

Ancient GM 261

Chapter 261: Altering the Heavens and Transforming the Earth

Everyone's eyes glowed with a bright light as the door to the ancient city opened. Without further ado, they entered as a group.

Over here, many ancient-looking buildings were situated within a vast landscape. Even the atmosphere was tinged with an archaic air.

But one thing was certain, the interior of the ancient city belonged to a different space compared the one outside.

In addition, the crowd could clearly feel terrifying surges of energy pressing down on them, the power of a manifested constellation.

Over here, there were skies, and there were also constellations.

Despite it being in the middle of the day, the outlines of countless stars were visible. And in the middle of that inexhaustible starlight, the crowd could also see the faint shadow of an imposing and gigantic statue standing in mid-air, overlooking the ancient city as though it wanted to place the entire land and its inhabitants underneath its feet.

"That's a manifested constellation, it seems like the rumors were real." Many people in the crowd mused. The transcendent powers had already heard of this, but the other parties definitely hadn't known of it.

They could see the manifested constellation, and clearly feel its strength. The statue overlooking the ancient city inundated the entire area with a terrifying pressure; it must be a manifestation of a powerful gravity-type constellation.

There were some that tried to resist the pressure by soaring into the air, however they only discovered that it was impossible to fly in this space. At most, they could only levitate a few inches, but if they tried to force their way further up, the pressure here would act upon them, forcing them back down to the ground.

"Manifested constellation," Bailu Jing murmured before he commented, "Seems like the people who entered here previously triggered something, which caused the birth of the current manifested constellation. Before this, although the transcendent powers knew that this place was extraordinary, they didn't know the reason behind it. But now, with the existence of that manifested constellation,

it appears that this place was truly the Dao Cultivation Ground of a Celestial Phenomenon Ascendant back in the past.”

Bailu Yi and Qin Wentian both nodded, no one knew what exactly had happened in this secret realm the last time the transcendent powers entered it. They only knew that even Hua Taixu had been injured.

“Divine Inscriptionists, please lead the way,” commanded a thick-browed elder in that moment. He stood beside Yang Fan, emanating an aura of extreme danger. His eyes were black, like tunnels with endless depths, as though they were capable of drawing people within. The combat prowess of this person was most definitely extraordinary.

“That old man is named Zhu Sha, also a ranker of the Heavenly Fate Ranking,” Bailu Jing reminded Qin Wentian, patting his shoulders. “Remember to act with caution, and do your best to protect Little Yi.”

“Right,” Qin Wentian replied, locking eyes with Bailu Yi. After which, they walked to the front, along with the Li Clan’s three brothers and the youth from the Demon Cult.

“Little Brother Qin, let’s walk together.” Old First nodded to him, the Star-Seizing Manor camp following behind Qin Wentian and the rest of the Divine Inscriptionists.

There were too many traps powered by Divine Inscriptions layered all around the place, and it was traditional for Divine Inscriptionists to clear the path.

Not only that, the experience gained by those who had visited in the past was useless to them now. All the traps and formations that were originally easy enough to break had already been broken by past Divine Inscriptionists, leaving only the traps that were beyond their abilities to handle. These traps and formations had claimed their lives instead, causing any potential knowledge of further traps to be lost with their death..

The various camps all proceeded into the depths of the ancient city. So far, they met with no danger, but several places obviously had traces of damaged runic outlines. Evidently, this was caused by the work of earlier Divine Inscriptionists who had entered previously.

“That platform seems to be where the light from the manifested constellation is pointing towards.” Everyone fixed their attention in that direction. There was a huge platform supported by stone pillars that resembled a training ground and its surroundings were layered with various stone ruins. Additionally, the faint shadow of a statue of an Ascendant seemed to be directly above it.

“There’s fluctuations of Astral Energy over there.” As though they sensed something, everyone began to sprint over to the platform.

“Hey you guys, go up and take a look.” Zhu Sha pointed to the elevated platform, as he imperiously commanded the Divine Inscriptionists.

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows, the tone of Zhu Sha, had no hint of politeness in it at all, it was as though he was ordering a bunch of slaves forward.

The people from the transcendent powers were basically treating them as tools to be used for the trial grounds.

“Let’s go.” The three brothers led the way. Qin Wentian’s personality was more cautious by nature, he couldn’t help but frown when he sensed the fluctuations from the runic outlines on the platform.

“Uncle Li, wait. There’s something strange up there,” Qin Wentian called out. His perception told him that there was a peculiar source of energy enveloping the platform, but as to where it came from exactly, Qin Wentian couldn’t decipher it.

The three brothers turned and glanced at Qin Wentian as they halted their movements. “What’s wrong? Did you sense something?”

Qin Wentian lightly shook his head, “I have no idea, but I can tell that there’s an extremely terrifying surge of energy flowing about. It’s good to be more cautious.”

“You have no idea?” Zhu Sha unhappily interjected. “Since you can’t sense it, you might as well go and test it out. Won’t we know what we’re facing after that?”

“Senior, this place is filled with many unseen dangers. We should be more careful lest a single mistake leads us to our doom, with no hope of recovery. We can choose to bypass this platform and explore the other areas.” Although Qin Wentian himself felt unhappiness in his heart, he didn’t outwardly show his displeasure.

“If we do things according to what you say, won’t that mean we would have to bypass every hint of danger we meet? If that’s the case, what the hell are you even here for?” Zhu Sha replied in a cold voice, his brows twitching when he saw Qin Wentian challenging his decision.

“If that’s the case, please feel free to go up and explore for yourself.” Qin Wentian made a gesture of invitation, just as impolite as Zhu Sha. They had not begged the Star-Seizing Manor to be here.

On the contrary, it was the Star-Seizing Manor who required their services. This attitude of Zhu Sha was too rude and caused much dissatisfaction.

“What did you say?” An ice-cold intent burst forth from Zhu Sha, however a round-faced elder immediately intervened, “Forget it, the words of that little brother does have its merits, so let’s all take a step back. It would only do us good to be cautious here.”

Zhu Sha’s personality was too direct, the round-faced elder was much more diplomatic. He understood that they would still have need for the Divine Inscriptionists. Even if Zhu Sha wanted to make a move against them, he should wait until after they exited the trial grounds.

“Hmph, no matter what, we still need one person to go up.” Zhu Sha coldly snorted.

“Forget it. Old Third, go up and take a look.” Old First decided to mitigate the feelings of unhappiness by giving in to Zhu Sha.

“No,” Qin Wentian decisively rejected. After he obtained heart sense (kinesthesia), his perception was many times more powerful than before. He felt a strong sense of unease from the towering platform. Glancing at the stone benches and the surrounding ruins, he felt as though the platform was a place that was used to offer sacrifices in the past. He had a faint feeling that this place was the backbone for the entirety of Divine Inscriptions in this secret realm, and it was highly probable that there existed many killing formations or traps that protected it. If someone accidentally triggered those traps, the consequences would be dire.

“Uncle Li, don’t go,” Qin Wentian warned him again. They were here at the behest of the Star-Seizing Manor, but they weren’t tools to be used. This was a matter of principle. If they followed what Zhu Sha said, not one of them would make it out alive.

The Li Clan’s three brothers smiled, they understood Qin Wentian’s kind intentions but were unwilling to make an enemy out of the Star-Seizing Manor.

Suddenly, a member of the Skyember Sect impatiently rushed up to the platform, moving towards the centre.

“There’s no issue!” That person remained safe and sound, and almost immediately, Zhu Sha’s countenance turned colder.

“Pu!”

All of a sudden, an overwhelming pressure pressed down from the skies, resembling a gigantic foot stomping down on the ground. In front of everyone's eyes, that foolish cultivator from the Skyember Sect turned into a mangled pool of flesh and blood. Not only that, the platform began to shimmer with a weird glow, absorbing the blood from the dead cultivator.

When they saw what had happened, the hearts of those hesitating on whether or not they should rush up the platform, began to palpitate rapidly. What a close shave, if it weren't for the young Divine Inscriptionist from the Star-Seizing Manor, their endings would have been the same as that cultivator.

The heartbeats of the Li Clan's three elders quickened as they drew in a deep breath, flashing looks of gratitude to Qin Wentian.

Zhu Sha's countenance sank, but he had nothing to say.

Qin Wentian couldn't be bothered about him. He was frowning, and for some reason, his heart was still pounding rapidly.

"Be careful, there's something strange going on," Qin Wentian warned in a low voice. Just as the sound of his voice faded, the ground they were standing on started to tremble.

"Indeed, the platform was a sacrificial altar." Qin Wentian stared at the platform as his heart sank. There was a high possibility that the expedition into the secret realm this time around was different from what Hua Taixu and the rest experienced in the past.

"Wentian, Little Yi, come back here," Bailu Jing called out, he could sense that something was wrong as people from the different camps started to assemble.

"BOOM!" Qin Wentian sank his palms towards the ground as he started to frenziedly inscribe Divine Inscriptions.

As the tremors grew increasingly intense, Qin Wentian's speed became faster and faster. He could sense the energy fluctuations in the runic outlines of a Divine Inscription embedded underneath the ground.

"Brother Jing, help me to slash apart the surrounding grounds," Qin Wentian called out. Bailu Jing immediately acted without delay, slicing with his palms, causing the ground about Qin Wentian to break apart. However, as a rumbling sound echoed, the surrounding earth started to move together, trying to recover.

“Continue breaking them apart, don’t let the ground converge together. I need some time!” Qin Wentian shouted. In the next moment, a raging wind gusted, as a terrifying current of airflow permeated the surroundings. No one had expected such a scenario to occur.

Those from the White Deer Institute stood in a circle surrounding Qin Wentian and Bailu Yi, and began slashing and destroying the surrounding ground. Qin Wentian rapidly slammed his palms downwards and momentarily, the outline of a gigantic Eight Trigram appeared.

“Sealing Formation.” Bailu Yi saw Qin Wentian inscribing sealing-type inscriptions and immediately understood what he wanted to do. Qin Wentian wanted to set up a sealing formation.

Rumbling sounds rang out incessantly, the pressure emanating from the Ascendant statue grew increasingly stronger. The raging wind gusted with an unprecedented ferocity, as the magnitude of the tremors began to ignite explosions all about.

“ARGH...” A miserable shriek rang out, already there were people who had fallen. Qin Wentian’s hand speed increased to its maximum, yet he still tried his best to raise his pace. His attainment wasn’t high enough yet, and he still needed a long period of time before he could completely inscribe a powerful Inscription.

“BREAK THE GROUND FASTER!” Bailu Jing roared. His finger glowed with Astral Light as he disappeared into the wind, rapidly moving about while slicing and slashing at the surrounding ground.

“RUMBLE!” Far away, towering mountains appeared from nowhere, rising tall from the ground.

Destruction reigned supreme as the ancient city crumbled apart, replaced by an entirely new landscape. The only thing that remained unchanged was the Ascendant statue high up in the skies.

“Altering the Heavens and transforming the Earth!” The hearts of the survivors all trembled. They knew that this time around, the secret realm’s trial would be a far different experience than what any of their predecessors had previously encountered!

Chapter 262: Extreme Danger With Every Step

Qin Wentian inscribed at a furious speed and finally, the gigantic runic outlines of the Eight Trigram shone with a resplendent light as his Inscription was completed.

This seal of the Eight Trigram enveloped the space where Qin Wentian and those from the White Deer Institute were standing at. It sealed the tremors of the earth and even the waves of destructive

energies were weakened. In the surroundings, the raging wind was still gusting as the quakes continued to rock the encompassing earth, breaking it apart before meshing them together.

After a period of time, the destructive quakes finally calmed, and only then did the participants have the chance to observe the new landscape.

They were still in their original position, the Ascendant statue was still up in the skies. However, the place they were in was no longer the ancient city but rather, the true Dao Cultivation Grounds of that Celestial Phenomenon Ascendant.

“What a fearsome formation.” Qin Wentian’s heart shook slightly. That formation earlier had the power to transform the entire landscape, the ancient city was just a facade. This place was where their objectives lay.

The Dao Cultivation Ground was extremely vast, and far up ahead there was a transparent door. Beyond there, numerous ever-green pine trees and ancient mountains dotted the landscape, giving off a tranquil and elegant aura. However, there was also a great hall situated right in the middle of that scenic place. Within the great hall, a sculpture sat cross-legged, and an ancient-looking manual could be seen grasped in its hands.

“Ascendant!”

Excitement flashed in the eyes of the crowd. This place was the true cultivation ground of that expert. If a single life was the price for making the real cultivation grounds of the Ascendant appear, then his death was absolutely worth it. It was too worth it.

The people in the respective camps exchanged looks with each other. Other than excitement, there was also caution and suspicion. In the end, who would be the one to obtain the inheritance of this particular Ascendant?

“Bzzzz bzzz!” A wind kicked up as several silhouettes couldn’t contain their greed any longer, and they dashed towards the transparent door. However, just as they took a few steps forward, the entire space seemed to light up from an unknown source.

“Careful, there are traps here!” someone called out, but it was already too late. Those who had run out earlier found their movements instantly locked by currents of runic power, while various traps around them began to activate.

One was caught unaware and was penetrated through by swords, while another encountered several demonic dragons rushing straight at him. That person instantly reacted by unleashing his Astral Souls to enhance his attacks, immediately slamming a palm and exploding the bodies of one. However, it was useless, with his movements locked down, his only fate was to be devoured by the dragons.

In the blink of an eye, not one of those that dashed out earlier were left alive. They had all fallen, despite their cultivation being at the peak of Yuanfu and being additionally supported by the fearsome power of their Mandates.

“Extreme danger with every step!”

The hearts of the crowd pounded madly in shock. They personally witnessed the death of their comrades, yet no one dared make a move to save them. Even now, they wouldn't risk moving a single step from where they stood. All of them were afraid of triggering even more unknown traps.

“This trial is many times more difficult compared to the trials in the past,” spoke an old man from the Pill Emperor Hall. “When I was here previously, although the ancient city had many traps, not every trap was powered by a peak-tier third-ranked Divine Inscription. This place is different, each step is layered with countless traps filled with killing intent. I believed this must be the true Dao Cultivation Grounds of that Ascendant.”

Many people nodded in agreement. The scope of danger in this place was many times higher compared to the past.

“There's danger with every step and we are unable to levitate. Although the inheritance is just before our eyes, it feels as far as the other side of the world. The difficulty to cross over safely is even higher than ascending the heavens.”

“Are there no other solutions?” Zhao Lie from the Skyember Sect asked in a loud voice. Earlier, due to his impatience, he had almost become one of those that had died. He knew that even with his power, it would be exceedingly tough to defend against the destructive traps within the formation.

“There are only two options. First, we could use brute strength to barge through, or second, we get the Divine Inscriptionists to test each step, neutralising the traps, and confirming its safety before we cross over. There are no other choices, the difficulty level is at least a hundred times higher compared to the past.”

That old man from the Pill Emperor Palace replied, causing heavy expressions to appear on everyone's countenance. If that was the case, who would still dare to choose the first option?

“Esteemed Grandmasters, the time has come to show your usefulness.” At this moment, an elder from the Skyember Sect spoke, his words causing a drastic change in the countenances of the Divine Inscriptionists present. This scenario was one that they wanted to avoid the most.

“We will need a period of time to perceive and contemplate the formation,” an Inscriptionist replied.

“Fine.”

The transcendent powers of every camp consulted with their Divine Inscriptionists. While at the Star-Seizing Manor's camp, Qin Wentian and the rest were still protected by the seal of the Eight Trigram. Earlier when the landscape was changing, their camp had suffered the least. At this moment, Yang Fan shifted his gaze onto Qin Wentian and the rest of the Inscriptionists as he spoke, "The White Deer Institute obtained first place in the exchange. We need to depend on your help now."

"I'll do my best," Qin Wentian replied. Yang Fan nodded as he added, addressing all the Divine Inscriptionists present, "I won't forget your help. My Star-Seizing Manor will also heavily reward the one who can aid us the most in the trial today."

The Divine Inscriptionists all nodded their heads, yet they understand the matter very clearly in their hearts. Only when they were needed would people from the transcendent powers speak so politely to them.

Qin Wentian closed his eyes as he silently contemplated the entire space. There were several runic outlines of Inscriptions that were extremely profound, hidden in plain sight. One had to 'sense' them, the traps weren't visible to the naked eye. Back then the first test set by Grandmaster Fenrir was none other than practice for this trial, but the amount of Divine Inscriptions Fenrir could hide in his mysterious portrait naturally wouldn't be able to compare to the amount hidden here.

Qin Wentian involuntarily trembled when he sent out his heart sense. A terrifying picture appeared in his mind.

Each step was filled with peak-tier, third-ranked attack-type Divine Inscriptions. However if it was only that, it wouldn't pose much of a challenge to the Divine Inscriptionists that came here today. The thing that caused Qin Wentian to have a headache was that each and every Divine Inscription within this formation was connected in a marvellous linkage. If someone were to neutralise a section, the power of the surrounding runic outlines would instantly congregate together, attacking the threat.

The Divine Inscriptions weren't scattered about as unique standalones but rather, they were part of a complete picture. A slight change would affect everything else, creating a butterfly effect.

If he walked out, he could slowly take his time to neutralise the Divine Inscriptions, but at the moment of neutralization, the other peak-tier third-ranked Inscription traps within the surroundings would instantly activate. How then, could one continue onwards?

The perception of the other Inscriptionists couldn't be compared to Qin Wentian, yet they too could sense the intricacies of the linkage that connected the various Divine Inscriptions together. One of them shook his head, "This formation is unbreakable."

“Unbreakable?” The countenance of many sunk as they heard that. If that was the case, wouldn’t that mean they had to take the first option, to barge through with force? Yet the inevitable results were clear to all, the incident of their comrade’s death was still fresh in their minds.

Zhu Sha turned his gaze onto Qin Wentian as he spoke, “Your perception is the highest, how long do you need to neutralise this?”

“Very difficult, I have no confidence,” Qin Wentian replied. Zhu Sha frowned, and ignoring Qin Wentian’s reply, he continued, “I will give you seven days of time.”

After which, he closed his eyes in silent meditation.

To him, seven days was already an extremely long time.

If Qin Wentian was still unable to neutralise the traps, they could only use the first method.

A cold light flickered in Qin Wentian’s eyes, but he didn’t say anything. He continued closing his eyes and quietly contemplated the runic outlines.

Even if it weren’t for the sake of the Star-Seizing Manor, if he wanted to advance, he would still have to break the formation...

No matter how difficult it was, he had no choice but to neutralise it.

Time flowed by, nobody dared to make any reckless moves. Qin Wentian didn’t contemplate the runic outlines of singular Inscriptions but rather, he was trying to see the complete picture, imprinting it into his mind.

He knew with utter certainty that there was no way to neutralise this if he chose to study the Inscriptions one by one. In that case, he could only look for clues by studying them as a whole.

Through Qin Wentian’s perception, the overall picture became increasingly clearer and more complete.

However, he involuntarily trembled with fear when the completed picture finally surfaced in his mind.

He saw a Divine Condor inclining its proud, majestic head, with animosity filling its eagle-sharp eyes. It was trying to soar in the air but was unable to do so.

Because above it, there was a gigantic statue with its foot pressing it to the ground, suppressing it. The condor desired the freedom of the skies yet was unable to soar through the air. Hence, its hatred transformed into an intense baleful aura, and whoever dared to step on it, must die.

This scenario caused Qin Wentian's heart to palpitate wildly. He opened his eyes, shifting his gaze to the blurry silhouette of the Ascendant statue above.

The Ascendant statue was suppressing the Divine Condor. How should he solve this?

Not only was the Divine Condor suppressed, the cultivators themselves were unable to levitate, so if they wanted to cross to the other side of the transparent door, they had no choice but to step on the condor.

In the blink of an eye, seven days had passed. Yet the Divine Inscriptionists remained motionless, they were still contemplating ways to break the formation.

"Grandmasters, are you guys done?" Zhao Lie's personality was more impatient, he had already been asking this same question repeatedly for the past few days.

"This old man is useless, I'm unable to break it." An old man from his camp shook his head.

"If that's the case, does that mean we can only rely on force to barge through?" Zhao Lie asked again.

"Yeah," the old Divine Inscriptionist muttered.

"Very well, you do it then," Zhao Lie spoke with a voice filled with ill-intent. His words caused the old man to frown as he replied, "This old man isn't strong enough, I'm afraid that I wouldn't be able to succeed."

"If that's the case, tell me what's the use of keeping you alive?"

Terrible flames wretched about Zhao Lie's body as he punched out, causing a flame sabre to manifest as its terrifying temperature engulfed the surroundings, splitting the old man into two before turning his corpse into ashes.

This scenario left the other Divine Inscriptionists thunderstruck.

Zhao Lie then turned his gaze onto them as he asked, “How about you guys? Can you break it?”

The countenances of the other Divine Inscriptionists in his camp were extremely ugly to behold.
“We... we will try...”

“Great.” Zhao Lie smiled. After which he turned to the other transcendent powers and stated,
“Shouldn’t the Divine Inscriptionists the rest of you invited make a move as well?”

Those from the Pill Emperor Palace, Hua Clan and Star-Seizing Manor all turned their gazes onto the respective Divine Inscriptionists of each camp.

Zhu Sha eyed Qin Wentian as he spoke, “The period of seven days has already passed.”

Qin Wentian opened his eyes as he replied, “I still need more time.”

“There’s no more time, I’ve already said that I would only give you seven days of time. If you still can’t neutralise it, we can only choose to use the first method.” Zhu Sha faintly continued, “You’ve already seen how that old Divine Inscriptionist from the Skyember Sect met his end.”

Zhu Sha let his words hang in the air, the meaning behind them clearly understood by all.

Chapter 263: A Painful Lesson

Qin Wentian stared at Zhu Sha, he clearly understood Zhu Sha’s meaning. If they had no choice but to choose the first method, the Divine Inscriptionists would be the one forced to make a move first.

And just like what Zhao Lie said, if the Divine Inscriptionists couldn’t break the formation, what use did they have?

In the eyes of these transcendent powers, the Divine Inscriptionists were merely tools to be used.

Naturally, the Divine Inscriptionists were also clear on this point, but didn’t the same thing hold true for them as well? They were making use of the strength of these transcendent powers to block incoming dangers as they attempted to break the formation.

However, the current scenario was something that these Inscriptionists had never experienced. They couldn't break the formation and not only that, they were trapped where they stood. Once they made an attempt to neutralise the Inscriptions, the result would only be their deaths.

Such an occurrence caused the conflict between both parties to directly erupt outwards. The powerful cultivators of the transcendent powers wanted to force the Inscriptionists to take action. If they couldn't neutralise the formations, there was no use in keeping them alive.

Qin Wentian stared at Zhu Sha, and upon seeing his ice-cold expression, he replied, "I have just gained some insights regarding a way to break the formation. If Senior wants me to neutralise the Inscriptions right now, the only result would be death. However, if Senior can give me some more time, there would still be room for hope."

Qin Wentian's voice was unperturbed, with no hints of anger or rage within.

The current him, had long learnt how to mask his emotions, and he wouldn't easily show what his inner thoughts were.

Zhu Sha frowned and was about to say something as Yang Fan interjected, "Give him some more time then."

"Very well, I will give you three more days." Zhu Sha snorted with displeasure, he knew that his attitude would offend Qin Wentian, but he just didn't care about it.

So what if Qin Wentian was a powerful third-ranked Inscriptionist? Did he even have the time to inscribe Inscriptions during actual combat? Zhu Sha didn't fear him at all.

A look of comprehension flashed on Zhao Lie's countenance as he noted what was happening at the Star-Seizing Manor camp. He was considering whether or not they should wait for Qin Wentian?

The people from the Hua Clan and Pill Emperor Hall similarly cast their gazes in the direction of Qin Wentian. From the conversation, they could discern that Qin Wentian should be the strongest Divine Inscriptionist within the camp of the Star-Seizing Manor.

And among those from the Pill Emperor Palace, Bai Fei also took notice of Qin Wentian. An expression of bewilderment involuntarily appeared on her face. She could faintly feel that Qin Wentian looked somewhat familiar, like she had met him before. The feeling kept prodding her, but

she couldn't remember an occasion where she could have acquainted herself with such a powerful third-ranked Divine Inscriptionist Grandmaster.

It had been around half a year's time since she last saw Qin Wentian.

And in the past half year, Qin Wentian's features had lost all traces of its earlier youthfulness. His features were now even more exquisitely sculpted, filled with the charm of masculinity, and added to that his longer black hair as well as the marked change in his aura, it made Bai Fei unable to recognise the current him.

Qin Wentian's transformation was too huge, especially in terms of his demeanor.

In the first place, Bai Fei wasn't even that familiar with Qin Wentian. To her, Qin Wentian was only a genius from a small country, and wasn't qualified to enter her sights. She had never seriously regarded his existence, hence it was only natural that she was unable to recognise him now with a single glance. She only felt that he was faintly familiar.

"Fine, let's wait three more days," Zhao Lie muttered. Although he was famed for his impatience, he knew that with their strength, if they chose to forcefully barge through the sea of Inscriptions, the amount of casualties would be disastrous. Even he himself didn't have absolute confidence he could deal with the power of the traps.

Hence now, he could only choose to wait.

"Do you really have a solution?" Bailu Yi stared at Qin Wentian, asking in a low voice. Her attainment in the Dao of Divine Inscriptions wasn't too bad, but she couldn't make heads or tails out of the current situation.

"Let me ponder over this a little more." Qin Wentian was staring at the faint shadow of the Ascendant statue in the air.

He had reason to believe since the supreme Ascendant set up this test, there would surely be a way to pass it. This must be something he had set up to ensure that people would be worthy of gaining his inheritance.

However, this 'test' was too difficult and the price one would pay if they failed it, was death.

Within these three days, there were many who had already lost patience. And when the third day arrived, Zhu Sha immediately confronted Qin Wentian, "Time is up."

Qin Wentian slowly opened his eyes, as he stared at Zhu Sha. "I've no way to neutralise the Inscriptions, but I can try walking over them. However, my power alone is insufficient, I would require the aid of experts from the Star-Seizing Manor to accompany me in crossing over together."

A dangerous light flashed in Zhu Sha's eyes. Qin Wentian was unable to break the formation and he still wanted the experts of the Star-Seizing Manor to make the trip together with him?

Didn't that mean he wanted the experts from the Star-Seizing Manor to share the risk with him?

"How many do you need?" Zhu Sha asked.

"At least ten people," Qin Wentian replied.

"You are an Inscriptionist invited by the White Deer Institute. Doesn't the White Deer Institute have enough people?" Zhu Sha coldly remarked.

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows, but his countenance instantly returned to normal. However, Zhu Sha had already seen the minute changes in his expression.

"Don't worry, the experts that White Deer Institute sent this time round are all elites. Furthermore, you are more familiar with them, so their power should be sufficient," Zhu Sha continued.

Qin Wentian frowned as he spoke, "Bailu Jing, how about it?"

Bailu Jing couldn't help but feel that there was something strange going on when he heard how Qin Wentian addressed him. Previously, Qin Wentian had always been extremely polite, addressing him as Brother Jing.

"I guess we have no choice then," Bailu Jing indifferently replied, yet he had already understood Qin Wentian's intentions.

“Fine, but I cannot guarantee that we will be able to succeed. We will have to depend on luck and destiny, so follow closely and stand only to my left and right. Remember that speed is of the essence, so move as fast as you can towards the door.. And not only must we be swift, every step we take has to be filled with absolute power, pressing as heavily as you can onto the ground,” Qin Wentian explained. “There are only two points to note: speed and strength. Using your fastest speed along with the strongest power of suppression you can muster.”

The countenances of everyone flickered with uncertainty. To maintain their top speed while ensuring each and every step they took contained immense power? It was easier said than done.

After all, if they wanted to be fast, their steps would have to be light. It was tremendously difficult to accomplish what Qin Wentian had just mentioned.

Bailu Jing nodded his head, he trusted in Qin Wentian. “We will do our best.”

“Doing your best is not sufficient, we must definitely succeed. To fail means death.” Qin Wentian’s countenance turned solemn, his words causing Bailu Jing and those from the White Deer Institute to re-assess this mission with greater gravity.

Zhu Sha frowned in suspicion, but no matter what, since Qin Wentian was going to be the first to barge through, he would be the first guinea pig.

“Let’s plan our positions. Me and Bailu Yi in the middle, Bailu Jing will stand behind me, while the others will stay to my left and right. This will offset the gap in power from my and Bailu Yi’s lower cultivation base.” Qin Wentian instructed. Bailu Jing nodded his head, and the members of the White Deer Institute swiftly complied.

“Very well, prepare yourselves.” Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath. At this moment, Astral pressure gushed forth from the bodies of all twelve of them, as illusory wings appeared on their backs.

“Go!” Qin Wentian stepped out of the area of safety as the rest mirrored his actions. As their steps landed on the ground, the sounds of explosions rumbled as the formation began to activate.

“BOOM!” Qin Wentian and the rest swiftly took another step forward, one filled with great power, fiercely stomping onto the ground. The combined power of their stomps temporarily suppressed the activation of the formation, causing the dangerous aura that was exuding out, to diminish.

“He is combining their strength with the gravitational effect of the Ascendant statue to suppress the formation.” A bright glow flashed in the eyes of those Divine Inscriptionists. This fellow was truly bold, he had actually come up with such a method.

Qin Wentian and the others moved with lightning speed, as they mirrored Qin Wentian’s steps, which seemed to have an unusual rhythm to them. And every time the surrounding hidden traps threatened to erupt forth, their steps would slam down onto the ground, causing the power of the traps to instantly dissipate as they were suppressed.

Although they were able to suppress the traps around them, the chain reaction caused by the activation of the formation was already beginning to merge the power from the other traps. The culminating energy was a hair’s trigger away from a massive explosion.

“QUICKLY!” Qin Wentian roared as he rushed forward, a unique cadence to his steps. They continued mirroring his steps and cutting their way forwards with increasing speed, stomping onto the ground with even more force, forcibly suppressing the congregation of the other traps.

In the blink of an eye, under the thunderstruck gazes of the others, Qin Wentian and the rest were about to reach the other side.

Although it was dangerous, it wasn’t impossible. And just when they were exulting, only a few steps short of reaching their goal, the terrifying power of the peak third-ranked Inscriptions coalesced in the form of an incomparably sharp arrow, as it fired towards them with explosive speed.

“Damn.” The countenances of Qin Wentian and the rest underwent a drastic change. They hadn’t managed to suppress its activation in time.

“You guys go on ahead, leave me.” An old man abruptly broke away from the group, as he caused a gigantic shield of Astral Energy to form, blocking the path of that runic arrow.

Impressively enough, the old man actually managed to block the incoming attack. However, the chain reaction caused waves of energy to explode towards him from all sides, resulting in the manifestation of a horde of demonic beasts, which devoured him from where he stood. This formation, was too terrifying.

“Uncle Zhong!” Bailu Jing’s countenance sank as he roared in agony. Qin Wentian turned and grabbed him along, as they all dashed out of that door, safely crossing over to the other side.

“They succeeded.” The rest remaining behind breathed in wonder.

Qin Wentian’s strategy had worked.

“Let’s go, we’ll do the same as them.” Yang Fan abruptly stood up. Zhu Sha nodded his head, it was undoubtedly the best moment to act. They had to catch up to Qin Wentian, that brat’s ability with Divine Inscriptions was truly excellent, and they could continue making use of him if there were more traps in front.

Yang Fan and those from the Star-Seizing Manor copied Qin Wentian’s strategy, using speed and strength to suppress the activation of the formation.

However they soon discovered that it wasn’t as easy as they had imagined. As soon as they had taken a second step, they could feel the whole space rumbling as terrifying waves of energy gushed towards them.

“BREAK THROUGH IT!” A terrifying aura erupted forth from Yang Fang, as he defended against the attack. Soon after, the rest of their team encountered obstacle after obstacle, and despite their efforts, the fearsome traps were unceasingly activated. They had not yet reached the other side, and already seven cultivators had fallen from their original team of twenty.

Those people that had fallen, were all peak-level Yuanfu cultivators.

“That bastard,” Zhu Sha growled, his face growing dark with menace.

Only now did he understand that when Qin Wentian requested their cooperation earlier, he had already anticipated his response. Qin Wentian had played him perfectly, resulting in a team made up entirely of those from the White Deer Institute, exactly as he’d planned.

Not only that, their attempt at crossing seemed easier, only one from their group had fallen.

Finally, when Zhu Sha and those from the rest made it across, the Star-Seizing Manor had lost a total of eleven peak-level Yuanfu cultivators. One could say that the price they paid was harsh indeed.

The Li Clan's three brothers opened their eyes, staring at the vanished silhouettes as they calmly stated, "It was truly a foolish choice to offend a Divine Inscriptionist in this trial of Divine Inscriptions."

The three brothers could clearly see that the unusual path Qin Wentian treaded, was the safest and most perfect path.

Their calm voices resounded through the air, rocking the hearts of the remaining transcendent powers. Although Qin Wentian didn't intentionally act against those from the Star-Seizing Manor, although it could be said that their losses had nothing to do with him, the Star-Seizing Manor had paid an extremely painful price for their arrogance.

If they had just politely made their request in the first place, with Qin Wentian leading them across, could their losses be so severe?

Chapter 264: Myriad Variations within the Formation

The experts from the Watermoon Mountain Villa had never been discourteous or showed ill intent to the Li Clan's three brothers. After all, the brothers all had good relationships with them and had been personally invited to represent them.

Not only that, since the Star-Seizing Manor wanted to be the villain, why would those from the Watermoon Mountain Villa make things difficult for themselves and offend even more people?

"Grandmasters, how should we best proceed?" Someone from the Watermoon Mountain Villa respectfully inquired.

Old First replied, "The path through this formation is like a boat on rocky waters, Little Brother Qin's perception is stronger than ours, that's why the path he treaded earlier was smoother. We will follow his path."

The attainment of all three brothers of the Li Clan was also extremely high. When Qin Wentian led the way, they all noticed the unique cadence of his movements.

But, because of the Star-Seizing Manor's attitude, no other Divine Inscriptionists saw fit to warn them. They had chosen to keep their mouths shut instead.

So what if those from the Star-Seizing Manor died? What did it have to do with them?

“Grandmaster Li, shall we proceed then?”

“Let’s go. Everyone from the Demon Cult, let’s work together. With more people we will have more power, and it will be easier to suppress the activation and to defend against any unexpected attacks.” Old First cast his gaze over to the experts from the Demon Cult. They naturally didn’t reject, nodding in agreement.

At the same moment, Zhao Lie was also staring at the Inscriptionists that the Skyember Sect invited. “Dear Grandmasters, Zhao Lie apologises for my earlier rudeness, I hope all of you don’t take it to heart. As long as we can safely reach the other side, I, Zhao, will definitely reward you heavily.”

The Divine Inscriptionists didn’t say anything, they knew Zhao Lie only acted like this because he was forced by the circumstances, but even so, how could they say no?

The Zhao Lie back then was extremely tyrannical, casually slaying an old Inscriptionist. If they said no now, their situation would definitely be the same as that old man. Obviously what they wanted to do was to abandon the members of the Skyember Sect, but evidently, it was impossible.

With Qin Wentian leading the way, the rest all mirrored his team formation – the Divine Inscriptionists in the middle leading the way, with experts on the left and right of them aiding in defense. In spite of this, even though they managed to barge across, they still suffered heavy casualties, and not one of them could mirror Qin Wentian’s success.

There was a total of over two hundred cultivators that came to the secret realm today. However, in just a short period of time, eighty of them had already fallen. The death rate could be said to be extremely terrifying.

This was potentially the highest amount of fortune one could obtain during a trial, ever since the trial grounds were discovered. And correspondingly, the degree of danger was greater as well. The slightest mistake on their part would result in death, hence the survivors didn’t feel joy but instead, bore it with a heavy pressure weighing down upon their hearts.

And after Qin Wentian stepped past that transparent door, he realised that even though the evergreen pine trees, the ancient mountains and that sculpture in the great hall were still visible, they could only be seen but not touched.

Not only that, after stepping past that transparent door, it seemed as though he had been transported into a different space. Those from the White Deer Institute that had accompanied him earlier had all disappeared.

“Did we trigger a formation that was inscribed by a space-type Inscription?” Qin Wentian could still remember that when they stepped past that door, he could vaguely feel the sensation of spatial energy.

He knew of Spatial-type Divine Inscriptions from the secret manuals Bailu Yi passed him. Spatial-type Inscriptions were extremely mysterious, as they touched on the concept of space.

Qin Wentian’s heartbeat quickened as he took a look around his surroundings. He was in the middle of an extremely vast space, there were mountain peaks as well rivers and oceans. Qin Wentian understood that he had just stepped into yet another formation.

Not only him, anyone who went through the transparent door would also definitely enter this formation.

Lifting his head upwards, he could still see the Ascendant statue up in the skies. It was as though the statue would impose its presence no matter where they ventured to inside this realm, emanating the gravitational pressure that prevented them from levitating.

“Although the entrance to the great hall only looks to be a foot away, I wonder how far it is exactly.” Qin Wentian mused, as the thirst of desire filled his heart.

From this formation, it could be seen how powerful that Ascendant was when he was still alive. He was even skilled in setting up spatial formations.

The power from the Spatial-type Divine Inscriptions was absolutely a priceless treasure.

And that Ascendant left behind such a trial, how could he not have a purpose behind it.

There was a very high probability that the Ascendant was doing all this in order to search for an inheritor!

Stepping out, Qin Wentian moved forwards. However, he halted his steps just after reaching a hundred paces. A look of interest could be seen on his face as he contemplated the barrier before him. Moments later, he pierced forwards with his finger imbued with Astral Energy, causing thunderous rumbling sounds to echo out as a destructive beam of sword light tore the barrier apart.

Only then did Qin Wentian continue onwards.

During this journey, Qin Wentian met with countless dangers. There were many traps and barriers that directly barred his path. If he couldn't neutralise them, there was no way to proceed.

This made Qin Wentian understand that if one wanted to pass all the 'tests' here, one must either have an extremely high attainment in the Dao of Divine Inscriptions, or one must have a cultivation base high enough to force their way through the traps.

But of course, the inheritor the Ascendant was looking for was undoubtedly someone with both qualities.

"The traps are getting increasingly dangerous, the power they contain now is already sufficient to slay peak-level Yuanfu cultivators." Presently, Qin Wentian was sitting on the ground, taking a break while manifestations from the powerful Inscriptions he inscribed clashed directly with the traps. After several moments, both his manifestations as well as the trap were destroyed. Only then did he stand up and continue, all the while involuntarily sighing in his heart.

Despite his high level of attainment, the path ahead was increasingly treacherous. He had to take every step with caution, he didn't dare be even slightly complacent.

Qin Wentian used his expertise in Divine Inscriptions to plough forwards when finally, he saw a silhouette standing not far away from him.

It was a middle-aged man with the Hua Clan emblem pinned on his robes. His eyes were filled with malevolence as he grinned coldly at Qin Wentian.

"Grandmaster Qin, how are you? How about we walk together?"

"Member from the Hua Clan." Qin Wentian's countenance didn't reflect the slightest change when he noticed the middle-aged man. He merely nodded his head lightly and replied, "Sure."

“Then, please,” The middle-aged man stated with a laugh, gesturing Qin Wentian to stand in front of him.

Qin Wentian glanced at him before replying, “Senior’s strength is many times higher than mine, would Senior please take the lead? I will naturally remind Senior if there are any traps in the surroundings.”

“Grandmaster Qin is too kind. Grandmaster Qin’s perception and attainment in the Dao of Divine Incriptions is unrivalled within third-ranked Incriptionists, how could this level of traps cause you difficulty? I humbly beseech Grandmaster Qin to take the lead instead.” The middle-aged man had a smile that was not a smile reflected in his eyes, and he spoke with mock politeness, as if hiding a knife behind his back.

“Since that’s the case, Junior will take the lead. But if I meet anything that I require Senior’s help with, I will have to trouble Senior then,” Qin Wentian, just as politely, replied.

“Sure.” The middle-aged man nodded. “Naturally.”

Qin Wentian didn’t continue speaking, but proceeded walking forwards instead. He knew that currently, anyone with the status of a Divine Incriptionist would be treated as a precious treasure.

Qin Wentian decisively agreed to that middle-aged man’s request because he had no choice. The middle-aged man’s robes were all torn and tattered, indicating that the journey for him up till this point of time had not been smooth sailing at all. Since the middle-aged man met Qin Wentian by luck, how could he still let him go?

In the blink of an eye, over ten days had passed as the two of them travelled together. The distance to reach the evergreen pine trees, ancient mountains and the great hall was still only a foot away, yet they were still walking forward as though there was no end.

“Grandmaster, why haven’t we arrived yet? Are you trying to delay things somehow?” the middle-aged man questioned with suspicion.

“If Senior doesn’t trust me, feel free to go on ahead on your own,” Qin Wentian casually replied.

“I’m just kidding, please don’t take offense.” The middle-aged man instantly laughed, trying to melt the tension. Over these ten days, although Qin Wentian would occasionally require his power to break through some obstacles, it was still many times easier compared to him travelling alone.

The path ahead was filled with unknown danger, how could he distance himself from such a talented Inscriptionist? There was no doubt that the other cultivators were all stuck within this formation. And although the traps weren’t as numerous compared to the formation earlier, here they were even more cunningly hidden and powerful enough to kill any peak-level Yuanfu cultivator that triggered it.

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At this moment, Bailu Yi felt a strong sense of unease, she had met an expert from the Star-Seizing Manor.

Although Bailu Yi’s attainment couldn’t be compared to Qin Wentian, she was still a powerful Inscriptionist in her own right. Hence, how could that expert spare her? He directly threatened and forced her to accompany him, journeying together.

“Senior, the magnitude of power contained in the traps ahead are beyond our abilities, even if we worked together.” Bailu Yi had an extremely weary look on her face as she spoke to the black-robed old man behind her.

The old man behind her didn’t like to talk, and gave off an extremely sinister feeling. He didn’t reply with words to Bailu Yi’s statement, but rather, he let his gaze roam all over her body, licking his lips, causing Bailu Yi to instantly pale as her countenance turned increasingly unsightly to behold.

Gritting her teeth, she continued walking ahead.

The old man in black kept on staring at her back view lasciviously, as a nefarious fire flickered in his eyes.

However, if Bailu Yi’s luck wasn’t great, Bai Fei’s luck was even worse.

She had come here with Zhan Chen, and because of her master, those from the Pill Emperor Palace were extremely protective of her. Yet she couldn’t have imagined that after the first formation, not

only would she not come across anyone from the Pill Emperor Palace but rather, would meet an expert from the Skyember Sect instead.

The expert looked to be about 26 to 27 years of age, but in actuality was already over thirty. He didn't bother masking his evil intentions, and immediately forced Bai Fei to lead the way.

But how could someone of Bai Fei's strength level be strong enough to do so? If it weren't for sheer luck, she would long have died via a triggered trap within the formation. And for those times she ended up in danger, the young man would always act to save her. She didn't know what he intended to do with her.

As they proceeded onwards, Bai Fei's robes became more ragged, revealing her beautiful shoulders, as well as patches of jade-like skin. The 'beauty' of this kind of partial nakedness was even more alluring, compared to a female being fully unclothed.

"Miss Bai, how about we find a remote spot and enjoy ourselves? I'm sure you don't want to meet death without knowing the taste of a man, right?" The young man grinned evilly, teasing Bai Fei. But if he really were to force himself on her, Bai Fei would also be helpless to prevent his actions.

Yet it was obvious that this young man didn't want to lose his 'meat shield' so quickly. But Bai Fei knew if this continued on, she would either end up dying by the traps or becoming the plaything of the young man. Both of these endings were far from reassuring, like dark shadows grinding at her heart.

And as for those rankers on the Heavenly Fate Rankings; Zhan Chen, Zhao Lie, Hua Feng, Bailu Jing, and Zhu Sha, they traversed through the formation at a swift speed. Although they weren't well versed in Inscriptions, their level of power was sufficient enough for them to use brute strength to force their way through. However, despite their impressive speed and strength, there were still a few traps that they barely survived from, leaving them all in similar states of suffering.

Dealing with this formation was turning out to be beyond their expectations!

Chapter 265: Coerced

Qin Wentian and the middle-aged man continued onwards. Although this formation was fraught with danger, there would surely be an exit. At most, he would rather spend his time attempting to neutralise those traps he was confident in. If he faced levels of dangers that were beyond his abilities, Qin Wentian would rather take a detour than deal with it head on.

And just as Qin Wentian took yet another alternate path, a silhouette appeared at the edge of his vision. His heart involuntarily trembled as his body flickered, appearing next to a Puppet.

This... was Bailu Yi's Puppet.

Strangely enough, after that the Puppet blinked at Qin Wentian, it pointed its finger in a certain direction, as though it was trying to tell him something. Qin Wentian's eyes narrowed as he asked, "Are you being coerced by someone?"

That Puppet nodded, causing Qin Wentian's heart to clench. "Bring me there."

"Grandmaster Qin." Just as Qin Wentian was about to leave with the Puppet, the middle-aged man appeared beside him, "Grandmaster Qin, what's happening? It would be better for us to hurry up and break through this formation."

"Senior, my friend just ran into trouble. Let's go together, your level of power should be sufficient deterrence," Qin Wentian replied.

The middle-aged man had a bitter smile on his face, did Qin Wentian just treat him like a hired thug?

Those who were still alive at this point, all either had a terrifying level of power or a high level of attainment in Divine Inscriptions. How could it be so easy? And if the offending party was also someone like him, someone from a transcendent power, how could it be worth offending him over Qin Wentian's friend?

"Grandmaster Qin, it's best if you stop meddling in other people's business." The middle-aged man amicably laughed. Qin Wentian's brows creased but in the next moment, a raging wind gusted by as he saw the middle-aged man swiftly slam his palm onto the Puppet, causing explosive sounds to ring out. The Puppet immediately shattered into pieces, laying strewn about all over the ground.

Qin Wentian's countenance instantly sank, regarding the middle-aged man with a noticeably sharpened gaze. "Don't worry, I'm doing this so you can be more at ease and concentrate on finding the way out."

This, the destruction of Bailu Yi's Puppet, was an unmistakable threat.

After a moment of silence, Qin Wentian turned and continued walking ahead. An unknown emotion flashed in the middle-aged man's eyes as he silently followed behind Qin Wentian. But this time round, he maintained a certain distance apart.

Evidently, he could still remember the painful lesson that was dealt to those at the Star-Seizing Manor, and so he definitely wouldn't give Qin Wentian any chances to borrow the power of the Divine Inscriptions to make a move against him.

The middle-aged man became increasingly wary. Not only did he follow a safe distance away from Qin Wentian, when his help was required to 'break' the traps, he would directly refuse. He was afraid that Qin Wentian might be luring him into a trap of his own.

And in that moment, Qin Wentian abruptly stopped as he stared ahead. "Grand Formation, I need your help."

Before them were mountains to his left and right. The path right in the middle appeared to be free of obstruction, yet Qin Wentian could clearly sense the aura of a formation within it.

The middle-aged man frowned, he didn't sense anything out of the ordinary. But still, he decided to test out Qin Wentian's words. Abruptly, he sent out a palm strike, aiming at the space in front of Qin Wentian. And at the instant his attack landed, the space shimmered. An overwhelming surge of destructive energy crackled as it dissipated. The middle-aged man smiled, "Grandmaster Qin's perception is truly beyond words. If there are other traps, please neutralise them as soon as possible. I believe that the exit is near."

Anticipation flashed in his eyes, he knew what he said was right, the exit shouldn't be far away.

"Senior, this formation is too powerful. If Senior doesn't act, it would be truly difficult to neutralise this formation." Qin Wentian frowned.

"I believe in Grandmaster Qin's abilities." The middle-aged man smiled before he stood there with his arms crossed, appearing extremely at ease.

"If that's the case, delays will be inevitable." Qin Wentian paused as he started to inscribe a Divine Inscription, creating runic outlines that emitted a faint amount of energy. The middle-aged man stared intently at Qin Wentian's actions and then suddenly, his body flickered and he appeared right beside Qin Wentian, his palms circulating with a terrifying, fiery-red energy. The high temperature caused the surrounding atmosphere to distort, as a fearsome pressure pressed down on Qin Wentian.

Without words, the middle-aged man was saying he would kill Qin Wentian if he made the wrong move.

Qin Wentian remained silent, focusing on completing his Inscription. And after a period of time, he moved forward and started to direct the manifestation of his Inscription to attack the formation ahead. With every step he took, the middle-aged man followed closely beside him; he could kill Qin Wentian at any second.

“Does Senior really need to be so cautious?” Qin Wentian laughed. However, the moment he turned his head, his eyes became fixated with something behind the middle-aged man’s back. “Who are you?” Qin Wentian asked in a cold voice.

The middle-aged man’s expressions changed, yet he remained in the same position. He smiled coldly as he replied, “Grandmaster Qin, these puny tricks won’t work on me.”

However, he saw only that Qin Wentian’s countenance shifted drastically, and abruptly, a terrifyingly sharp aura erupted forth behind the middle-aged man, causing him to freeze in shock. As he turned back to face the incoming threat, he simultaneously formed his left hand into the shape of a claw and extended it towards Qin Wentian. Even if there really was an enemy behind him, he still had to restrain Qin Wentian’s movements.

But just as the middle-aged man turned his head, Qin Wentian had already stomped on the ground, sinking into the earth. Sword-type Divine Energy rumbled into his Yuanfu as he sent out several sharp swords created from Astral Light flying towards the middle-aged man.

The middle-aged man knew that he was tricked the instant he turned his head. Just as he suspected, there was no one behind him, yet at the same time, he could feel waves of terrifying sword intent explosively rushing towards him.

Using his fiery palm to frantically defend against the waves of sharp swords, the middle-aged man suddenly stumbled. The Divine Inscription carved by Qin Wentian earlier glowed with a radiant light, as cracks appeared on the earth where the middle-aged man was standing on. Making use of this opportunity, the swords immediately slashed forwards, aiming for his legs. The middle-aged man’s reaction was insanely quick, he quickly stomped on the ground, jumping upwards and dodging the sword slashes. However, he had forgotten about that gravitational pressure exerted by the Ascendant statue in the air. An overwhelming pressure bore down on him, forcing him to land on the already cracked ground from before.

He lost his balance upon hitting the ground, and this time around the middle-aged man couldn’t react in time as Qin Wentian suddenly appeared in front of him, blasting forth with his Falling Mountain Palms. The collision’s impact pushed the middle-aged man towards the traps within the formation that Qin Wentian had yet to break.

“SAVE ME!” The middle-aged man shrieked in terror, but Qin Wentian merely retreated a few steps back as he watched his opponent getting incinerated by the triggered traps.

He took a huge risk in order to kill his captor but if he hadn't taken the risk at all, he would've been unable to overcome his opponent. He'd had no other choice.

Only after his captor's body had completely burned into ashes did Qin Wentian turn back to rush towards the place he had found Bailu Yi's Puppet, his eyes filled with ice-cold intent.

Even though Bailu Yi could sense her Puppet's destruction, she would definitely understand that Qin Wentian would wait for her there.

In that time, Qin Wentian sat there as he prepared a formation to await the arrival of Bailu Yi.

But Qin Wentian was stunned to see Bai Fei arrive first instead of Bailu Yi. Not only that, she was in an extremely sorry state. Trailing behind her was a sinister young man who was also in a similar state albeit somewhat better, indicating that their journey here hadn't been easy at all.

“It's him.”

Bai Fei's eyes lit up the moment she saw Qin Wentian.

The sinister young man behind her also had an expression of interest on his face when he saw Qin Wentian.

“Move quickly.” The young man prodded Bai Fei on, and a few breaths of time later, they both reached Qin Wentian.

“Grandmaster, what are you waiting here for?” The young man smiled politely at Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian glanced at Bai Fei. Her robes had even more visible patches, and other than her beautiful shoulders, even the outline of her ample snow-white mounds were clearly visible, no doubt causing evil desires to bloom in the minds of males who looked at her. Her countenance was extremely haggard, and she looked to be under great pressure. Evidently, she was being forcibly coerced by the young man.

Bai Fei mistook the look in Qin Wentian's eyes. She gritted her teeth, her countenance growing even more unsightly.

“Hehe, if she is to Grandmaster's liking, I can gift her to you. She's a beauty from the Pill Emperor Hall and is still untainted yet.” The smile on the sinister young man's face grew even more amicable. However, Qin Wentian merely shot a glance at him as he replied, “I still have something on, don't bother me and go on ahead first.”

The young man was still smiling, it wasn't such an easy thing for him to meet Qin Wentian, the most talented Divine Inscriptionist from the Star-Seizing Manor Camp. How could he easily let him go?

“Grandmaster, why don't we form an alliance? Come with me, I definitely won't mistreat you,” the young man continued.

Bai Fei interjected, “Grandmaster... Have we met before?”

The sensation of familiarity grew increasingly stronger. She was sure she had met Qin Wentian before, but she just couldn't remember where.

Qin Wentian indifferently glanced at her, but didn't bother to reply her. And at this moment, sounds of footsteps could be heard from afar. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze over as his eyes narrowed. The newcomers were none other than Bailu Yi and the old man clad in black from the Star-Seizing Manor.

As the black-robed old man saw Qin Wentian, a brilliant light flickered in his eyes. It was actually him!

As a member of the Star-Seizing Manor, he had personally witnessed Qin Wentian's performance during the exchange. Also, when he remembered the incident from the previous formation, in that the Star-Seizing Manor was 'harmed' by Qin Wentian, an evil fire could be seen flickering in his eyes.

“Grandmaster Qin, what a good plan, causing my Star-Seizing Manor to lose such a large number of powerful peak-level Yuanfu cultivators.” A malicious smile appeared on the face of the old man as he spoke, yet Qin Wentian stared right at him, with an ice-cold light in his eyes that held an

unspoken resoluteness. Not only did Qin Wentian hold no fear of him, perhaps he was even planning to kill the old man here.

The expression on the old man's face didn't falter. He walked behind Bailu Yi, aware that Qin Wentian's killing intent was most likely because he was holding Bailu Yi hostage.

"Grandmaster Qin?" A look of contemplation dawned on Bai Fei's face. She was trying to remember which of the Divine Inscriptionists she was acquainted with, with the surname of Qin.

"Are you alright?" Qin Wentian asked Bailu Yi.

"How well can I be after being forcibly coerced for so many days." Bailu Yi glared at Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian breathed easier. Seeing how Bailu Yi was still able to joke around with him, he garnered that in these few days, she and her captor hadn't been in too perilous a situation.

"Release her and we will call this matter quits." Qin Wentian stared at the old man as he coldly remarked.

"Hehe, Qin Wentian, aren't you overestimating yourself?" the old man shot back with amusement.

"Qin Wentian?"

Bai Fei's mind rumbled as an image rose unbidden from her memory, superimposing onto the young Inscriptionist in front of her. Staggering backwards, her eyes widened in shock.

There was no mistake, it was him. She had finally recognised him!

This monstrous Divine Inscriptionist was actually that young man from that small country!

Chapter 266: Berate

The change was too great, in a mere six months, Qin Wentian's transformation had left Bai Fei almost unable to recognize him.

Although it could be said that she didn't really have much of an impression of Qin Wentian back then in Chu, they had still met a few times before and had even exchanged words. The memories of

Stellar Martial Cultivators were all exceedingly good, and not recognising Qin Wentian could be an indicator of how much he had changed.

She could still vaguely remember Qin Wentian as an impulsive youth, with hints of immaturity in his aura, as well as that ‘pride’ of a genius from a small country. Back then she held Qin Wentian in total derision, and had once told Qin Wentian to wake up from his fantasy, to stop dreaming of being together with Mo Qingcheng. Bai Fei would never have expected that today, she would meet Qin Wentian again under such circumstances.

The youth back then had completely rid himself of all childishness, his features now had an intense look, extraordinarily sculpted. His eyes reflected a calm confidence, but now, also flickered with cold intent, causing fear to those he looked at. This was a marked difference compared to the faint arrogance he had unconsciously exuded before.

And what confounded her the most was that his once ‘lowly’ character was now a peak-tier, third-ranked Divine Inscriptionist today, able to seamlessly kill off over tens of peak-level Yuanfu cultivators.

Such a huge contrast caused Bai Fei to temporarily be unable to reconcile the differences.

That youth, had actually come to the Moon Continent.

Could it be that he didn’t understand that regardless of how talented he was in Chu, the Grand Xia Empire was like a sky-high mountain that was unscalable to him.

“It’s actually you.” Bai Fei stared at Qin Wentian. “Are you intentionally pretending not to know me?”

Qin Wentian merely glanced at Bai Fei as he shot back, “Am I very familiar with you?”

Bai Fei’s countenance froze, her faintly covered snow-white peaks trembled as she drew in a shivering breath, the sight of it causing the blood of males to surge with arousal.

“Mhm?” The sinister young man felt extremely interested as he calmly noted what was happening.

Bai Fei and Qin Wentian were acquainted with each other, but it seemed as though Qin Wentian was holding a grudge against her.

Other than that, Bailu Yi who was a captive of the Star-Seizing Manor elder, was the person Qin Wentian wanted to save.

A cold light flashed in that black-robed elder's eyes as he shook his head, angered by Qin Wentian's impudence.

"I think, you are still unaware of the current situation." The old man snorted as he brandished a palm towards Qin Wentian, a fearsome energy emanated from it as though his palm strike was capable of sinking even the stars and moon.

"Hey hey, don't break the peace." The young man took a step forth as he too sent out his palm, blocking the attack of the old man, the impact causing the sound of rupturing air to ring out.

"What do you mean?" The black-robed elder coldly stared at the sinister-looking young man.

"We all just want to exit the formation safely, why is there a need to fight against each other?" The young man laughed. "Brother Qin, this place is fraught with danger, so if you can help us leave this place, I can guarantee that he will release his captive. I would also gift this beauty to brother Qin to deal with. Isn't that perfect? Moreover, this friend from the Star-Seizing Manor has a bad temper, why act to ignite it? Wouldn't it be a win-win situation if we all cooperated instead?"

Bai Fei's countenance stiffened, she was to be gifted to Qin Wentian?

Qin Wentian naturally understood the faint, underlying threat behind the sinister young man's words. He replied, "Sorry, I have no way to trust any of you."

"Hmph." The black-robed elder coldly snorted as he placed his hands threateningly on Bailu Yi's shoulders. "Do you think you have a choice?"

"Brother Qin, please reconsider. Miss Bailu is as pure as jade, and has the beauty of that which could cause the moon to hide and shame the flowers." The sinister young man laughed evilly. After hearing his words, the black-robed elder grinned as he started caressing Bailu Yi's back, causing her to turn pale-white.

"If you dare try anything again, you can stay here forever," Qin Wentian replied. He then continued, "The traps ahead are many times stronger compared to before, I can assure you that even with your strength, you would be unable to force your way through it. I personally witnessed an expert from the Hua Clan making that attempt, but all that's left of him now are ashes. That was why I stayed here to further contemplate the formation. Of course if you wish to seek death, I won't stop you."

The old man's palm froze in mid-action, not daring to make another move. "Does that mean that you agree to cooperate?"

"Release her first," Qin Wentian coldly replied.

"Hehe, don't worry, I will personally take care of her safety. Just lead the way." How could the black-robed elder release the bargaining chip that was Bailu Yi?

Qin Wentian frowned, "I don't trust you to take care of anything female."

"Haha, seems like you have feelings for this girl." The black-robed elder laughed, as he narrowed his eyes. "But since I know this, all the more reason for me not to release her."

Qin Wentian's countenance became colder, "Since that's the case, you can kill me right now and test your luck against the traps."

Qin Wentian's eyes were steel-like, filled with an unbendable determination. The old man frowned, how unexpected that Qin Wentian would act in such a crazy manner, he was too much of a slave to his emotions.

"Brother Qin, don't talk like this, death won't solve anything. Bailu Yi is such a beautiful woman, it would truly be a waste if she were ravaged by that black-robed man. How could you die in peace, then?" The young man continued smiling evilly. Neither party was willing to back down.

Indeed, Qin Wentian's countenance grew increasingly ugly to behold. After a moment of silence, he continued, "Take me in her stead. You guys can walk behind the two of us, we will be your 'meat shields'."

The black-robed elder's eyes flashed, as he exchanged glances with the evil young man. Soon after, the two of them laughed out loud. If that was the case, they would accept the conditions.

"Come stand before us then." The black-robed elder grinned.

Qin Wentian didn't hesitate, immediately walking over. Only when he stood right in front of the black-robed elder did he release his hold on Bailu Yi.

Qin Wentian placed both hands on her shoulders as he stated, "I'll protect you."

Bailu Yi froze, shyness could be seen on her innocent face. She hadn't thought that Qin Wentian would perform such an intimate action.

However an instant later, she could see an extremely terrifying light flickering in Qin Wentian's eyes as he used his strength and pushed her far away.

"HOW DO YOU WANT TO DIE?" All of a sudden, Qin Wentian stomped onto the ground, activating the Inscriptions he had inscribed while waiting for Bailu Yi's arrival earlier. The ground cracked beneath the black-robed elder's feet, as a suction force pulled him downwards. Simultaneously, Qin Wentian borrowed the gravitational force from that Ascendant statue, using it to power his own Inscriptions. A blood-curdling scream echoed in the air, the black-robed elder's legs were rended to pieces by a sword-type Inscription hidden underneath the earth.

Bai Fei stood there, stunned. Suddenly, without warning, she felt someone slamming her with a palm, pushing her out of the formation.

Bai Fei was unceremoniously blasted onto the ground as she involuntarily cursed, "Bastard."

Yet her heart couldn't help but secretly sigh in relief as she witnessed how powerful Qin Wentian's trap was.

That fellow had long completed his preparations, creating a multi-layered formation here.

"SPARE ME!" the old man screamed, but how could Qin Wentian show mercy to him? Being merciful to one's enemies equated to being cruel towards oneself. In fact, not only did he ignore the old man's plea, he even increased the tempo of the sword slashes, eventually mincing the old man's body into little bits.

As for that sinister young man, the moment Qin Wentian stomped his feet to activate the formation, he had also been caught inside the trap. This was a multi-layered formation; there were trapping Inscriptions as well as killing Inscriptions embedded within. Qin Wentian had been waiting for Bailu Yi's arrival, he didn't expect Bai Fei and her captor would be here as well.

A golden radiance shrouded the young man within, blocking him from the trap's attacks. At the same time, he repeatedly tried dashing outwards, only to feel as though he was in a maze, he couldn't get out.

Eventually, the young man halted his movements, not daring to move randomly about. He wasn't familiar with Divine Inscriptions and formations, and knew that it would be extremely tough for him to escape. However, he also knew that as long as he was cautious, he wouldn't be easily killed by the formation. Hence, he decided to pause his movements, he didn't want to suffer the same fate as that black-robed elder.

The terrifying keen of swords wailed, yet the sinister young man manifested a pure gold body of a sculpture in front of him, deflecting the sword slashes.

“Brother Qin, your formation won't be able to kill me. Let me out and from now onwards, both of us will have nothing to do with each other,” the young man called out.

Qin Wentian's countenance remained cold. He knew that if this man didn't die, there would surely be repercussions.

However, Qin Wentian also understood that it was one thing to use third-level Inscriptions to slay an unsuspecting peak-level Yuanfu expert and a different ball game altogether if he wanted to do the same with someone that was on his guard.

Receiving silence as an answer, the sinister young man's expression grew cold as killing intent flickered in his eyes. A golden lance then appeared in his hands, a menacing aura of destruction emanating from it.

“Careful,” Qin Wentian warned. Abruptly, a beam of golden light directly penetrated through the formation, causing a small rupture in the Inscription, as it rushed towards Qin Wentian and his group.

“Run.” Qin Wentian grabbed Bailu Yi before dashing away. The young man had an extremely powerful Divine Weapon, it would only be a matter of time before he broke through Qin Wentian's formation.

Qin Wentian's actions were exceedingly decisive, choosing immediately to leave, pulling Bailu Yi along. Bai Fei's countenance stiffened before she too, followed after Qin Wentian. She was too weak in here, her only hope of survival lay with Qin Wentian.

“Scram.” Qin Wentian abruptly turned his head back, coldly staring at Bai Fei.

Bai Fei stuttered, “You...”

“I, Qin, am merely a poor and uncouth fellow who isn’t worthy enough to interact with Miss Bai Fei,” Qin Wentian stated detachedly, his words causing Bai Fei to pale. Back then she had regarded Qin Wentian with utter contempt but today, the circumstances were reversed. Now she was the one ‘begging’ to follow Qin Wentian.

“Even now, you... you... are still unworthy to be together with Qingcheng!” How could Bai Fei stand for such an attitude. She spat coldly at Qin Wentian, “As for you two, you look truly compatible with each other.”

“Worthy or not, that is not something for you to decide. I saved you today for one reason, and one reason only—that you are in the same sect as Qingcheng. As for me and Bailu Yi, only friendship exists between us. Tell this to Qingcheng for me. I, Qin Wentian, will definitely pay a visit to the Pill Emperor Hall one day to take her back.”

And with that vow, Qin Wentian immediately turned and walked away, leaving the dumbstruck Bai Fei rooted to the spot!

Chapter 267: Zhan Chen’s True Face

After they left the area, Bailu Yi stared intently at Qin Wentian.

The coldness he had radiated had already dissipated, and as he noticed Bailu Yi staring at him, he cheekily commented, “You like looking at me that much?”

“Cocky.” Bailu Yi glared at him, shifting her eyes away. However, she couldn’t help herself. A moment later, her gaze shifted back as she asked in a light voice, “Is Mo Qingcheng really your girlfriend?”

She had clearly heard the conversation between Qin Wentian and Bai Fei earlier. Bai Fei was from the Pill Emperor Hall and Qin Wentian personally stated that he would make a trip over there in the future to take Mo Qingcheng away. If that was the case, it meant that everything Qin Wentian had said before, was real.

Back then when Qin Wentian mentioned Mo Qingcheng to her, she had thought that he was joking.

“Mhm.” Qin Wentian shrugged.

Bailu Yi's beautiful eyes lighted up, "Can you tell me more, I'm really curious about the story between you two."

"Even beautiful women love gossip?" Qin Wentian laughed. "Mo Qingcheng and I came from a small country named Chu. That place, was under the administration of the Nine Mystical Palace. My clan had some conflict with the Royal Clan and by a twist of fate, Qingcheng saved me when she discovered me unconscious in a forest. However in the beginning, I didn't know that she was the one who had saved me, she only told me about this after we were acquainted for a period of time."

Qin Wentian began telling the events of his past while Bailu Yi listened closely, entranced by their story.

"You crippled Hua Xiaoyun's arms?" At the end, Bailu Yi exclaimed in shock.

"Yes. Luckily, the Pill Emperor's daughter, Luo He, was also present at the time. If not for that, there was no way the Hua Clan would have spared me that easily." Qin Wentian nodded.

"If that's the case, does that mean your purpose for coming to the Moon Continent was to look for Mo Qingcheng?" Bailu Yi felt extremely touched. Truly, distance doesn't matter when it came to true love.

However, she was also very clear on the difficulty of 'taking' Mo Qingcheng away from the Pill Emperor Hall.

"It wasn't just for that, my main purpose for coming here was primarily to kill Hua Xiaoyun, and also of course, for your White Deer Institute," Qin Wentian continued.

"White Deer Institute?" Bailu Yi didn't understand.

"If I tell you this, you cannot hold it against me for keeping it a secret from you earlier," Qin Wentian replied.

Naturally, Bailu Yi's curiosity was greatly piqued after she saw how mysterious Qin Wentian was acting. "Sure."

“Do you know of the ‘hidden’ Azure Faction?” Qin Wentian looked intently into Bailu Yi’s eyes, studying her expression. Bailu Yi’s heart pounded madly when she heard those words, causing her to almost stumble as great waves rocked her heart. This was the greatest secret of the White Deer Institute, which only core members were privy to, how could Qin Wentian have known it?

When he saw the change in Bailu Yi’s expression, Qin Wentian understood clearly that Bailu Yi too, knew of this secret.

“You...” Bailu Yi trembled as she stared at Qin Wentian.

“I’m the successor of the Azure Emperor,” Qin Wentian replied, Bailu Yi was still in a daze from the impact of his words, feeling as though her brain had short-circuited.

Qin Wentian was the successor of the Azure Emperor?

Inserting his hands inside his robes, Qin Wentian withdrew a command token. The word ‘Azure’ was clearly inscribed on top of the token.

“Token of the Azure Emperor,” Bailu Yi’s voice quavered, and only when Qin Wentian put away the token did she recover somewhat. She drew in a deep breath, “Are you here to take over our branch at the White Deer Institute?”

“Do you think it’s possible?” Qin Wentian seriously inquired.

Bailu Yi contemplated for a moment before she replied in a low voice, “It’s hard to say. After all, the White Deer Institute has stood alone for so many years. It would be truly difficult to make everyone in the Institute submit to you just because of a token from the past.”

“I’ve no intentions of making the Institute become my servants. Even though the Institute is merely one of the branches from the ‘hidden’ Azure Faction, why turtle like this in the Grand Xia Empire? Why not rock the entire world instead of hiding in the Moon Continent?” Qin Wentian’s words were brimming with confidence, causing waves of commotion to assail Bailu Yi’s heart.

“This means taking a risk, and if anything went wrong, there’s a high possibility that the White Deer Institute would never recover,” Bailu Yi replied. “Qin Wentian, promise me this. Do not reveal

any information regarding the ‘hidden’ branches of the Azure Faction before you have sufficient power to do so. Too many transcendent powers participated in the fall of the Azure Emperor back then, so if they caught wind that there are still living descendants of the Azure Emperor hiding in Grand Xia, they would definitely act to remove its roots.”

“Don’t worry, I would never act without sufficient power. I too, won’t reveal my connection to the White Deer Institute before that happens. At most, I will use you as an excuse and let the others misunderstand the relationship between us,” Qin Wentian teased, causing Bailu Yi to roll her eyes at him.

“Okay, you have to work hard to gain the Institute’s approval then, okay?”

“Does that mean that you’ll support me?” Qin Wentian laughed. Bailu Yi glared at him, “Wasn’t the purpose of you telling me because you wanted me to support you?”

Qin Wentian lowered his head with a smile, not replying but continued walking ahead. He muttered in a low voice, “If you didn’t support me, I would have chosen to give up on this branch. The White Deer Institute would have remained as the White Deer Institute for all eternity.”

Bailu Yi’s heart trembled when she heard Qin Wentian’s words. If she didn’t support him, Qin Wentian would have chosen to give up? Qin Wentian had unhesitatingly told her such a huge secret not only because he wanted her support, he also wanted to know how she felt about it. This was trust, Qin Wentian was already treating her as one of his closest confidants.

“I shall lead the Azure Faction to the pinnacle of Grand Xia once again.”

A radiant smile beamed on Bailu Yi’s face when she heard his words. In a similar fashion, she also believed that Qin Wentian would be able to do it.

Qin Wentian and Bailu Yi continued walking towards the place where Qin Wentian slayed the middle-aged man. A distance away from there, he held out his hand, gesturing for Bailu Yi to stop, as he crouched down quietly behind a hillside.

Qin Wentian’s perception could clearly feel that there was someone already there. These people were none other than Zhan Chen from the Pill Emperor Hall as well as his companion.

As someone ranked #11 on the Heavenly Fate Ranking, his speed in breaking through the obstacles could be considered fast indeed. Beside him was his companion, Qing Yue. Zhan Chen retrieved a medicinal pill from his robes and passed it over to her. “Qing Yue, eat this to replenish your energy. We will take a break here for a while before attempting to break through this later.”

Qing Yue gazed at Zhan Chen, her beautiful features as calm as water. With no hesitation, she took the pill offered by Zhan Chen and consumed it directly.

“Someone has been here before. Since he could arrive at this point before us, there is no need to doubt his strength. Luckily, he is already dead. Not only that, Old Third of the three brothers was unable to neutralise this formation and has also perished within.” Zhan Chen pointed to the two interspatial rings that were lying on the ground, as he continued in a calm voice, “The trap ahead should be the most dangerous trap within this formation, so as long as we break through it there’s a high chance that we’ll reach the exit and obtain that Ascendant’s inheritance.”

An instant after he spoke, that refined, scholarly look on Zhan Chen’s face was warped by wild ambition.

He was the strongest of all cultivators that had participated in the trial this time round. If that was the case, the position of that Ascendant’s successor would definitely be him.

“Mhm.” Qing Yue was clad in a light-blue dress, and the look in her eyes when she stared at Zhan Chen, was filled with love and tenderness, even in that moment...

“Zhan Chen, I believe in you.” Qing Yue smiled. In an instant, the beauty of her smile eclipsed even the moon, causing Zhan Chen’s heart to involuntarily shudder as a hint of regret flashed in his eyes.

“After my death, you will definitely be the leader of the Pill Emperor Hall.” Qing Yue’s smile didn’t falter, yet her words caused Zhan Chen’s countenance to undergo a drastic change as he stared at Qing Yue in stunned silence.

“I know that the pill you gave me was poison. It will turn me into a mindless zombie, following your every order.” Tears rolled down her cheeks as she continued, “Zhan Chen, we’ve known each other for eight years, how can I be unclear of your personality? On the surface you appear so clean, so gentle and elegant. Yet you couldn’t mask the ambition in your heart from me.”

“I was the one that gave you the introduction you needed to enter the Pill Emperor Hall. Your talent was obvious to all, and in a mere eight years, you became the blazing sun of our sect, your radiance

the brightest out of all the elites in our Pill Emperor Hall. But I know everything you've done, every action you've taken was all for the sake of furthering your own ambition."

Qing Yue's tears continued to fall, yet the smile on her face never wavered. "Back then when Martial Aunt had said that Qingcheng would definitely be one of the most important pillars of our Pill Emperor Hall in the future, I knew your heart would definitely be moved. I know I am no use to you now, so let Mo Qingcheng take my place instead. This is the only thing remaining that's still within my power to do for you. Without me in the way, Martial Aunt would be more than willing to betroth Qingcheng to you. The two of you will be the future of our sect, while I'll just be in the way. Zhan Chen, this is the last time I can help you..."

After speaking, Qing Yue turned and dashed towards the trap which Old Third died to, choosing death over being a mindless puppet.

She was heartbroken, her heart had died when she saw Zhan Chen taking out that pill. She knew him too well, how could he hide his intentions from her?

With a lifeless heart, what use was there for her to continue living on?

Qing Yue's Astral Souls erupted into being as her aura heightened to its limits, rushing head first into the trap. Her beauty was further accentuated underneath the starlight cast by her Astral Souls, and even Zhan Chen couldn't help but feel his heart clenching at what he had lost. An expression of agony flickered on his face, but swiftly, very swiftly, it was replaced by a look of utter determination. Nobody could shake his heart, his will was resolute, this was the path he had chosen, this was his Dao Heart.

From the start of his cultivation to now, his journey was filled with too much bitterness and fatigue. In spite of this, he would continue trudging on, all the way until he rose to the pinnacle of Grand Xia. His resolve was unshakable!

Closing his eyes, Zhan Chen stood still. He could feel Qing Yue's impending death, yet his heart had never felt this serene before.

But at the very moment of her death, Zhan Chen's eyes abruptly snapped open, a terrifying light flashed through them. He suddenly turned around, his silhouette flickering as he dashed towards the direction behind him. He had sensed someone watching him!

Chapter 268: Silent Endurance

The glint of light in Zhan Chen's eyes was even sharper compared to a sword's edge, his killing intent immediately erupting forth the moment he sensed he was being spied upon.

If news of this matter were to leak out, that he ruthlessly chose to sacrifice his companion for the sake of his goals, the Pill Emperor Palace would be the first to slay him.

Hence, that spy must die.

"Run!" Qin Wentian knew that Zhan Chen had discovered their presence, he hadn't expected Zhan Chen's perception to be this strong. Holding Bailu Yi's hands, Qin Wentian retreated with explosive speed.

"Hey, why don't you stay behind?" The voice of Zhan Chen rang out, the killing intent he manifested was so thick that it caused those exposed to it to feel their bodies turning cold.

How could Qin Wentian and Bailu Yi stop? Executing the Garuda Movement Technique to its limits, Qin Wentian dragged Bailu Yi along.

With a flick of his finger, Zhan Chen concentrated Astral Light ahead of him, as an ancient sword coalesced from it. Zhan Chen instantly stepped on top of it as the Astral sword functioned like a skateboard, powered by his cultivation base, causing great clouds of dust and earth to kick up as it sped after Qin Wentian, shrinking the distance between them.

Although Qin Wentian's movement technique was godly, his cultivation base was only at the third level of Yuanfu. The same went for Bailu Yi. How could their speed match up to a peak-level Yuanfu cultivator who was ranked eleventh on the Heavenly Fate Rankings?

The disparity of their power levels were too far apart.

Qin Wentian's countenance grew extremely unsightly as his gaze turned cold. He also hadn't expected to discover Zhan Chen's secret and now, Zhan Chen wanted their deaths to ensure their silence.

"Bzzz!" With a wave of his hands, Qin Wentian sent out the Yellow Springs Monument, which appeared on a mountain slope.

“Come.” Qin Wentian and Bailu Yi directly stepped onto it. Qin Wentian continued stepping in a rhythmic manner as thunderous sounds rang out. An instant later, a crimson glow emanated forth from it, along with a terrifying pressure.

When Zhan Chen dashed over, he only saw Qin Wentian on the verge of dashing into a trap. With a wave of his palms, a screen of swords manifested around him.

“DIE!” Zhan Chen spat out, as that screen of swords transformed into a layer of sword shadows, flying towards Qin Wentian.

The speed of the sword shadows was so fast, it created a shrill sound as the air ripped apart. “Down!” Qin Wentian pulled Bailu Yi along as they tumbled down the mountain slope, narrowly avoiding the attack.

Zhan Chen coldly snorted, as he rode his Astral sword forward, directly rushing into the formation. He had no fear of the majority of traps here.

Qin Wentian’s countenance sank. He was unwilling to die like this.

“Little Yi, Wentian.” Right at this moment, an excited voice called out in a certain direction. Hope bloomed on Bailu Yi’s pale face, that voice was exceedingly familiar to her.

Only now did Qin Wentian notice a silhouette madly dashing over. This person was none other than Bailu Jing.

A look of unwavering resoluteness flashed in Qin Wentian’s eyes. He sliced the skin of his finger and pressed it down onto the Yellow Springs Monument, channeling his blood energy within it.

Zhan Chen slashed down with his palms as a terrifying sword began to form in mid-air, cleaving downwards to Qin Wentian and Bailu Yi

A crimson light flashed in Qin Wentian’s eyes as he gestured for the Yellow Springs Monument to fly forward, smashing towards Zhan Chen. Zhan Chen only felt the pounding of his heart, as well as a surging of his blood, when a deafening sound echoed the moment his sword attack slashed upon the stone monument.

“RUMBLEE~” The monument rebounded back from the impact of the collision, slamming onto Qin Wentian. His body and Bailu Yi’s grinded upon the earth as the force of the rebound flung them

backwards, causing them to cough up several mouthfuls of blood. Only at this moment did Bailu Jing arrive.

“Stay your hand!” Bailu Jing roared, his whole person transformed into a shadow and an instant later, a killing technique descended from the skies. A golden thread manifested, shooting towards Zhan Chen.

Zhan Chen flicked his fingers, his monstrous sword intent ‘cracked’, transforming into countless sword fragments that attempted to slice apart the golden thread.

The golden thread proved impervious to his attempts, and continued descending downwards, seeking to tear Zhan Chen apart.

“Great Sun Nine Beheading Technique!”

Zhan Chen’s gaze stiffened, as the sword Qi he projected grew stronger and stronger. He stabbed forth with his finger, his attack landing onto the golden thread as a terrifying destructive energy ignited, causing the surrounding space to distort. And finally, with this last attack, that golden thread snapped. But it bought enough time for Bailu Jing, who now stood protectively in front of Qin Wentian and Bailu Yi.

“Brother.” Bailu Yi called out, Bailu Jing acknowledged her with a nod, a bone-chilling coldness radiated out from him as he stared at Zhan Chen.

“Ranked #56 in the Heavenly Fate Ranking, Bailu Jing. Based on your current strength, your ranking would surely improve when the time comes for the Venerate Heavens Sect to refresh it,” Zhan Chen stated, staring back at Bailu Jing.

Bailu Jing’s eyes were filled with killing intent, he knew that Zhan Chen’s earlier strike was meant to kill Qin Wentian and his sister Bailu Yi.

A terrifying pressure gushed forth as Bailu Jing released his Astral Souls. Of his three Astral Souls, one was a divinity covered in raging flames, the second one a wind shadow, while the third one, was a resplendently glowing Seven Slaughter Astral Soul.

His Astral Souls originated from the third, fourth and fifth Heavenly Layers respectively!

Bailu Jing, who was always so composed, now exuded towering flames of anger that seemed to reach the Heavens!

“Big Brother Jing, everything was just a misunderstanding.” At this moment, Qin Wentian’s voice drifted over, causing Bailu Jing to start. Qin Wentian then continued, “Zhan Chen, why are you pursuing us for no reason? Did we do something that offended you? I don’t think we’ve ever interacted before.”

Since Zhan Chen was ranked #11 on the Heavenly Fate Ranking, and someone chosen from the Pill Emperor Hall, there was no need to doubt his strength. Even though Bailu Jing might be powerful, it was obvious that it was to their disadvantage if a fight really broke out.

Zhan Chen shifted his gaze onto Qin Wentian, meeting clear eyes with no hints of hatred. He felt taken back at how deep Qin Wentian’s scheming ran. By intentionally pretending that it was all a misunderstanding, Qin Wentian was saying he would keep his silence on what he had just witnessed. And as for Zhan Chen’s earlier attempt to murder them, Qin Wentian couldn’t care less.

Did he really not mind? Or was he merely enduring it in silence?

“Haha, Zhan Chen, you are actually here as well.” At this moment, a group of cultivators walked over. These newcomers were none other than Zhao Lie and Old First of the Li Clan’s three brothers. Old First was evidently unlucky, in meeting Zhao Lie and then being forced to lead the way.

“It’s that Divine Inscriptionist Grandmaster. Excellent, with two Inscriptionists, we can definitely exit this bloody space.” Zhao Lie’s eyes flickered with fire as he glanced at Qin Wentian. He assumed that Zhan Chen had been coercing Qin Wentian to lead the way but Bailu Jing refused, which led to the conflict between them.

“Hehe, that’s what I think as well. I wonder if Grandmaster Qin is willing to lead the way?” Zhan Chen stared at Qin Wentian as a grim smile appeared on his face.

Qin Wentian understood, if they didn’t die today, the killing intent in Zhan Chen’s heart would never fade.

However, wasn’t it the same for him as well? If there was a chance, he would definitely slay Zhan Chen.

“Naturally.” Qin Wentian smiled, agreeing without hesitation.

“With Little Brother Qin leading the way, our path forward would surely be many times smoother.” Old First laughed heartily, the earlier tension in the air melting away.

Bailu Yi naturally understood Qin Wentian’s intentions, pretending that they saw nothing earlier.

And as they resumed their journey, Qin Wentian and Bailu Yi kept their distance from Zhan Chen. Bailu Jing didn't question them, Qin Wentian intentionally wanted to keep what they witnessed a secret.

After a while, they returned to the formation where Zhan Chen and Qing Yue had conversed at.

And in that moment, even more people appeared. The new arrivals were experts from the Hua Clan.

"Is everyone here?" Behind them, a voice drifted over. Zhu Sha and two others from the Star-Seizing Manor had arrived as well.

The ice-cold gazes of Zhu Sha and Yang Fan then landed onto Qin Wentian. From their perspective, Qin Wentian definitely had to pay for the deaths of over ten peak-level Yuanfu cultivators they had lost.

However, they could read the current situation. They knew that they couldn't harm Qin Wentian, as they still needed to depend on his strength to break through this goddamned space.

"Grandmaster Qin, please." Zhan Chen made a gesture of invitation. Qin Wentian swept a glance at the characters in front of him, his countenance serene, yet he knew that they were currently in an extremely perilous situation.

"Right." He nodded in agreement as he moved forward and started to inscribe Divine Inscriptions. Bailu Jing and Bailu Yi stayed behind Qin Wentian, while Old First stood beside Qin Wentian, working together with him to neutralise this formation.

Qin Wentian's actions were very slow, causing Old Li to feel that there was something going on. It was as though Qin Wentian was doing this intentionally.

In actuality Qin Wentian was looking for an opportunity, but as he thought of the strength of those behind him, he knew that it wasn't possible for him to kill them all with a single move.

Zhan Chen, Yang Fan, Zhao Lie, Hua Feng; all of them were rankers in the Heavenly Fate Ranking. There was no way he could simultaneously kill them all with sneak attacks. He could only focus on neutralising the formation.

An instant later, Qin Wentian picked up one of the interspatial rings, yet he left one lying on the ground. Old First faltered, before picking up the remaining ring with his trembling hands, his face a mask of agony.

"Old Third." Old First tightly clutched the interspatial ring of his third brother. An instant later, his countenance froze, he saw Qin Wentian inscribing a word—Zhan—before him.

“Zhan, Zhan Chen.” Old First’s heart pounded, as he felt his body trembling, a glint of hatred flashing past his eyes. However an instant later, he took a deep breath and calmed himself, pretending as though he hadn’t seen anything out of the ordinary.

Qin Wentian blocked the word with his body, and immediately wiped it away after writing it as he continued to neutralise the formation. After each trap was neutralised, they slowly advanced with the the rest of the group, who quietly followed them from behind. Gradually, the ever-green pine trees and ancient mountains appeared at arm’s length.

The exit was very near.

“Energy fluctuations from Divine Inscriptions.” Qin Wentian abruptly shifted his gaze forwards. Although those trees and mountains appeared quite near to them, they were shadowed by a faint distortion that shimmered in the air, taking the shape of a rampart manifested by Divine Inscriptions, blocking their way.

His movements involuntarily halted, and he closed his eyes, silently contemplating the intangible rampart in front of him.

Qin Wentian could feel that freedom was just a step away!

Chapter 269: Unworthy Successor

Those behind him all frowned when they noticed Qin Wentian had halted.

A baleful aura emanated forth from the middle of Zhu Sha’s brows as he icily questioned, “What are you doing?”

“The difficulty of this formation is exceedingly high, I naturally would need a period of time to study it. If you don’t feel comfortable waiting, why don’t you do it yourself?” Qin Wentian shot back, his reply causing Zhu Sha to snort, a glint of coldness flickering in his eyes when he looked at Qin Wentian.

After this matter was concluded, he would definitely deal with Qin Wentian.

A mere Divine Inscriptionist dared to be so arrogant in front of him? Insufferable idiot, Qin Wentian didn’t know the meaning of death.

Of course, Qin Wentian was aware that Zhu Sha held killing intent in his heart. He acted ignorant, closing his eyes and then spent half a day in contemplation. Those behind him could only wait quietly for him.

Finally, Qin Wentian opened his eyes as he spoke to Bailu Jing and Bailu Yi, “Brother Jing, both of you try placing your palms on those two positions over there.”

After speaking, a beam of Astral Light shot out as Qin Wentian waved his hands, causing two positions on the rampart to light up.

“Right.” Bailu Jing and Bailu Yi nodded as they walked forward.

“Wait a minute,” Zhu Sha called out, a look of sharpness could be seen on his face as he interjected, “Why the two of them?”

“This is merely a probe and there might be danger. Of course, if Senior is willing to do so, I’m more than happy to let you be the guinea pig.” Qin Wentian laughed, his reply causing Zhu Sha’s countenance to sink. This brat was too scheming, previously they had all fallen for his trick. He intentionally sought them out for help first, and when they rejected his request, he immediately followed their ‘suggestions’ and directly exited the first formation with those from the White Deer Institute.

This time around, maybe he was trying reverse psychology? Asking Bailu Jing and Bailu Yi for help first to lure Zhu Sha and the rest into making a move.

“Let them go first, Zhu Sha and one other stand behind them,” Yang Fan commanded. Glancing at Qin Wentian, he really wanted to see what tricks Qin Wentian had up his sleeves. If the Bailu siblings were successful in escaping this formation, Zhu Sha wouldn’t be left behind.

Zhu Sha and another expert from the Star-Seizing Manor nodded their heads, as they followed closely behind Bailu Jing and Bailu Yi.

The Bailu siblings naturally trusted Qin Wentian, and placed their palms in the position indicated by Qin Wentian. An instant later, that intangible rampart shimmered and ‘solidified’. Abruptly, two doors appeared on the rampart and the Bailu siblings vanished from sight.

“Huh?” Zhu Sha and the other expert froze. They instantly dashed forwards and placed their palms in the same position as the Bailu siblings did, but this time around, a fearsome ominous aura exploded forth instead.

“Be careful.” Qin Wentian leisurely walked forward, however his warning was too late. Zhu Sha and the other expert hastily pulled back as they felt the ominous aura gushing towards them.

“BREAK!” Zhu Sha howled in rage, blasting forth with both his palms, causing two gigantic palm imprints to appear, both circulating with an overwhelming energy. BOOM! Although the ominous aura dissipated upon impact, Zhu Sha was left with a pair of badly mangled hands.

“Senior’s movements were too fast, I couldn’t warn you in time.” Qin Wentian smiled as he walked over with Old First.

Zhu Sha’s palms were trembling, his eyes dripped with venom.

He couldn’t warn them in time? How could he believe such bullshit?

Zhu Sha’s comrade had even worse injuries compared to him – both of his arms had been mutilated.

Yang Fan’s countenance sank, he knew Qin Wentian had done this intentionally.

In spite of this, he couldn’t do anything to Qin Wentian. The seeds of worry couldn’t help but blossom in his heart, and he knew that there must certainly be a way to exit this formation. The Bailu siblings had already totally vanished.

“This formation is ever-changing, the second resonance needs to occur from another position.” Qin Wentian’s steps stopped in front of the rampart. He locked eyes with Old First and in an instant, both of them blasted out with their palms, imprinting it in a particular position on the intangible rampart.

“STOP THEM!”

The countenance of Yang Fan and the rest drastically changed, all of them were still stunned from the counter-attack of the rampart to Zhu Sha and his comrade. No one expected Qin Wentian would suddenly make a move, catching all of them unawares.

But it was already too late. The rampart shimmered into existence as Qin Wentian and Old First vanished together. This occurrence caused the remaining cultivators to turn ashen with dismay.

Qin Wentian and Old First had already arrived at the other side of the rampart, and joined up with the Bailu siblings.

“Little Brother Qin, my youngest brother...?” Old First turned his gaze onto Qin Wentian, with worry apparent in his voice.

“I and Bailu Yi managed to hear the conversation between Zhan Chen and his companion. Old Third was forced by them to neutralise that formation and eventually died trying. Not only that, in order to probe the formation, Zhan Chen fed a pill to his companion and sent her within. In the end, she died there too.”

Qin Wentian explained, his words causing a sharp glint of light to glow in Bailu Jing’s eyes. “So that’s the reason why he tried to kill you and Little Yi?”

“Yeah, I could only pretend that nothing happened. Luckily for us, Zhao Lie’s arrival prevented Zhan Chen from making a move,” Qin Wentian continued. After which, he turned his gaze onto the evergreen pine trees and ancient mountains, as well as the great hall situated in the centre, the sculpture of the Ascendant within.

They had finally arrived!

“With their strength, they will eventually break through the rampart,” Old First spoke, he knew that if those from the transcendent powers combined their powers, they would definitely be able to take down the rampart, albeit with some sacrifices.

“Mhm, let us enter the great hall first to take a look,” Qin Wentian agreed.

After which, the four of them proceeded onwards, it seemed that there were no longer other traps here. At the entrance of the great hall, all of them were taken aback by the vastness of the great hall, as well as the exquisiteness of the sculpture ahead of them. The sculpture had two ancient scrolls in his hands, and the resemblance could be said to be almost totally akin to a human.

Not only that, on the ground’s surface were many runic outlines of Divine Inscriptions revolving of their own accord, illuminating the great hall.

“Hmm, these don’t seem like traps?” Old First asked Qin Wentian.

“Yeah, I think so. These are like outlets of power that required humans to kick start them. Not only are they not traps, they can be controlled by one who has a high enough attainment in the Dao of Divine Inscriptions.” Qin Wentian nodded, he shared the same sentiments as Old First.

“We will know for sure if we enter.” Bailu Jing laughed. He boldly took a step forwards and all of a sudden, the runic outlines glimmered. A flood of golden light inundated the area as several silhouettes appeared all at once.

There were a total of nine figures, whose bodies glowed with a golden hue. The sharp glints in their eyes were as terrifying as swords, as they stared at Qin Wentian and the rest.

“Four of you arrived at here at the same moment, which of you is the Inscriptionist?” One of the golden guardians spoke, his tone incisive.

Qin Wentian gazed back at the golden guardian as he replied, “I am.”

“And me, as well,” Old First spoke, narrowing his eyes. These nine golden guardians resembled Puppets, but somehow they weren’t true Puppets. Their eyes glimmered with human-like intelligence.

The golden guardian who spoke swept his gaze over to Qin Wentian and Old First, as he stated, “The nine of us are the ‘Golden Armored Puppets’ created by Master. Our individual strengths are fixed at the peak-level of Yuanfu and our mission is to guard Master’s inheritance. Master’s successor has to be both proficient in the Dao of Divine Inscriptions as well as having monstrous talent in cultivation.”

Qin Wentian’s eyes flickered, they had encountered many tests on their way here. His earlier conjecture was right, this entire trial was a test set by that Ascendant in order to choose his successor. Indeed, the traps in this realm could only be broken either via force by someone at the peak-level of Yuanfu, or a Divine Inscriptionist Grandmaster with an exceedingly high attainment in the Dao of Divine Inscriptions.

“Little Yi, stand behind me.” Bailu Jing pulled his sister behind him. The aura these nine golden guardians were emanating felt exceptionally dangerous, four of the nine golden guardians had already stepped out, with a golden long spear equipped in their hands.

They, were the final test.

Bailu Jing had already released his Astral Souls, as a terrifying aura erupted forth from his body. This was the pressure generated by the Killing Path of his Seven Slaughters Astral Soul.

“You’re... not bad, but not good enough.” One of the golden guardians stared at Bailu Jing, after which, he disappeared from sight as his spear penetrated through space, like a streak of golden lightning.

Bailu Jing stepped forward, unleashing the Great Sun Nine Beheading Technique as the will of his Mandate gushed out. Momentarily, an abundance of golden threads appeared in the air, their glow so blinding they resembled a miniature sun, blazing with killing intent.

“BREAK!” The golden guardian coldly shouted. A beam of light shot out from the tip of his spear, smashing against the miniature sun, destroying it.

Bailu Jing's expression froze upon witnessing this golden guardian's fearsome combat prowess.

He unleashed the Great Sun Nine Beheading Technique again, the power of the sunlight channeling down through the golden threads. The terrifying sun flames blazed with a fearsome screech, as the threads cleaved down one by one with an imposing strength; even a peak-level Yuanfu cultivator would be hard pressed to defend against that attack.

Yet the strength of his opponent exceeded even his expectations, Bailu Jing could do nothing to injure him.

Qin Wentian and Old First were also attacked by the golden guardians, with Qin Wentian stomping the ground as a fearsome sword-type Inscription exploded forwards. There were many complicated-looking runic outlines on the ground, he could harness their power to aid him if his comprehension were high enough.

A typhoon gusted as a storm of swords flew towards his opponent. However, the golden guardian was too powerful, easily destroying the manifestations of whatever Inscriptions Qin Wentian sent at him. He stepped towards Qin Wentian as he icily commented, "You are too weak, you are unworthy to become the successor. You don't even have the qualifications to fight over the inheritance. YOU MUST DIE!"

After speaking, the killing intent that gushed forth from the golden guardian grew increasingly stronger as he continued walking towards Qin Wentian.

A terrifying light flashed in Qin Wentian's eyes.

How could Qin Wentian not be angered? With a single sentence, the golden guardian had condemned him, telling him that he didn't even have the qualifications to fight with others over the inheritance.

"Ever since these trial grounds were created, only those with true ability have been able to reach this point. It wasn't by virtue of luck that all four of us gained entry into this place. So why then, am I unworthy to receive the inheritance?"

"The successor must not only have a high attainment in the Dao of Divine Inscriptions, he must also be exceedingly powerful in terms of his cultivation and combat prowess. I have no idea how the four of you arrived here, but with your cultivation base merely at the third-level of Yuanfu, how can you be qualified? This inheritance was left behind by Master for a talented son of heaven, only

those with outstanding talent can compete for it.” The killing intent of the golden guardian didn’t diminish, as he slowly stepped nearer. “The inheritance is not for the likes of you. DIE!”

As his voice faded away, the golden spear dazzled with a golden radiance as it pierced towards Qin Wentian once again.

This golden guardian was serious. He wanted to kill Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian’s heart turned cold, a bone-chilling aura pouring out from him in waves. What an eloquent way of saying, “The inheritance is too good for the likes of you”!

Chapter 270: Do you know, who you truly are?

The killing intent of the golden guardian intensified, as a sharp pressure gushed forth from him. As he stepped forwards, the golden spear penetrated through space once again, a streak of golden lightning imbued with boundless force, slashing towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian continuously stepped out on the ground, as runic outlines around him glimmered with Astral Light. An Azure Dragon exploded forth from nowhere, flying ahead to clash with the golden lightning. A deafening explosion thundered out as the Divine Inscription ruptured into pieces.

“The nine of us are the protectors of the inheritance. If the successor is outstanding in both fields of attainment and combat prowess, he could defeat us by borrowing power from the runic outlines on the floor. As for you, you are skilled in the Dao of Divine Inscriptions but exceedingly weak in terms of cultivation base. At your level, fighting for the inheritance is simply courting death.”

The golden guardian spoke each word caustically, dripping with sarcasm. Every step he took created a sharp pressure that bore down onto Qin Wentian. Under that pressure, Qin Wentian felt as though his body was about to be penetrated through from the sharpness.

Qin Wentian kept retreating, when suddenly the sound of wind gusting drifted in, and a few other silhouettes appeared within the great hall.

These new arrivals were none other than Zhan Chen, Yang Fan, Zhao Lie, Hua Feng and their respective followers. They combined their powers and used the strongest force they could muster to break apart the rampart and immediately dashed towards the great hall right after. Only upon confirming that Qin Wentian and the rest had yet to obtain the inheritance, did they let out a sigh of relief.

The blood on the mangled palms of Zhu Sha was still fresh, his killing intent had reached the height of Heavens.

Now that the inheritance was in front of them, there was no longer a need for Qin Wentian.

He had already outlived his usefulness.

“Grandmaster Qin, how do you want to die?” Zhu Sha grinned.

Qin Wentian’s countenance was unperturbed, “Don’t tell me you guys don’t wish to exit the secret realm any longer?”

Zhu Sha’s countenance changed, but then one of the golden guardians interjected. “Since you guys are here, you all have the right to participate in this final trial of the successor selection. As long as you can defeat us, the inheritance will be yours and the destruction of this realm will soon follow. At that time, you can easily exit from this space.”

The murderous urges in Zhu Sha’s eyes intensified after hearing the golden guardian’s words. He grinned coldly at Qin Wentian.

However, Zhan Chen and Yang Fan’s attention were fixed on the ancient scroll in the sculpture’s hands. They had already forgotten about Qin Wentian’s existence.

If they could obtain the inheritance of the Ascendant, they would be akin to a tiger that has grown wings. By then, they would be the only chosen in their respective sects or clans.

Within each group of transcendent powers, regardless of sects or clans, there were several who were chosen per generation. Although they were rankers on the Heavenly Fate Ranking, their achievements weren’t unique – the elites of the previous generations had also once achieved what they have now. Those past elites had already broken through to the Heavenly Dipper Realm, and so their positions in their respective sects and clans weren’t something the current chosen ones of this generation would be able to compare to.

Not only that, there would always be new talents emerging, threatening to overtake their position.

All those chosen were baptized by countless bloody battles before they could emerge as future leaders, and now the inheritance of the Ascendant was undoubtedly the greatest opportunity that would give them an edge in their struggle for supremacy.

At this moment, an incomparably sharp sword appeared in Zhan Chen’s hand. That sword gleamed with a brilliant light; it was a peak-tier third-ranked Divine Weapon.

As for Yang Fan, a pair of gauntlets appeared. It was similarly a peak-tier third-ranked Divine Weapon.

Although the Heaven's Chosen didn't have in their possession a fourth-ranked Divine Weapon, it didn't mean that their transcendent powers didn't have them.

As a chosen, their respective sects or clans have already considered them as someone with the potential to eventually become a future leader. Hence, the requirements placed on them by their respective powers were extremely strict; they wouldn't allow those chosen to grow overly dependent on Divine Weapons. At most, they would only have one or two defensive-type or fleeing-type treasures, but definitely not that of the attacking-type.

Danger motivates growth. By imposing these rules, only then would the transcendent powers be able to further draw out their potential. When facing against someone stronger than them, at the very least, they could still escape.

All this, purely because they were chosen.

If one day they could defeat the chosen of the other powers, their sect or clan would no longer restrict them.

A whistling sound pierced through the atmosphere, the golden guardians were all ready for battle.

The inheritance lay just behind the golden guardians, right in the hands of that sculpture, free for the taking if one had the capability to do so.

Zhan Chen dashed towards one of the golden guardians, slashing out with his sword. In the next instant, a rain of swords manifested, stabbing towards the head of his target.

The golden guardian reacted instantly, weaving about the long spear in his hands in an intricate dance. Golden light erupted forth, coalescing into a golden protective barrier around its body.

Then, with a single spear strike, it broke through the rain of swords.

Yang Fan and the rest similarly rushed out. Yang Fan's Star-Seizing Palms were augmented by his intimidating gauntlet. A menacing destructive energy swirled within his palms, as he directly exchanged blows with the spear of the golden guardian.

Meanwhile, Qin Wentian was in dire straits. It was as though that golden guardian had set his sights on him, seeking his death no matter what. As Zhu Sha noticed Yang Fan was currently busy fighting for the inheritance, he turned his cold gaze onto Qin Wentian. Now, the time had finally come.

Zhu Sha's mangled palms shone with Astral Light, he abruptly dashed out, blasting forth with his palm, his attack violently smashing onto Qin Wentian's back. Qin Wentian turned pale, and there was still a golden guardian unleashing its attack right in front of him.

"WENTIAN!" Bailu Yi screamed. As she rushed over, Zhu Sha sent out another palm strike, knocking her aside and as she spat out fresh blood, the impact caused her to be flung out of the great hall.

With her strength, there was no way for her to partake in any of the battles occurring within the great hall.

Qin Wentian made use of the complicated runic outlines on the ground, drawing upon their power in a bid to defend against Zhu Sha's Star-Seizing Palm. However, the disparity between their cultivation levels was too wide. Zhu Sha's attack easily breached through his defense, causing the blood and qi within his body to rumble. Qin Wentian's pupils widened; the golden guardian's spear attack resembled a streak of explosive lightning, penetrating through space with an unbelievable speed and of insurmountable force.

This spear attack wasn't something Qin Wentian could defend against.

"NOOOOOOOOO!" Bailu Yi closed her eyes, unwilling to see what would happen next. Bailu Jing was still entangled with his opponent, it was impossible for him to lend his aid.

"Puchi!" A crisp sound echoed in the air, as the long spear skewered through Qin Wentian and was pulled out at exactly the same instant, giving testament to its sharpness. The impact slammed Qin Wentian's body onto the walls of the great hall, and he fell to the ground convulsing, his mind blanking out.

"He deserved death." Zhu Sha coldly snorted, sending another palm strike at Qin Wentian. Bailu Yi had already somewhat recovered from his earlier strike, and she dashed over, throwing herself onto the path of the attack in an attempt to shield Qin Wentian. As the palm landed on her, the power of its attack hurled her backwards and she slammed into Qin Wentian, coughing up several mouthfuls of blood.

"LITTLE YI!"

Bailu Jing's countenance went pale, and he howled in rage. However, in that moment of distraction, a golden spear narrowly missed his heart. The golden guardian was too strong, he couldn't afford to look away for even a second.

The nine golden guardians all had strength at the pinnacle of Yuanfu.

Obtaining the inheritance was easier said than done.

“Hehe.” Zhu Sha coldly laughed when he saw what happened. He dashed out once more, wanting to completely exterminate both Qin Wentian and Bailu Yi. However, he abruptly halted, for at that moment, he could feel the cold stare of a golden guardian locking onto him, causing shivers to run down his spine.

These nine protectors didn’t just want to kill Qin Wentian, they wanted to kill everyone, leaving behind only those who were qualified. If all these cultivators weren’t strong enough, they all had to die here.

That golden guardian unleashed an attack towards Zhu Sha, who could only defend in response; he was too occupied to see how Qin Wentian was faring.

In the middle of all the fighting, Bailu Yi walked to Qin Wentian’s side, her countenance turning white as a sheet when she gazed at the blood dripping unceasingly from his wounds. She tore one of her sleeves and tried bandaging Qin Wentian’s injuries.

“Qin Wentian, wake up!” Bailu Yi was shaking him. “You can’t fall asleep.”

Qin Wentian couldn’t process any coherent thoughts, the injuries inflicted on his body were way beyond the limits of what a human body could tolerate. His mind felt extremely fuzzy, he only wanted to drift into that eternal sleep.

In his blurry state of consciousness, he could faintly sense someone calling out to him.

The volume of the voice drifting into his ear grew increasingly softer. At this instant, it was as though he had already entered a world of absolute silence.

“Am I about to die? I’m unwilling to die like this!”

Qin Wentian felt extreme reluctance, he still had too many things he had yet to accomplish. How could he die here?

Yet, he was moments away from falling into an eternal sleep. The pain was overwhelming and he was so fatigued; he wanted nothing more than to slip into that sweet oblivion, no longer wanted to think about anything.

Within Qin Wentian’s body, the candle flame still burned. Surrounding the flame, one could see the golden strands of thread intertwining.

In that moment, the last wisps of his consciousness were transported into that flickering flame.

But the candle flame seemed to be weakening, as the intensity of the light it emitted diminished. He could feel his consciousness fading away...

Was he really about to die?!

Throughout this cruel path of cultivation, each turn was fraught with countless dangers, he had survived them all just to reach this point. Yet, he was still dismissed by the golden guardians, rejected on the grounds that he was an unworthy successor. How could he accept such a judgement?

Why was he unqualified? Just because he started his cultivation at a later time, resulting in a lower cultivation base?

The candle flame continued burning as the power of his bloodline surrounded it. Even the barbaric, fearsome power of his bloodline seemed to be waning away.

And in that split second, within the flickering flames of the candle, Qin Wentian saw a familiar silhouette.

“Uncle Black.”

Qin Wentian’s heart trembled.

“Wentian.” A voice rang out in his heart.

“You cannot die here.”

“I... can’t die here?” Abruptly, countless scenes appeared in his mind, fueling Qin Wentian’s heart with powerful emotions, bolstering his will to survive.

Where did Uncle Black go? Was Qingcheng doing fine at the Pill Emperor Hall? Headmaster Diyi was still imprisoned in the Nine Mystical Palace, the ‘hidden’ branch of the Azure Faction had yet to reclaim their former glory. How can he die here?

The weakening candle flame wavered before becoming completely motionless. An instant later, it burned with a light way brighter than ever before. The golden strands of thread that were his bloodline power, integrated into the candle flame and fuelled its radiance to burn brighter and brighter. An instant later, Qin Wentian’s heart lit up like a blazing inferno.

“AWOOO!” Qin Wentian’s blood rumbled, emanating a fearsome gut-wrenching pressure. His was an ancient primordial bloodline that originated from time immemorial.

What made Qin Wentian thunderstruck was that within his body, something took form within the flickering flames of the candle. There was a towering primordial beast that seemed as though it gazed at everything in the Heavens and Earth with disdain.

Qin Wentian trembled, why was his bloodline so powerful? And why did such an overwhelming bloodline seemed to fear and defer to that candle flame burning in his heart?

“You, do you know who you are?”

A voice echoed in his heart. He, Qin Wentian, possessed such a bloodline. Did he know his true origins?

The golden guardian had said it before, that he was unworthy to be the successor?

In that case, he wanted see if this Ascendant’s inheritance was even qualified to brand him as unworthy.

The candle flame burned even brighter as his injuries recovered.

As long as it wasn’t extinguished, he would never die!

The golden strands of blood around the candle flame transformed into a beam of lightning, shooting straight towards the centre of Qin Wentian’s brows. He could sense something taking form, the creation of a third eye forthcoming!