, "Wind Continent, Jiang Ting from the Jiang Clan, pays her respect to the Palace Mistress."

Ouyang Kuangsheng was blunt and outspoken, while the female emitted a faint aura of arrogance. This was her natural disposition and not out of rudeness towards the Palace Mistress.

"Descendants of the Ouyang and Jiang Clan, please take a seat." The Palace Mistress smiled with a nod. Chairs had already been prepared by those from the Celestial Lake Palace from earlier. Ouyang Kuangsheng and Jiang Ting did not act with fake courtesy as they seated themselves, with others from their respective clans standing behind them.

"To think that Ouyang Kuangsheng is actually together with Jiang Ting." A strange glow passed through the eyes of many. The Ouyang Clan and the Jiang Clan, were all transcendent powers in the Nine Continents.

“Beast King Hall, Shiki,” Shiki stated indifferently as he stepped forwards. The crowd was abuzz. Evidently, those originating from transcendent-level powers in the Nine Continents were a cut above their peers, all of them majestic and an awe-inspiring sight.

“You are bestowed a seat.” The Palace Mistress laughed.

“War Continent, Wang Xiao from the Wang Clan.” Another white robed youth stepped forward, to the shocked murmurs from the surrounding people. Seeing that the Wang Clan had shown up as well, it seemed like all the transcendent powers wanted to use the expedition to the Celestial Lake Palace as a way to temper their younger generations. Those present had a cultivation base of at least the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, not to mention there were even some Yuanfu cultivators within the gathering as well.

“Yan Continent, Mu Baifei.” Another youth stepped forward. This youth was clad in a long, white robe, appearing extremely neat with a hint of delicateness. But for all that, one could sense an incredible sharpness from the middle of his brows.

Swallow Swordsman, this person was definitely a Swallow Swordsman.

“Skydemon Sect, Yao Sheng.”

“Greencloud Pavilion, Qian Mengyu.”

As several people stepped forth, the Palace Mistress granted each of them a seat. The crowd carefully observed those silhouettes that sat down, silently marking down their appearances. Any one of these individuals could become the next dazzling stars of their generation in the Nine Continents. Just Ouyang Kuangsheng alone was already extremely remarkable.

“Qin Wentian, you come over as well.” After Qian Mengyu sat down, she called out towards Qin Wentian, who still mingled in the crowd. Those from the Greencloud Pavilion all stood behind her chair.

Qin Wentian stiffened for a moment before lightly nodding his head, walking over to Qian Mengyu. Since Qian Mengyu had already spoken, it would be rude to reject her.

“Are these two also from the Azure Continent?” The Palace Mistress smiled as she regarded Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. It seemed that regardless of whoever she met, she would still treat them as a respected guest.

“They are friends of mine, from a place named the Chu Country,” Qian Mengyu replied with a smile. A bright light flashed through the Palace Mistress’s eyes, as she stared intently at Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng.

However, the Palace Mistress quickly shifted her gaze away and greeted the crowd with a smile.

“There are only seven open positions for cultivators wishing to immerse themselves in the celestial lake. All of you should already be aware of the danger level, and I shall not elaborate on that. I only hope that everyone will show mercy should they fight against each other. The time limit is one month.”

Everyone nodded their heads; they naturally understood the rules.

“Enter then, I shall not take up more of your time. However, demonic beasts are forbidden to be brought inside.” The Palace Mistress of the Celestial Lake Palace laughed, as the crowd erupted in excitement, all parties dashing towards the entrance of the celestial lake.

“Let’s go.” Qian Mengyu stood up, following the crowd to the flight of stairs descending downwards. Qin Wentian discovered that the water in the entrance of the celestial lake, didn’t share the normal properties of water, and their clothing remained dry.

“What a mystical place.” An expression of awe painted Qin Wentian’s face, as he stepped through the entrance of the celestial lake together with Mo Qingcheng. In that very instant, Qin Wentian felt a surge of mysterious energy acting on his body.

“My Yuanfu.” Mo Qingcheng’s beautiful eyes widened in surprise. After passing the entrance, she realised that the Yuanfu within her body had been completely severed from her arterial pathways.

The moment they stepped completely into the water, Qin Wentian and the rest discovered that the flight of stairs was still visible, as though they had been transported to another space filled with resplendent Astral Light. Also ahead of them, was an ancient pathway.

Qian Mengyu stared at Mo Qingcheng with astonishment in her eyes, “Don’t you all know the effects of the celestial lake’s Refinement Grounds?”

“Hmm, we’re not very clear about that.” Qin Wentian shook his head.

“Both of you are too ridiculous.” Qian Mengyu couldn’t help but berate them, “Why are you guys even here if you have no knowledge about this place? The Refinement Grounds of the Celestial Lake Palace is similar to the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds and is also one of the eighteen testing grounds of the Grand Xia Empire. There’s a mysterious surge of energy that will seal the Yuanfus of Yuanfu cultivators. Upon stepping inside, cultivators at the Yuanfu Realm would be at the peak of Arterial Circulation; they are unable to enjoy the immense amount of Astral Energy from Yuan droplets stored within their Yuanfu. If not for this, there would be no point for cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Realm to come here.”

“Naturally, even if their Yuanfu was sealed, the innate techniques cultivated by Yuanfu cultivators would obviously be stronger than those at the Arterial Circulation Realm. This was to their advantage, but could also end as unfavourable to them. Stronger innate techniques naturally meant a higher energy consumption rate. And over here, they would only be courting their own death as they have no way to replenish it from their Yuanfus.”

Qin Wentian’s gaze froze. By sealing the Yuanfus and severing the connection between them and the arterial pathways, even the task of flying would be difficult.

Over here in the Refinement Grounds of the Celestial Lake Palace, the advantages Yuanfu cultivators enjoyed were reduced to the bare minimum.

“It is said that the celestial lake was formed naturally, but with the addition of modifications by the Celestial Lake Palace, the level of danger here has risen as well. It wasn’t so easy to snatch one of the seven open spots, you guys are really too ridiculous,” Qian Mengyu coldly remarked.

Although her tone was unpleasant to hear, Qin Wentian knew that it was because of her concern for them. Naturally, he didn’t take offence and quickly replied with a smile, “Can we just follow you, then? Where is the location of the actual celestial lake?”

“The celestial lake lies at the end of the Refinement Grounds.” Qian Mengyu eyed the ancient pathway as she spoke. Qin Wentian discovered that the other cultivators had already set off, dashing ahead as though they were rushed for time.

“Mengyu, why are you telling them so much? We should hurry up and move on as well.” A girl with exquisite looking features standing at the side frowned as she glared at Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng, appearing somewhat unhappy. She didn’t know what Qian Mengyu was thinking.

“Move out then,” Qian Mengyu coldly instructed, as her group of cultivators dashed ahead with extreme speed.

Qin Wentian turned his gaze forwards; he discovered that the other cultivators on the ancient pathway purposely kept their distance from each other, all appearing to be extremely cautious. This was even more glaringly obvious when it came to the chosen ones originating from the various transcendent powers. Not only did they keep their distance, some of the other cultivators had also formed temporary alliances.

Upon witnessing this, Qin Wentian came to a sudden realisation. Since there were only seven spots available at each opening, the most dangerous thing within the Refinement Grounds would be none other than the treacherous hearts of humanity.

But even so, many people treated this as a tempering experience. He guessed that for those who made it here, they should already possess a certain level of self confidence in their own prowess.

“The Forest of Hallucination, be careful here. This place will stall us for a period of time.” Qian Mengyu surveyed the forest ahead, seeing the other cultivators dashing towards the entrance and how their presences instantly disappeared as they passed through.

“Stay behind me and follow closely.” Qian Mengyu’s countenance turned sluggish as they entered the Forest of Hallucination. Once inside, a maze materialised in the form of numerous ancient-looking trees.

Qian Mengyu waved a group of her cultivators forward. The group slowed their pace, trying to find a way out of the forested maze. However, they soon realised that there was no way for them to leave, and moreover, they had lost sight of the others.

“Indeed, the effects of this place matches what was mentioned in the rumors.” Qian Mengyu added, “The Refinement Grounds is a place to battle for survival of the fittest; luck is never counted as a factor.”

“What should we do now?” someone asked Qian Mengyu.

“We will rest here in our original spot,” Qian Mengyu spoke, as she sat down on the grass.

In the quietness of the Forest of Hallucination, a stifling pressure could be felt emanating forth from within, giving an extremely sinister feeling.

Rustling sounds rang out, and Qian Mengyu stiffened as she gazed vigilantly at her surroundings.

Swiftly after, a line of silhouettes appeared in her field of vision. They were none other than the people from the Beast King Hall, with Shiki in the lead.

Upon seeing Qian Mengyu, Shiki's licentious smile widened as his steps slowed. The uncontrolled, voracious desires of beasts heated his eyes.

Qian Mengyu frowned, as she icily stated, "Shiki, could it be that your Beast King Hall wishes to clash with my Greencloud Pavilion? I can assure you that it won't be a good decision."

"Oh, is that so?" The sinister looking smile on Shiki's face widened even further. Qian Mengyu turned her gaze aside, only to see another group of figures appear.

"Yao Sheng from the Skydemon Sect." Qian Mengyu froze, her countenance turning extremely unsightly. The Beast King Hall and the Skydemon Sect were both transcendent powers in the Demon Continent; to think that they had actually allied together.

"You can only blame it on your own bad luck," Yao Sheng stated sinisterly, before sweeping a glance at Qin Wentian. Of course, he still remembered this person, and their previous encounter at the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds back then.

"Run," Qian Mengyu whispered, causing her fellow cultivators to tremble in reaction. Despite this unfortunate timing, Qian Mengyu acted with extreme decisiveness; the Demon Continent allied forces wouldn't be able to wipe them all out in a single swoop if they all chose to escape instead of clashing directly.

"You guys, I want her alive." Shiki pointed to Mo Qingcheng, who was standing beside Qin Wentian, while he himself, moved towards Qian Mengyu, lust apparent in his eyes.

"NOW!" Qian Mengyu screamed as the cultivators of the Greencloud Pavilion instantly split in all directions. Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng also dashed elsewhere to a random location.

"HAHAHA!" Shiki's footsteps caused great tremors to shake the earth, and he leapt up into the air. With a howl of malevolence, a terrifying soundwave blasted out, as an illusory form of a savage lion appeared in the air.

Right before landing on the ground, his fist ruthlessly smashed out, containing tremendous strength behind it. Due to the earlier lion's howl, a cultivator from Qian Mengyu's group couldn't react in time, and when she finally came to her senses, the fist of Shiki had already come into contact, bursting her head into pieces.

Simultaneously, those from the Beast King Hall and the Skydemon Sect all acted in tandem, wishing to cleanly slaughter the cultivators from the Greencloud Pavilion.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng frantically dashed towards a random direction, only to see a group of cultivators from the Beast King Hall tracking their movements, following behind them with incredible speed.

Halting his steps, Qin Wentian's ancient halberd was already in his hands as a terrifying coldness flickered in his eyes.

"Wentian, take note of your Astral Energy consumption, the road to the celestial lake is still long," Mo Qingcheng counselled, bringing Qin Wentian back to his senses. Mo Qingcheng's was right to warn him; he couldn't go all out so quickly, the road ahead was still long.

This was only just the beginning.

Chapter 183: Guardian

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng's speed was extremely fast. By this point they were already very far away from their earlier resting spot, with a total of five others pursuing them. Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng continued dashing forwards, with no intentions of stopping, opting to conserve their strength.

A cold light glinted in the eyes of their pursuers. Their targets weren't losing out in the slightest when it came to speed, and seeing how they were split off from their own main group, it would only spell disaster to continue chasing after the two, especially if they were to meet any groups formed by the other powers.

"People from the Beast King Hall?" At this moment, a silhouette appeared ahead. Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng slowed their steps, only to see that the new arrival was none other than Ouyang Kuangsheng.

"Ouyang Kuangsheng, this matter has nothing to do with you." By then, the five experts from the Beast King Hall had already surrounded Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. Sweeping their gaze about, they finally relaxed when they saw that Ouyang Kuangsheng was acting alone, without the rest of his clan members.

But Ouyang Kuangsheng was really too self-confident, to think that he would opt to travel alone.

"Mmm." Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed as he crossed his arms in front of his chest, adopting the appearance that he was only there to watch the show.

A sharp glint of light flashed in the eyes of the leader of the five from the Beast King Hall, as an extremely chilly expression appeared on his face. "Kill the male."

"Roger." The robes of the four others fluttered as demonic qi emanated forth from their bodies. Two of them moved towards Qin Wentian, while the other two headed for Mo Qingcheng.

Qin Wentian's ancient halberd was already in his hands, as a cold glint of demonic light flashed in his eyes, so cold it pervaded the bone. A demonic look replaced his earlier expression, and monstrous killing intent gushed out from him, fluttering his robes about in the air.

The two walking towards Qin Wentian attacked simultaneously. One of them struck out towards Qin Wentian, his hands transforming into the claws of an eagle, as an illusory form of an eagle appeared in midair. A terrifying demon-wind arose from the force of the attack, threatening to lacerate Qin Wentian's body apart. The other cultivator blasted forwards with an explosive gigantic palm. In their eyes, Qin Wentian was already a dead man.

Swish~ A raging gust of wind blew as Qin Wentian slashed out tyrannically with his ancient halberd, aiming for the incoming eagle claw with a speed as fast as lightning. The terrifying energy within his strike caused the wind to howl, as an aura of sharpness could be felt emanating from it.

As sounds of piercing rang out, the ancient halberd ruptured the sharp eagle claws, penetrating through the entire arm of his opponent, right into his brain. At the same time, he raised his left hands, and executed the Falling Mountain Palms with a roar, directly matching palms with the gigantic demonic palms of his opponent. The impact from the collision creating a whirlwind storm with them standing at the centre. Only then did the opposing cultivator notice the coldness of Qin Wentian's eyes and was suddenly struck with a sense of terror.

Qin Wentian retreated slightly, sweeping out his ancient halberd in a horizontal arc, akin to the wing slash of a Vermillion Bird. His opponent could feel a monstrous sharpness bearing down on him. With a roar of rage, he blasted out with both his palms, trying to block the attack. Qin Wentian then spat out numerous rays of sword light, each manifesting into sharp swords. One by one, the swords pierced through the head of his opponent, slaughtering him with no mercy.

If one wanted to talk about combat, not many cultivators in the 9th level of Arterial Circulation could match up to Qin Wentian.

After killing them both, Qin Wentian turned his eyes to the leader. His silhouette flickered as he abruptly disappeared from sight. However, he didn't move in the direction of the leader but towards Mo Qingcheng instead. Bursting forth with indomitable strength, he stabbed his ancient halberd at the heads of his opponents.

Abruptly, a terrifying surge of demonic qi exploded forth. Qin Wentian turned, only to see the previously motionless leader releasing all three of his Astral Souls. All of his Astral Souls shone with resplendent light, and were actually condensed from Demonic Beast Constellations! The leader slowly moved forwards to Qin Wentian, as a towering demonic qi permeated the air.

Awoooooo~ Ferocious howls thundered out, as Qin Wentian's eardrums shuddered from the impact. Immediately after, it was as if he saw a myriad of demonic beasts galloping towards him, seeking to devour him.

“Yuanfu level cultivator.” Qin Wentian's heart shook slightly for a second. From the aura his opponent released, Qin Wentian could sense two things: first, that the leader was exceptionally powerful even among Yuanfu cultivators; second, he wanted Qin Wentian's death with a single strike.

The leader also knew that his Yuanfu was sealed, which was why he chose to execute such a powerful innate technique requiring such a high consumption rate. He would rather kill Qin Wentian off with a single blow, rather than prolong the fight. After all, he noticed that Mo Qingcheng was also at the Yuanfu Realm.

Qin Wentian felt as though his eardrums were destroyed, and the galloping herd of demonic beasts gave him a tremendous sense of pressure. Qin Wentian's blood was boiling, as the demonic qi gushing out from his body increased in strength. Taking a step forwards, he transformed into a blurry shadow, and pushed forth his Fallen Star technique. The resulting unstoppable force collided directly with the innate technique of his opponent.

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM. The terrifying might of his opponent's blows were akin to typhoons blasting against his body. However, his current physique was already comparable to a demonic beast and had extremely high endurance. Moving as a blurry shadow, he continued pressing forwards with his ancient halberd without fear.

Rumble~ The terrifying counter-impact flung Qin Wentian's body backwards, the force of the blow so strong it took two massive trees to break his momentum. Groaning, he spat out a mouthful of blood, the demonic qi so abundant that the entire atmosphere turned oppressive. The body of the Yuanfu leader no longer moved, as the ancient halberd had gored through his throat. He died with his eyes wide open, never expecting that under the pressure of his strongest innate technique, Qin Wentian who should be in imminent peril, would still be able to fight back to such an extent.

Mo Qingcheng had also finished dealing with her opponents. Walking towards Qin Wentian, she retrieved a medicinal pill and placed it inside his mouth. Qin Wentian swallowed the pill as he regarded the nervous Mo Qingcheng, before smiling and reassuring her, “I'm alright.”

Although he smiled, Qin Wentian couldn't allow himself to be the slightest bit complacent. The battle he had just faced, had opened his eyes to the dangers of these Refinement Grounds.

“Awesome.” Ouyang Kuangsheng stared intently at Qin Wentian, admiring the beauty of the final strike he unleashed. Ouyang Kuangsheng knew that if he were the one facing the Yuanfu leader, he could have avoided injury, but unlike Qin Wentian, his own Astral Energy consumption definitely would have been higher. The Refinement Grounds were akin to a life and death marathon; small injuries were fine as long as they didn't deplete too much of the Astral Energy stored within their bodies.

Qin Wentian naturally understood this logic, which was why he didn't mind suffering damage in exchange for his opponent's death, not to mention that he already knew Mo Qingcheng had some recovery pills and medicinal pellets on her.

Nodding to Ouyang Kuangsheng, Qin Wentian didn't continue the conversation.

“If we weren't in here right now, I would definitely have sought you out for an exchange of pointers, haha.” Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed as he departed, planning to search for his party members.

In here, even if Ouyang Kuangsheng was extremely confident about his own prowess, there was no guarantee he'd survive by himself if he ran amok at the start of his journey in the Refinement Grounds of the Celestial Lake.

It was considered 'safer' to go alone nearer to the end of the journey, after the strength of the other allied forces were reduced. After all, only seven spots were available, and in this place where danger lurked in all corners, history had proven that many outstanding talents would fall.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng left the area, too. After all, the area was strewn with corpses, so only after changing locations did they sit down to regulate their conditions.

Qin Wentian passed a few Yuan Meteor Stones to Mo Qingcheng. In the Refinement Grounds, one could only replenish their own store of Astral Energy by depending on Yuan Meteor Stones.

However at this moment, sudden sounds of rustling rang out. Qin Wentian quickly turned his head towards the noise, his heart tightening.

“Oh Brother Qin, so it’s you.” Yi Xiang appeared, laughing as he approached. Qin Wentian discovered that Yi Xiang was with several others, looking as though he had already formed an alliance. The white-clad leader, with a handsome and delicate countenance, was none other than Mu Baifei, the swordsman from the Yan Continent.

“Isn’t Brother Qin together with those from the Greencloud Pavilion? Why are you injured?” Yi Xiang glanced at Mo Qingcheng as he inquired.

Although Yi Xiang was extremely cordial in nature, Qin Wentian still felt some misgivings towards him. He then nodded as he replied, “We ran into an ambush and were injured, as a result.”

“Without the Greencloud Pavilion, I’m afraid that it would be even more dangerous for Brother Qin and Miss Mo to travel alone. Tell you what, I’ll help to intercede on your behalf, so why not join our alliance?” Yi Xiang remarked.

Qin Wentian contemplated, glancing at Mo Qingcheng, but eventually agreed. Even if he had no care for himself, he wouldn’t selfishly allow Mo Qingcheng to be in danger because of his lack of power. Travelling alone, with everyone else forming alliances, would indeed be a foolhardy decision.

“Don’t worry, since we have an affinity, leave this to me,” Yi Xiang heroically spoke, as he ran towards Mu Baifei, conversing with him before waving his hands to signal for Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng to come over.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng went over, There were 18 people in this alliance, which could be considered quite huge in terms of numbers. However, it was clear to Qin Wentian that this was merely the start of the Refinement Grounds’ trials; for now, joining a powerful alliance equated to safety. But when the end of the journey is nigh, alliances would definitely collapse once people fought against each other.

There were a total of three, including Mu Baifei, who were all Swallow Swordsmen. They all carried ancient swords strapped to their backs and appeared extremely full of pride, even refusing to cast a glance at Qin Wentian. To them, these people who joined their alliance were of no value. This alliance was formed solely because of convenience; the others were also clear about this point and thus tolerated their attitudes. After all, the Swallow Swordsmen’s name and reputation was also exceedingly famous in the Nine Continents.

With such a powerful alliance, they didn’t really meet any dangers along the way, however occasionally they would come across the corpses of other cultivators sprawled around the Refinement Grounds.

After two days, they finally exited the Forest of Hallucination. Upon leaving, numerous pathways appeared in front of them, each separated by towering mountain peaks.

“Who will be the scouts?” a Swallow Swordsman standing at the side of Mu Baifei inquired. His tone of voice was cool and indifferent, sounding as though he was above the rest.

“Brother Qin, we would have to trouble you then.” Yi Xiang smiled at Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian stared at Yi Xiang, his eyes narrowed for an instant before returning back to normal.

“Don’t worry, Brother Qin, these two shall accompany you, and we’ll immediately rush over if there’s an ambush.” Yi Xiang pointed to two others by his side as he spoke, causing them to frown as well.

“Fine.” Qin Wentian agreed.

“I’ll go with you.” Mo Qingcheng stepped forwards, standing beside Qin Wentian.

“Oh, we don’t need that many people to scout.” Yi Xiang laughed. Qin Wentian turned his head back, glancing coldly at him before holding onto Mo Qingcheng’s hands, walking forwards with no regards for those behind him.

Qin Wentian had no wish to stay in this alliance any longer. Upon seeing this, Yi Xiang’s eyes narrowed as a cold sinister light flickered within.

“Yi Xiang, what the hell are you thinking?” the female cultivator stated unhappily; she had travelled beside him on their way here. She had also seen Mo Qingcheng’s true countenance earlier. Considering Yi Xiang’s actions of asking Qin Wentian to scout ahead while retaining Mo Qingcheng, it would be very hard for people not to jump to conclusions.

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Within the Celestial Lake Palace, inside a quiet hall, an extremely bewitching-looking woman sat upon a jade throne. Traces of cold intent could be seen in her clear eyes, her demeanor appearing as majestic as a queen.

Her beautiful eyes were staring straight ahead, upon which numerous screens were arranged. Each screen showcased various scenarios currently playing out within the Refinement Grounds.

Two figures stood at the side of the captivating queen. One was the Palace Mistress of the Celestial Lake Palace, while the other was an extremely ice cold ephemeral beauty that didn’t seem to be from the mortal world. The aura she projected was somewhat similar to the captivating queen sitting on the jade throne.

At this moment, the cold gaze of the queen was staring at Qin Wentian. This youth, Qin Wentian, was said to come from Chu.

The Chu Country, back when the Azure Emperor had disappeared, the Azure Emperor Palace was faced with an imminent crisis. Countless gazes filled with greed locked onto the Azure Emperor

Palace, and each and everyone of their members were under close scrutinisation. However, none of the overlords from the other transcendent powers found what they were seeking.

It was only recently that the constant surveillance had ceased after a piece of news had spread, claiming that prior to the Azure Emperor's passing, he had gone to a place called Chu.

At this moment, the corners of the cold bewitching queen's lips curled up into an unpleasant smile. Did those foolish fellows thought that they could find what the Azure Emperor had left behind? So what if they found the secret map? What use was there? There was still that woman standing guard, defending the final checkpoint!

"Will a new Emperor be born from the Azure Emperor Palace?" the queen murmured. Standing beside her, the Palace Mistress involuntarily shivered. However, the ephemeral beauty was unfazed, and without a single change in expression, as if her aloof and indifferent appearance would always remain as such!

Chapter 184: Monument of Yellow Springs

Choosing an ancient path at random, Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng proceeded on their way. To their surprise, the journey was smooth and they encountered no difficulties.

After embarking on the pathway for a while, they discovered that the many pathways ahead eventually congregated together, forming a broad main road. Further up ahead, they saw several cultivators already standing there, with their gazes turned forward.

"Ouyang Kuangsheng, no wonder the journey through this pathway was so smooth." Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng halted their steps right where the various pathways congregated. Shifting their gazes ahead, they could see the corpses of several other cultivators strewn about, dying the ground a bloody red.

BOOM. Suddenly, Qin Wentian felt the blood within his body pulsing intensely, causing him to be alarmed. Inclining his head, he saw that further along was a stone monument with the words 'Yellow Springs' inscribed upon them. The monument floated in the air about 10 metres from the ground.

"How strange." Mo Qingcheng, too, could feel the blood pulsing in her body, causing her heart to tremble.

This time around, the test was set within the ancient pathway of the Yellow Springs. As the Buddhist saying went: Coming face to face with the Yellow Springs, only with Buddhist's

enlightenment is one allowed to shed the abyss of worldly suffering. Only by turning back will you be able to see the shore (Repent and you shall be saved).

Rumour has it that if one came face to face with the Yellow Springs' ancient pathway during the Celestial Lake Palace test, one must definitely turn back to seek out other paths. Many of the other cultivators had unsightly expressions upon their faces; since from the start all the various paths eventually congregated here, this meant that each and every cultivator entering the Refinement Grounds of the Celestial Lake Palace would end up here as well.

If one didn't dare to proceed forwards, they could turn back (repent and see the shore), and other pathways will open for them. This was the meaning behind the Buddhist saying from earlier. However, if one dared to proceed through the Yellow Springs' pathway, that would undoubtedly lead to a shortcut.

"I just don't believe that the Yellow Springs pathway is as fearsome as the rumors described," an unknown person stated hesitantly. After which, he stepped forwards, choosing to enter the pathway, yet doing so with extreme caution.

BOOM. The blood within his entire body pulsated, as he felt the intensity of the surging of his blood explosively increase.

Taking another step forward, his countenance turned ashen as his blood vessels could be seen popping out and protruding all over his body.

Releasing his Astral Souls, the Astral Light shrouded his body in a protective radiance. He gritted his teeth and continued slowly making his way forward.

BOOM. The pulsating of his blood caused his heartbeat to escalate. His entire countenance was covered in a bloody shade of red, as terror painted over his features. Booming sounds rang out as his heart pounded wildly.

"Retreat." A notion of thought appeared in his mind, as he retreated with crazy speed. However, the pulsing of his blood became more alarming in intensity, eventually culminating in a bloodcurdling screech. The other cultivators only saw his blood vessels erupting, and like a fountain his blood sprayed out, falling like rain from the clouds. His heart was the last to explode and what was left of him, was only a bloody pulpy mess.

"Let us turn back," Jiang Ting, who was beside Ouyang Kuangsheng, spoke out.

“Encountering the Yellow Springs is a rare opportunity, if we are able to get past this, we will definitely reach the celestial lake. I want to give it a try.” As he stepped forwards, Ouyang Kuangsheng’s heroism reached to the clouds. Jiang Ting’s countenance changed as she quickly said persuasively, “Kuangsheng, do not act on impulse.”

“Jiang Ting, if you all want to turn back, you guys go on ahead without me.” Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed out loud as he continued forwards. Similar to before, the intensity of his blood pulsing heightened, and his heartbeat escalated.

It was as though a gale of raging wind gusted over the ancient pathway. Ouyang Kuangsheng’s blood seethed, but his steps were filled with an unbreakable determination, projecting an aura of courage as he advanced.

So what of it, if he were to face the Yellow Springs? Since he had already decided to enter, he would never turn back. Even if he ended up dying, so be it.

Those from the Ouyang and Jiang Clan were all extremely nervous as they locked their gazes upon this youth so blessed with unsurpassed talent. The weakness of Ouyang Kuangsheng was that he was too impulsive, and all consequences be damned. As long as he set his mind upon something, his will would never waver, regardless of what others said or did. Even if this pathway of the Yellow Springs led to hell, he would still be determined to walk on it.

Coming face to face with the Yellow Springs, repent and you shall be saved, yet he stubbornly refused to turn back.

“If I meet my end here, go find someone better.” Ouyang Kuangsheng had already advanced his way beneath the Yellow Springs Monument. His resolute expression remained unchanged, his long hair danced about in the wind, seeming as though he had no other concerns in the world.

Jiang Ting’s heart pounded madly from his behavior. Ouyang Kuangsheng halted his steps and released his Astral Souls. Watching his movements, her heart leapt to her throat, only to see a few moments later Ouyang Kuangsheng continue to slowly advance, as though every step he took was a remarkably challenging feat.

Gradually, Ouyang Kuangsheng’s position got further and further from the Yellow Springs Monument. With visible effort, he turned his body as he smiled at Jiang Ting and the others, “Go.”

Jiang Ting and the rest, could only nod heavily in agreement.

“What should we do?” Mo Qingcheng looked towards Qin Wentian.

“I wish to give it a try as well.” Qin Wentian gazed at Mo Qingcheng, startling her with his answer. However, she recovered swiftly and with a laugh said, “Then I shall accompany you.”

“No, wait for me here. If I’m unable to persist, I will return.” Qin Wentian gently pinched Mo Qingcheng’s nose as he smiled. He didn’t want Mo Qingcheng to be too worried.

“Okay...” Mo Qingcheng nodded. Qin Wentian turned about and proceeded to head towards the Yellow Spring Monument. His heartbeat escalated as his blood seethed and surged. As for why Qin Wentian wanted to attempt this was due to the pressure emanating from the Yellow Springs pathway; he could feel the power of his own bloodline throbbing in resonance. Such a sensation made him thirst for more.

As his blood rushed through him with greater intensity, his heartbeat pounded frantically. He didn’t realize that behind him, Mo Qingcheng had actually took a few steps forwards.

Qin Wentian could faintly sense that he was unable to control the power of his Bloodline Limit for much longer. That outpouring of energy soared, as his hair turned inky black, whisked about by the wind. As the roaring sound of rushing blood became increasingly louder, he could feel the countless streams of energy within its flow.

Finally, he arrived at the point below the Yellow Springs Monument. Halting his steps, he closed his eyes as he turned his perception inwards within his body. It was as though there was a blood-colored seal jumping about in excitement. And from the aura emitted from the blood seal, he could sense the terrifying amounts of energy contained within.

“Is this the physical materialization of the Bloodline Limit?” Qin Wentian’s heart was trembling. To think that he had actually managed to sense the reason for the resonance of his bloodline. He had a faint feeling that from now on, he could freely control this source of energy, integrating it into his attacks.

Was this a breakthrough? An advancement in the leveling up of his bloodline.

Inclining his head, Qin Wentian’s vision turned blood red, as a tyrannical pressure gushed forth, so massive it felt as though it could reach the heavens. His was a Monarch-level bloodline, how would this mere monument be able to faze it?

Countless blood-colored imprints rose up into the air, flying towards the Yellow Springs Monuments. In that instant, the monument glowed with a resplendent crimson light, shaking as it flew towards Qin Wentian, as though the two forces were having a confrontation.

Mo Qingcheng turned pale white as she witnessed the scene, nervous to such a degree her heart felt strangled. She bit down on her lips until fresh blood flowed, taking yet another step forwards against the tremendous pressure.

At this moment, Qin Wentian still had no awareness of Mo Qingcheng's actions. The imprints originating from his blood seal smashed towards the stone monument, and the monument's speed gradually slowed as the once resplendent crimson light turned dull.

Mo Qingcheng felt the sense of pressure growing weaker and weaker, and upon raising her head, she saw the monument fall from the air to land in front of Qin Wentian, as pressure no longer emanated from it.

"What, my bloodline can actually control this monument?" Wonder appeared on Qin Wentian's face. He felt that he had somehow formed a connection, binding him with the Yellow Springs Monument. Very quickly, Qin Wentian deposited the monument into his interspatial ring.

The alluring eyes of Mo Qingcheng flickered. "This..."

Ouyang Kuangsheng had turned to witness the confrontation, so stunned he remained rooted to the spot. Qin Wentian had actually subdued the Yellow Springs Monument?

Qin Wentian calmed the power of his Bloodline Limit, returning to Mo Qingcheng's side. He saw the traces of blood and bite marks on her lips, and he felt incomparably touched knowing that she had stepped onto the Yellow Springs pathway out of worry for him.

"Silly girl." Qin Wentian cupped Mo Qingcheng's face with his hands. Mo Qingcheng beamed with a sweet smile as she replied, "Let's be on our way."

"Okay." Qin Wentian nodded in agreement. However the very next moment, sounds of footsteps rang out as a few silhouettes appeared, coming out from one of the various pathways. Amazement was etched on the faces of the new arrivals upon seeing both Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng.

"You're alright?" Qian Mengyu asked in astonishment, she had initially thought that with how things had turned out earlier, Qin Wentian would surely have been finished.

"My luck is pretty good." Qin Wentian smiled. "We are on our way, do you want to go together?"

Glancing at the three others behind Qian Mengyu, Qin Wentian sighed silently. It seemed like they had suffered many casualties, to think that they were only left with four people.

“Fine.” Qian Mengyu agreed, as they both proceeded ahead. After several moments on the pathway, apprehension and vigilance could be seen in their eyes when they saw Ouyang Kuangsheng standing amidst a sea of corpses.

Upon noticing them, Ouyang Kuangsheng could only smile bitterly. Those that exited the Yellow Springs pathway would certainly be able to enter the celestial lake. However, the test earlier was ‘spoiled’ by a freak that had caused the entire Yellow Springs pathway to vanish. This meant that for later cultivators, there would be no test to obstruct their way. No one else would know that this test had ever existed.

Turning, Ouyang Kuangsheng no longer bothered with them as he sped forwards, hoping to be one of the first few to step into the celestial lake.

Qin Wentian and his party members also sped up, following closely behind Ouyang Kuangsheng, and all of them eventually exited this ancient pathway.

Those from the Greencloud Pavilion intentionally pulled Qian Mengyu back from following Qin Wentian and Ouyang Kuangsheng, widening the gap between them. Their actions caused Qian Mengyu to stiffen slightly, but she soon understood the meaning behind it. They were afraid that Ouyang Kuangsheng might launch a sneak attack.

After Ouyang Kuangsheng and Qin Wentian exited the ancient path, the first thing they saw were a pair of ancient trees, each standing at both sides of the road. Dazzling starlight could be seen flowing from the branches of the trees, originating from its fruits.

“Haha, light at the end of the tunnel, indeed.” Ouyang Kuangsheng instantly sprinted towards one of the trees as he leapt upwards and began rapidly plucking the fruits.

Qin Wentian locked eyes with Mo Qingcheng, as they sprinted towards the other tree to pluck its fruits. Their speed was amazingly quick so by the time Qian Mengyu and her company arrived, about half the fruits had already been plucked clean.

“Stellar Fruits.” Those from the Greencloud Pavilion were thunderstruck, as they, too, hurriedly sprinted towards the ancient trees.

“What are the use of these Stellar Fruits?” Qin Wentian looked towards Qian Mengyu as she asked.

“The Stellar Fruits are only useful in this spatial dimension; eating it will replenish one’s Astral Energy, and could be considered an extremely useful treasure inside the Refinement Grounds.” Ouyang Kuangsheng explained. He had already harvested all the fruits from the tree he’d run to.

Qin Wentian’s eyes brightened as he shifted his gaze to those from the Greencloud Pavilion. “There’re plenty of fruits here, let’s split them equally according to our number of people.”

“Why must we split them equally?” A female cultivator standing next to Qian Mengyu questioned, a sharp light glinting in her eyes.

Qin Wentian’s eyes turned frosty as he stared at the female cultivator, “What do you mean?”

“We allowed you to tag along and this could already be considered us taking care of you. Naturally, it will be up to us to decide how the fruits should be split. But don’t worry, you will surely get your share,” the female cultivator coldly stated, contempt apparent in her tone. This fellow was truly indulging in his own wild fantasies, he actually wanted to split the fruits equally?

From her point of view, the fact that they allowed Qin Wentian to follow them earlier was already a kindness bestowed to him by their Greencloud Pavilion. If it were not for them blocking the combined assault by the Beast King Hall and the Skydemon Sect back then, Qin Wentian would have already died.

“So, you mean that the fruits won’t be split equally?” Qin Wentian’s voice got colder by several degrees. He was the first to obtain the Stellar Fruits, and also the one who suggested the equal split. However, it appeared that those from the Greencloud Pavilion didn’t appreciate this kindness, and on the contrary, they still felt that he was too greedy.

Ouyang Kuangsheng was similarly dumbstruck, but soon after, an expression of interest appeared on his face. They took care of Qin Wentian? Forming an alliance was originally of mutual benefit to all parties and they would naturally face incoming danger together. But from the tone of her words, it was as though allowing Qin Wentian to join them was an act of charity on their part.

“Brother Qin, even if you want to split, you should be splitting the fruits with us.” At this moment, another row of silhouettes appeared by the ancient path’s exit. These new arrivals were none other than Mu Baifei and the others. The one who spoke was Yi Xiang, as his eyes narrowed, looking at Qin Wentian. Naturally, it went without saying how important the Stellar Fruits were within the Refinement Grounds.

Qin Wentian glanced at Yi Xiang, Mu Baifei and the rest of the members from his earlier alliance. There wasn’t a single kind soul amongst this group of people, indeed.

Chapter 185: Vying Over

Qin Wentian frowned upon hearing the words spoken from the female cultivator of the Greencloud Pavilion. In any case, he wasn't that familiar with their group, he was merely acquainted with Qian Mengyu.

"What do you think?" Qin Wentian asked, as he directed his gaze at Qian Mengyu.

"Miss Mengyu, this man here received our care earlier, and based on logic, by right we should decide how to split the Stellar Fruits. Not only that..." The female cultivator cast a glance at Mu Baifei and his party members. The way these new arrivals looked at the Stellar Fruits were akin to a tiger looking at its prey.

With sufficient Stellar Fruits in their hands, even if they didn't have the advantage in numbers, those from the Greencloud Pavilion would be able to go all out in utilising their Yuanfu-level innate technique, regardless of the consumption rate. They had no need to fear Mu Baifei and his party at all.

Qian Mengyu's brows were knitted, and as she locked eyes with Qin Wentian, she intoned in a low voice, "Forget it, since we are acquaintances, let's split the fruits equally."

Qian Mengyu didn't wish to haggle so much, after all they had four people, and Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng were only two. Even if they split the Stellar Fruits equally, the Greencloud Pavilion group would still get more.

Maybe, in Qian Mengyu's heart, she did indeed think that Greencloud Pavilion should decide the split. After all, Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng were at a disadvantage in comparison. If it were any other cultivator instead of Qin Wentian, she would have definitely gone all out to kill them and then plundered the Stellar Fruits.

Qin Wentian was no longer as naive as he used to be. Upon hearing Qian Mengyu's words, he could already guess her thoughts. However at that moment, the female cultivator beside Qian Mengyu interjected, "No way, Miss, now that there are external enemies, if we still split the fruits equally with them, wouldn't that mean we are just giving the Stellar Fruits away? Don't tell me that you're hoping for them to clash against Mu Baifei and his party."

The female cultivator could also be considered a beauty; her looks were delicate and exquisitely formed but seeing her current expression, Qin Wentian felt nothing but disgust.

With a few Stellar Fruits in his hands, Qin Wentian walked forwards to hand them over to Qian Mengyu. "Don't worry, we won't implicate your Greencloud Pavilion. As for these fruits, consider them my gift to you."

After speaking, he turned his gaze towards the other three cultivators from the Greencloud Pavilion, coldly remarking, "Since you are all so adamant about splitting the Stellar Fruits, on what grounds do you have that I must split them with you? I was the one to obtain these fruits, if you wish to try and snatch them, bring it on."

Qin Wentian pulled Mo Qingcheng away, his anger was obvious to all.

“You ungrateful bastard, forgetting our earlier help the moment you find treasure. If not for us, would you even still be alive?” Killing intent flashed in the eyes of the female cultivator as she pointed her finger straight at Qin Wentian, her rage boiling to the max. Qin Wentian was too impudent.

“Shut your mouth,” Qin Wentian coldly replied, “Earlier, when we were surrounded, the two of us drew away five cultivators. In the end, we finished them off ourselves, when did your Greencloud Pavilion ever protect us?”

“Hehe, Brother Qin hold on. First off, why don’t you temporarily put aside your underlying issues with the Greencloud Pavilion? Back then you entered into our alliance based on my introduction, and now that you have the Stellar Fruits, shouldn’t you pass them to us?” Yi Xiang was smiling coldly. The moment these cultivators saw a treasure, they could no longer hold back their greed. After all, no one knew what else might happen in future in the Refinement Grounds. It would always be better to have the Stellar Fruits at hand to replenish their energy.

Qin Wentian saw Ouyang Kuangsheng leisurely standing to the side, as though watching a show. Despite the fact that Ouyang Kuangsheng had a large amount of the Stellar Fruits on him, no one tried to bother him. The other cultivators all chose to target Qin Wentian instead, apparently thinking he was easier to bully.

“You think too much, I applaud your imagination.” Qin Wentian cast a glance at Yi Xiang, as he continued walking away with Mo Qingcheng.

“Hehe, hand over all the Stellar Fruits on you right now,” a Swallow Swordsman spoke calmly. He walked away from Mu Baifei’s side, directing his stare at Qin Wentian, Mo Qingcheng, as well as those from the Greencloud Pavilion. There was an inherent arrogance in his eyes, considering everyone else to be beneath him.

“Let’s go.” Qin Wentian held onto Mo Qingcheng’s hands as they sprinted forwards, not wanting to waste their time with these people.

“Let us leave, as well,” Qian Mengyu spoke, as her party members similarly sprinted forwards. The Swallow Swordsman laughed coldly as he directed his alliance to run after them.

Ouyang Kuangsheng had an expression of interest reflected on his countenance. It was said that every time the Stellar Fruits appeared, a dispute would surely take place. In the eyes of everyone, the Stellar Fruits were a treasure, but was its existence not a disaster, instead? Or maybe, the Stellar Fruits themselves were also another kind of test.

At this moment, turning his head back, Ouyang Kuangsheng saw several silhouettes sprinting towards his direction. He saw cultivators from the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect, and even

Wang Clan cultivators from the War Continent. It seemed like this time round the dispute would be extremely exciting to watch.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng.” The few cultivators from the Wang Clan halted their steps, as Wang Xiao, who was in the lead, swept his gaze over to Ouyang Kuangsheng. Taking note of the tree’s appearance, a sharp glint of light flashed in his eyes. “You obtained the Stellar Fruits?”

Ouyang Kuangsheng glanced at Wang Xiao. He knew that if this fellow were to truly attack in a frenzy, everyone would definitely fear him to some degree. Not bothering to reply, Ouyang Kuangsheng’s lips curled up into a cold smile as he too, sprinted ahead.

On the spacious pathway, cultivator after cultivator dashed madly ahead. Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng were currently leading, but their countenances soon became worried.

A gigantic, towering mountain rampart came into view, its peak so tall that it seemed to touch the clouds. There was only a single pathway through its middle. At the moment, that pathway seemed to release a powerful force of suction, as hurricanes howled, lacerating the space within. It seemed extremely terrifying.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng halted their steps, their countenances extremely unsightly as they stared at the towering mountain rampart in front of them.

“Qingcheng, take these. Be careful.” Qin Wentian retrieved a few Stellar Fruits, passing them over to Mo Qingcheng. She lightly nodded, as they both turned only to see the clouds of dust kicked up by the cultivators approaching in a rush. The Greencloud Pavilion cultivators were one of the first few to arrive, and as they saw the towering mountain ahead of them, the expression on their faces became exceedingly ugly to behold.

Since there was actually a mountain rampart blocking their path, they wouldn’t be able to avoid the dispute. And as for those who possessed the Stellar Fruits, they would surely be the target for others.

Mu Baifei and his alliance also arrived, however they weren’t in a hurry to make their move. They also realised that there were still many others behind them.

Several moments later, the rest of the cultivators all arrived at the mountain rampart. Each cultivator stood about randomly, their ulterior motives apparent on their faces.

Ouyang Kuangsheng cast a glance at the crowd, before shifting his gaze back onto Qin Wentian. This matter had become so troublesome, and was all because of Qin Wentian. If it weren’t for him

subduing the Yellow Springs Monument, the vast majority of the current crowd would never have made it this far.

“Qian Mengyu from the Greencloud Pavilion. Turn the fruits over, with your strength, there’s no way you could hold onto them.” Mu Baifei took a step forwards, staring at Qian Mengyu. A condescending tone could be heard in his voice as he and the two other Swallow Swordsmen drew their swords. At that instant, a monstrously sharp sword Qi could be felt tearing apart space, gushing towards the four cultivators from the Greencloud Pavilion.

“Try it.” Qian Mengyu’s countenance was exceedingly unpleasant to behold.

Mu Baifei and the two swordsmen advanced as the monstrous sword Qi increased in strength. A suffocating sword intent permeated the air as their Astral Souls were released, inundating the area with a dazzling light.

The Swallow Swordsmen naturally condensed Sword-type Astral Souls. The three of them stood shoulder to shoulder, pointing their fingers forward. An instant later, tens of millions of sharp swords materialized into a roiling tempest of flying blades. The tempest howled furiously, seeking to decimate all that blocked their path.

“What a powerful sword Qi.” The crowd gasped in awe.

At this moment, a long sword could also be seen in Qian Mengyu’s hands; she was proficient with the Sword-type innate technique, Sword of Nine Lives. Wielding the sword in an intricate dance, it contained overflowing vitality and an undying will. At that instant, the female cultivators beside her also unleashed their attacks, all of them combining their powers together, seeking to clash directly with the oncoming sword tempest.

Swish, swish, swish. The terrifying sword Qi emanated by both sides was exceptionally ear-piercing, as the combatants were engulfed in a storm of swords. The Swallow Swordsmen continued their advances, as boundless amounts of sword Qi gushed forth with every step they took. They flicked their sword fingers out unceasingly, layering their terrifying sword intent, stacking over each other, becoming increasingly stronger.

Qin Wentian stood witnessing their battle, silently musing that they were indeed Swordsmen that hailed from transcendent powers. Any one of the three was sufficient to dominate anyone who had participated in the Jun Lin Banquet, including himself from back then. However as of now, Qin Wentian didn’t feel that he was weaker compared to them.

The current Qin Wentian versus the previous Qin Wentian; who knew how many times stronger he was now in comparison to back then.

“Brother Qin, you can witness for yourself exactly how strong the Swallow Swordsmen are. A wise man submits to his circumstances, we won’t hold it against you if you hand over the fruits now.” Yi Xiang walked forwards, standing in front of Qin Wentian as he spoke in a low voice, with a vile smile painted on his face.

Qin Wentian cast a glance at Yi Xiang, his reply was only a single word, “Scram.”

Yi Xiang’s countenance sank, as his demeanor became sinister. Glaring at Qin Wentian before glancing at Mo Qingcheng, he stated, “Brother Qin, it’s okay if you wish to die, but why must you drag down such a beautiful girl with you?”

Qin Wentian stared at Yi Xiang, an icy cold glint of light could be seen flickering in his eyes, causing Yi Xiang to be filled with a sense of danger. That harmonious looking youth was actually capable of bringing forth such pressure when angered.

“We will hand the fruits over.” At this very moment, on the battlefield some distance away, Qian Mengyu and her party members were forced all the way to the mountain rampart by the three Swallow Swordsmen. With their backs to the mountain wall, with no further paths of retreat, and in addition to the ever strengthening sword Qi, those from the Greencloud Pavilion could only obediently submit and hand over the Stellar Fruits in their possession.

“Puchi~ Fresh blood spurted out, as a female cultivator behind Qian Mengyu was run through by a sword, dying on the spot. Qian Mengyu stiffened, as her countenance became incomparably unsightly.

And at the same time, the monstrous sword intent dissipated as Mu Baifei calmly stated, “Since you already knew the result would turn out like this, why did you still resist in the first place?”

His voice was heavily tinged with arrogance as he stretched out his hands towards Qian Mengyu.

Qian Mengyu turned ashen as she handed the Stellar Fruits over. Only now did the crowd know the dispute was over vying of the Stellar Fruits.

“That’s all? The amount of Stellar Fruits can’t be so few, right?” Mu Baifei serenely spoke. After which, one of the female cultivators raised her hands, pointing her finger towards Qin Wentian,

“The remaining fruits are all in his hands, while the entire hoard of Stellar Fruits of the other tree is in Ouyang Kuangsheng’s possession. Go snatch them if you have the ability to.”

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows as he saw Mu Baifei walking towards him. Just as serenely as before, Mu Baifei asked, “Where are the Stellar Fruits?”

His eyes were filled with disdain, staring condescendingly down at Qin Wentian. How could the amount of Stellar Fruits he obtained be sufficient to split with those in his alliance.

“Hehe, Brother Qin, if you infuriate Brother Mu, I’m afraid that you won’t be able to keep your little life.” Yi Xiang snickered, with a hint of intimidation.

“My life? Do you believe I won’t take your life first?” The demonic look in Qin Wentian’s eyes got more and more pronounced, his incomparably calm voice caused Yi Xiang’s countenance to freeze, and his expression became increasingly unsightly.

“He should have several Stellar Fruits in his possession, you guys go ahead and split them amongst yourselves,” Mu Baifei spoke to those in his alliance, causing their eyes to glimmer with greed.

It was very obvious Mu Baifei fully understood the current situation. He was not the only one that wanted the Stellar Fruits; there were still many others from the various transcendent powers eyeing the fruits akin to tigers watching their prey. The strength of his alliance was still insufficient to possess this entire batch of treasures alone.

Not only that, with his pride and arrogance, he felt that it was beneath his dignity to act against a nameless someone with no backing whatsoever.

Chapter 186: Mystic Moon Hall

Yi Xiang and one other, stared down Qin Wentian, stepping out to walk towards him.

“Brother Qin, you’re the one who can’t appreciate a favor. Don’t blame us,” Yi Xiang spoke indifferently, his killing intent radiating outwards. He truly wanted to see Qin Wentian, an ignorant person hailing from a small country, what capabilities did he have indeed to be this arrogant? Qin Wentian didn’t even know of the Ouyang Aristocrat Clan or any of the other transcendent powers. What were his origins, exactly?

Buzz~ Yi Xiang and the others made their moves, releasing their Astral Souls.

Qin Wentian's countenance was extremely cold . How could there be such a logic stating he had to hand over the Stellar Fruits after obtaining them. His long hair was fluttering about in the wind, as demonic Qi emanated forth. All the blood in his body seethed, as the blood seal jumped about in a frenzy, containing an incredible power within.

“DIE.” The pressure their opponents emitted came smashing down on them. Yi Xiang and one other dashed towards them, attacking with wild abandon. Mo Qingcheng wanted to counter their attacks, but stopped when Qin Wentian replied, “Leave this to me.”

As the sound of his voice faded, his silhouette transformed into a blur of shadows, instantly appearing before the two opponents as he unleashed a terrifying palm imprint.

4th Stance of the Thousand-Hand Imprints – Kuji Imprint

As the Kuji Imprint burst forth, a sense of overwhelming desolation filled the atmosphere, where nothing existed. The power behind the imprint was intent on eradicating everything in its path. Not only that, the gigantic palm's terrifying manifestation also retained an incomparable sharpness of sword intent. Qin Wentian had executed the Kuji Imprint with the sword-type Divine Yuan Energy in his body.

The expressions of the two attackers froze on their faces; the might of the gigantic palm imprint they sensed contained a pressure so stifling, they couldn't even breathe. It was as though the Kuji Imprint was the only thing that existed in this entire world, sweeping forwards with unstoppable force.

The crowd felt terror in their hearts upon seeing the palm imprint of Qin Wentian. It was unfathomably astonishing as to the depth of power it held; it radiated a bloody sheen and the aura of an Emperor could be felt within .

Since Yi Xiang and the other attacker had no way to retreat, they could only summon all their strength to defend against Qin Wentian's palm attack. As a thunderous sound echoed out, both Yi Xiang and the other attacker's arms instantly shattered. Horror filled their eyes as the Kuji Imprint devoured them whole. The pressure of overwhelming desolation smashed their bodies into pieces, before grinding the pieces into dust. No trace of their corpses remained.

“How powerful.”

The countenance of everyone in the crowd froze as they stared at Qin Wentian. They could tell that the earlier palm imprint was at least a middle-tier, earth-grade innate technique. The pressure released was capable of overwhelming destruction; Yi Xiang and the other attacker died before they had a chance to use their trump cards.

The lone youth stood there, his hair an inky black. His aura was incredibly fiendish and demonic Qi was gushing out from him as it grew stronger and stronger by the second. The blood in his body surged and seethed, as he projected an aura of such absolute obedience it seemed as though even kings and emperors had to submit to him.

Currently, he was still young, but if he were to mature in strength, the domineering force behind his aura of absolute obedience would intensify even further. The power of his bloodline limit had definitely come from an exalted and extraordinary lineage.

Expressions of extreme fascination appeared on the faces of Qian Mengyu and those from the Greencloud Pavilion. Qian Mengyu silently mused in her heart, it seemed like she had still underestimated the combat prowess of Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian felt energized by the power of his bloodline limit, sensing the blood seal within his body jumping in a frenzy. This power would seep into his attacks, further enhancing their might to another level.

“So what if you guys managed to obtain the Stellar Fruits? Are all of you blind? Do you think the Swallow Swordsmen would lead you to the celestial lake? Can you clearly not see how many other experts are standing behind you?” Qin Wentian swept his gaze towards those in the Yi Xiang’s alliance. Upon hearing his words, their countenance stiffened as they looked behind, their hearts filled with trepidation.

“Without sufficient power, being a follower of others is equivalent to travelling alone. Only death awaits you at the end of the road.” At the end of his sentence, the ancient halberd appeared in Qin Wentian’s hands, slamming its tip into the ground as if to further emphasize his words.

“What wild words. Mere pretentious bravado.”

Mu Baifei indifferently snorted at Qin Wentian’s speech. His white robes fluttered as his sword Qi propagated, his eyes boring into Qin Wentian’s.

“Take him down,” Mu Baifei commanded, contempt heavily coloring his tone while his countenance still remained as serene as before.

The two other swordsmen from the Yan Continent nodded, and released their Astral Souls. In unison, they walked towards Qin Wentian, their sword fingers marking him as their target.

Qin Wentian stared coldly at the two Swallow Swordsmen, similarly walking towards them with the ancient halberd equipped in his hands. With every step he took, the demonic aura he released grew stronger and stronger. His eyes resembled tunnels of endless depths, so deep a person could drown in them should they dare to meet his gaze.

The two white-clad swordsmen stabbed out with their sword fingers, as tremendous amounts of sword Qi swirled about, lacerating the void as tens of millions filaments of sword light bloomed.

Qin Wentian weaved the ancient halberd in beautiful arcs, as an illusory form of a towering Xuanwu Tortoise appeared, immovable even in the presence of his opponent’s sword Qi.

“Hmph.” The two Swallow Swordsmen laughed coldly. Flicking their fingers, two exceptionally sharp swords materialized from above the defending phantom, chopping downwards to tear the illusory Xuanwu Tortoise apart.

The blood seal within his body trembled; the power of his bloodline limit seeping into his innate techniques caused the defense of the illusory Xuanwu manifestation to be overwhelmingly strong. Qin Wentian took another step forwards, his aura directly clashed against the overflowing sword might, counter-pressuring his opponents.

The two Swallow Swordsmen snorted with indifference, as they too, took a step forwards. Sweeping their sword fingers out in a horizontal slash, their energy input caused the filaments of sword light to grow even stronger and more resplendent.

At that instant, Qin Wentian dashed forth, smashing his ancient halberd forwards. The illusory form of the towering Xuanwu howled in rage as it rushed out; the abundant amount of blood light erupting outwards covered the entire space, acting as a barrier against the overflowing sword Qi. The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian’s hands transformed into a dazzling stream of light, breaking apart all that obstructed his way.

The two swordsmen retracted their sword fingers while unsheathing their physical swords. This was the first time they had taken their swords out of their scabbards, the silvery glow reflected off their swords was extremely blinding, causing pain to the eyes of those who saw it.

The two swords simultaneously slashed out, clashing directly against the incoming ancient halberd of Qin Wentian. The power gushing forth from the ancient halberd subdued the terrifying bursts of sword Qi, seemingly groaning under its pressure before dissipating. The two Swallow Swordsmen were forced backwards from the impact, their countenance incomparably unsightly. The power contained within Qin Wentian's attack was immeasurably formidable.

Despite this, they instantly recovered their stances, dancing about with their swords. The faltering sword Qi grew increasingly stronger, as they both transformed into two streams of lights, explosively dashing towards Qin Wentian.

Casting a glance at the ancient halberd of Qin Wentian, Mu Baifei could tell that it was a divine weapon. The already tyrannical attacks of Qin Wentian were even more overwhelming with the augmentation effects of his divine weapon.

Mu Baifei's silhouette flickered, his movements akin to the wind. His sword keened, as he unsheathed it with blinding speed. Although his sword strike was delivered after theirs, it actually arrived in front of Qin Wentian at the same moment as the two other swords. Three sword attacks from three different angles, wanting to steal Qin Wentian's life away.

"Mu Baifei, your reputation is undeserved." Ouyang Kuangsheng's countenance was filled with contempt upon seeing Mu Baifei's actions.

Swallow Swordsmen were known for their outstanding attacks, yet even with two, they were counter-pressured by Qin Wentian. And now, with the inclusion of Mu Baifei, there would be no glory even if they won.

Mu Baifei naturally knew this as well. But since he had already intervened, he knew he must kill Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian felt an overwhelming impending sense of danger. He quickly reacted, weaving the ancient halberd in his hands in a beautiful dance, as he swept it out horizontally to block. As expected, although Mu Baifei's sword position appeared to be further away, it was just an illusion. If his reaction has been slower by even a microsecond, the sword would have already penetrated through Qin Wentian's throat.

Borrowing the power generated from the force of the impact, Qin Wentian executed the Garuda Movement Steps to its utmost limits, his perfected steps appearing exquisite beyond comparison as he retreated. The swords of the two other attackers missed Qin Wentian by an instant, but the

terrifying sword Qi of their attacks still slashed towards his face, causing him to feel a sticky sensation.

As he was retreating, he gingerly touched his face, only to feel traces of blood seeping out.

“Swallow Swordsmen?” Qin Wentian inclined his head, staring at his three attackers. An expression of ridicule appeared on his countenance, as he coldly continued, “They’re nothing much, after all.”

His words caused the countenances of the crowd to transform into something extremely fascinating to behold. Qin Wentian was truly powerful, to think that he could block a joint attack from Mu Baifei and the two other Swallow Swordsmen.

Mu Baifei pointed his sword straight at Qin Wentian, as he replied, “Is that so?”

As the sound of his voice faded, the eruption of sword Qi from Mu Baifei grew even stronger.

Upon observing all these happenings, a group of people walked towards Mo Qingcheng. As the companion of Qin Wentian, there should also be some Stellar Fruits in her possession right?

However, at this moment, an unknown figure appeared in front of Mo Qingcheng. This figure was robed in black, her delicate and exquisite figure was already sufficient to steal the breath of the crowd away. In addition to wearing a conical bamboo hat, she also wore a veil to conceal her features. Only a pair of exceptionally bright and clear eyes could be seen of her features.

The moment the mysterious figure appeared, a group of similarly clothed cultivators stood to her left and right, directly in front of Mo Qingcheng. Their movements caused the crowd to feel as if they were intentionally protecting her.

With the exception of the mysterious figure, the features of the rest of her comrades were unmasked, their beautiful faces could be clearly seen by the crowd.

“Does the Mystic Moon Hall wish to intervene?” A strange glow appeared in Mu Baifei’s eyes as he took in the situation. Those from the Mystic Moon Hall were always mysterious, cultivating many unfathomable and bizarre innate techniques that contained excessive Yin. Thus, the majority of cultivators from the Mystic Moon Hall were females.

Mystic Moon Hall of the Spirit Continent, it was one of the transcendent powers of the nine continents.

Initially, Qin Wentian was extremely worried for Mo Qingcheng, but upon seeing those from the Mystic Moon Hall protecting her, he let out a sigh of relief. However, he couldn't help but wonder at their actions. Mo Qingcheng was from Chu, and shouldn't have had contact with those from the Mystic Moon Hall before.

“She's from the Mystic Moon Hall?”

An excited gleam appeared in the eyes of Shiki from the Beast King Hall as he took note of Mo Qingcheng. Although Mo Qingcheng's current features were obscured, he had once seen what she really looked like. And now upon seeing the group of cultivators from the Mystic Moon Hall guarding Mo Qingcheng, he deduced that she was definitely one of the important chosen disciples from Mystic Moon. This knowledge caused his lust to soar even higher.

“Hehe, ATTACK,” Shiki coldly commanded. An instant later, the cultivators from the Beast King Hall lunged out, as terrifying demonic Qi permeated the air.

“A bunch of vile bastards.” Someone in the Mystic Moon Hall ridiculed. The majority of cultivators in the Beast King Hall were all of beastmen lineage. Upon hearing the taunt, their anger exploded as they clashed with those from the Mystic Moon Hall.

“You are mine.” A smile of lust appeared on Shiki's face as he crouched down on all fours, darting towards Mo Qingcheng. An extremely icy look flashed in Mo Qingcheng's eyes as she released her Astral Souls. As a Yuanfu cultivator, even though her Yuanfu was currently suppressed, she would still have an advantage when fighting against cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Realm.

Qin Wentian glanced in the direction of Shiki, furrowing his brows as a terrifying cold light flickered in his eyes. In his heart, he had already sentenced Shiki to death.

Qin Wentian opened his mouth, swallowing a Stellar Fruit just as a wave of terrifying sword Qi gushed over from the approaching Swallow Swordsmen.

“There's still time for all of you to stop your actions now,” Qin Wentian coldly stated. He was extremely worried for Mo Qingcheng.

“You must die here today,” Mu Baifei just as coldly, replied.

The three of them joined hands to attack Qin Wentian. If he were to still survive, what would happen to their reputation? And in future, how could they still have the face to interact with cultivators of the same generation within the nine continents?

Currently, all of them already were half a step into Yuanfu. In just a mere year or two later, it would be their turn for their names to shine brilliantly.

“Since you wish to court death so much, I shall grant it to you.” Qin Wentian slammed his ancient halberd downwards, embedding it in the ground as a terrifying tempest of sword Qi emanated forth from him

To their extreme astonishment, the crowd saw countless swords manifest from Astral Energy, flickering about Qin Wentian, and shrouding him within. The sharp keen of swords grinding each other could be heard, as an incredibly monstrous sword Qi emanated forth.

Chapter 187: Ouyang Joins the Battle

“Sword Qi.”

Mu Baifei and the two other swordsmen furrowed their brows. Resplendent sword light, flickered all around Qin Wentian, its radiance shrouding him within. The Astral Light transformed into countless numbers of flawlessly sharp swords, each emitting a keening wail.

Relentless waves of monstrously sharp sword Qi gushed out from each sword formed from the Astral Light.

“How amazing.” The crowd stared at Qin Wentian, flabbergasted. This fellow wasn’t from any of the transcendent powers, so how could his combat prowess be at this high a level.

And yet the aura of Qin Wentian kept climbing upwards with no signs of stopping. An incredibly demonic presence could be felt, as the blood seal inside his body multiplied. As the seals trembled violently, the bloody aura covered each and every one of the astral swords.

Glancing once more at Qin Wentian, his appearance transformed into a Bloodsword Sovereign, the demonic Qi he exuded only growing stronger and stronger.

“Since you all wish to court death, I shall grant you what you seek.”

Qin Wentian's words resounded through the air, sounding exceptionally tyrannical. He sought death for all present Swallow Swordsmen.

BOOM! Mu Baifei and his cronies moved, and in the midst of it all, Qin Wentian finally took a single step forwards.

With merely a single step, the keening wail of his swords intensified, as the countless astral swords combined together. The swords transformed, surging into a spiral of sword waves intent on devouring everything.

Mu Baifei's countenance changed as he coldly hollered, "SWORD HOWL!"

As the sound of his voice faded, boundless amounts of sword light generated from the three Swallow Swordsmen converged. Their Sword-type divine weapons grinded against each other, creating a cacophony of sword howls. Accompanying it all, the sword intent emanating in the air stacked over each other, overlapping and enhancing the power of the sword howls.

Under the overwhelming pressure that Qin Wentian exuded, the Swallow Swordsmen were actually forced to resort to these types of sword-combination attacks?

"DIE!" The Sword-type Divine Energy within his body erupted forth, powering his astral swords spiral and blasting them forwards. Tens of millions of swords amalgamated together into formation, becoming a single supreme sword. The sight of this phenomenon caused endless shock to the spectating crowd, not to mention the underlying fact that all Yuanfu Cultivators' Yuanfus were still sealed. If unleashed outside of the Refinement Grounds, the power of this attack would be sufficient enough to kill Yuanfu experts, as well.

"KILL!" Mu Baifei and the two other Swallow Swordsmen roared, as the cacophony of sword howls shook the heavens, transforming into a gigantic dragon, dashing forwards with rage. This was an extremely high level innate technique that enabled the might of their sword to manifest into a real dragon. This technique could only be carried out if three sword cultivators joined their hearts and minds as one, creating the cacophony of sword howls before it could be executed. From this, it could be seen how great was their pressure when facing Qin Wentian.

The crowd was dumbstruck as they witnessed the events happening on the battlefield. The supreme sword, along with the sword spirals, collided explosively with the sword dragon, resulting in a burst of multi-colored radiance in the surroundings. The noise made by the sword howls, coupled with the sword keening, was so intense it almost broke the ear drums of everyone in the vicinity. Boundless bursts of sword Qi erupted in all directions, forcing the crowd of spectators to either dodge or suffer death.

At the area where Qin Wentian stood, clouds of dust flew all about as a result of the earlier attack. Mu Baifei and the two attackers burst into retreat; their white robes were lacerated into pieces, and traces of blood could be seen on their clothing. At this moment, their countenances all appeared to be incomparably heavy, as they stared at the tyrannical Qin Wentian in front of them. Despite their incredible sword-combination innate technique, they still failed to overcome Qin Wentian.

Nobody would have imagined that at this moment, Qin Wentian was exceptionally shocked as well. He was very clearly aware of the power of his own attack; the tremendous power of his sword-type Divine Energy transformed into Divine Imprints for attacking purposes. In addition to his powerful body and the augmentation of his power by his bloodline limit, this attack was something he had specially prepared to deal with Yuanfu cultivators. But to think that in the end, this attack still failed to kill Mu Baifei and the two other swordsmen.

This particular attack exhausted an extremely large amount of Qin Wentian's energy reserve. Despite this, he ate another Stellar Fruit, as he stared at Mu Baifei.

The countenances of the three Swallow Swordsmen were extremely unsightly. To think that they wanted to bully Qin Wentian into giving up the Stellar Fruits, but had rammed their toes into a metal board instead.

They were the prestigious swordsmen that hailed from the Yan Continent and had absolute confidence in their own powers. However, the three of them had actually been suppressed by a nameless nobody.

Not so far away, Qian Mengyu and the two other surviving female cultivators had expressions of extreme fascination on their faces.

Shock could be seen on Qian Mengyu's countenance, a thunderstruck expression reflected on her face. To think that he was so powerful, how laughable it was to assume Qin Wentian followed them because he needed their protection.

And what was even more ludicrous was that after Qin Wentian obtained the Stellar Fruits, he had wanted to split the fruits equally between them. However, one of her companions actually suggested that, because Qin Wentian was under their protection, his status was as one of their followers. Because of this, they themselves should decide on the division of the fruits according to their desires. In the end, although Qian Mengyu agreed to split the fruits equally, everyone could tell that she didn't do so willingly. Now that she thought of it, she couldn't help but feel a burning sensation on her face.

Qin Wentian was the one who suggested to split the fruits equally with them. Even if Qin Wentian didn't want to do so, what could they even do to him?

Mu Baifei and the other two swordsmen used their absolute strength to suppress the four of them, even killing one, yet the three swordsmen were totally suppressed by Qin Wentian alone.

The female cultivator beside Qian Mengyu, the one who kept making snide remarks towards Qin Wentian, turned ashen and pale white upon seeing the true combat prowess of Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian disregarded their opinion of him. At this moment, he stopped his attacks and stared straight at Mu Baifei and the two others. Although his earlier moves consumed a great portion of his Astral Energy reserve, he had sufficient power to unleash one final attack. But if he were to do so, he would be hardpressed to deal with any future troubles that might come by later. Similarly, the Astral Energy expenditure of Mu Baifei and the two swordsmen should have been astronomical, as well.

On the other side of the battlefield, Mo Qingcheng didn't suffer any disadvantages when fighting against Shiki. This was also the reason why Qin Wentian didn't immediately help out.

The cultivators from the Mystic Moon Hall seemed superior to those from the Beast King Hall in combat; this didn't mean that the overall strength of the Mystic Moon Hall was superior but instead, it was all because the veiled mysterious lady was extremely powerful. Her movements were like the shadows, giving people an unfathomable feeling. Her presence was so vague, to the extent it was difficult to even sense her existence. By the time she showed herself to her opponents, the long black lance equipped in her hands would have already penetrated through their hearts. Several of those beastmen died in her hands.

This caused many in the crowd to feel a chill in their hearts; the Mystic Moon Hall, one of the transcendent powers in the nine continents, were famed for their extremely sinister and crafty innate techniques. There were truly very few people who dared to antagonise them.

It was also rumoured that the training of the disciples from the Mystic Moon Hall was extremely brutal, to the point where it could be described as undergoing excruciating torture. Their aim was to polish their disciples into a sharp lance of darkness, training them in assassination.

However at this moment, Yao Sheng stepped forwards as the cultivators from the Skydemon Sect started to stir.

Although Yao Sheng and Shiki were in an alliance, he didn't opt to help out when the cultivators from the Beast King Hall were defeated. Instead, he chose to wait until several cultivators of the Beast King Hall died before taking action. This caused many to speculate that although he still wanted the alliance with Shiki, he didn't wish the Beast King Hall to be at full strength.

“Kill,” Yao Sheng coldly commanded, before sweeping his gaze over to Qin Wentian and the Swallow Swordsmen. It would be perfect if both parties were to heavily injure each other.

Qin Wentian frowned; he wasn't clear as to the reason why those from the Mystic Moon Hall chose to help Mo Qingcheng. But since they had done so, he didn't want any danger to befall them because of their decision. Yet, he was all alone, not allied to anyone and had no way to send help to them.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng, could you please help those from Mystic Moon Hall? After this, it can be considered that I owe you a favour. How about it?” Qin Wentian was still staring at the Swallow Swordsmen as he spoke, with his back facing to Ouyang Kuangsheng.

Ouyang Kuangsheng didn't expect that Qin Wentian would ask him for help. Contemplation shone in his eyes before he smiled, “Fine, but there's no need for you to owe me any favours. Let it be considered that I, Ouyang Kuangsheng, have made a friend.”

After speaking, he stepped out. Abruptly, a brilliant glow shone as his body was covered in terrifying flames. A fearsome heat emanated forth from him, as he shot a punch outwards. The cultivators in front of him felt their bodies boiling, exploding under the pressure.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng is truly powerful, so wild and unrestrained. To think that he would dare to offend two transcendent powers – the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect, just because of a single sentence from an unknown person.”

Many in the crowd marveled at the display, but then again they had already heard of Ouyang Kuangsheng's personality; he was truly someone who did what he wished at any moment with no concern for what others might think.

If he cared for their opinion, he wouldn't have waited so long before starting cultivation, even though others his age were already in the Arterial Circulation Realm. No one knew how many stares of contempt and derision he'd had to endure back then. However, he didn't give a damn about their contempt, and chose to wait until he was able to condense an Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer before commencing cultivation. His success had catapulted him from a nobody to having overwhelming fame in just a single night.

This kind of nonchalance by itself could also be considered a type of arrogance. He did whatever he wanted, the thoughts and feelings of others be damned.

It was only then that Ouyang Kuangcheng made a complete evaluation of Qin Wentian. There was no need to doubt his power after seeing him suppress the three Swallow Swordsmen, and there was no need to doubt his character after his previous offer to split the Stellar Fruits equally with those from the Greencloud Pavilion. The most important thing was that he personally witnessed Qin Wentian subduing the Yellow Springs Monument.

For thousands of years, the legend of the Yellow Springs ancient pathway had circulated around the nine continents. Coming face to face with the Yellow Springs, repent and see the shore (turn back and be forgiven). If one was powerful enough, they would be able to transcend the pathway and survive unscathed. But Qin Wentian was the first to directly subdue the Yellow Springs Monument.

Thus, after Qin Wentian spoke, Ouyang Kuangsheng only needed a few moments to consider before he agreed. A person like Qin Wentian was worthy of his friendship.

“Many thanks.” Qin Wentian could feel how forthright Ouyang Kuangsheng was. He, too, didn’t mind making such a friend.

And just like that, the various representatives of the transcendent powers were embroiled in the fights, caused by an unknown person – Qin Wentian.

But what a pity, those from the Greencloud Pavilion no longer had the qualifications to participate in the fierce battles. The girl accompanying Ouyang Kuangsheng, Jiang Ting and the other cultivators from the Jiang Clan, had not even arrived yet.

The only one remaining was, Wang Xiao, hailing from the Wang Clan of the War Continent. Many in the crowd swept their gaze towards Wang Xiao only to see him calmly standing, watching the events play out in front of him with no change in expression. No one could tell what he was thinking, but one thing everyone knew was that out of the transcendent powers that came to the Refinement Grounds, Wang Xiao was definitely one of the most powerful elites of the younger generations. His level of strength and combat prowess definitely didn’t lose out to Ouyang Kuangsheng.

They just didn’t know whether Wang Xiao would participate in this storm of battles for the Stellar Fruits.

But regardless of this, at this moment Qin Wentian could finally be at ease and focus on dealing with these three extremely tough-to-deal-with Swallow Swordsmen from the Yan Continent!

Qin Wentian pulled his ancient halberd out from the ground, his Astral Energy having already been fully restored by the Stellar Fruits.

By contrast, Mu Baifei and the two swordsmen didn't have any Stellar Fruits to consume. Fighting against the four female cultivators from the Greencloud Pavilion, fighting a battle with Qin Wentian, and especially executing their sword-combination technique; all these factors had already exhausted a large amount of their energy reserves. As they watched Qin Wentian strutting over, traces of wariness could be seen reflected in their eyes.

Mu Baifei raised the long-sword wielded in his hands, pointing it towards Qin Wentian. The reputation of the Swallow Swordsmen must not be besmirched by their hands.

The two other swordsmen raised their blades as well, the sword intent that emanated forth growing stronger by the second.

Psst~ Qin Wentian's silhouette transformed into a blurry shadow, and with explosive speed his ancient halberd erupted forth towards Mu Baifei. He opened the battle with the first stance of his Great Dream Halberd Art – Mountain Splitter. Cleaving apart mountains with a single strike, the power of this attack would undoubtedly strike fear in people's hearts. And what's more, this attack of Qin Wentian, was powered by the sword-type Divine Yuan Energy in his body.

As the leader for this group of Swallow Swordsmen, Mu Baifei's combat prowess was naturally the strongest, and he undoubtedly deserved his reputation. He moved his long-sword in gentle arcs, manifesting several streams of light from its tip, boiling with killing intent.

BOOM! The momentum forced Mu Baifei backwards, but at that moment, the swords of the other two instantly slashed out quick as lightning. Qin Wentian spun, maintaining his marvellous footwork, dodging while simultaneously blasting attacks out with his Fallen Mountain Palms. The might of the attacks he unleashed felt as heavy as a mountain and imbued with boundless strength, blocking the sword beam from the left. As the other sword beam shot towards him from the right, he flung out his ancient halberd, transforming it into a streak of light, flying straight towards Mu Baifei. He had voluntarily chosen to give up his weapon.

Puchi~ Qin Wentian spat out several beams of sword light towards his right, instantly dulling the sword might of his opponent. At the same moment, the sounds of gushing water gushing could be heard from the arterial pathways of Qin Wentian, as the Astral Energy within him began to seeth and surge.

“DIE!” The Astral Energy flowed into Qin Wentian’s arms, filling them with an incredibly fearsome power as he blasted forth with the Kuji Imprint. Within the palm imprint he struck out, layers of bloody light could be seen flickering within, as an aura of destruction emanated forth from it. Just as a thunderous sound echoed, the impact of collision flung the sword out of his attacker’s hands.

How ferocious was Qin Wentian’s speed? Along with this long-prepared strike, Qin Wentian simultaneously executed his Garuda Movement Technique to its absolute limits, appearing in front of his opponent in an instant. The countenance of the attacker turned incomparably unsightly. With a howl of rage, he hurriedly stabbed out with his sword fingers, as a surge of powerful sword intent gushed out from it.

But how could there be anyone who could compare to Qin Wentian in terms of close combat? His now-demonic eyes stared at his opponent, causing the other to experience a surreal sensation, akin to that of a nightmare. The earlier blood palm reached him, effortlessly destroying his pathetic attempts at a mounted defense, before barreling through and exploding the head of his opponent.

All that happened in a split-second, however, Mu Baifei and the other attacker swiftly countered his earlier attacks and responded with another of their own, causing a strong sense of danger to rise in Qin Wentian’s heart.

In that instant, Qin Wentian adjusted his attack, as the terrifying Divine Yuan Energy within him gushed out in a frenzy, transforming into resplendent astral swords explosively flying towards Mu Baifei. Evidently, Mu Baifei’s threat to him was obviously greater. At this exact moment, the sword of the other attacker neared. Qin Wentian sent out his left palm in response, only to see a beam of glimmering sword light slashing apart the space, as traces of blood appeared on his palms. The sword of his opponent was too sharp.

Against such an opponent, a moment of carelessness would mean death.

Qin Wentian retreated with rapid speed. Mu Baifei and his remaining crony knew that they had missed the best opportunity to kill Qin Wentian. Their gazes turned heavy as they stared at the corpse of their comrade, their killing intents soaring to the limits.

Qin Wentian turned back, glancing at Mo Qingcheng. Shiki was half-mad with anger; he had already went all out, transforming into his half-demonic form. He felt extreme shame at the thought of being unable to suppress Mo Qingcheng despite his status.

However, there was no need to worry about those from the Mystic Moon Hall. Ouyang Kuangsheng was truly powerful, so with him supporting those from the Mystic Moon Hall, as a group they weren’t inferior to those from the Skydemon Sect.

And as for those cultivators from the non-transcendent powers, they silently watched with glee. They were in the weaker position, and any outcome resulting from this fight would be extremely beneficial to them.

“Brr, what a cold wind.” At that moment, someone suddenly shivered. And the gale of cold wind only grew stronger and stronger.

The crowd of spectators furrowed their brows, as they gazed in a particular direction. The converging point of their focus was none other than the only gap through the Mountain Rampart! The suction force of that pathway became increasingly stronger, to the point where the nearby granules of sand and gravel started to fly towards it.

“What’s the hell is happening?” A few seconds later, a terrifying windstorm formed and could be seen swerving with incredible speed towards the gap. The suction force intensified as though the gap was the mouth of a gigantic demon wishing to devour everything.

Even the clothing worn on the bodies of the cultivators were fluttering in response to the suction force. Some of the weaker cultivators felt as though they were about to be swept off their feet, about to be drawn in. This terrifying sensation only escalated in strength.

Everyone ceased their attacks, and Qin Wentian was forced backwards by half a step from the force generated from the terrifying windstorm. Stabilizing his posture, Qin Wentian couldn’t even open his eyes, the demonic wind was simply too bizarre.

Underneath the pressure borne from the gale of demonic wind, many cultivators could no longer keep their steps steady but instead found themselves flustered as they stumbled about, trying to find their footing. A random cultivator was seemingly ‘directed’ by the suction force, barreling towards the direction of Qin Wentian. However, when he neared, that person abruptly turned about, brandishing a gigantic axe. He chopped down with ferocious speed, intent on smashing Qin Wentian apart.

Qin Wentian instantly broke out in a cold sweat. Under the suction force and the incoming windstorm, he couldn’t even move his body. How could he then dodge the strike? It was even tougher to summon the required strength to defend against the attack, not to mention the extremely terrifying force his attacker used to swing down the gigantic axe with. This ‘random’ cultivator was most definitely someone also standing at the peak of the younger generation scheming to obtain his Stellar Fruits.

Qin Wentian relinquished total control of his body, not fighting against the pull of the demonic wind. His body flew directly towards the gap in the Mountain Rampart, as the gigantic axe cleaved past. A fearsome axe light flickered, as sounds of laceration rang out. His robes were slashed apart as a long wound appeared in front of his chest.

BOOM! Qin Wentian slammed into the mountain wall, excruciating pain assailing his senses. The intensity of that surge of demonic wind was too terrifying.

“Wentian!” Mo Qingcheng’s worried voice drifted over. She had personally witnessed that terrifying axe cleaving downwards earlier, and was struggling to move towards Qin Wentian.

“I’m alright.” Qin Wentian turned his head, smiling at Mo Qingcheng. He felt the power of his bloodline limit surging, as the bloody wound on his chest slowly recovered. After which, he sensed the blood seal within his body leaping towards the direction of his wound, as his recovery rate visibly heightened. His heart trembled slightly; only now did he understand how powerful his bloodline was.

“Over here.” Mo Qingcheng reached her hand out to Qin Wentian, as he leaned against the mountain walls, moving towards her. With her dainty little hand finally in his grasp, he spoke, “Qingcheng, I don’t think anyone would be able to resist such a powerful gale of wind. Let’s allow nature to take its course, and we shall enter that pathway.”

“Mhm.” Mo Qingcheng lightly nodded her head, as they tightened their grasp on each other’s hands.

“Go.” Qin Wentian didn’t bother retrieving his ancient halberd, neither did he bother to look for the wielder of the gigantic axe. The most important thing now was safety. These cultivators were all extremely ruthless, and even in the face of the windstorm, people were still unwilling to miss a chance to get the Stellar Fruits.

The two of them completely stopped resisting the pull of the wind, allowing the currents to steer them towards the direction of the pathway. Yet another thunderous sound boomed. Qin Wentian could only feel his head spinning, not realising that he had slammed into the mountain walls. That gust of wind was so strong he couldn’t even open his eyes.

Circulating Astral Energy around his body, his blood seethed and surged, protecting his inner organs and vital channels. At the same time, Qin Wentian pulled Mo Qingcheng into his arms, using his body as a shelter to shield her from any collision as their bodies soared together with the currents of the raging wind.

Mo Qingcheng's inner organs shuddered violently, when suddenly she felt the warmth of an embrace. Sweetness filled her heart as she snuggled into Qin Wentian's protective hug, hugging him even tighter.

Qin Wentian was slammed again and again into the mountain walls by the merciless wind. Finally, after what felt like an eternity, Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng were ruthlessly hurled to the ground. Entwining their bodies together, they rolled sideways to cushion the force of the impact.

Opening his eyes, Qin Wentian gazed into the clear eyes of Mo Qingcheng, as a smile broke out on his face. They were still alive!

Mo Qingcheng smiled back sweetly in response.

As the two of them struggled to sit up, they felt as though their bodies were treated like punching bags, just bags of loose sand only held together by their tenacious wills.

Contemplating their surroundings, they were currently situated in the middle of a windstorm. The reason they could still feel such intense gales of wind was right in front of them; yet another terrifying windstorm faced them, with gusts of cold wind akin to sharp swords and sabres blowing in their path.

But as their eyes penetrated the windstorm, they saw a beautiful scene lying ahead. Towering stone pillar after pillar, so tall they seemingly reached the Heavens, were positioned to the side of a beautiful, starry lake. Star light cascaded downwards, illuminating the stone pillars. That must be the celestial lake.

As long as they could advance past the windstorm ahead, they would be able to immerse themselves in the waters of the celestial lake.

At that moment, the cultivators that survived from the suction force had all already arrived. When their eyes caught sight of the celestial lake, many discarded all traces of caution, madly rushing ahead to step inside the windstorm tempest. However, those same people quickly slowed their steps, shrouding their bodies with Astral Light in a protective radiance. They could sense how terrifying this final test was.

Advancing step by step, several of the cultivators had already entered the boundaries of the windstorm. Abruptly, one of the cultivators in the lead gave a bloodcurdling scream. His body was shredded into pieces, as blood fanned out in a mist. He had completed a third of the journey, but his energy reserves had been fully used up, and was unable to breach the final barrier.

Such a scenario was met with gasps of shock, especially from those that had already entered the windstorm. However, they had no time for regrets, and could only grit their teeth and continue persevering onwards.

The stench of blood grew increasingly stronger, causing many to tremble in fear. All of the cultivators that entered the windstorm had died. For the cultivator that travelled the farthest, he crossed no more than half the required distance.

“Stellar Fruits.” The gazes of several of the remaining cultivators landed on Qin Wentian and Mu Baifei. Those two were the only ones that possessed the Stellar Fruits, other than Ouyang Kuangsheng.

Without sufficient Astral Energy to protect oneself, entering the windstorm equated to certain death. The existence of the Stellar Fruits were precisely for this purpose – to breach the final barrier: entering the celestial lake.

The crowd moved quickly, surrounding Qin Wentian, Mo Qingcheng and Mu Baifei. Within the blink of an eye, they blocked their path, preventing them from entering the windstorm. It was not just them, even Ouyang Kuangsheng found himself surrounded.

They definitely had to obtain the Stellar Fruits, and were left with no other choice but to take this risk.

The windstorm whirled with ever increasing fury, until someone at last made their move. Wang Xiao of the War Continent was the first to take action, and his chosen target was none other than the Swallow Swordsman, Mu Baifei.

Qin Wentian glanced askance at the other Swallow Swordsman standing near Mu Baifei. Currently, he was the only one remaining out of the three Swallow Swordsmen; one had died and the other was occupied. When Mu Baifei finally noticed Qin Wentian’s cold gaze directed towards him, his heart shivered with debilitating dread.

Chapter 189: Wang Xiao of the War Continent

At this point, no one else dared to step within the windstorm tempest. It was clear to them that one was required to constantly circulate their Astral Energy to resist the windstorm, and once their energy reserves were exhausted, it would be too late to retreat even if you wanted to.

Now, even if the cultivators wanted to test the wind’s intensity, they wouldn’t directly enter the tempest. At most, they would only take a few steps nearer to it.

And the sole thought going through everyone’s mind was that, only with the Stellar Fruits would they be able to breach this current obstacle.

However, obtaining the Stellar Fruits didn’t even cross the mind of the remaining Swallow Swordsman; he was now only filled with concern regarding the safety of his own life. Seeing Qin Wentian advancing step by step, closer and closer towards him, he felt true fear for the first time.

Seeing the silhouette of the youth walking towards him, he felt an unprecedented sense of pressure. Earlier back then, the three of them joined hands to deal with Qin Wentian, but was still unable to get the better of him. Now, he was facing Qin Wentian alone.

Bzzz~ Qin Wentian executed his movement technique, and instantly arrived in front of his opponent. The Divine Yuan Energy within his arterial pathways circulated in a frenzy, blasting out a blood-colored Kuji Imprint that emanated an overwhelming pressure of desolation. The Swallow Swordsman turned white, as he raised his sword in an attempt to defend himself. The beams of sword light flickered, but appeared dull and lifeless under the bloody light of the Kuji Imprint. As the sounds of collision rang out, the Swallow Swordsman was forced into retreating several steps, as he could no longer maintain a steady stance.

After which, a sword beam flashed, followed by a gust of cold wind. The swordsman was left feeling a trace of coolness around his throat, before the sensation gave way to a stinging chill.

The sword in his grasp fell onto the ground, both of his hands wrapped around his throat, helplessly trying to staunch the wound. Despair flickered in his eyes, as his legs totally lost strength. Droplets of blood dyed the yellow sand a deep red, before his corpse slumped limply onto the ground, his eyes closing forever in eternal rest.

Traces of wariness appeared in the eyes of the spectators. Although Qin Wentian had Stellar Fruits in his possession, it wouldn't be so easy for one to get a hold of them.

Wang Xiao executed a fearsome innate technique, as he dashed towards Mu Baifei. His entire body was seemingly weaponised, as numerous flying daggers transformed into silver streams of light, flying unceasingly towards Mu Baifei.

Using his sword in defense, Mu Baifei blocked the flying daggers, trembling from the impact. Abruptly, the glow of more terrifying divine weapons flashed, as golden chakrams appeared, breaking apart Mu Baifei's defense while another long chain covered with sharp blades flew out. This forced Mu Baifei into constant retreat.

RUMBLE~ Wang Xiao's silhouette flickered, as he appeared in front of Mu Baifei. His arms were fully covered by silvery armor plating, easily brushing Mu Baifei's sword aside. Punching out with earthshaking strength, he slammed his fist into Mu Baifei's body, causing the latter to vomit large amounts of fresh blood.

"Wait, I'll give you the Stellar Fruits," Mu Baifei implored to Wang Xiao, his countenance turning bloodlessly pale.

Only after hearing this did Wang Xiao stop. Walking towards Mu Baifei, he had an expression of cool indifference on his face as he extended his hands outwards. Mu Baifei placed a Stellar Fruit into Wang Xiao's outstretched arms, only to see Wang Xiao frowning as he coldly stated, "Give me all the fruits. I shall not ask again."

Mu Baifei could only grit his teeth and comply, giving up all his Stellar Fruits to Wang Xiao. He would never have imagined that he himself, the pride of the Swallow Swordsmen, would actually be in such a state today.

Wang Xiao turned around, his followers appearing at his side as he distributed the Stellar Fruits equally between them. Obviously, it was plain to see that he would not be the only one to enjoy the benefits of the celestial lake; he wished for those accompanying him to enjoy them as well.

If Qin Wentian were to glance over, he would have realized that one of the followers of Wang Xiao was none other than his earlier attacker – the person who wielded the gigantic axe.

"We still need more..." Wang Xiao furrowed his brows as he turned his gaze onto Qin Wentian and Ouyang Kuangsheng.

Ouyang Kuangsheng was currently standing together with those from the Mystic Moon Hall. They seemed to have formed an alliance, together defending against the threat from the Skydemon Sect and Beast King Hall.

And as for Qin Wentian, after his killing of the Swallow Swordsman, many in the crowd were eyeing him but had yet to make a move against him.

Many of the cultivators had already fallen, with only around forty or above remaining. Wang Xiao cast his gaze around the crowd, a cold glint of light flickering in his eyes, as he pointed at the gap in the Mountain Rampart. "Those who don't wish to die, get over there now," Wang Xiao coldly commanded, his cool and indifferent countenance made it seem as though he was merely making an ordinary statement.

Several cultivators stiffened at his words as astonishment flashed on their faces. Narrowing their eyes, they discovered six other silhouettes standing behind Wang Xiao, making the total number of cultivators from the War Continent to be seven.

And just so coincidentally, there were only a total number of seven spots available for those qualified to immerse themselves into the celestial lake. It was evident what Wang Xiao's intentions were, even without words.

And not just his words, everyone in the crowd could sense how strong his arrogance was, and how exceedingly great his ambitions were as well.. He wanted those who came with him to monopolize the seven open spots available.

At this point in time, although several in the crowd knew they didn't have too great a chance to be one of the final seven, they still held a faint hint of hope in their hearts. They couldn't bear to give up this chance, and aside from that, there was still a cultivator amongst them who had a full tank of energy reserves. Making up his mind, he decisively stepped into the tempest, wanting to try his luck.

"Clear the battlefield," Wang Xiao's cold voice rang out, as his six of followers congregated together, standing in a line as an intense killing aura abruptly gushed forth. They were all akin to emotionless divine weapons, created only for killing. The six of them approached the crowd, as light from their own various divine weapons erupted forth in a shining radiance.

"KILL!" Sounds of rage rang out, as killing intent overflowed to the Heavens. Those from the Wang Clan transformed into terrifying killing machines, snuffing out their targets. Just as Wang Xiao commanded, they started to clear the battlefield.

The Wang Clan that always maintained a low profile, finally unveiled their true colours after gazing upon the celestial lake.

Killing intent akin to a raging wind devastated the entire space, and very quickly, four cultivators fell under their weapons.

Qian Mengyu and her fellow cultivators stood there, shivering with terror as they saw those from the Wang Clan walking towards them.

At this moment, Qian Mengyu's emotions were extremely complicated. She, who had always been conceited, didn't even have the qualifications to partake in the final battle.

The truth was cruel, but she had no choice but to accept it.

She was very clear of what today's confrontation indicated. Among the younger generations of the transcendent powers, she didn't even have the ability to stand on equal ground with them. Not to mention that for those who came today, this was not all that the transcendent powers of the Nine

Continents had to offer. If she couldn't even stand on equal grounds with them now, how could she ever have a place to rule in the vast stage that was the Nine Continents?

If in the future, this exact same scenario happened again, she would definitely be eliminated by the era, becoming just an ordinary someone.

In the countless years since the Nine Continents were formed, which of those monstrous geniuses didn't have to fight their own way up the ranks against those in the same generation, before their talent shook the world.

Sighing in her heart, Qian Mengyu bowed and walked in the direction of the gap, not even turning to look back.

Just today, her first loss was to Mu Baifei; Qin Wentian stood equally against three of the Swallow Swordsmen; Wang Xiao overwhelmingly dominated Mu Baifei.

One could well imagine how lousy she felt.

Seeing Qian Mengyu leading those from the Greencloud Pavilion away, many in the crowd also gave up their resistance, and decided not to participate in this dispute.

The reason why they participated in the tests, was none other than to obtain the chance to immerse themselves within the celestial lake. Although for many, the objective this time was to use this experience to temper themselves, it was more important to stay alive. Even though it was regretful to give up, they had already benefited from this trip. As long as they worked harder in their cultivation, they could still stand against these dazzling characters in future to truly see who was stronger.

Wang Xiao, Ouyang Kuangsheng, Mu Baifei and that nameless fellow. All these people were firmly engraved in the memories of the crowd. In the future, these people would surely leave their mark in the history of the Grand Xia Empire.

The cultivator who had stepped into the tempest earlier couldn't advance any further. Although he felt regret, he did not continue forward and chose instead to retreat. However, just when he was about to exit the tempest, his energy reserves ran out and so his body was shredded into pieces, lacerated by the powerful windstorm. This struck fear into the people's hearts.

Without Stellar Fruits, there shouldn't be anyone confident enough to breach the windstorm tempest.

Wang Xiao glanced at his surroundings; there were almost no bystanders left. The only ones remaining were those still in combat – the Skydemon Sect, Beast King Hall, Mystic Moon Hall and Ouyang Kuangsheng.

Ouyang Kuangsheng was truly powerful, indeed. He alone, was sufficient to stand against the half-mad Shiki and maniacal Yao Sheng. Not only that, he didn't appear to be any weaker than them, either. Let the terrifying storms and rain come as they may; he shall remain immovable, standing steadfastly on the ground. His attacks were just as wild and overbearing as before. Although people will say Ouyang Kuangsheng had a frivolous personality, and does whatever he wants without concern for others, during battle, regardless of his attack or his defense, both were at an extremely high level. From this, one could see that his foundations were well established, and had reached the peak of proficiency in his innate techniques.

Discounting those that were currently in battle, the ones remaining were only Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. Even Mu Baifei had given up.

Wang Xiao walked towards Qin Wentian, his followers trailing behind him. The aura they projected made it seem that these seven from the Wang Clan really intended to clear up the entire battlefield, eliminating all their competitors one by one, until the seven spots solely belonged to them.

Wang Xiao waved his hands, as his followers halted their movements. He then walked alone towards Qin Wentian. In the beginning, he had thought that in this tempering exercise, only Ouyang Kuangsheng was qualified to be his opponent. But after meeting Qin Wentian, he really wanted to test himself against this unknown stranger that could apparently fight against Mu Baifei and his two companions on an equal footing. He wanted to see how strong Qin Wentian was exactly.

“I shall deal with her then.” A figure behind Wang Xiao spoke. They understood Wang Xiao's intentions, but there was no way they would allow Mo Qingcheng to interfere with the battle of Wang Xiao and Qin Wentian.

After speaking, the figure walked towards Mo Qingcheng. It was none other than the person wielding the great axe who tried to ambush Qin Wentian.

Manifesting a surge of terrifying killing intent, Wang Xiao increased his speed, almost to the point of running, causing the yellow sand to scatter about his feet. Qin Wentian's feet shook slightly, as his silhouette disappeared from sight, dashing towards Wang Xiao in a similar fashion. Their intent to battle could clearly be seen reflected in the fiery glint in their eyes, the only difference between them being their aura. Wang Xiao's aura was emotionless and sharp, akin to a divine weapon, whereas Qin Wentian's aura was fiend-like and incredibly demonic, as though he were the monarch of all demons, unexcelled in the world.

Chapter 190: Might of the Yellow Springs Monument

Wang Xiao and Qin Wentian finally clashed, as they both raised their palms to attack. On Wang Xiao's body, a terrifying sharpness akin to divine weapons emanated forth. His arm alone had the aura of an exceptionally sharp sword.

Qin Wentian blasted out with his Falling Mountain Palms, its might manifesting the pressure of a gigantic mountain and slamming down with great power.

After they both matched palms, a deafening sound rang out as the pressure emanating from the Falling Mountain Palms seemingly dissolved into nothing. An ice cold sharpness shot through Qin Wentian's body, while a dream current shot forth from his eyes after locking gazes with Wang Xiao.

Wang Xiao narrowed his eyes, and an instant later, they turned a silvery white, protecting against the intrusion.

Puchi~ Qin Wentian spat out beams of sword light, while Wang Xiao spun in the air, causing several silver daggers to explosively fly towards Qin Wentian at the speed of lightning.

Qin Wentian's countenance stiffened, as he responded with his Dragon Subduing Fists. Twin dragons manifested, their roars shaking the Heavens as they blocked the comets of silver daggers.

Bzzzz! A resplendent golden ring of light exploded forth, spiraling with extreme speed, smashing towards Qin Wentian. He felt an extremely strong sense of danger; the power of the golden chakram were incredibly shocking.

"Kuji Imprint." Qin Wentian's palms blasted out with a strength that could topple mountains and overturn seas. As a thunderous sound echoed, he forced back the golden chakram, returning them to Wang Xiao. As Wang Xiao caught hold of the chakram, he simultaneously sent out a silvery chain to bind Qin Wentian. That golden chakram spun out yet again, with fearsome speed.

Wang Clan from the War Continent, a Clan that specializes in the forging of weapons. To them, the many powerful divine weapons found out there in the market were merely the same level as common ones. Those from the clan would have several divine weapons hidden on their body.

Pulses of blood light could be seen flickering on Qin Wentian's palm. The demonic Qi surged and seethed, and Qin Wentian manifested a gigantic palm shadow. He blocked the sneak attack and was unexpectedly successful in holding onto the silver metallic chain shot out by Wang Xiao, while his other palm once again repelled the golden chakram. The Qin Wentian at this moment seemed to possess an inexhaustible amount of energy.

Then, a dazzling white light intensified, as it erupted forth from Wang Xiao's body. It was as though he too, had a bloodline limit. An aura of sharpness enveloped his body, as his eyes glowed with a white light. A full set of armor manifested, as every part of Wang Xiao was protected, giving forth an emotionless and indomitable aura.

BOOM! Stepping forwards, it was as though Wang Xiao's entire body had transformed into several divine weapons. He stared at Qin Wentian, slashing out with his golden chakram while punching out with a fist coated by protrusions of sharpness, aiming for Qin Wentian's head.

"Wang Xiao from the War Continent, with his entire body seemingly weaponised. How terrifying." The spectators were all trembling with fear. Within the crowd, Wang Xiao, Ouyang Kuangsheng, and Qin Wentian were undoubtedly the strongest three.

Wang Xiao's attacking methods were innumerable and varied, yet he still could not handle Qin Wentian. At this moment, he was truly incensed.

Qin Wentian's palms were still locking down the silver chain, observing how Wang Xiao used his strength. An inexhaustible amount of sword rays erupted forth from Qin Wentian's body, as he forcefully tried to reel in his opponent. The sword-type Divine Yuan Energy within his body, started to gush out with no restraint. He emanated an aura of sharpness, wanting to lacerate everything into nothingness.

BOOM! Qin Wentian took yet another step forwards, relinquishing his hold on the chain. Sending out numerous palm shadows, his palm's might congealed into a spiral, battling against the multitude of divine weapons that Wang Xiao possessed.

"KILL!" a voice roared in anger, Qin Wentian continued forwards. The blood aura of his bloodline integrated within his sword aura, his appearance akin to a sovereign of swords.

Both their attacks collided, the resulting shock waves giving out a resplendent glow so blinding it was impossible for the crowd to even open their eyes. Both Qin Wentian and Wang Xiao were forced back by the impact. Particularly for Wang Xiao, there were actually traces of blood flowing down that indomitable weaponised body of his.

Wang Xiao froze in shock. Lifting his head, the aura he exuded got colder and colder, as they both retrieved a Stellar Fruit, devouring it. They knew that they had just met their strongest opponent.

Qin Wentian glanced at his side; Mo Qingcheng was currently fighting against the axe wielder, and looked to be completely suppressed by him. Her opponent was also of the Yuanfu realm, and all three of his Astral Souls were of the weapon-type kind, thus bestowing him with insane attack power. At that moment, he lifted his gigantic axe, madly cleaving downwards. Mo Qingcheng's countenance paled as she did her utmost to defend, but despite doing so, the incoming force still

caused her to spit out blood. Her breathing was ragged, but she still tried her best to suppress it, not wanting the sound to bother Qin Wentian.

Swish~ Qin Wentian's silhouette flickered, as he dashed towards Mo Qingcheng. However, the other members of the Wang Clan blocked his path, whilst an impending sense of doom approached him from the back. Wang Xiao trailed him from behind, as silver beams of light abruptly appeared.

"DIE!" Wang Xiao shouted coldly, as a silver-colored round ball appeared in his palms. The moment he flung out the silver ball, it exploded into countless silver fragments, each filled with a terrifying attack power. Each attack was akin to arcs of silver lightning, erupting towards the direction of Qin Wentian.

A glow of blood colored light gleamed in Qin Wentian's eyes as he explosively released the towering power of his bloodline, causing a stone monument to materialize directly in front of him. That, was none other than the Yellow Springs Monument.

He had just obtained the monument, and still didn't know how to utilize its power yet, but at this juncture, he had no other choice but to use it.

The moment his next step landed on the ground, Qin Wentian's demonic aura soared to the Heavens. The glow of blood flickered, as the resplendent sharp swords created from his sword-type Divine Yuan Energy formed a spiral of protection, flying forwards to block the silver fragments. At the same time, Qin Wentian channeled his blood aura into the Yellow Springs Monument. He could sense an extremely fearsome blood Qi within the monument, controllable via resonance with his bloodline limit.

BOOM!

An explosive sound rang out, making the hearts of the crowd pound, the blood flow in their bodies beginning to circulate faster and faster.

The stone monument floated above Qin Wentian, as streams of blood light was shot into it. The blood light could be seen visibly emanating forth from Qin Wentian's body. When the two of them locked gazes, Wang Xiao unconsciously felt a tinge of terror.

Zoom. The Yellow Springs Monument flew towards Wang Xiao.

BOOM! Wang Xiao's heart palpitated madly, the speed of his blood circulation went out of control, feeling as though his blood vessels were about to burst. At this moment, he couldn't care less about his attacks, and could only retreat rapidly. With an ashen expression on his face, he tried to create distance between himself and the monument.

As the monument flew out, Qin Wentian also turned to dash with incredible speed towards Mo Qingcheng.

Thump, thump!

The members of the Wang Clan could feel their hearts pounding madly. Their countenances turned extremely unsightly as they quickly retreated, and even Mo Qingcheng was affected.

Mo Qingcheng's opponent currently had a heavy expression on his face. He cleaved out once more with his axe, before explosively retreating.

"Qingcheng, follow me," Qin Wentian called out, as he sped towards the axe wielder. Mo Qingcheng followed Qin Wentian, yet maintained a certain distance behind him.

Qin Wentian chased after the axe wielder who was fleeing frenziedly. While doing so, he directed the Yellow Springs Monument to unceasingly zoom towards the escapee.

Thump. His heart pounded, as his countenance turned red.

Thump. His heartbeat quickened, as his veins protruded.

"ARGHH!" howled the man in madness, circulating his Astral Energy to protect himself. However, Qin Wentian pursued him relentlessly, with no intentions of giving up. The terrifying pressure emitted by the Yellow Springs Monument continuously acted on the axe wielder, as it followed his movements.

Thump. His heart shuddered, as he involuntarily spat out a mouthful of blood, his countenance bloodlessly pale.

Thump, thump, THUMP! He, who had finally halted his movements, turned about only to see the Yellow Springs Monument slam into him.

"ARGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH..." A bloodcurdling scream rang out, as the blood Qi inside his body exploded, shattering his heart into pieces. Fresh blood sprayed out, landing on the Yellow Springs Monument before being absorbed. His body slumped down lifelessly, dying a dog's death.

The cultivators all stopped their battles at the same time. Their eyes were filled with stark terror as they stared at the Yellow Springs Monument hovering above Qin Wentian's head.

The Yellow Springs Monument. This was the legendary monument from the Yellow Springs pathway within the Refinement Grounds. Why was it under the control of Qin Wentian?

“This fellow, to think that he could actually control the Yellow Springs Monument to attack.” Although Ouyang Kuangsheng knew Qin Wentian had subdued the monument, he still felt that this was an inconceivable feat. Subduing the monument was one matter, whereas having full control over it was another. It must have been Wang Xiao who had inadvertently forced Qin Wentian to use the Yellow Springs Monument.

However, in the hands of Qin Wentian, the pressure of the Yellow Springs Monument felt somewhat weaker than before. This weakness should be correlated to the cultivation level of Qin Wentian, he guessed.

“Eat this.” Mo Qingcheng walked to the side of Qin Wentian, as she passed him a medicinal pill. She had also eaten one herself, earlier.

As Qin Wentian gazed at Mo Qingcheng, the ice cold look in his eyes melted, replaced by tender gentleness. Those in the crowd all had similar odd expressions on their faces. This domineering youth who exuded overflowing demonic Qi, actually turned gentle as a kitten in front of Mo Qingcheng.

After ingesting the medicinal pill, both Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng consumed one Stellar Fruit respectively. Locking their gazes, smiles blossomed on their faces. It hadn't been easy surviving the Refinement Grounds up till now.

Qin Wentian then cast a glance towards Ouyang Kuangsheng, only to see that the experts from the Mystic Moon Hall had actually dwindled down to three. The ferocity of the earlier battle was evident. But naturally, this paled in comparison to the disastrous losses suffered by the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect.

Suddenly, those from the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect, decided to band together with those from the Wang Clan. From this, one could see the level of threat the current Qin Wentian posed to them.

“Ouyang, do you have enough Stellar Fruits to split with your people?” Qin Wentian inquired.

“I have three others here with me, so the amount of Stellar Fruits I possess should be sufficient to tide us over,” Ouyang Kuangsheng stated. The Stellar Fruits would be useless once they passed the final windstorm barrier, so naturally he wouldn't be stingy towards those in the same alliance.

“Fine, let’s enter,” Qin Wentian exclaimed. Ouyang Kuangsheng distributed the Stellar Fruits as the six of them entered the windstorm tempest. At their actions, the gazes of everyone in the crowd became fixated on them. This meant that out of the seven open spots, only one was left.

Not only that, other than Wang Xiao, none of them had any Stellar Fruits.

At that moment, several in the crowd began to stare at Wang Xiao, including those from the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect. There was still one remaining spot, and their hope, naturally rested upon Wang Xiao.

Wang Xiao’s countenance sank, his cold gaze turned even colder as a silver round ball appeared in his hands. An aura of extreme sharpness emanated out from him, causing people around him to feel an overwhelming sense of danger; no one dared to make a move recklessly.

Wang Xiao initially planned for his clan members and himself to monopolise the seven spots of the celestial lake. But now, it was obviously impossible.

Looking at Qin Wentian stepping into the tempest, an incredible killing intent could be felt gushing out from him.

Qian Mengyu stood there at the mountain rampart, sighing as a sour feeling arose in her heart. Back then, Qin Wentian took the initiative to ally with her. If it weren’t for the friction caused by the Stellar Fruits, Qin Wentian would most probably have included her in the final spot!