

Ancient GM 351

Chapter 351: Mu Feng

More and more cultivators from Grand Xia gathered in Ginkou, the main topic being discussed throughout the continent were all related to the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

Only three more days remained before the start of the pilgrimage to the Ancient Kingdom. This also marked the commencement of the battle for the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

Currently, in the air space above Ginkou Continent, several demonic beast mounts and powerful experts could be seen whistling through the air. The sheer number of cultivators rushing to Ginkou was so massive that it seemed like the line of visitors would never stop.

Countless silhouettes congregated in the vast land outside the Ancient Kingdom of Grand Xia. They stared at the entrance of the Ancient Kingdom, at the sky-reaching pillars that ascended all the way to the clouds, supporting a total of ninety-nine azure dragon stone steps. They converged upwards, serving as a sacred path for the pilgrimage to the Ancient Kingdom. It exuded an imposing feeling of prestige, full of majesty. This flight of stairs was none other than the entrance to the Ancient Kingdom.

Currently, there were several talented heroic youths from the younger generation present. They stared at the ancient sacred pathway, as boundless anticipation filled their hearts. The desire they felt was so strong that they couldn't wait to battle, right there and then, achieving fame in a single shot.

How many of the younger generations had painstakingly cultivated just for today's battle? If they could succeed, their names would be ranked within the Heavenly Fate Rankings in a single battle. Their future would be incomparably bright, and much smoother to traverse. The various transcendent powers would also go all out to invite talented young cultivators to join them, nurturing them with effort. Among the successful ones, some might even be given the chance to become core disciples.

Naturally, there were also some who fought for no other reason than to measure themselves with other talented cultivators of the younger generation, tempering themselves to their limit, always pressing forward without looking back.

“Legend has it that within the Ancient Kingdom, there still exists the Emperor's Destiny within. If one performs outstandingly, they may even acquire the Emperor's Destiny, thereby changing their

future fate and fortune, improving it by a huge margin.” A young man and woman stood together in discussion, with voices filled with anticipation.

Also, there were some who came for entirely different purposes. For example, Shu Ruanyu from the Moon Continent. She stood alone at an inconspicuous corner, with traces of coldness on her countenance.

Back then she'd been engaged to Yang Fan, and it was naturally because of her outstanding talent that she had been chosen to wed into the Star-Seizing Manor. But who would've known that after being abducted by Qin Wentian, things would begin to change. The Star-Seizing Manor suspected that her chastity had been taken and even Yang Fan began to avoid her. Under a fit of rage, she initiated their breakup, destroying the marriage agreement between them.

Even now, she had no way to unleash that turbid breath she kept suppressed. She wanted to avenge herself on Qin Wentian, yet she didn't know where he'd gone to. Hence, she made a guess and went to Ginkou in hopes of seeing if Qin Wentian would be there as well.

Shu Ruanyu gazed at her surroundings and soon noticed two silhouettes, one old and one young, standing near her. Both of these men had an extraordinary demeanor and at this moment, the older-looking man asked, “Di Feng, are you ready for the ranking battle?”

Di Feng gazed at the Ancient Kingdom ahead, feeling a rush of hot blood. Brimming with tremendous self-confidence, a smile appeared on his face as he stated in a low voice, “I only came here to contend for the number one position.”

“You stayed hidden for so many years, all just to shock the entire Grand Xia with this one battle. The ranking battle holds extraordinary meaning to you—if you can obtain first place, your position shall henceforth be unshaken, and they will know who you are.” The older man murmured as he calmly continued, “Don't forget your opponents this time around are monsters as well. Chen Wang, Shi Potian, both of them suppressed their cultivation to prevent themselves from stepping into the Heavenly Dipper Realm. They will be your greatest opponents.”

Di Feng nodded, yet the confidence he exuded never wavered.

“We will come again in three days,” the old man quietly stated, before leaving here with Di Feng. Their words caused a strange glow to flash past Shu Ruanyu's eyes. What boastful words, saying that he wanted to acquire the position of number one. And that old man seemed extremely confident that only Chen Wang and Shi Potian could contend against Di Feng.

In the top few rankings of the Heavenly Fate Rankings, the #1 Hua Taixu and the #4 Jing Wu, had already stepped into Heavenly Dipper. The strongest remaining rankers were undoubtedly Chen Wang, Shi Potian, as well as Emperor Azure.

It seemed that this man Di Feng, didn't even care about Emperor Azure.

But of course, she didn't know that Di Feng was actually Emperor Azure. They were one and the same, the most mysterious man on the Heavenly Fate Ranking.

As Shu Ruanyu's gaze shifted away, her beautiful eyes froze as she saw something strange occurring. Di Feng and the old man also halted their steps as they gazed to their right.

Beside them, two extremely weird-looking silhouettes appeared.

One was a female clad in ragged robes, stained with mud and a headful of coarse hair matted with dirt. Her eyes were the only thing lively about her, filled with depth and clarity. Occasionally, as she turned back to look at the person behind her, traces of worry could evidently be seen in those clear eyes.

The young woman looked to be extremely young and was currently pulling a tattered bed made of bamboo, with a person riding on top of it.

His face was mottled with a blackish hue, as though he were dying from poison and yet, the aura he exuded was chillingly sinister. For that reason, the surrounding passersby found themselves involuntarily staying away.

"A cripple like him also dares to participate in the ranking battle?" A person nearby suddenly stated. There were those in the crowd who also had expressions of disgust and mockery on their faces.

The young woman in ragged robes frowned as rage suffused her features, "You are not allowed to talk about my Feng gege [1] in this manner, he's not a cripple."

"This beggar girl seems pretty feisty. Feng gege? Calling him in such an affectionate manner? How old are you little girl? Are you his lover?" The person from earlier sarcastically remarked, yet the young man sitting on the bamboo bed showed no signs that he'd heard his words. He was incomparably silent, not even his eyelids twitched.

"Get lost." That young girl couldn't help but curse in a low voice—the person had intentionally moved to block her way.

“Yo, such a huge temper. Although you look somewhat dirty, I’m sure you’d be a beauty after a bath and a change of clothes. Why don’t you take a bath together with me?” That person who was mocking the cripple earlier burst into raucous laughter, accompanied by his two companions.

Suddenly, the eyelids of the cripple finally twitched as he opened his eyes and stared at them.

The mocking person and his companions continued teasing the young girl, when abruptly, they felt their entire bodies violently shuddering in uncontrollable spasms. Their foreheads turned dark as they gasped for air, before white froth gurgled, leaking out of their mouths as they slumped over, dead.

Such a scene caused the spectators to feel unconsciously tense. What just happened?

No hints of vitality could be sensed from the bodies on the floor, their faces had turned entirely black.

Shu Ruanyu paled as a thunderstruck expression appeared on her face. The young man on the bamboo bed was too terrifying, with a twitch of his eyes, those hooligans teasing the young girl had died, just like that?

“Feng gege, don’t be like this, okay?” When she saw what had happened, the young girl turned her head and glanced in a pitiful manner at the young man. She couldn’t help feeling pain in her heart when she witnessed the death of those men.

“I’ve already arrived. You can leave now.”

The young man finally spoke. His voice was extremely cold, and held a piercing frigidness that could chill people to the bone.

“I’m not leaving, I won’t let you drive me away.” The young girl pouted, full of unwillingness.

“Scram.” The young man lifted his head as a terrifying light flashed past his eyes. Yet the young girl held no trace of fear in her eyes when she stared back at him. “Regardless of how you’ve transformed or what state you’ve become, I will never leave you. I love you, even if you kill me I will never leave.”

The eyelids of the young man twitched, yet his countenance was as cold as ever, no one knew what he was thinking about.

“Poison, this person uses poison. He must have practiced some venom arts.”

At this moment, loud exclamations of shocks could be heard, the corpses on the ground had totally turned black—a sure sign of death by severe poisoning.

Turning their gazes on the crippled young man once again, no one else dared to mock or belittle him, there were only traces of terror in their hearts.

“Could it be him?” A memory flashed in Shu Ruanyu’s mind, her heart couldn’t help but shiver when she thought of that person.

Mu Feng, the most infamous person on the Heavenly Fate Rankings, ranked #7. Rumors stated that he was one of the youngest cultivators ever to be ranked among the top thirty-six, and had an extremely high degree of attainment in the use of poison. His master was none other than the Poison Monarch, whom everyone feared, another monster on the Heavenly Dipper Rankings.

There were too many news reports and rumors regarding Mu Feng.

There were people saying that even though this man was proficient in the poison arts, there was no better friend one could make. His character was heroic and straightforward, and extremely upright, to the point that on those occasions when his master, the Poison Monarch, wanted him to kill people to practice his poison arts, he would refuse. If it weren’t for the Poison Monarch being awed by his talent, he would have long died at the hands of his master. Everyone in Grand Xia knew that the Poison Monarch was an extremely ruthless man.

Yet, somehow, the crippled young man on the bamboo bed didn’t match the descriptions of Mu Feng. A sinister look unceasingly flickered in his eyes, as an aura of death constantly exuded out from him. Also, allowing a girl as young as her to pull him all the way to Ginkou? This didn’t fit in with Mu Feng’s character at all.

At this moment, Shu Ruanyu abruptly stiffened, her eyes narrowing as she casted her gaze over to the horizons.

It was him, that fellow finally appeared. Qin Wentian, as well as that damnable fatty who kept threatening to take off her clothes when she was a captive.

Qin Wentian and the others contemplated the ancient sacred pathway in front of them. His heart couldn’t help but feel awed. Indeed, this place was the same as his memories the damn old fogey left for him, the Ancient Empire of Grand Xia.

However at this moment, it was as though he sensed something. Turning around, he sought the source of the stare he felt, and a strange glow couldn't help but flicker in his eyes when he noticed Shu Ruanyu.

What a coincidence, that woman actually came here too. After one year, Shu Ruanyu had already broken through to the ninth level of Yuanfu.

At this moment, Qin Wentian felt another pair of eyes staring at him. Shifting his gaze in another direction, he noticed Mu Feng sitting up on his bamboo bed. He was staring at him with eyes filled with endless malice, as though he couldn't wait to tear him apart.

Such maliciousness, caused even Qin Wentian to feel a chill in his heart.

"What's going on?" Qin Wentian frowned, he wasn't acquainted with this man, this should be the first time they met, yet why was Mu Feng gazing at him as though he was looking at his mortal enemy?

"Careful," Qin Wentian warned in a low voice. Those beside him also noticed the presence of Mu Feng.

"QIN WENTIAN!"

A voice that rang from the depth of hells echoed, Qin Wentian was greatly stunned. It seemed as though the other party truly knew him. Mu Feng's eyes, other than an icy coldness, were also filled with traces of blood. He appeared extremely fearsome to look at.

"You are?" Qin Wentian asked, bewilderment appearing on his face.

"You actually pretend not to know me? Laughable, how laughable." Mu Feng's killing intent shot to the skies as a terrifying black qi gushed forth from his body. Qin Wentian only felt his entire body going cold as the powerful poison of Mu Feng seeped into him.

Chapter 352: Fearsome Poisonous Blood

Qin Wentian stared at Mu Feng in surprise, he could clearly feel the hatred and anger Mu Feng had in his gaze. It was as though Qin Wentian was nothing less than his most hated enemy.

"Are you mistaken? I believe this is the first time we've met," Qin Wentian continued, he had no memories of Mu Feng at all.

Mu Feng's aura hadn't abated and soared to even greater heights after Qin Wentian words. The killing intent flickering in his eye grew more and more intense, seemingly burning like an undying flame.

"You guys leave first," Qin Wentian added in a low voice. Right now, he felt exceptionally uncomfortable. The poisonous qi exuded by Mu Feng had already funnelled through his body, corroding him from within. Indeed, poison-users were truly fearsome opponents to fight against.

At this moment, Bailu Yi's face began to darken. Upon seeing this, the killing intent that burst out of Bailu Jing wasn't any less intense than that of Mu Feng. "STAY YOUR HAND!"

Qin Wentian glanced at Bailu Yi before his features also blackened with anger. He felt an intense fire raging in his heart, he truly wasn't acquainted and didn't know of Mu Feng, yet Mu Feng had directly used poison, affecting the innocents around him.

In Grand Xia, poison-users were all to be feared. Even if their cultivation bases were lower, they were still capable of killing people stronger than them.

The name of Poison Monarch was a taboo throughout Grand Xia. His infamy was such that even some transcendent powers would choose to avoid him as they were unwilling to antagonize him.

In the history of Grand Xia, the most ruthless annihilation of an entire sect had been carried out by none other than the Poison Monarch. Legend has it that when the Poison Monarch was still young, he too originated from a great clan. He was handsome, with a sunny disposition and worked extremely hard in his cultivation. However, before his wedding, his fiancée was captured and abused to death. When his clan went to seek revenge for this act of transgression, they were all wiped out, leaving him as the only survivor. After that, Poison Monarch went into closed-door seclusion for many years, only coming out after attaining mastery in his venom arts. When he appeared once more, anything that had the faintest trace of connection with his enemy were annihilated completely, sparing none of the children, women or livestock. In a fit of insane rage, he single-handedly annihilated a major power of over ten thousand in number, wiping them from the face of Grand Xia.

From that moment onwards, the Poison Monarch became a taboo existence in Grand Xia with none daring to offend him.

Against poison-users, one had to be extremely careful. Any lapse in attention would result in death, or worse.

The killing intent radiating from Qin Wentian grew increasingly colder when he noticed Bailu Yi had been poisoned as well. His palm wavered as the young girl near Mu Feng let out a miserable scream. Qin Wentian coldly stated, "If you continue, I shall kill her right now."

Mu Feng coldly stared at the young girl in front of him as he commented, "Didn't I tell you to scam earlier?"

After speaking, he turned his gaze back onto Qin Wentian, "Fine, don't target her. I will only kill you."

"You guys retreat." Qin Wentian warned the others as they gave him a wide berth. In that circle of space, only Qin Wentian and Mu Feng on his bamboo bed were facing off against each other.

A black-colored wind gusted, and even though Qin Wentian held his breath, the blood in his body unconsciously surged up.

"Mandate of Blood." Qin Wentian mused, his opponent's combat prowess was truly terrifying.

Mu Feng's body lightly floated up in the air, and in the next moment, he sliced open a slight wound on his palm, as black-colored blood oozed out.

The blood mixed in with the wind as Mu Feng flew towards Qin Wentian with a speed as fast as lightning. Qin Wentian felt a burning pain in his eyes, and the skin from his entire body beginning to corrode. He felt extremely miserable, this pain was at a hellish level of agony. Opponents who comprehended the Mandate of Blood and incorporated it with the essence of venom arts were exceedingly dangerous to deal with.

Right now, his blood gurgled as his bloodline limits awakened, the demonic qi exuding from him reached the skies, as a scaly demonic armor took form and enveloped his entire body. A fearsome spiral of energy gathered in his palm, which he ruthlessly blasted out as Mu Feng approached. The energy took the shape of a dragon imprint, imbued with overwhelming strength, which then manifested demonic dragons that howled with wrathful roars that echoed from the void.

Mu Feng's eyes remained ice cold as he spat out another mouthful of black blood into the black whirlwind. The black whirlwind swirled and concentrated into gusts of wind, covering his entire fist

as Mu Feng, standing strong against that overwhelming pressure, landed next to Qin Wentian and punched out, matching Qin Wentian's palm, hit for hit.

Qin Wentian retreated of his own accord. He usually never retreated voluntarily when it came to a clash of strength against strength. Yet this time around, he had chosen to do so. His opponent's body was covered entirely in poison, so he had to be cautious.

Other than the Mandate of Blood, Mu Feng had also comprehended the Mandate of Wind. Windspeed, his first level insight into the Mandate of Wind, was already at the Perfection Boundary, granting him an enhancement of movement speed by a factor of sixteen.

A ruthless glint of light flickered in Qin Wentian's eyes when he saw how fast Mu Feng was. The Divine Energy within his Yuanfu bubbled and was then channelled right into his arms, together with the power of his bloodline limit.

Abruptly, Qin Wentian dashed forwards instead of continuing his retreat. His hands metamorphosed into the claws of a golden dragon, imbued with an invincible force.

Peng...

Both terrifying forces of impact collided together as their palms met in mid-air. Mu Feng spat out another mouthful of black blood at Qin Wentian when he neared, while Qin Wentian sidestepped, dodging the worst of it. Yet the windforce controlled by Mu Feng enabled some droplets of black blood to sizzle into Qin Wentian's palm. Instantly, Qin Wentian felt a powerful sensation of corrosion frenziedly eating into his flesh, gradually spreading to all parts of his body.

In that single instant, it seemed as if Qin Wentian's body reservoir of red blood had turned black. His internal organs were all corroding as the color of his face grew darker and darker.

Qin Wentian's countenance drastically changed. Using the force of the collision, he sprang back in retreat, then involuntarily sat down as he stared at Mu Feng in shock.

Mu Feng wasn't any better off, Qin Wentian's strength was beyond his expectations—the bones in his arms which he used to meet Qin Wentian's palm had totally shattered, and he felt his inner organs vibrating violently from the force of impact. His entire body was flung through the air, slamming ruthlessly into the ground as his blood soaked the earth around him.

“Feng gege.”

The young girl in front of him was so afraid when she saw Mu Feng in this state that her tears started to flow unceasingly down her face. She ran over, huddling over Mu Feng as her tiny frame shivered uncontrollably.

“Wentian!” Bailu Yi and the rest similarly rushed to Qin Wentian’s side, their countenances were all incredibly ugly to behold.

“He’s Mu Feng, ranked #7 on the Heavenly Fate Rankings. Although his combat prowess is somewhat inferior compared to those on the same level as him, his venom arts are exceedingly formidable.” Bailu Jing had an expression of worry on his face. “Wentian must have been afflicted with his poisonous blood.”

The black qi within Qin Wentian circulated throughout his body. Mu Feng’s venom arts were extraordinary indeed. Even a Heavenly Dipper would be in a similar state as Qin Wentian if they were to be struck by his poison.

“I have no vengeance with you, I don’t even know you. Why are you doing this?”

Qin Wentian stared straight at Mu Feng, Mu Feng should understand how terrifying was it to face one of his attacks head on. In addition, Qin Wentian’s companions were all by his side—if the poison ended up killing Qin Wentian, Mu Feng wouldn’t be able to escape death as well.

He didn’t understand why Mu Feng hated him so much.

“No vengeance between us? Why am I doing this? Qin Wentian, I treated you as a brother, you bastard. Not only did you seduce my younger sister, you even killed her after raping her. My parents, my whole family, they were all tortured into insanity before you released them into death.” Mu Feng howled, spitting out each word with force, all the while glaring fiercely at Qin Wentian. At this moment, the anger he felt was so overwhelming that it overshadowed the pain from his injuries.

He couldn’t forget that horrible scene, witnessing the naked body of his sister, whose eyes were still filled with a horror that not even death could wipe clean. He couldn’t forget the bodies of his parents, both mutilated into several parts. He treated Qin Wentian as his brother yet had been stabbed in the back. How laughable and ironic to think that he once made a promise with Qin Wentian to come to Ginkou and fight in the battle to determine their rankings, together as brothers.

Qin Wentian's countenance grew incredibly unsightly to behold. He had never done any of the things Mu Feng mentioned. Yet seeing Mu Feng's appearance, he didn't seem to be lying.

But what the hell, he had never even met Mu Feng before, and because of this supposed grudge, both of them were already in dire straits from exchanging blows with each other. What was going on?

"I will only say one thing. I don't even know who you are, and I've never done any of those things you mentioned." Qin Wentian closed his eyes, at this moment, his face had already turned completely dark. The black-colored qi within his body circulated about, bringing him closer and closer to the boundary that separated life and death.

It was unknown when Qing'er appeared, but when she did, her face was pale and she was trembling as she glanced at Qin Wentian.

"I didn't know." Qing'er had an expression of self-reproach on her flawless features. She had no idea that a single clash would injure Qin Wentian that badly, almost to the point of death.

"Qing'er, don't blame yourself." Qin Wentian opened his eyes, and squeezed out a smile before shutting them again.

At this moment, Fan Le and Chu Mang roared in anger, they lost all reason as resplendent Astral Bows appeared in their hand, locking their arrows onto Mu Feng. Their killing intent was extremely terrifying.

"DIE!" Fan Le howled.

"NOOOO!" The young girl beside Mu Feng stood in front of him with her arms outstretched. She gazed at Fan Le and Chu Mang with a pitiful expression on her face as she implored, "Please, I'm begging you two, please don't kill him."

"Get lost." Mu Feng stated in a heavy voice, yet the girl adamantly shook her head, with tears flowing relentlessly down her face.

“Even if he dies, I want him to die with the truth.” Fan Le glared at Mu Feng as he asked, “You said my brother did all those things to your family? When did this happen? And where were you then?”

Mu Feng icily stared back at Fan Le, maintaining his silence. The young girl in front of Mu Feng sobbed, “It was half a year ago, in the Spirit Continent. Because of this, the poisonous qi from Fenggege’s venom arts attacked his heart because of qi deviation, which resulted in his body being crippled. After that, he chose to cultivate even more toxic venom arts, all for the sake of revenge. Why is your whole group so heartless? Your friend is so cruel yet you’re still set on helping him.”

“Bullshit. Half a year ago, the whole lot of us have been cultivating in the Unmatched Realm in the Azure Continent. Immediately after leaving the Unmatched Realm, we challenged the Heavenly Stele Steps and then rushed straight to Ginkou. Are you saying that we know teleportation? Stop your malicious lies.”

Fan Le retorted in rage. “Scram, he has to die. If you insist on getting in our way, don’t blame me when my arrow sends the both of you to hell.”

“This matter was witnessed by countless people in the Azure Continent. You can ask around if you don’t believe us,” Chu Mang added. Upon hearing their words, the young girl’s countenance paled, “Impossible, how can this be?”

“I can be a witness too.” Qinger walked up. Looking at Qinger’s aura that was untainted by the world, the young girl’s intuition told her that Qinger wouldn’t lie. And even if she did, at this point was there even a need to lie when they had already outnumbered her and Mu Feng?

“How can this be? I’ve interacted with him for so many days, how can I mistake another person for him?” Mu Feng coughed out a mouthful of blood when he heard their words. After the poison qi attacked his heart back then, he’d almost died. After surviving from that ordeal, he practiced a kind of terrifying venom art that allowed the poison elements within his body to integrate with his blood fully. The toxicity within him were all held back at a boiling point with the entirety of his strength. He didn’t even have the energy to do anything else—he could only make it here because the girl in front of him had pulled him all the way from the Spirit Continent.

With a bated breath of venom, he’d contained all the poison within him just to kill Qin Wentian when he met him again. How could it be a case of mistaken identity?

Qin Wentian had no words to reply when he heard that. Given how crazed Mu Feng’s attacks were, he definitely wasn’t lying. In that case, there was only a single possibility left. There was someone

masquerading as him, wanting to harm him to the extent of even luring Mu Feng from thousands of miles away to poison him to death.

And right now, as the poison within Qin Wentian's body came into contact with that candle flame, the poison had no way to extinguish it. In fact, that candle flame was counter-devouring the poison instead, causing Qin Wentian's eyes to light up.

His second bloodline granted him invulnerability to poison?

He was saved, yet Qin Wentian couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief. What a close shave. Given Mu Feng's proficiency in the venom arts, even the top few rankers above him on the Heavenly Fate Rankings would fear him. Nobody would dare guarantee they would win or even retreat unharmed if the opponent they were facing was Mu Feng!

Chapter 353: Using poison against poison

Chu Mang and Fan Le didn't care for Mu Feng's word. Be it a case of mistaken identity, or just a misunderstanding, nevertheless, Mu Feng must die.

"SCRAM!" Chu Man roared at the young girl in front of Mu Feng. Fan Le's arrow had already broke the space apart, fired forth at a speed akin to lightning.

"Wait." Suddenly, Qin Wentian's voice drifted out. Fan Le's countenance faltered, and the trajectory of the fired arrow was shifted at the last instant. Fan Le had a puzzled look on his face when he turned to glance questioningly at Qin Wentian, but upon seeing a hint of color returning to Qin Wentian's darkened features, his eyes couldn't help but widen in surprise.

"Don't kill him first." Qin Wentian's eyes were still tightly closed, the golden strands of blood were currently circulating around his body, cleansing away the black-colored poisonous blood, and slowly rejuvenating Qin Wentian. Gradually, the darkness on his countenance dissipated, to the great joy of Bailu Yi and the rest.

Qin Wentian had recovered—he had fully neutralized the corrosive poison within his body.

"Hu..." Qin Wentian spat out a mouthful of foul air as he opened his eyes. Qing'er, who was staring at him with concern, couldn't mask the fleeting happiness that flashed past her eyes when she saw that he'd recovered. It was as though she was sincerely happy for his well-being.

But when she noticed Qin Wentian staring back at her, her face immediately reverted back to its normal state, with no fluctuations to her expressions.

“Qing`er, you look really nice when you smile.”

Qin Wentian laughed. Qing`er’s brows twitched, yet she remained silent, purposely shifting her gaze towards another direction, paying no mind to his comment.

As to her behaviour, Qin Wentian was long used to it. In fact, if Qing`er were to constantly maintain a smiling expression, that would truly be abnormal.

Standing up, Qin Wentian walked towards Mu Feng, who had an expression of dumbfounded astonishment on his face. How was this possible, Qin Wentian had survived the onslaught of his blood’s poison?!

“Are you certain that I am the person who killed your entire clan?” Qin Wentian looked directly at Mu Feng, as he stood right in front of the young girl between them, allowing Mu Feng to look clearly at his features.

Mu Feng seriously contemplated Qin Wentian from head to toe, focusing specially on Qin Wentian’s eyes.

“There’s something wrong, this.. this is impossible. You have the same features, yet your aura is clearly different. Your physique as well, how can this be? What’s happening?” Mu Feng turned pale, the impact of his mistake caused a rush through his brain as he involuntarily coughed out even more black blood.

“Other than the Azure Continent, I’ve spent the past year here in Ginkou. It’s impossible for me to have killed your clan, and earlier when we were fighting, I didn’t even know why you wanted to kill me. If you’re not lying, it means that the Qin Wentian you knew must have been someone else impersonating me. What was his cultivation level?”

Qin Wentian wanted to clear this up, he wanted to know who had impersonated him and implicated him in all those atrocities. That conniving bastard was the one that deserved death.

“I’ve only exchanged blows with him briefly, but I could tell that he was truly powerful. His cultivation level is the same as mine, at the ninth level of Yuanfu.”

“I’m still at the seventh level of Yuanfu.” Qin Wentian released his aura, “Regardless of friend or foe, everyone is aware of this.”

“Shu Ruanyu, you should be able to verify this point for me. A year ago when I was still in the Moon Continent, my cultivation base wasn’t even at the fifth level of Yuanfu yet.” Qin Wentian stared at Shu Ruanyu, who stood nearby, his sudden words causing her to be stunned. Initially she wanted to seek Qin Wentian out for revenge, but upon witnessing his fight, she understood clearly that she had no way of matching Qin Wentian’s strength.

Not only that, even Chu Mang and that fatty had grown many times more powerful compared to before.

When she realized Qin Wentian had discovered her presence, her countenance momentarily grew somewhat unsightly to behold.

“Mu Feng, you were tricked by someone. This man might be a worthless cad, but I can attest to the fact that he’s not some demented freak. When I was held captive, he didn’t touch me inappropriately in the slightest. And besides, just look at how beautiful his female companions are, why would he resort to mistreating your sister?”

Shu Ruanyu stared at Mu Feng as she spoke, surprising Qin Wentian with her words. Why was this woman suddenly so kind-hearted and then willing to help him out in this situation?

Back then, her hatred for him reached her very bones, but after pondering it for a moment, Qin Wentian understood why she suddenly changed her attitude. It must be because rumours had spread after her capture, and thus she needed him to clear her name.

Mu Feng cast a glance at Luo Huan and Bailu Yi. All of them were women of remarkable beauty. Although his sister wasn’t bad looking, she still couldn’t be compared to the two women currently standing in front of him. And when he turned his gaze onto Qing`er, even someone of his steely will could feel his heart being moved by her beauty.

In that case, had he really been fooled by someone else?

Thinking of this, an expression of agony flashed through Mu Feng’s face. Who was his enemy then?

He didn't mind sacrificing his life to kill Qin Wentian, but the problem now was that he'd almost killed the wrong man. Not only that, he didn't even know the true identity of his enemy, the man who'd reduced him to his current state. Hatred was too small a word to describe the emotions he was currently feeling in his heart.

Thinking of this, the last bit of strength that was used to suppress his poison qi dissipated, causing noxious fumes to gush out of him. In an instant, his body was being ravaged by the poison, turning his skin completely black as the poison began to devour him in its backlash.

Upon witnessing the sudden scene, the spectators all retreated far away with none daring to approach the group. Their hearts were still pounding with shock—they never expected Mu Feng to come all the way here, using a single breath to hold back the venom in his blood. Now that it was totally spent, the seal of strength he used had collapsed.

In order to kill Qin Wentian, he didn't mind sacrificing himself to the poison as well.

"Feng gege!" The young girl's countenance turned pale-white as she rushed forwards. With a wave of Qin Wentian's hand, a powerful source of strength enveloped her, restricting her movements.

Qin Wentian appeared beside her and pulled her back. "If you go any nearer, you will definitely die."

"If Feng gege dies, I will die with him." The girl's tears flowed uncontrollably as she looked to Qin Wentian and sobbed, "I'm really very sorry about what happened, I hope you can forgive us. Feng gege may be a practitioner of the venom arts, but he's not a bad guy! Otherwise, he would never have been fooled by that monster. The whole incident had too much of a psychological impact on him, and so in order to gain more power, he chose to cultivate a venom art, even though he can't control it completely. He was planning to end his life once he killed you, which was why he kept chasing me away. I knew that he was acting fiercely to make me abandon him, this was all because he didn't want me to follow him to the grave!"

Qin Wentian stared at Mu Feng as he sighed in his heart. Although Mu Feng had nearly killed him, he couldn't blame him for it. So long as one was human, they would definitely go raving mad if such a thing had happened to them. Who could be so ruthless, willing to go so far to destroy both Mu Feng and him?

Not only that, that person had known that he would definitely come to Ginkou to participate in the ranking battle. This must be the reason why the imposter made an agreement with Mu Feng back then, saying to come to Ginkou together to fight as brothers. It was because of this that Mu Feng, with one bated breath of venom, traveled over a thousand miles to kill him.

And if their battle hadn't ended with both him and Mu Feng on the brink of death, this matter would have never been resolved. It would have ended with either Qin Wentian's or Mu Feng's death. That imposter in the shadows was truly someone crafty and sinister.

"Let me take a look at him for you." Qin Wentian placed the young girl into Bailu Yi's care as he walked towards Mu Feng. At this moment, the poison qi in Mu Feng's body had already run amok, yet he was still clear-minded.

"You cultivated the venom arts, yet why are you in this state now?" Qin Wentian asked.

"In a moment of impatience, I chose the most tyrannical of all venom arts to cultivate. However, I have no way to fully disperse the poison qi in my body, I can only use my strength to temporarily suppress it, allowing it to seep inside my bloodstream." Mu Feng's voice was extremely weak as he spoke to Qin Wentian, "I almost killed you. I don't need forgiveness, yet I will never be at peace unless I kill that man with my own hands. If you discover the imposter's identity, promise me that you'll kill him for me. And don't think too badly of Lumi, she's young and has the heart of an angel. I hope that you won't make things difficult for her."

"I know of a set of needle techniques that can ignite one's potential, allowing every part of your body to return to its most vibrant state of activity. However, this technique is exceedingly dangerous—if you can't withstand it, it may even lead to death. Do you wish to give it a try?" Qin Wentian gazed seriously at Mu Feng.

Mu Feng stared back at him, silently studying him. At this moment, Qin Wentian could kill him as easily as a flip of his palms. He didn't need to use such a roundabout method.

"Life and death are determined by the Heavens. Since, I'm already approaching death, what do I have to fear?" Mu Feng spoke in a low voice, as Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head in agreement. Squatting in front of Mu Feng, Qin Wentian retrieved a set of silvery needles before he pierced one into the centre of Mu Feng's brows, the back of his ears, his temples, his chest, his arms... Very swiftly, Mu Feng's body began to tremble, as an expression of utter agony flashed on his face.

"You are right. Live or die, let's leave it to the Heavens. Although the probability of death is higher, if you want revenge, you'd better survive this." Qin Wentian spoke calmly, as though talking about a very ordinary thing. This set of needle techniques, named the Limit-Exhaustion Needle Art, had been taught to him by Uncle Black. Its main purpose was to ignite the potential of humans, allowing all their organs, and even their blood to shift to their most active state. If one couldn't handle the burden of this technique, they were at risk of death via implosion. And even if they survived, they would still be in an extremely weak state after the enhancement effect ended.

This set of needle techniques were considered to be extremely dangerous, but since Mu Feng was close to being completely counter-devoured by the poison qi, the only remaining option was to use poison against poison.

After executing his needle technique, Qin Wentian withdrew, leaving Mu Feng's body to convulse in silent pain. The needles inserted in him glowed with Astral Light as they transmitted Astral Energy into the various critical parts of his body.

"Feng gege." The girl Bailu Yi was holding couldn't help but sob at the sight. She wanted nothing more than to rush over to accompany him, yet how could Bailu Yi let her go? Several spectators stood afar as they watched on impassively.

The poison qi fog that surrounded him spread further outwards, and even Mu Feng's countenance turned increasingly wretched. The pain was so intense that one would rather prefer death instead.

Lumi's tears dripped in an unbroken stream, stricken with worry as she stared on. Despite the involuntarily intense convulsions, Mu Feng was still holding on. No matter the pain, he would never give in.

Although blood-curdling screams echoed out from him, a heart-freezing look of determination could be seen in Mu Feng's eyes. He had to live, he couldn't die before finding out the identity of his true enemy.

"The disciple of the Poison Monarch, the one ranked #7—Mu Feng's in such a terrible situation where he could die at any moment." Some in the crowd lamented.

"If he really did die, that just means one less fearsome competitor for the top three positions. This is a huge advantage for those contenders."

Some among the crowd wished for Mu Feng's death—if he died, there'd be no need to fight him. As a disciple of the Poison Monarch, Mu Feng was undoubtedly someone to avoid fighting against.

"ARGHHHHH" Finally, Mu Feng let out a earth-shattering roar. The poison qi that permeated the atmosphere around him was being frenziedly sucked back into his body. After which, his head slumped to the side as his struggles ceased.

"Is he dead?"

The expression on the crowd's faces froze. Mu Feng died, just like that?

Qin Wentian walked forwards—he could sense Mu Feng’s breathing, he was still alive.

Qin Wentian squatted down, extended his hand and placed it on top of Mu Feng’s. However in an instant, he immediately retracted it when he realized that his entire hand was coated with a blackish-qi. Qin Wentian’s heart pounded, it seemed as though the poison qi in Mu Feng’s body was even more terrifying compared to before.

it was then that Mu Feng opened his eyes. He stared at Qin Wentian, his gaze was still extremely cold, like that of death.

His body spasmed slightly before he managed to climb to his feet. Mu Feng swept his gaze over their surroundings before regarding Qin Wentian intently. After which, he walked away, his gait unsteady as he departed the area.

“Feng gege.” Lumi rushed forwards, supporting him with her body. Qin Wentian noticed Lumi was unaffected by Mu Feng’s poison qi. This observation caused Qin Wentian to draw in a deep breath, Mu Feng’s attainment with poison just shot up by another level. It seemed that using poison against poison was an effective solution, and hadn’t weakened Mu Feng at all. In fact, he seemed to be stronger compared to before, to the extent that he could even walk on his own.

He had survived through this because he had a heart of steel, and a thirst for his unsated vengeance. He couldn’t die here.

His silhouette gradually walked further and further away, and eventually the crowd also dispersed. No one knew that in the future, this young man would become a character on the scale of the Poison Monarch, able to drive terror in the hearts of others. Not only that, he was even more terrifying compared to his master!

Chapter 354: Who’s the Controller

Qin Wentian stared silently at Mu Feng’s departing back. He understood that the calamity that befell Mu Feng’s family had completely caused his temperament and personality to change.

Mu Feng’s heart was even stronger compared to before, and even that fearsome poisonous qi hadn’t managed to kill him. Instead, under the stimulation of another poison, both toxins complemented the other by counteracting the other, achieving a balance in his body.

Shifting his gaze aside, Qin Wentian stared at Shu Ruanyu once again as he smiled, “Were you dumped by Yang Fan?”

Shu Ruanyu instantly frowned when she heard that. She glared at Qin Wentian before gritting her teeth and replying, “No, I was the one that proposed the breakup.”

Qin Wentian nodded, it seemed that his guess was right. The transcendent powers were all extremely mindful of their reputation. Although he didn’t do anything to Shu Ruanyu, she was still his captive for quite a long period of time. Such a scenario would definitely give rise to countless gossips, which eventually led to the break up between Yang Fan and Shu Ruanyu.

“Earlier, you tried every possible method at your disposal to kill me, and that was the only reason why I chose to capture you instead. Let the grudge between us come to an end here, and if you still want to make trouble for me, you can try but I guarantee that you won’t be let off so easily,” Qin Wentian faintly stated, while Fan Le beside him burst out into despicable-sounding laughter. “Careful that I don’t catch you and have you warm our beds.”

Shu Ruanyu bit her lips, glaring fiercely at Fatty. After a moment of silence, she finally turned and left with reluctance.

Qin Wentian put aside all thoughts of Shu Ruanyu. He leisurely advanced forwards, arriving at the entrance to the Ancient Kingdom.

Ahead, ninety-nine azure dragon stone steps congregated into the sacred pathway, exuding an imposing and majestic aura. Located in front of the first step was a nine-sided gigantic drum. At the beginning of the sacred path, the drum’s reverberations must echo nine times before one is deemed worthy to set foot on the ancient path, before one can even be qualified to fight for a position on the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

On both sides of the azure dragon steps, was a separate winding pathway that could be used by the spectators to ascend upwards, following the route of the ancient sacred path.

Rumour had it that the two winding paths were used back then for the Royal Clan and Grand Clans to inspect the Grand Xia’s troops.

But now, these two winding paths were used by the spectators to witness the contenders trying to wrest the luck and fight for positions on the Heavenly Fate Rankings for the audience’s delight.

How many heroes of the younger generations had fallen because of ascending the steps, sounding out the drums, fighting for the rankings.

The sacred pathways were all extremely cruel. On the road of this pilgrimage, only a total of 360 cultivators would be able to rank among the Heavenly Fate Rankings. The others would all be dead or injured seriously to the point where they were no better off alive than dead.

And out of the 360 rankers, only the top thirty-six would gain the title of Heaven's Chosen.

Countless geniuses were obliterated every three years.

Qin Wentian stood there, gazing at that ancient pathway.

The Grand Xia was unimaginably vast, and here the geniuses were as common as the clouds. All of them had spent years cultivating bitterly before coming here for the Heavenly Fate Rankings battle. Every individual had their own stories, their own dreams—all to allow their names to resound throughout Grand Xia and stand at the pinnacle of Yuanfu.

He didn't know how powerful his opponents would be, he also didn't know the extent of the danger he would face. He only knew that his determination wouldn't waver and his heart had never changed.

Before he could dominate Grand Xia, he needed to control the White Deer Institute, and therefore he needed this battle to climb up into one of the top three rankings. This was a starting point for him.

He needed this battle so he could defeat Zhan Chen, so that Luo He wouldn't interfere with his relationship with Mo Qingcheng.

He needed this battle to allow his name to echo throughout Grand Xia, to let them know who exactly was Qin Wentian.

Closing his eyes, Qin Wentian entered into a meditative state. The gentle wind breezed past his ears as countless streams of voices entered his ears.

At a certain location, an aged figure gazed at the young man beside him as he stated, “Son, your talent is extraordinary. With your preparations throughout the years, this battle will be the one to catapult your name into endless fame.”

At another location, a young man was smiling as he faced his clan members, “Father, Mother, Grandpa, don’t worry about me, I will do my best.”

There was also a young lady cheering her elder brother on, with her fist pumping into the air, “Brother, you have to do your best! There may be many beauties falling in love with you after this, so you’d better find me a good sister-in-law.”

The words of the elders, their friends, as well as the individual contenders all merged together.

Some among them were from ordinary backgrounds, while others were from the major powers. There was no doubt that the vast majority among the contenders this time around would either be eliminated early on or fall at the later stages. This was the baptism of destiny. If one wanted to contend for the luck, they had to face this cruel ultimatum.

Fan Le walked up, glancing at Qin Wentian and seemed as though he was preparing to say something. Suddenly, he saw Luo Huan waving her hands, signalling for him not to disturb Qin Wentian.

Chu Mang sat down beside Qin Wentian, quietly gazing at the ancient pathway as well.

Luo Huan had a beautiful smile on her face when she glanced at the countenance of her favourite Junior Brother. No matter if he failed or succeeded, she would still feel proud of him.

This wasn’t the Jun Lin Banquet, this place wasn’t Chu. This time around, the opponents Qin Wentian would face possessed the most monstrous talent among the younger generations in Grand Xia.

Qing`er also glanced at Qin Wentian. A bright light flashed past her eyes but it was unknown what she was thinking about, she stared at his features for a moment longer before departing the area.

The Bailu siblings stared at the ninety-nine azure dragon steps ahead of them, as boundless anticipation and yearning bloomed in their hearts.

The surrounding crowd gradually increased in number. All of them were here waiting for the commencement of the ranking battle.

Countless scenes flashed past Qin Wentian's mind, he felt he had only been here for an instant, yet somehow, it also felt like an eternity.

Three days of waiting passed by like a fleeting dream.

Upon waking, he felt that this sensation of passing time was extremely mysterious.

He felt as though he had somehow touched upon something, yet that thing remained as fuzzy as smoke. He was unable to get a clear grasp on what he'd faintly gained an insight into.

Whistling sounds rang out as the silhouettes in their surroundings all started to step upon the platform before the ninety-nine steps of the ancient sacred pathway.

Among these people, Qin Wentian spotted many familiar faces, such as Luo He from the Pill Emperor Hall, as well as the leader from the Ouyang Aristocrat Clan. Those representing the transcendent powers of Grand Xia had arrived.

In the centre of this group were undoubtedly the respective leaders of the nine supreme-level transcendent powers: Great Solar Chen Clan, Venerate Heavens Sect, Shi Clan, Wang Clan, Pill Emperor Hall, Hua Clan, Yan Swallow Swordsmen, Ouyang Aristocrat Clan, and Skydemon Sect.

Three of the powers stood directly in the middle of this group; on the left was the Chen Clan, on the right was the Shi Clan, with the experts from the Venerate Heavens Sect standing between.

These three powers were located in Ginkou and could be considered the 'leaders' of the pilgrimage. From the Venerate Sect, was an old man who rose into the air, he exuded a faintly discernable mist-like aura. Qin Wentian could see the reverence and respect on the faces of the crowd when they looked at the old man.

Because, this old man was the person currently in charge of the Venerate Heavens Sect—Old Man Tianji.

Old Man Tianji was skilled in the arts of reading the movements of constellations, observing the luck and destiny of Grand Xia. He could peer into the future, gaining knowledge of heavenly secrets. Although the Venerate Heavens Sect wasn't proficient in combat, no other transcendent powers dared to belittle them. They were the one who set Grand Xia's rankings, including the Heavenly Fate and Heavenly Dipper Rankings.

Old Man Tianji waved his hands at the crowd below him, an amiable smile on his face.

At that instant where he waved his hands, the countless numbers of silhouettes started to part all the way to the sides, opening up a space in the centre for him. Very swiftly, the left and right areas on the platform were filled, and there were even people getting pushed off because of the lack of space. Gradually, the region below the platform was devoid of those who wanted to compete, leaving only the spectators. Everyone on the platform, be it the young ones, the middle-aged or even the old, they were here to fight the ranking battle for a position on the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

The atmosphere turned solemn as people waited for Old Man Tianji to speak. Qin Wentian glanced at the crowd, before glancing back at the old man. He was paying attention to how those from the supreme transcendent powers would act.

All of them were only thinking of one thing. Who among them would obtain first and be able to have his name resound throughout Grand Xia.

Each of the cultivators' gazes were strewn in different directions, with each of them staring at those on the platform that they felt had the highest chance of ranking at the top.

For people like Chen Wang and Shi Potian, the amount of attention they garnered was the greatest. They were ranked only after Hua Taixu, and now that Hua Taixu was gone, they stood the highest chance among all in occupying the top spot.

"Junior Brother, do your best." Luo Huan walked in front of Qin Wentian, giving him a huge hug before exiting the platform. Her soft and supple body caused his heart to pound rapidly, Qin Wentian could only smile awkwardly in response.

Bailu Yi hugged her brother Bailu Jing before walking up to Qin Wentian, giving him a hug as well, making him feel slightly overwhelmed from all the love he was getting.

"I'll be waiting to see your name among the top three rankers after the battle," Bailu Yi whispered before walking away together with Luo Huan.

Qin Wentian, Ouyang Kuangsheng, Bailu Jing, Chu Mang and Fan Le all stood together in a group, yet no one really paid much attention to them. After all, they were all relatively unknown compared to the top rankers on the previous rankings. Also, for those that gathered here, all of them were talented geniuses from all corners of Grand Xia. This was also the reason why no one paid much attention to Qin Wentian and his group of friends.

As for Mo Qingcheng, with her unmatched countenance, she would garner attention wherever she went. At this moment, she wasn't that far away from Qin Wentian. Zhan Chen followed closely behind her, his eyes flashing with a sinister looking light as he cast a glance at Qin Wentian and the rest.

Luo He, who stood in the air, reacted in a similar way—when she noticed Qin Wentian, a frown plastered over her face as a cold light flickered in her eyes.

“That maiden is so beautiful...” The hearts of the crowd sighed when they noticed Mo Qingcheng. There were countless beauties in Grand Xia, but the lone charms of Mo Qingcheng were enough to overshadow all the rest.

“Who is she?” Somebody among the crowd couldn't help but ask.

“Mo Qingcheng from the Pill Emperor Hall. Indeed, the rumors are true, even a character like Hua Taixu was moved by her beauty and wanted to woo her.”

“The one behind her is Zhan Chen. There were rumors saying that he cultivated an extremely terrifying cultivation art. Being in the top ten should be no problem to him, and he might even have a chance to contend for the top three. Regretfully, I heard that he's been wooing Mo Qingcheng for ages but is always met with utter rejection.”

The countless people here all had boundless amounts of thoughts running through their minds. The spectators all hoped that time would pass faster, allowing them to view the newly crowned legends of the refreshed rankings.

Finally, those who wanted to participate in the ranking battle, all stayed away from the empty space in the centre.

Old Man Tianji gazed at the contenders below as he slowly spoke, “A few thousand years ago, in this very location, the Ancient Grand Xia fell, and the Empire fragmented into nine pieces. In spite of this, the Ancient Kingdom continued to focus their efforts and gather the luck, destiny, and spiritual qi of Grand Xia. Hence, every three years, the talented geniuses from all corners of Grand Xia gather here once more, to set off on a pilgrimage to the Ancient Kingdom. The battle to wrest away the luck and destiny shall belong to no other than the strongest, therefore becoming characters on the Heavenly Fate Ranking.”

“I’m the one that observes the destiny of Grand Xia. Omens are showing, signs are already foretelling that one among you will reunite Grand Xia under one banner once more. We can only wait for the advent of such an individual, the one destined to change the world as we know it. Who then, among you, will be the one to control the future of Grand Xia?”

Chapter 355: Trial of the Battle Drums

The voice of Old Man Tianji cut through the entire space and resounded in everyone’s minds. The hearts of everyone in the crowd couldn’t help but to pound furiously when they heard what he’d just prophesized.

Even the spectators could feel hot blood coursing through their veins. The destiny of Grand Xia had already taken form? And would be orchestrated by one among the current contenders taking part in the ranking battle?

Who exactly would control the future of Grand Xia?

Old Man Tianji’s features remained composed as he gazed downwards at the countless silhouettes looking up at him. This batch of contenders who wanted to participate in the ranking battle, who wanted to wrest away the luck and destiny, numbered over ten thousand. They were the same as countless other cultivators in the past.

The majority of these ten thousand cultivators all had a cultivation base at the ninth level of Yuanfu. Without having substantial power, they would never be confident enough to participate in the ranking battle.

Although ten thousand may sound like a huge number, in the perspective of Grand Xia, ten thousand people was just like a grain of sand in the endless desert.

Not only that, many among these ten thousand would be eliminated. They would first need to prove that they had the qualifications to step upon the sacred pathway.

At this moment, Old Man Tianji spoke once again, “All of you can now begin, if you are unable to sound out more than nine echoes from that gigantic drum, don’t waste time and just forfeit.”

The drum was the first barrier, designed to eliminate their numbers.

It was of immense difficulty to make the nine-sided gigantic drum echo out even once. The criteria was this: if one couldn’t get the drum to echo nine times, they didn’t have the qualifications to step into the Ancient Kingdom.

Not only that, the contenders were allowed to channel their attacks unceasingly onto the drum. Yet if the echoes were cut off halfway, it was useless even if they continued on.

The ten thousand contenders advanced forward, stepping on the ninety-nine azure dragon steps one after another. The atmosphere grew increasingly solemn. None were allowed to soar in the air, they had to walk up all ninety-nine steps, each successive step an indication of their respect for the sacred pathway.

And right now, the first contender was advancing towards the nine-sided gigantic drum situated in the centre of the first step. The long robes covering his body fluttered as a mighty aura exuded from him. Maintaining the distance of a single step away from the drum, several armor-type divine weapons covered his body, adding to the sharpness of his aura. It seemed as though he himself was a divine weapon, instead of a human.

“It’s Wang Jue. As the first contender, is he trying to tell the others that he’s here today to contend for the position of the top ranker?” The gaze of the spectators landed onto Wang Jue.

Wang Jue, a Heaven’s Chosen from the War Continent’s Wang Clan, ranked #6 in the Heavenly Fate Ranking. He’s definitely qualified and might even be one of few combatants here with the strongest chance of ranking within the top three.

At this moment, Wang Jue’s fist turned a silvery white as he punched out, slamming his fist into the drum. An instant later, booming sounds of reverberations echoed out and shook the heavens.

The fearsome afterwind fluttered Wang Jue’s hair, as the booming sounds continued without pause, all the way to the ninth echo. A terrifying rebound force momentarily landed onto him, yet Wang Jue stood there unmoving, as sturdy as an ancient tree.

“Since we’re contesting for the rankings, how can I lose out to others right on the first test.” Wang Jue’s voice rang out, and before the nine echoes faded away, his fist slammed forth again, containing within them an incomparably terrifying sharpness.

The drum reverberated three more times, and by the last echo, the after-wind was so fierce that it almost lifted him off his feet.

Gritting his teeth, he took another step forwards as he unleashed a flurry of blows onto the drum. Regardless of how terrifying the after-wind was, he refused to be budged.

Standing beside Wang Jue, the next contender watched on in stupefied amazement, as though he had forgotten his purpose there.

Finally, Wang Jue sounded out eighteen echoes, the sound lingering for long moments as it rang throughout the Heavens and Earth.

“A total of eighteen echoes... According to the past records, anyone who managed to sound out eighteen echoes were all eventually ranked within the top ten rankings.” Several in the crowd silently mused, this Wang Jue had stolen the show by letting the world know of the determination in his heart with his eighteen echoes.

Those from the Wang Clan all had smiles on their faces accompanied by looks of satisfaction flashing in their eyes. Going all out from the very first test, this was Wang Jue’s determination.

Contending for positions on the Heavenly Fate Rankings? In that case, one should go all out right from the start.

After Wang Jue, the contenders tried the drums in successive fashion. The majority of those after him could only manage to sound out fourteen echoes and below. Only a few were able to sound out a fifteenth echo, but those people were already rankers on the previous Heavenly Fate Ranking.

No one else managed to sound out eighteen echoes.

There was only one attempt every three years, everyone didn’t dare to slacken when it came to the first test.

Right from the start, the sense of competition in the air could already be felt emanating forth from the contenders.

Naturally, there were also many others who couldn't even sound out nine echoes. Reality was harsh, the truth was often cruel, and so they could only retreat with heavy reluctance and try again in three years time.

After this, another name caused a stir in the crowd. This person was Li Yu, from the Thousand-Jue Alliance.

"There are actually so many failures, how fearsome is this nine-sided gigantic drum?" Fan Le gazed at the giant drum ahead as he silently mused. This first test had already eliminated more than half of the ten thousand contenders. This elimination method couldn't help but invoke a chill in the hearts of everyone who had yet to step up.

After all, those who dared stand here today were all the extreme geniuses of their own locations. Each of them had an unwavering belief and confidence in their own power.

"Nineteen echoes..."

At this moment, an earth-shattering resounding boom echoed through the air. Fan Le stared at the silhouette with his mouth wide-open. Over half of the ten thousand contenders failed to make it past the nine echoes, yet this man in front of them sounded out a total of nineteen. How terrifying was that?

"Di Feng!" Qin Wentian stared at the familiar silhouette in the air.

"It's Emperor Azure." The rest of the crowd caught on to his identity as they exclaimed in wonder. Ranked #5 on the Heavenly Fate Ranking, Emperor Azure (Wang Cang). His surname was Wang as well, yet he had surpassed Wang Jue, eclipsing his earlier glory of eighteen echoes. Yet the vast majority of the crowd had no idea that Emperor Azure wasn't surnamed Wang.

"Emperor Azure, how powerful. I wonder if anyone else can break his record?"

"Ouyang Zheng also went up, yet he could only sound out seventeen echoes."

Those beside Di Feng, despite the fact that seventeen echoes was already extremely impressive, were all overshadowed by him.

Ouyang Zheng was a Heaven's Chosen from the Ouyang Aristocrat Clan, ranked #10 on the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

Although the number of echoes couldn't determine one's ranking, but it in itself was also a kind of competition. Especially when Wang Jue opened with an astounding eighteen echoes, the rest of the contenders weren't willing to appear weaker compared to him.

After which, a series of powerful characters made their moves.

Yang Fan from the Star-Seizing Manor, sixteen echoes.

Zhao Lie from the Sky Ember Sect, sixteen echoes.

Hua Feng from the Hua Clan, fifteen echoes.

Duan Qingshan, sixteen echoes.

"Shi Potian is making his move." At this moment, the gazes of the crowd were all focused on a single person—Shi Potian from the Shi Clan.

Shi Potian sounded out twenty echoes, refreshing the record.

"As expected of someone from the Shi Clan. The ancient primordial beast blood flowing through his veins is truly fearsome indeed." The spectators silently mused.

For the ranking battle this time around, there were no doubts that the loudest cheers belonged to Chen Wang and Shi Potian.

Great Solar Chen Wang, and Shi Clan, Potian (Breaking the Heavens). Who could contend against these two monsters?

“Huh, that black-robed figure?”

At this moment, Qin Wentian’s eyes couldn’t help but flicker when he noticed a familiar black-robed figure appearing next to the drum. Wasn’t this the fellow that cultivated the Devil Arts?

Devil-might coated the entire body of the black-robed figure, as he blasted out with a palm strike that caused the drum to violently vibrate. In quick succession, he sounded out nine echoes with impending booms still on the way.

However, this didn’t quite capture the attention of others, and it was only when the black-robed figure had reached a total of fifteen echoes before people began focusing on him.

As the sixteenth and seventeenth echoes reverberated, the black-robed figure finally halted his attacks. It was obvious that he still had strength remaining, yet he chose to give up at the seventeenth echo, seemingly indifferent about the results.

“He’s actually a cultivator of the devil path, who is he exactly? I have never heard of such a person, could he be a dark horse?”

“Maybe that he is a she, notice how he stayed cloaked in black? He must be hiding his identity.”

“Chen Wang, Great Solar Chen Wang is finally making his move.” Chen Wang took a step forward, as the crowd burst out into crazy cheers. Ranked #2 on the Heavenly Fate Rankings, without Hua Taixu, he was the person most likely to obtain the top ranking this time around.

The light from the sun was incomparably resplendent, Chen Wang didn’t disappoint his supporters. Similar to Shi Potian, he sounded out a total of twenty echoes.

“Mu Feng is here as well, although I heard that he was grievously injured just three days ago.”

The gigantic drum sounded out nine echoes before Mu Feng walked away, ignoring the opinions of others.

Although this was the case, no one dared to belittle Mu Feng. Even Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns would fear his poison.

Regardless of Chen Wang, Shi Potian or Mu Feng, none of these three should be underestimated.

After which, there was another name worthy of attention. That person, was Situ Po, a Heaven's Chosen from the Sword Extinction Sect.

At this moment, Qin Wentian turned his gaze over. Mo Qingcheng perceived his actions and as he finally stepped out, a mischievous smile flashed past his eyes.

Qin Wentian and the rest mirrored her actions, all of them stepped onto the sacred pathway and moved towards the nine-sided gigantic drum.

“Zhan Chen is finally making his move. I heard that his infatuation with Mo Qingcheng hasn't lessened despite the countless rejections he's faced.”

“Who's that maiden? She's actually so beautiful, almost on par with Mo Qingcheng.” The spectators all exclaimed in awe when they noticed Yun Mengyi. Although Yun Mengyi was famous in the Unmatched Realm, not many outside that area knew of her.

“Xuan Yan, Xuan Yan went up as well.”

“So many beautiful girls, this is just like a feast for our eyes in a banquet of beauty.”

Mo Qingcheng, Yun Mengyi and Xuan Yan went up at the same time.

Zhan Chen had yet to act.

Other than these, the ones remaining were none other than Qin Wentian, Ouyang Kuangsheng, Chu Mang, Fan Le and Bailu Jing.

A total of nine contenders coincidentally matched up with the nine-sided gigantic drum.

“Fatty, I want to see how many echoes you can manifest,” Xuan Yan spoke in a low voice. Evidently, she was talking to Fan Le.

Fan Le was lacking a little in confidence, the situation this time around was different from the past.

And what was interesting was that these nine contenders all made their moves at the same time. In the next instant, the nine-sided gigantic drum echoed out in unison.

The total power unleashed created a chaotic stream that devastated the surroundings. Qin Wentian’s strike was beyond overwhelming, sounding out nine echoes with a single strike. Yet in spite of this, no one noticed him because the main focus of everyone’s attention was Zhan Chen and Mo Qingcheng.

Occasionally, the gazes of the crowd would also turn to Yun Mengyi and Xuan Yan.

The crowd only saw Zhan Chen immersed in a golden light as countless fearsome sharp swords lacerated outwards. Momentarily, he had already sounded out the fifteenth echo yet it was extremely clear that he wasn’t done yet.

Mo Qingcheng had already halted her attacks, she stopped the moment the ninth echo rang out. Although she still remained there, nobody complained, it was an enjoyable thing to steal a few more glances at her before she retreated.

Eventually, Fan Le, Chu Mang, Ouyang Kuangsheng and Bailu Jing all halted their attacks. Among them, the ones with the greatest number of echoes, were Bailu Jing and Chu Mang, with a total of sixteen echoes each.

Xuan Yan gathered her strength and sounded a total of seventeen echoes, awing everyone in the crowd.

Yet they discovered that there were still three people who hadn’t halted their attacks. The beautiful maiden akin to a snow lotus on the right actually sounded out eighteen echoes. The sword technique she executed appeared simple and elegant, yet contained a mystery of such profoundness that it could rival the grandness of the Heavens.

“What’s going on, why is this group of people so powerful?”

Xuan Yan sounded out seventeen echoes while Yun Mengyi sounded out eighteen echoes.

Zhan Chen and Qin Wentian had already reached the eighteenth echo mark, yet both of them were still going strong. Among the drum reverberations, a strong sense of enmity could be felt.

With a cold laugh, nine swords combined into one as Zhan Chen pierced forth. The nineteenth echo was born—it seemed as though he had no intentions of stopping, he wanted to challenge the record today, to reach the twentieth echo.

Yet the rebound force from this echo contained an overwhelming strength, the wind-force was so strong that Zhan Chen couldn't even keep his eyes open.

Qin Wentian's countenance looked extremely solemn, his blood gurgling within his body as he imbued his fist with unparalleled strength. He punched out once again, incorporating within his fist the rhythm of the world's boundless energy, blasting all out upon the surface of the drum.

“BOOM!” The nineteenth echo, reverberated.

“How is this possible?”

Within the crowd, several had expressions of incredulous disbelief etched on their faces. This was the first time they had witnessed two contenders both surpass the eighteenth echo in a direct confrontation with each other. And not just anyone, the unknown young man was contending against Zhan Chen!

Chapter 356: Chaotic Battle at the River of Life and Death

Who was that person?

As the gazes of the crowd landed on Qin Wentian, bewilderment filled their hearts. The majority of them had never seen nor heard of this young man before.

Not only that, the aura Qin Wentian was exuding was only at the seventh level of Yuanfu.

There was no need to doubt his determination, seeing how he managed to sound out a nineteenth echo. Along with a heart of steel, one's attack must also possess tyrannical might as well as have strong individual defenses to ward off the rebound force.

Zhan Chen's countenance turned chilly as he turned to stare at Qin Wentian. The golden light emitting from him flared even more brilliantly. At this moment, he was aware of Mo Qingcheng still spectating from the side. Not only that, with the attention of the crowd focused onto him, how could he lose to someone with a cultivation base merely at the seventh level of Yuanfu?

Even though this was only the sounding of the drums, he mustn't lose out to Qin Wentian.

Releasing his Astral Souls, a terrifying golden-colored wind surrounded Zhan Chen, before it slowly coalesced into the shape of a Heaven Punisher Ancient Sword. With a roar, he brandished the sword and slammed the drum once more.

“BOOOOM!”

As the twentieth echo reverberated, the terrifying rebound force shattered the golden armor on Zhan Chen's body. The impact rushed directly through his body, causing his heart to pound violently. He knew that if he tried to sound out the twenty-first echo, he would undoubtedly be seriously injured.

The sound of his twentieth echo lingered through the air as he turned his cold stare once more onto Qin Wentian.

Yet, he only saw Qin Wentian driving a single finger forwards onto the drum. An overwhelming destructive strength broke apart the space, causing the twentieth echo to ring out as it slammed onto the surface of the gigantic drum.

“BOOOM!!” The Heavens and Earth trembled. He too, achieved twenty echoes. As the sound of that echo reverberated, it felt like the hearts of the spectators were physically impacted. When that terrifying rebound force gushed intensely against Qin Wentian, his body didn't even tremble in the slightest, his heart was as still as water. It was as though he could see the ending of Ancient Grand Xia once again, that day where blood and tears had mingled, the dissolution of a magnificent dynasty—all the countless streams of will converged together, shooting straight into and rumbling his mind. This was too terrifying.

Zhan Chen hesitated for a moment, and the sound of the previous echo he created dissipated. A moment's hesitation had cost him his chance but even so, twenty echoes was already amazing. He

was on the same level as Chen Wang and Shi Potian, and although the sounding of the drums didn't affect the competition results, at the very least, it allowed people to see Zhan Chen's domineering bearing.

"How can your petty heart win against my undying determination?"

As the sound of his voice faded, Qin Wentian stabbed forth with another finger. The boundless force of the world concentrated into a spiral, infusing his finger as he drove it onto the drum yet again.

"BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!"

Twenty-one echoes—he broke the record. The sound of this reverberation melded together with Qin Wentian's voice and rumbled through the air, rocking the hearts of the spectators.

This person had just challenged Zhan Chen with this final provocation.

How can your petty heart win against my undying determination?

The first elimination test was merely a formality, using the drum echoes to sift the weak from the strong. But, in terms of pride, the test was a form of challenge for the various geniuses attending. Let alone the fact that Zhan Chen went up together with him, Mo Qingcheng was also watching by the side, so how could he still lose to Zhan Chen then?

Stepping up, Qin Wentian advanced forwards. Smiles suffused the features of his companions around him as they too, proceeded onwards.

This young man was extraordinary, yet sadly his cultivation base was still too low. Provoking Zhan Chen with a cultivation base at the seventh level of Yuanfu was too brazen and foolhardy.

Presently, most of the contenders had already taken the drum test, with only a few of the weaker ones yet to step up.

Moving forward, the remaining contenders set off on their way.

The nine-sided gigantic drum test had eliminated more than half of the original ten thousand participants.

The next test would be even more dangerous: the contenders would face the River of Life and Death.

The River of Life and Death was truly a life and death experience; those who passed it would live, and for those who failed—only death awaited them.

From ages past till the current era, it was unknown how many heroes of Grand Xia had fallen into the River of Life and Death.

Qin Wentian and the rest ascended the azure dragon steps, and when they reached the top, they could see the River of Life and Death in front of them. Or maybe, it would be better to term it as a lake of Life and Death.

The width of the River of Life and Death was as wide as the first step—the stage for the gigantic nine-sided drum—easily able to accommodate thousands of people. As for its length, it measured at about ten thousand metres long, a distance that was considered relatively short for Stellar Martial Cultivators. Any one of these geniuses were able to ford the river in a remarkably short period of time.

However, it wasn't going to be so easy with a few thousand people fording the river while fighting against each other at the same time.

But, more than the opponents they would face, the river water was the most perilous part of the test—contained within it was a will of corrosion. Without a doubt, all Yuanfu-level cultivators would die if they fell into it.

At this moment, the crowd saw Old Man Tianji and those in-charge of their respective transcendent powers rising through the air, flying past the River of Life and Death. They landed on the other side, then opened the Kingdom's gate before standing upon the Ancient Kingdom's city wall.

This River of Life and Death was once a heavenly moat that served as the first line of defense for Ancient Grand Xia. With this defensive setup, the pass could be guarded by just one man, against ten thousand.

Old Man Tianji's gaze stared ahead. Right now, all the contenders were already facing the River of Life and Death. Although the distance of ten thousand metres might not seem far, this place was already destined to be the grave for several contenders about to take the test.

Old Man Tianji then lit up a candle. This candle was short and thin, indicating a time limit of a mere hundred breaths for the contenders to pass this test.

The difficulty of this could well be imagined with so many people advancing at the same time. There would bound to be some who would make a move against others, using them as stepping stones to get across. The situation would be rife with chaos.

"The candle is already lit. Before the candle flame burns out you are to arrive at the end of the river. Failure means death," Old Man Tianji then calmly continued, "Move out."

"GO!" Qin Wentian roared, the few thousand contenders moved at the same time, with a speed as fast as lightning, jostling the others who got in their way.

A single candle to traverse the distance of ten thousands metres, they had to grab hold of all remaining time and proceed forwards with their fastest speed before they could pass.

The thousands of contenders frenziedly rushed ahead, their momentum created an after-wind so powerful they could lacerate anything into pieces. What a terrifying sight, the scene was too visually stunning.

The auras of the few thousand contenders burst out, adding to the chaotic scene. Several had already started fighting amongst themselves in an effort to press ahead at the expense of others.

"SCRAM!" A person behind Qin Wentian shouted, slashing forth with an ancient sword at lightning speed. At the same time, that person stepped on a flying sword, trying to get ahead.

"I'll take the rear, you guys go on ahead." Qin Wentian hollered, flipping his palm to blast backwards with a terrifying demonic palm imprint, colliding directly against the ancient sword. His eyes flashed with incredible coldness as his hands moved about in the air, performing runic gestures. Momentarily, a number of great rocs materialized, and they rushed out to block the pathway of the attack.

Similarly, there was also people who were in front of Qin Wentian's group turning back to unleash attacks in order to block their path. Even when Qin Wentian and the rest soared up into the air, they were met with people already above them in the middle of hurling attacks downwards, wanting to knock them into the river.

Chaos, the situation right now was utterly chaotic.

With a loud splash, someone finally fell into the river. Miserable gut-wrenching screams rang out as his body corroded at visible speed, quickly dissolving into white bones, before the bones themselves eventually dissolved into nothingness.

Qin Wentian swept a glance at the scene as his heart involuntarily shuddered slightly. This was merely the first test after the nine-sided drums. How ruthless, and how tragic was this competition between geniuses?

"Qingcheng." Qin Wentian glanced at her with worry in his eyes. Given how chaotic it was, where everyone focused only on rushing ahead, he couldn't help worrying about Qingcheng. But luckily he discovered that she was fine. Maybe it was because of her beauty, but there was no one willing to act against her. This was an innate advantage all beauties seemed to possess.

Without an especially strong grudge or hatred, as long as Mo Qingcheng didn't take the initiative to antagonize others, those experts wouldn't make a move against her.

Chu Mang and Fan Le stood at the frontline of their group with their Arrow Astral Souls released. Fan Le completely unleashed his bloodline limit, immersing himself in golden flames and looking akin to an Empyrean War God, exuding an imposing and mighty aura.

"Peng!" Somebody ahead of them acted out, trying to block their path as Chu Mang and Fan Le both coldly snorted and loosed an arrow at the target rapidly dashing ahead. That person flipped his palms, making an attempt to destroy the arrows, only to see the feathered bolts suddenly shift their trajectories, causing his countenance to drastically change. An instant later, piercing sounds rang out as the flaming arrows punched through his head, before his corpse fell into the river.

For their group, they wouldn't take the initiative to kill others but for those people who wanted to block their paths, they would show them no mercy.

After Chu Mang consumed the Limit-break pellet, his cultivation base had already broken through to the peak level of Yuanfu. How could his attacks not be overwhelming?

"BOOOOM!"

Right at this moment, a terrifying pressure bore down on them as manifestations of mountains after mountains slammed down from the skies towards their group. Not only that, there were even mountains appearing before them, blocking their path ahead.

“Situ Po.” Qin Wentian inclined his head. He saw Situ Po soaring in the skies, enveloped within an armor of starstone, raining attacks down onto them.

Qin Wentian’s silhouette flickered as he too soared into the skies. With a punch, he shattered the manifestations of the mountains, when suddenly a sharp sword cleaved down his head. It was none other than Situ Po’s technique, the Life Extinction Swordplay.

At the same instant, a domineering suppression force pressed down onto them. The manifestation of a gigantic leg stomped downwards from the Heavens, containing heaven-shaking power within.

“Duan Qingshan.”

Qin Wentian’s countenance turned ice cold, Situ Po had actually allied with Duan Qingshan to make this sneak attack against them.

They were both extremely powerful, Duan Qingshan was ranked #25 on the Heavenly Fate Rankings, while Situ Po’s combat prowess was also at a similar level.

Chu Mang’s great axe cleaved towards them as Ouyang Kuangsheng’s body blazed, releasing flames of ember and thunder, interweaving into thunderfire.

How could Zhan Chen miss out on this excellent opportunity to gang up on Qin Wentian? He clasped his palms together, pointing them forward and stabbed out as a gigantic golden sword materialized, piecing directly towards Qin Wentian.

At this moment, Qin Wentian and his group were being besieged by enemies from both the front and back.

Yet, in the next instance, a domineering devil-might descended, as a black-colored devil spear penetrated through the void, aiming for Zhan Chen. Zhan Chen’s countenance faltered as he roared in rage. “IT’S YOU AGAIN!”

Yun Mengyi also acted, dashing towards Situ Po as her glacial intent caused the atmosphere in the surroundings to turn into ice and snow.

Chaos, this was complete and utter chaos. Attacks were all wildly unleashed, the contenders taking this test could only depend on their luck as they continued rushing ahead.

Other contenders noticed this scene and they couldn't help but feel astonishment in their hearts. To think that young man who broke the record of the drum echoes would have such influence—so many friends as well as so many enemies.

Those that were hunting him down were all extraordinary characters of their generation—Zhan Chen, Duan Qingshan and Situ Po. Comment by Lord Bluefire: relook. those that were hunting him?

And at this moment, yet another Star-Seizing Palm Imprint was thrown in the mix. The expressions on the spectators' faces stiffened yet again. That was an attack that originated from the Star-Seizing Manor—it seemed that Yang Fan, alongside with one of his lackeys wanted to join in the fun as well.

Chapter 357: Blasted into the River

Qin Wentian's gaze was as fierce as lightning, filled with a terrifying glint of cold light. The bloodline limit in his body erupted forth, as the centre of his brows began to glow resplendently, as though a third eye were taking form.

“Yun Mengyi, freeze this space.” Qin Wentian's voice was ice cold. With a single draw of her sword, Yun Mengyi's frost intent enveloped everything.

Qin Wentian halted his group advancement, and instead, he chose to directly battle above the River of Life and Death. This scenario caused many to be taken aback—wasn't Qin Wentian worried about the passing time?

Zhan Chen, Yang Fan and the rest frowned as well. Although they wanted to kill Qin Wentian, obtaining a good ranking on the Heavenly Fate Rankings was more important to them. They didn't have time to play around with Qin Wentian.

“Erase Duan Qingshan.”

Qin Wentian's voice was as cold as the depths of hell. He had once said that if he were to meet Duan Qingshan ever again, he would definitely kill him. And yet Duan Qingshan still dared to make a move against him.

Since he had chosen this path, the price for his actions would be his life.

The black-robed figure held back Zhan Chen, while Chu Mang fought against Situ Po. Bailu Jing and Ouyang Kuangsheng were engaged in battle against Yang Fan and his lackey from the Star-Seizing Manor. Yun Mengyi turned her gaze onto Duan Qingshan as a coldness of absolute zero erupted forth towards him. Ice formed on his body, the chill so penetrating that it cut deep into his bones.

Abruptly, a formless energy blasted into his body, as a terrifying will wormed into his sea of consciousness. As he lifted his head and stared at Qin Wentian, the expression on his face was incredibly unsightly. A fearsome primordial beast took form in his mind, howling in rage as it tried to devour his consciousness. That violent impact felt as though his mind was being torn apart.

Qin Wentian's will of Mandate could actually attack the sea of consciousness of his opponents directly.

Fan Le's arrows fanned out, as Duan Qingshan's countenance turned ashen. He rapidly retreated backwards, while aiming a powerful kick at Qin Wentian and the others. With a mere wave of his palms, he directed the formless energy to destroy the manifestation of the giant leg, and then carried on forward, blasting into him once again.

"This can't be, his Mandate, it's at the second level!" Duan Qingshan's eyes widened in fright. How was this possible? Qin Wentian was only at the seventh level of Yuanfu, how could he comprehend second level Mandates? That was the prerequisite of stepping into Heavenly Dipper!

Yun Mengyi's speed was extremely fast, as she too, had comprehended the Mandate of Wind. Her Mandate of Icesnow was slowing down Duan Qingshan's movements, and so her current speed was faster than his. When she clashed against him, a sword slashed downwards as a beam from the heavens cascaded down with frightening force and terrible beauty. Duan Qingshan paled—everyone who entered the Unmatched Realm knew of Yun Mengyi's prowess.

Duan Qingshan gave a howl of rage as his Astral Souls exploded forth.

However, he only saw Qin Wentian madly rushing over, with terrifying killing intent blasting out from him.

At this moment, Qin Wentian only had a single thought in his mind, the death of Duan Qingshan.

Duan Qingshan stared blankly at Qin Wentian sending out a palm, pressing forcefully against the space in front of him. In the next instant, a terrible force slammed into him, akin to a blow from a desolate beast at full-strength. That overwhelming force directly ignored his pathetic attempts at defense and forcefully pushed him downwards in the direction of the river.

Gushing sounds rang out, the sounds of the waves in the River of Life and Death.

“No...” Duan Qingshan glanced at the river, his countenance as white as a sheet of paper. Qin Wentian’s palm still pressing onto the empty space, ignoring everything in order to push him downwards.

“I said before, I would kill you if I met you here.”

As the sound of his voice faded, Qin Wentian sent out yet another palm, as a towering strength forced the air downwards, pushing Duan Qingshan directly into the river.

“Plop,” Duan Qingshan instantly transformed into bones, before flowing along with the river currents.

Duan Qingshan had fallen.

The spectators on both banks watched on as the white bones drifted past them, with intense shock rocking their hearts.

That was Duan Qingshan, someone ranked within the top thirty-six of the Heavenly Fate Ranking. He was forced into the river by someone whose cultivation base was two levels lower than his?

What a cruel test, how intense was the competition for the Heavenly Fate Ranking?

At the same time, this also made the others seriously contemplate this young man.

Who exactly was he? He had several allies by his side, as well as several enemies.

And in the case of the first test, he even broke the record, sounding out a total of twenty-one echoes.

Back then, none of the spectators thought it meant anything. After all, his cultivation was obviously one of the weaker ones here. Yet, he killed Duan Qingshan, and now there was no need to doubt Qin Wentian’s actual strength. If he was weak, it would have been impossible for him to blast Duan Qingshan down into the river.

When they witnessed this scene, those from the Ouyang Aristocrat Clan, all had incredibly ugly expressions on their faces.

Thoughts of revenge filled their heart. Qin Wentian set off a wave of commotion when he stepped into the Ouyang Clan. Back then he was still weak, with nothing noteworthy about him, yet now, he even had the strength to kill Duan Qingshan, and was also a good friend of Ouyang Kuangsheng. They couldn't do anything to him.

As for Ouyang Ting, her countenance paled—she was frightened out of her mind.

How can this be? HOW CAN THIS BE? Duan Qingshan was slain by Qin Wentian.

Her eyes turned red as she gazed helplessly around, her mind telling her that this was impossible. Yet with the truth in front of her eyes, there was no way her heart could deny the same thing.

How had it come to this? Shouldn't it be the opposite, where Duan Qingshan killed Qin Wentian instead?

All of this occurred in the space of a few seconds, yet a few breaths of time had indeed felt wasted because of that. In the next moment, Qin Wentian soared up to the skies as he surveyed his earlier attacks.

Zhan Chen, Situ Po and the rest knew that they couldn't afford to delay any longer. They flew even higher up, unwilling to entangle themselves by fighting with Qin Wentian at length.

"Quickly, let's go as well." Qin Wentian and the others madly rushed ahead. There were others still fighting in front of them, as contenders after contenders fell into the river. Such a scene made the spectators feel a chill in their hearts.

The contenders were all rare geniuses, of one-in-ten thousand, yet they had fallen here.

The candle was about to burn out, and the contenders continued to arrive at the end of the river, passing through the city gates.

A raging wind billowed, Qin Wentian and the rest also managed to reach the goal. The candle flame completely extinguished itself when they landed on the other bank, causing all of them to sigh in relief. Who would have thought that the River of Life and Death test would be so dangerous. Luckily, all of them made it through, without even a single casualty.

“Let’s go.” As they passed through the city gates, they met Zhan Chen and their earlier attackers again. Their gazes collided against each other, incomparably sharp as killing intent permeated the air.

“Consider it your good luck.” Zhan Chen’s eyes gleamed with a golden light as he coldly stated. After which, he turned his gaze onto the black-robed figure. This person had already spoiled his plans more than once.

Qin Wentian also glanced at the black-robed figure as he lightly nodded in gratitude. “Many thanks.”

The eyes of the black-robed figure flickered, giving people a sense of their elegance. It caused Qin Wentian to suspect—could this devil path practitioner be a female instead?

The tyranny of the Devil Arts was more terrifying than anyone could imagine. It was extremely dangerous, yet how strong the heart of the practitioner must be if they were willing to cultivate the devil path?

Yet these were merely his musings, he wondered if the black-robed figure was listed among the Heavenly Fate Rankings and more importantly, why was he or she helping him?

Over another half had been eliminated after the River of Life and Death. Currently, there were still many contenders, the one remaining were all elites of the elites.

For the battle over the positions in the Heavenly Fate Rankings, luck was sometimes required. For example, Duan Qingshan had the strength, and had been one of the thirty six Heaven’s Chosen. Yet he still died, even before making it past the test at the River. This indicated that his luck was pretty awful.

And in the course of the ranking battle, many would fight prematurely because of their individual grudges. Hence, even as an elite, if one was unlucky, they would also be one of the fallen.

In spite of the dangers, this was the grueling test that made the Heavenly Fate Rankings so sacred in the eyes of Grand Xia.

The great waves emerging from these tests were sifting through the sand in their quest to find gold. By the end of the competition, only those with sufficient strength and luck would remain. It was impossible to persist onwards if a cultivator was missing either one of these factors.

At this moment in front of the contenders, there were several battle platforms.

Old Man Tianji and the other leaders leisurely walked on the air as they gazed downwards at the contenders.

On the left and right, countless spectators began to fill the winding paths, tightly squeezed together. They had all come up in hopes of a better view for the next test.

“This was where Ancient Grand Xia drilled its troops. Step up on the battle platforms, and an illusory opponent similar to your current strength level will appear. For those who can’t even get past the yellow-colored battle-robed warriors, they will immediately be eliminated. Let it begin.” Old Man Tianji gazed at the contenders as he calmly instructed.

As the sound of his voice faded, Chen Wang from the Great Solar Clan immediately moved—like a resplendent blazing sun, he stood on the centre-most platform. The platforms weren’t large in size, so if one was blasted down by the illusory opponents, they would be eliminated.

A burst of light inundated the area as an illusory figure took form in front of Chen Wang. This figure was clad in a red battle robe with a terrifying aura similar to Chen Wang’s at the peak of the ninth level of Yuanfu.

“Bzzz!”

The illusory warrior heaved a spear as he dashed out, instantly stabbing towards Chen Wang.

Chen Wang’s eyes flashed, it was as though a ball of flame was burning in his eyes. An instant later, the illusory warrior went up in flames. It was devoured into ashes before shattering, and then transformed into a stream of light shooting into Chen Wang’s body. Momentarily, a red battle robe appeared on Chen Wang’s body.

After which, two more opponents appeared. These two were clad in orange-colored battle robes.

Chen Wang took a step forwards, unleashing the Great Solar Universe Art to its extreme, blasting forth with two palms and then instantly incinerating the two manifested opponents. Momentarily, the color of Chen Wang’s battle robe turned orange.

“Battle-robed Warriors. The manifested opponents will grow stronger and stronger as time goes by. The level of their ranks can be classified into red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. In fact, there were people who once passed through all stages, fighting against platinum-colored battle-robed warriors.”

Ouyang Kuangsheng explained in a low voice for Qin Wentian’s benefit. By the end of this test, the battle robes that appeared on one’s body would have the color most fitting of their strength!

Chapter 358: Chen Wang’s Strength

Chen Wang’s strength was extremely fearsome. He instantly defeated three yellow-robed warriors as his own battle robe took on the color of yellow.

“Those three yellow-robed warriors have a cultivation base at the peak of the ninth level, with their Mandates at the Perfection Boundary. Truly terrifying to fight against,” Qin Wentian murmured as he took in the scene. The initial three rounds of battle allowed him to understand that the number of manifested warriors would shoot up by one after each round, but their strength levels were all the same. When it came to the Yellow-ranked, the three warriors complemented each other movements and weaknesses perfectly, it wasn’t as easy as it seemed to defeat them.

The fourth round, a manifested warrior clad in green battle robes appeared on the platform Chen Wang was at.

Its cultivation base was at the pinnacle of Yuanfu, yet its spear arts were even more formidable compared to the three yellow-ranked warriors. Chen Wang’s Great Solar Universe Art erupted forth, shining with a blazing light. Not only that, he also unleashed his second level Mandate, but in spite of this, the green-ranked warrior managed to neutralize it. Evidently, the Mandate of the green-ranked warriors, was already at the second level of insights.

Eventually, however, it was still defeated by Chen Wang.

Thereafter, the contenders started to jump up on the platforms, directly starting their battles with the first level red-ranked warriors.

For those that couldn’t even pass the yellow-ranked warriors, they were directly eliminated. This meant that all of them had to win three rounds at the very least.

The hearts of several of the contenders couldn’t help but pound in shock when they witnessed the supremacy of Chen Wang.

By then, Chen Wang had already defeated the two blue-ranked warriors. These two manifested warriors were opponents whose insights into their respective Mandates were at the second level.

And now, Chen Wang was facing off against three indigo-ranked warriors.

All three of his opponents were at the pinnacle of Yuanfu, with their Mandate at the second level of insights. And although their weapons were all spears, the second level Mandates each of them comprehended were different from each other. This allowed them to synergise and complement each other, to the extent that their joint outputs were even greater than the sum of all three their attacks. How could anyone defeat them?

“This battle platform must have been something left behind by the Ancient Emperor, how fascinating.” Qin Wentian mused. Chen Wang was more formidable compared to him—evidently, all three of Chen Wang’s Mandates had already reached the second level.

But this was only to be expected, back then Chen Wang was already the second strongest in the Heavenly Fate Ranking. Using only a span of three years, he climbed from the initial state of the ninth level to his current achievements; at the pinnacle of Yuanfu, in addition to attaining second level of insights in his respective Mandates. Chen Wang was a true genius, so even though the Heavenly Dipper Realm was a major watershed to most, it was nothing to him. He was one of those monsters that could cross over to Heavenly Dipper any time he wanted.

Not only that, the instant Chen Wang stepped into Heavenly Dipper, he would already be capable of slaying ordinary Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns. This was what it meant to be a Heaven’s Chosen—this was what it meant to be a core member from a transcendent power.

“Victory?” The spectators all gazed on, thunderstruck. Chen Wang defeated the three indigo-ranked warriors as the battle robe on his body also turned a shade of deep indigo, projecting an extremely imposing aura.

At this moment, a violet-ranked warrior manifested on the battle platform Chen Wang was standing. Its countenance was extremely solemn, and merely meeting its gaze was sufficient to strike deep fear in the hearts of the most stalwart.

“Chen Wang is so powerful.”

“The first level of Martial Mandates can be classified into the Initial, Advanced, Transformation, Perfect Boundary, serving as the foundation before breaking through to the second level of insights. Similarly, the second level of insights are also classified into those four Boundaries. Since the three indigo-ranked warriors earlier all had second level Mandates at the Initial Boundary, I wonder how strong this violet-ranked warrior will be.”

Qin Wentian was analyzing Chen Wang and his opponents. Fighting on the platform would enable him to roughly calculate the level of combat prowess the respective contender had.

His own Mandates, the Mandate of Force, Mandate of Dreams and Mandate of Demons were all already at the Perfection Boundary of the first level. Not only that, his Mandate of Force had already broken through to the second level. At the Perfection Boundary of the first level, the Mandate of Force granted him an enhancement in his strength by a factor of 16, but now that he had already stepped into the second level, his Mandate of Force could even make use of vibrational waves in the air. Force was omnipresent, so he could even attack someone through space without directly landing a blow on them. This was his power of the second level insight he gained into the Mandate of Force, Void Vibration.

In addition, since the second level insight he gained surpassed the first level, the might of his vibrational waves already included the sixteen-fold strength enhancement from the first level insight, Strength.

Countless gazes were fixated onto Chen Wang—everyone wished to witness his true power with their own eyes.

Chen Wang didn't disappoint the spectators—he went all out from the start and utilized the Great Solar Energy to cover his entire body in sun flames, transforming into a ball of fire akin to the sun.

Those from the Great Solar Chen Clan all nodded in satisfaction when they saw Chen Wang's performance.

Only in this state would Chen Wang be able to fully unleash the might of the Great Solar Universe Art, allowing the Great Solar Energy to circulate internally and cover his entire body externally.

“An opponent at the ninth level of Yuanfu?” Those from the Chen Clan coldly laughed. Leaving those at the ninth level of Yuanfu aside, even rankers on the Heavenly Fate Rankings might not even dare to touch Chen Wang in his current state. Even if Chen Wang himself were to casually allow them to freely attack him right where he stood, they wouldn't dare. The Great Solar Flames covering his body would incinerate everything near it—this was an art of absolute power.

Under the thunderstruck gazes of the crowd, Chen Wang defeated the violet-ranked warrior as the color of his battle robes turned violet.

“Chen Wang’s Mandate of Flames has actually reached the second level, Flames Solidification. He’s even surpassed the Initial Boundary all the way to the Advanced Boundary. Who would still dare to touch him? Who could still contend against him?”

This was the first time the public had seen Chen Wang’s true power. With the highest ranked battle robe, he was more than qualified to contend for the number one position on the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

After Hua Taixu, he Chen Wang, was the strongest in the Yuanfu Realm. Now that Hua Taixu had stepped into Heavenly Dipper, who among Yuanfu would still be his match?

Chen Wang won another round, defeating two manifested warriors at the violet-gold-ranked. And right now, a total of three platinum-ranked warriors appeared, staring disdainfully at Chen Wang. The auras they exuded were all immeasurably powerful, overshadowing even the illustrious Chen Wang.

Finally, Chen Wang could no longer continue his winning streak. Yet even though the three platinum-ranked warriors had defeated him, his achievements were already beyond outstanding.

The color of Chen Wang’s battle robes were that of violet-gold. This color was a symbol of supremacy, no one else should be able to surpass him. Now all that was left was to wait and see if Shi Potian would be able to reach this level, similarly manifesting a battle robe of the violet-gold color.

The blood of the other contenders surged with a wave of heat. For this test, for those unable to exhibit the ability to defeat opponents stronger than themselves would be doomed to fail here. The battle robes on one’s body must be at least the color of yellow.

The majority of the contenders had already taken the test, the weakest among them had the combat prowess necessary to fight against opponents at the pinnacle of Yuanfu, whose first level insights had reached the Perfection Boundary. One could very well imagine how fearsome the remaining contenders were.

After Shi Potian stepped on the battle platform, intense anticipation and excitement rocked the hearts of the crowd once again. Eventually, Shi Potian similarly obtained a violet-gold battle robe, indicating that he stood on the same level as Chen Wang.

Chen Wang and Shi Potian were too powerful, their strength far surpassed that of their peers in Yuanfu.

Emperor Azure, Wang Jue and the rest were knocked off the platform after they defeated the indigo-level, they couldn't even defeat the violet-ranked warriors let alone violet-gold. Comparing them to Shi Potian and Chen Wang, their combat prowess was off by an entire level.

After all, the violet-ranked warriors were already terrifying existences that had already comprehended more than one Mandate at the second level, it wasn't strange to be defeated by them. Of course, if they truly put their lives on the line and went all out, they might be able to win. But then again, maybe not.

But since their battle robes were of the indigo color, this indicated that Emperor Azure and Wang Jue had also comprehended second level Mandates. If not, it was impossible for them to defeat the indigo-ranked warriors.

“Is everyone already starting to display their true capabilities? This ranking battle has definitely proven to be many times more exciting to spectate compared to previous ones.”

The hearts of the crowd involuntarily trembled, so Emperor Azure and Wang Jue were also monsters that had comprehended second level Mandates while in Yuanfu.

Qin Wentian stood there watching the battles of the other contenders. He couldn't help but feel excitement, as well as a sense of psychological pressure acting on him.

It seemed as though he had still underestimated the difficulty of the battle that determined the Heavenly Fate Rankings. For the previous Heaven's Chosen ranked below the 10th position, they were existences that left people like Duan Qingshan far behind in their dust. Probably, Duan Qingshan wouldn't even be able to last more than a few moments when fighting against them.

They were all Heaven's Chosen, yet the distance between them was incomparably vast.

“Top three of the Heavenly Fate Rankings!” Qin Wentian drew in a huge breath. To him, this was a challenge of incredible difficulty.

“How much hidden strength and trump cards does Zhan Chen still possess?” Qin Wentian mused. Three years ago, Zhan Chen was already ranked #11 on the Heavenly Fate Rankings. Now that he obtained the cultivation art of the Gold-Element Ascendant, how much had his level of power grown by? How strong was he now, exactly?

Qin Wentian discovered that Zhan Chen intentionally allowed himself to be knocked off the platform after his battle robes turned the color yellow. Golden light gleamed sinisterly in his eyes, he didn't give a shit about the opinions of others concerning his actions.

“Zhan Chen is obviously hiding his strength.” Many in the crowd speculated.

The majority of the contenders were either eliminated or only had battle robes of the yellow-ranked. After all, it wasn't so easy to defeat an opponent with second level Mandates.

This also showed the contrast between them and Chen Wang and Shi Potian. How difficult it was to obtain the violet-gold battle robes.

The next contender drew the attention of the crowd. This figure was clad in black, with their features obscured. Yet currently, the figure's black robes were enveloped by an illusory blue-colored battle robe.

“His cultivation base is at the eighth level of Yuanfu, hence his opponents are all also at the eighth level. Yet, in spite of this, during the first three rounds, their Mandates were already at the Perfection Boundary, and for the fourth round, the opponent's Mandate was at the second level. There are no differences in terms of will of Mandates, the only differences are the realms of cultivations, which reflects the cultivation level of the person currently taking the test.”

“That black-robed figure cultivates the Devil Arts, so his attacks are all extremely tyrannical. Even though his manifested opponent has second level Mandates, he should still be able to defeat them.”

The crowd discovered to their surprise that the black-robed figure seemed to become more stronger the more he battled. This was the terrifying point about Devil Arts, and his performance was such that even Old Man Tianji and the rest of the leaders took notice of him. That art he was cultivating....Chaotic Art of the Heavenly Devil.

This lost inheritance—how had he obtained it? And in spite of its inherent dangers, he still dared to cultivate it? Wasn't he afraid of losing himself to the devil?

Eventually, the black-robed figure was clad in illusory battle robes of an indigo color. Other than Chen Wang and Shi Potian, he was one of the most dazzling contenders here.

“It seems like I have a huge advantage.” Qin Wentian laughed. With a cultivation base at the seventh level of Yuanfu, this meant that his manifested opponents would similarly only be at the pinnacle of the seventh level.

His silhouette flickered as Qin Wentian stepped onto one of the battle platforms. As his feet landed, a burst of light inundated the platform as his opponent manifested.

With a single punch. Destruction.

After which, two more opponents appeared. Qin Wentian's silhouette flashed, punching out twice in unison. Destruction.

The third round, three punches. Destruction.

“What speed, this crazy fellow!” The spectators finally noticed Qin Wentian. This was the young man who broke the drum echoes record, as well as the person who killed Duan Qingshan during the test at the River of Life and Death. Who would have thought that his strength would be so insanely overwhelming? He could insta-kill opponents at the same level.

And right now on the battle platform, a green-ranked warrior finally appeared.

“Second level Mandate?” Qin Wentian coldly smiled. His opponent was only at the seventh level of Yuanfu, so what if it could use second level Mandates?

Qin Wentian flickered as he instantly closed the distance, and with domineering force directly exploded the long spear in his opponent's grasp. A terrifying fluctuation of vibrational waves drifted out and, in front of the eyes of the crowd, that green-ranked warrior imploded to death.

The illusory robe around Qin Wentian's body instantly turned a brilliant green!

"This..." The spectators were rigid with shock. With this level of power, the results were clear—Qin Wentian should have no problems turning the color of his battle robes indigo!

Chapter 359: Violet Battle Robe

The green-ranked warrior had the same cultivation base as Qin Wentian, as well as a second level Mandate.

And yet, when it directly clashed against Qin Wentian, the green-ranked warrior was totally annihilated in a single breath. How tyrannical were his attacks? In the same level, Qin Wentian was unrivalled, regardless of whether his opponent had a second level Mandate or not.

"Since this person could kill Duan Qingshan, his combat prowess has definitely reached the peak of Yuanfu. Although the green-ranked warrior's second level Mandate is stronger than his, it's not at all surprising that he could suppress it."

"I wonder who is he, how can he have such an overwhelming attack strength? What a pity that he's only at the seventh level of Yuanfu. If his cultivation was at the ninth level he would definitely be able to contend for the top five positions on the Heavenly Fate Rankings. But putting that aside, with his current strength, there shouldn't be a problem for him to rank within the top thirty-six."

More and more people started to notice Qin Wentian, from the sounding of the drums to now, Qin Wentian gathered the spectators' attention little by little. First was the drum record, second was the slaying of Duan Qingshan during the River of Life and Death test and third, his outstanding performance on the battle platform.

At this moment, another two manifested opponents appeared. Clad in blue battle robes, they exuded a fearsome aura.

"Bzzz!" A raging wind kicked up as both of the warriors dashed forward and stabbed their spears at Qin Wentian, one taking the left and another taking the right, intending to entrap Qin Wentian in a pincer attack.

However, the spectators only saw Qin Wentian twisting his body, using exquisite footwork to dodge their attack. Slamming out with both his palms, he aimed for their spears as demonic scales covered his arms, by virtue of his Mandate of Demons. The demonic scales were further reinforced by his Mandate of Force. The vibrational shockwave travelled through the spears, entering the bodies of the blue-ranked warriors as both of them imploded into pieces.

“This strength...” The spectators started to seriously contemplate Qin Wentian. Such an attack was too insidious.

Qin Wentian’s attack incorporated his second level insights into the Mandate of Force, Void Vibration. This, coupled with his already terrifying attacks, there was no way the two manifested opponents could resist.

Strength, what he excelled in was strength. Regardless of what tricks or methods opponents used, he would directly counter with absolute strength. When that opponent realized his mistake, everything was already too late, they could only wait to be destroyed.

After which, three indigo-ranked warriors appeared.

“Indigo-ranked warriors this time, so if he wins again, other than Chen Wang and Shi Potian, he’ll be ranked among the strongest contenders who’ve managed to obtain the indigo battle robes.”

Mustang, Luo Huan and Bailu Yi didn’t participate in the ranking battle, they were squeezed somewhere within the crowd spectating. Their hearts couldn’t help but feel agitation when they heard people around them discussing Qin Wentian.

“Luo Huan, tell me do you think that I’m really useless as his teacher? I didn’t even teach him anything, yet he’s already surpassed me by so much in a mere few years.” Mustang sighed, Qin Wentian’s cultivation speed was insanely fast, he felt as though he had wasted his life away just watching how talented his disciple was.

“Teacher, everyone has their own encounters and Wentian’s innate talent is incomparable. Back then in the Sky Harmony City, who could ever predict that he’d reach this level today? Back then, you ignored the objections of some of the elders in our Emperor Star Academy to aid him, and that was already an act of great kindness towards Junior Brother Qin. I believe that he is a man who values his relationships, so he will naturally show you the respect you deserve. Although you might not have taught him any powerful techniques or cultivation arts, your advice steered him clear and you were always there when he needed you most, Teacher, so you shouldn’t keep thinking about things like that. We should all be happy for Wentian.”

Luo Huan consoled him, yet she knew that as a teacher, when one was stronger than one's disciple, the feeling of prestige would naturally be there. But when one's disciple grew stronger and stronger to the extent of far surpassing the teacher, how could the teacher not feel unworthy of his disciple? Even though Qin Wentian was not that kind of person, there would be a gap in the relationship. That was why Luo Huan wanted Mustang to stop thinking about this matter even though she understood that it was only human of him to do so.

If not, the distance between teacher and disciple would only increase further and further.

"Right, I will do as you say. Oh, by the way, even that lazy bum Fan Le is now stronger than you, so you'd better work hard to catch up." Mustang laughed, Luo Huan hugged his arms as she smiled, "No worries, my glorious future will be dependent on my lovely junior brothers then."

Mustang could only smile wryly in response. Bailu Yi who was by their side found the conversation extremely illuminating. It seemed like Qin Wentian had many enriching experiences, and both his teacher and senior sister weren't as powerful as him. And just as Qin Wentian had told her, he was from a small and remote country named Chu, he had what he had today all because of the effort he put in, walking on the cruel path of cultivation step by step until today.

"I'll pray that you'll get a good ranking as proof of your efforts. As for Mo Qingcheng, where is she now? Her results should be as exemplary as yours, and only then will they see what a perfect match the both of you are. The people of Grand Xia, the Pill Emperor Hall, they will all bear witness to the union of this immortal couple." Bailu Yi's silently prayed in her heart, hoping for Qin Wentian's success.

"She's really so beautiful... Maybe only someone like her can match up with Qin Wentian." Bailu Yi smiled, but somehow she felt a bittersweet feeling in her heart. Yet, that feeling soon faded, to be replaced by one of happiness for them.

Because of Mo Qingcheng, Qin Wentian went all the way to the Moon Continent, risking his life to slay Hua Xiaoyun. This was already sufficient to prove the depth of his affections for her. No one deserved to be together as much as they did.

Qin Wentian, who was currently still in combat, naturally didn't know of Bailu Yi's thoughts. At this moment, the illusory battle robe on him had already turned a deep indigo, this meant that he had already defeated the three indigo-ranked warriors.

“Violet is next, Qin Wentian is going to fight against a violet-ranked opponent next. And if he manages to win, he’ll become the person underneath Chen Wang and Shi Potian but above all the other contenders. But, can he win?”

Among all the battle platforms, Qin Wentian’s platform drew the most attention—over 50% of the spectators were looking in his direction.

The violet-ranked warrior finally manifested. It also had a cultivation base at the seventh level of Yuanfu, together with second level Mandates. However, its second level Mandate was at the Advanced Boundary instead.

The weapon of the manifested warrior was also still a spear. Qin Wentian stared at the violet-ranked warrior, he didn’t know which second level Mandate this opponent possessed, and its exact level of strength.

For this battle, he had to win—this was his conviction. Only by fighting against this the second level Mandates of this manifested opponent would he then be able to roughly evaluate the power level of Chen Wang and Shi Potian.

“Chi, chi...” Piercing sounds echoed, Qin Wentian saw terrifying lightning sparks around the spear head of his opponent’s weapon.

“Mandate of Lightning.”

Qin Wentian’s countenance faltered for a moment. The explosive power of the Mandate of Lightning was extremely fearsome, even when at the first level of insight, Eruption. And this time, opponent had a second level Mandate of Lightning...

As he thought of this, the blood in Qin Wentian’s body surged up as he morphed into his demonic form, appearing like an ancient primordial beast. In that instant where the warrior attacked, a lightning dragon howled as it spiralled through the air, crashing right into Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian groaned in agony, the qi and blood in his body were violently stirred up and flowing in disarray, in total chaos.

“This...” Qin Wentian’s frame was burned as a charred smell drifted from him. If it weren’t for his monstrous physique, he’d be nothing but charred piece of charcoal by now.

This was the power of lightning, the power of heaven's wrath. It was simply too terrifying. Not only that, the opponent's strongest attack had yet to be unleashed. A lightning dragon coiled around the spear of the manifested warrior as a powerful force of destruction penetrated through the void, aiming right for Qin Wentian.

The Divine Yuan Energy within Qin Wentian's body exploded forth as his palms sent out draconic imprints incorporated with the shockwaves of his Void Vibration, colliding directly against the dragon. The impact from both attacks created a gigantic explosion that formed giant fissures in the air.

Both of them had a cultivation base at the seventh level of Yuanfu, and although Qin Wentian had the advantage in terms of strength, his second level insight into the Mandate of Force was only at the Initial Boundary. On the other hand, his opponent's Mandate of Lightning was already at the Advanced Boundary, and further complemented its attack style.

A massive wind kicked up, Qin Wentian's palms contained enough strength to topple the mountains and overturn the oceans. His demonic qi towered to the skies and forcefully halted his opponent's spear just before it could burst into motion.

“DIE!”

Qin Wentian's speed was breathtakingly fast, and despite being at the same cultivation level as him, the warrior's speed couldn't match his. Garuda Wings appeared behind his back as Qin Wentian inched closer to the lightning-might that enveloped his opponent's body.

The palm of the warrior slashed out, like a thunderbolt issued from the Heavens. How could Qin Wentian retreat now that an opportunity was right in front of his eyes? His entire strength erupted forth, colliding together towards the palm slash of the violet-ranked warrior.

“Peng...!”

The arms of the violet-ranked warrior completely ruptured from the vibrational shockwaves. Qin Wentian's silhouette flickered as he appeared in front of the warrior, before smashing his palms together with astounding force, aiming for the temples of his hapless opponent.

The violet-ranked warrior was annihilated.

“Hu...”

“Violet-colored battle robes. Other than Chen Wang and Shi Potian... the most magnificent battle robes belong to....”

Astonishment and disbelief suffused the features of the crowd.

With a cultivation base merely at the seventh level of Yuanfu, what level and boundaries had Qin Wentian’s Mandate reached exactly?

No one could tell by just spectating, because Qin Wentian used the Mandate of Force which was directly incorporated into his attacks. Other than an opponent who had exchanged blows with Qin Wentian, no one would be able to gauge his true level.

But regardless, the color of Qin Wentian’s battle robe turned a vivid violet.

This clearly was a testament that Qin Wentian was unrivalled in the seventh level of Yuanfu.

Currently, he was only considered below the other two with their violet-gold battle robes.

Following which, two violet-gold-ranked warriors manifested. And as his opponents took form, even more pairs of eyes shifted towards Qin Wentian’s direction.

Could he win this battle? If Qin Wentian could win, he would be on the same level as Chen Wang and Shi Potian and the violet battle robe on his body would turn a dazzling violet-golden color. But, that should be a tall order because after all, this time around, his opponents were two violet-gold-ranked warriors who could complement each other flawlessly, thus removing their weaknesses and boosting their strengths.

Qin Wentian’s gaze turned heavy, he wanted to win this battle.

As long as he won, he could prove that in terms of combat prowess, with the scaling of cultivation level, he didn’t lose out to Chen Wang nor Shi Potian. And if that was the case, when he broke through to the eighth level, he would be capable of exchanging blows with both of them.

Even if he couldn't defeat them, he had to ensure that they were the only ones that could overpower him in battle.. Otherwise, he would have next to no chance of ranking within the top three. That was his bottom line.

Yet, how could he settle for his bottom line? His true objective was to surpass Chen Wang and Shi Potian.

Hence, for this next battle, losing was not an option!

Chapter 360: Platinum Battle Robes

The two violet-gold-ranked warriors projected an overwhelming aura with their spears held out, pointing at Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian's countenance stiffened, he didn't know which Mandates these two warriors had comprehended. He could only hope that lady luck was on his side, and their Mandates weren't too abnormal.

It could be said that there was no concrete method to determine the 'best' Mandate in terms of strong and weak, however, there were still visible differences between them. For example, the differences between the Mandates of Wind, Flames, Lightning and Great Earth. Each of them had their strong points, so one couldn't really argue that a particular Mandate was stronger than the others. Usually it depended on the cultivator's comprehension level, and therefore different people might have different levels of strength, even when it came to using the same Mandate. There should only be very slight differences when it came to the first level insights, as they served as the foundation—they were the same for all cultivators that comprehended them. But when it came to second level insights, the comprehension would vary between individuals and therefore resulted in variations of the same Mandate. And for cultivators of the same level, these variations further illustrated their differences even more..

And there were those who somehow comprehend the more elusive Mandates, like the Mandate of Space. Although one couldn't say that the Mandate of Space was superior to that of the Mandate of Flames or Lightning, Space definitely had a certain advantage over the others. This was especially true if the opponents had insights at similar levels and boundaries.

But even so, you can't say for sure that Space was superior to Flame. What if it was a different opponent? An example would be that for some cultivators, the second level insight they comprehended for the Mandate of Flame was Burning Heart, enabling them to incinerate the hearts of their opponents upon contact. Such might was something the Mandate of Space wouldn't be able to achieve.

The key still depended on the comprehension of individuals.

Qin Wentian's second level of insight into the Mandate of Force was Void Vibration. He could create vibrational shockwaves and attack from afar, and if he were to fight in close combat, his strength would be even more terrifying—capable of ignoring his opponent's defenses and going straight for their internal organs. Hence, despite the reinforced defense the battle robes granted the manifested warriors, they still imploded to death.

A massive wind kicked up as the two violet-gold-ranked warriors moved—one of them had comprehended the Mandate of Wind.

At the same time, a heavy pressure pressed down onto Qin Wentian. This was the will from the Mandate of Great Earth.

“How swift.” Qin Wentian retreated as he saw a figure closing in on him with rapid speed, stabbing out with attacks imbued with the speed of the wind. Such a speed was too quick for the naked eyes to follow.

Qin Wentian hurriedly raised his palms to defend—sounds of shattering rang out as its long spear pierced into his scaly armor. The terrifying spear head spun about like a drill in the air, chasing after Qin Wentian who was knocked backwards by the force of the strike. His opponent wanted to break his defenses, so each of its attacks were aiming at Qin Wentian's critical spots.

The other violet-gold-ranked warrior descended. His spear was filled with an imposing heaviness and the spear attack hadn't even reached Qin Wentian yet the impending momentum already caused him to feel as though his body was about to break apart. If that strike had hit him, he didn't dare imagine what would have happened after that.

“It's the end.” Many of the spectators mused when they saw that strike. One of the manifested warrior excelled in speed, his spear attacks relentlessly chasing after Qin Wentian on that small battle platform they were on. Coupled with the cooperation of the violet-gold-ranked warrior who excelled in heavy attacks, Qin Wentian would soon have nowhere to run to.

Indeed, a few moments later, Qin Wentian was already forced to the boundaries of the platform. Many people lamented, it seemed that the violet battle robes was already his limit.

Only Chen Wang and Shi Potian were qualified to wear battle robes of the violet-gold color.

Finally, it seemed as though Qin Wentian's silhouette had already disappeared from the battle platform.

"Something's wrong..."

The spectators realised that Qin Wentian had totally disappeared from sight, he wasn't on the ground below the battle platform nor the area where the other contenders were gathered.

"Over there! How is he this fast?" The crowd finally spotted Qin Wentian who reappeared next to the violet-gold-ranked warrior who comprehended the Mandate of Wind.

"Success."

Qin Wentian's heart pounded with joy. Back then in the Unmatched Realm, he had studied the eighty-one demonic techniques engraved upon a wall.

And one of them, Roc Flash, mimicked the movement of a great roc, granting the user a massive boost of momentum in short-distance bursts. Although Qin Wentian had practiced this technique back then, he still lacked the necessary insight to master it. Now that he was forced to the edge of the platform, he'd barely managed to pull it off.

The violet-gold-ranked warrior sensed that something was wrong and instantly turned to the side. But despite its superior speed, there was no longer sufficient time for it to dodge any longer—Qin Wentian's attack had already landed, bypassing its defenses.

After the violet-gold-ranked warrior (wind) was destroyed, Qin Wentian's feet stomped heavily on the ground as he rushed towards the other violet-gold-ranked warrior that comprehended the Mandate of Great Earth. His demonic form surged forwards, as a terrifying light gleamed in his eyes. Sadly, these were all manifested opponents, so they didn't have a heart. If not for this, he could have used his [Heartbreak Echo] technique against them.

Now, they could only compete based on pure strength.

Qin Wentian clashed against that violet-gold-ranked warrior, the impact from their collision manifesting a whirlwind of destruction. Despite being in his demonic form, he felt as though his arms were about to shatter from the rebound force. Groaning, the rebound force travelled into his body, causing Qin Wentian to cough out a mouthful of blood. His opponent's second level insight into the Mandate of Great Earth was somewhat similar to his Void Vibration, causing Qin Wentian to feel as though his body was about to break apart.

However, the defense of the violet-gold-ranked warrior wasn't as terrifying as Qin Wentian in his demonic form. He was only an illusory manifestation, and with both their cultivation bases at the peak of the seventh level as the standard, even when it came to an equal exchange of blows, the one to lose out would definitely be the violet-gold-ranked warrior.

Qin Wentian's violet battle robe flashed with a brilliant light, turning into the color of violet-gold, granting an imposing presence to his already impressive aura, akin to a battle god to his already impressive aura.

“Violet-gold Battle Robes!”

The gazes of the spectators froze when they stared at Qin Wentian. The combat prowess of this guy...bordered on the unbelievable, he could even defeat two opponents with comprehensions into second level Mandates.

“His own Mandate must surely have already reached the second level by now. It must be hidden from our sight because its will was directly incorporated into his attacks.”

Someone in the crowd speculated.

Chen Wang and Shi Potian also stared in shock. This was the third contender after them that had the qualifications to don the violet-gold battle robes. Not only that, it was someone with a cultivation base only at the seventh level of Yuanfu.

There were many faces twisted in displeasure. Naturally, Zhan Chen was incensed to see Qin Wentian's exemplary performance. But no matter, in the ranking battle the contenders wouldn't be suppressing their cultivation bases to fight with him on equal grounds. Qin Wentian could be considered lucky—this round was different.

On the battle platform, three silhouettes clad in platinum-color robes appeared.

Their platinum battle robes conveyed their majesty, as though they were robes worn only by kings and emperors.

Both Chen Wang and Shi Potian failed when it came to this final round and now, Qin Wentian was the third person to challenge the platinum-ranked warriors.

Would he be able to obtain victory?

In the air above, Old Man Tianji and the rest had their gazes fixated onto Qin Wentian. Despite Qin Wentian's performance, no expressions of shock and surprise could be seen on their faces—it was as though they were merely watching a play.

Luo He cast a glance at her disciple, Mo Qingcheng, and upon noting her yellow battle robes, she couldn't help but frown in disappointment. It was obvious Mo Qingcheng hadn't gone all out, and didn't even seem to care about the ranking battle at all. More accurately, it could be said that she joined the ranking battle for one objective only—to interact with Qin Wentian.

“Master, didn't Junior Sister Qingcheng successfully concoct the Limit-break Pellets?” Bai Fei stood behind Luo He as she asked in a low voice.

“I know.” Luo He's voice was ice-cold. Of course, Luo He knew that Mo Qingcheng had sacrificed many valuable ingredients, in addition to her own heart's blood, in the process of concocting the Limit-break Pellets, all because she wanted to give them to Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian's cultivation base was the same as the last time she met him, but Luo He knew that if he took one Limit-break Pellet right now, Qin Wentian would immediately step into the eighth level of Yuanfu.

Qin Wentian at the seventh level already possessed such overwhelming strength, so how much stronger would he be when his cultivation base grew to the eighth level? There shouldn't be any problems for him to fight against opponents at the ninth level of Yuanfu, it was almost a given that he would be ranked among the top thirty-six.

But, Mo Qingcheng wanted him to win against Zhan Chen? It was still impossible.

Zhan Chen's actual current strength was far beyond what people thought it was. He may even match or surpass Chen Wang and Shi Potian.

It has been a long, long time since the Pill Emperor Hall had anyone from their sect with a truly astounding position on the Heavenly Fate Rankings. Although Zhan Chen was ranked #11 three years ago, he still wasn't in the top ten. This matter, was actually not a matter of glory for the Pill Emperor Hall.

Hence this time around, the Pill Emperor Hall had placed all their hopes on the shoulders of Zhan Chen. They had to be the one to wrest the ancient luck away.

On the battle platform, Qin Wentian and the three platinum-ranked warriors were already engaged in combat. A terrifying maelstrom gushed over, attempting to devour Qin Wentian. It was obvious to the crowd that this was a battle where he had no hope of victory.

The three platinum-ranked warriors attacked together, one from the front and two from the sides as resplendent golden light glimmered, forming a seal that froze the entire space. The will of their respective Mandates coated their attacks as they rushed in, locking on to Qin Wentian. There was no way Qin Wentian could dodge their blows, no road to fly up to the heavens, no door into the earth—he was at the end of his rope.

“Dangerous. An attack of such degree, were the manifested warriors really programmed to kill?”

Astonishment flashed on the faces of the crowd, would Qin Wentian be the first to die in this test?

He was one of the only three to make it to this stage, but an attack of this degree was basically impossible to defend against.

“This...” Qin Wentian's countenance also changed, yet he didn't have any time left for hesitation. A terrifying glint of light flickered in his eyes as he stabbed out with a single finger. The demonic qi he was exuding towered to the heavens. Swirls of demonic qi were being channelled into the tip of his finger, as it landed on one of the platinum-ranked warriors, causing instant destruction. Simultaneously his steps inscribed runic imprints of third-ranked ancient shield Inscriptions, causing them to spring out and envelope his body.

“Ka Cha!”

How powerful were their spear strikes? Even though the ancient shields were peak-tier, third-ranked Inscriptions, they were still easily broken through. The only purpose the shields served now was to slow the attacks of the platinum-ranked warriors.

As the spears penetrated the shields, Qin Wentian side-stepped slightly, his palms transforming into claws of a golden dragon. He then viciously grabbed the head of one of the platinum-ranked warriors, crushing it with a snap of his claws. He was putting his life on the line for this attack!

And indeed, in the time it took for him to slay the second platinum-ranked warrior, the spear of the last guy already ran through him. Fresh blood spurted out of his wounds as an almost maniacal laughter could be seen in his now fiend-like eyes. He grabbed hold of the spear embedded in him and used it as leverage to push it even further into his body, thereby shortening the distance between them. With a demonic grin on his face, Qin Wentian stabbed forth with yet another Heaven Breaking Finger, aiming for the heart of his opponent and instantly annihilating him.

In that instant, time seemed to halt as the gazes of the entire crowd landed on him. That finger attack was too overwhelming, and the way he fought was simply too crazy.

Qin Wentian won, and he only used an extremely short amount of time to do so.

The violet-gold battle robes shimmered as it turned into a dazzling platinum. To the spectators, Qin Wentian appeared so radiant that they weren't aware of his injured state, and overlooked the amount of energy he'd used up for the two consecutive Heaven Breaking Finger attacks. Their whole attention was entranced by the shining platinum battle robe on Qin Wentian's body.

Not even Chen Wang and Shi Potian had accomplished that!