

Ancient GM 391

Chapter 391: Ascending the Peak

The flame giant that was Chen Wang retreated a step backwards, one of his arms had forcibly exploded. Qin Wentian's entire body was covered in raging flames yet the glow in his eyes never faded—they shone like torches in the darkness, illustrating his determination.

“Strength, can yours surpass mine?” Qin Wentian ferociously stomped forwards, and a huge rumbling sound rang out as his aura gushed forth. He was like an unrivalled Monarch, staring imperiously at his lowly subject.

Great Solar Chen Wang was his opponent? So what of it?

Among those on the same level, Qin Wentian was unrivalled.

Chen Wang glared hatefully at Qin Wentian. At the instant Qin Wentian blasted forth with his palm strike, Chen Wang stomped on the ground, causing a bout of astral light to flood the area as his silhouette disappeared. Although Chen Wang knew that Qin Wentian was able to read the trajectory of the Stellar Transposition, he had no choice but to execute it.

Yet the instant Chen Wang stomped the ground, disappearing from sight, Qin Wentian had already turned and pierced forth at a previously empty location with his Heaven Breaking Finger.

Over there, Chen Wang's fiery left palm slammed down at that spot, descending from the Heavens, containing enough might to shatter everything, and disintegrating all things into nothing but ashes.

The two bursts of energy frenziedly collided in the air, and with rapid thrusts of his palms, numerous ancient bells manifested and slammed onto Chen Wang's gigantic flame body.

Under its lingering effect, the relentless echoes of the ancient bell, combined together with Qin Wentian's external force attacks, this all enabled them to work in perfect synergy.

Although he transformed into a flame giant, and possessed the Great Solar Universe Art, his main body was still a human. He still had a heart.

The Heartbreak Echo, precisely targets the heart.

Chen Wang's heart was swelling from the echoes of the ancient bell, his heartbeat pounding with increasing intensity. Chen Wang could clearly feel his heart expanding, as though preparing to explode.

“Peng!”

Yet another burst of astral light flooded the area as he used Stellar Transposition again. Chen Wang vanished once more, but Qin Wentian instantly used Roc Flash as well. This time, Qin Wentian didn't move to intercept Chen Wang but rather, he created even more ancient bells at each of the four boundaries of the arena platform, locking Chen Wang within a cacophony of ringing.

“Pu...” Chen Wang spat out a mouthful of crimson flames, resembling lava. He tried to exit the platform yet Qin Wentian relentlessly chased after him, not giving him the chance to do so.

This was something Chen Wang and the rest had decided. Life and death would be determined by one's combat prowess. It would not be against the rules to kill your opponent in the ranking battle.

Chen Wang howled, and despite the cost, he once again split his body into three. Two of his flame giant incarnations rushed towards Qin Wentian, in an attempt to buy time while his true self used the last of his astral energy and executed Stellar Transposition once again.

Peng, Peng...

The two flame giant incarnations shattered into fragments, while Chen Wang was successful—he stepped off the platform in the nick of time. This meant that he, Great Solar Chen Wang, was the loser in this battle.

The position of the first ranker had flown from his hands, but he was still number two. Always number two.

Standing on the ground, Chen Wang only saw Qin Wentian staring down at him from the platform with heavy disdain in his eyes. An intense burst of shame flooded every fibre of his being. He had lost, defeated by someone that he never thought he would lose to.

In the formation world, how imposing was he then, chasing after Qin Wentian to kill him. But now in a one-on-one fight, he'd been defeated fair and square, and it was impossible to describe the bitter aftertaste of defeat he was feeling right now.

“Didn’t you say earlier that you are number one?”

A flash of contempt flashed past Qin Wentian’s eyes. “The Heavenly Fate Rankings had yet to be concluded, yet you and Si Qiong were so dead set in your conviction of being superior over all others. Apparently, frogs in a well are only good at talking.”

As the sound of his voice faded, Qin Wentian returned back to the arena platform, no longer bothering to speak to Chen Wang.

Ultimately, actions spoke louder than words.

Chen Wang had proclaimed that he was number one. Now that he'd been defeated, all of his achievements would merely serve to smack him in his own face.

If it were some other contender obtaining the position of number two instead of Chen Wang, then it would have been a matter of glory. But for Chen Wang, it was the exact opposite.

Without the participation of Hua Taixu, Chen Wang was originally supposed to be the brightest blazing sun. He thought he was invincible in the whole of Yuanfu, yet who would have thought that someone like Qin Wentian would appear. Not only that, he was defeated by somebody whom he'd once failed to kill when his opponent was merely at the seventh level of Yuanfu. How could this not be a humiliation?

He'd suppressed his cultivation base for so long, refusing to step into Heavenly Dipper, all for one reason and one reason only. To obtain first in the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

The winner becomes the King, the losers become vilified. Chen Wang, was the loser.

The gazes of the spectators slowly shifted towards the arena platform.

When Qin Wentian first joined the ranking battle, he was an unknown contender with a cultivation base at the seventh level of Yuanfu.

During the first test, he was the one that sounded out the most echoes, breaking the record.

During the second test, Duan Qingshan and the rest wanted to slay him above the Life and Death River, but Duan Qingshan was counter-slain instead.

During the third test, he surpassed Chen Wang and Shi Potian and donned the most dazzling platinum battle robes, obtaining the qualifications to be the first to enter the Vermilion Bird Formation. Right after, he offended Chen Wang by refusing to heed his command to forsake those qualifications, which would have allowed Chen Wang to be the first to enter. Qin Wentian had totally ignored him.

Although he'd started to attract attention, none of the spectators had believed in his chances. At the very most, they only thought that he would have an opportunity to be ranked within the top thirty-six rankers.

After which, he entered the formation world and obtained the Purgatory Vermilion Bird, and started to pave his way to prominence.

Step by step, all the way up till now, to finally stand at the true pinnacle of Yuanfu.

The gentle wind fluttered his robes, as the Purgatory Vermilion Bird hovered above his head. This scenario caused a deep rush of impact, rumbling the spectators' hearts.

This dark horse had really walked all the way till the end.

No one would have predicted that Qin Wentian would be ranked first in the Heavenly Fate Rankings this time around.

In the air, Old Man Tianji stroked his beard as he took in the scene. There was now no doubt in his mind who the demon star represented.

If they wanted to change the destiny of Grand Xia that had already set on its new course, the only viable method was to kill the one represented by the demon star.

However, since the demon star had already been birthed, this meant that more or less destiny was already set, and any actions they took now would merely be a pebble toss in the ocean, incapable of affecting either the direction of the currents or the intensity of the tides. It wouldn't be that easy if one wanted to kill him.

From today onwards, calamity might befall Qin Wentian. But as to how the ending of the calamity would turn out, even Old Man Tianji had no idea.

Those from the Pill Emperor Hall had incredibly complicated expressions on their faces. Luo He's reflected a calmness that didn't match her trembling heart.

Those from the Hua Clan had extremely cold looking expressions on their countenance. They never would have expected that Qin Wentian would be the top ranker.

Those from the Chen Clan, Shi Clan, Wang Clan—they all had nothing to say as well.

For the first time, the position of the top ranker in the Heavenly Fate Rankings had been seized by a nobody. He wasn't affiliated with any of the transcendent powers in Grand Xia.

As for the Ouyang Aristocrat Clan, they had another perspective on this. Taking into account the relationship between Ouyang Kuangsheng and Qin Wentian, as long as Qin Wentian was able to continue on and mature, it would only be beneficial to their Ouyang Aristocrat Clan.

Shu Ruanyu, Xuan Yan, Xuan Xin, all looked on speechlessly as well.

Only Mo Qingcheng and Bai Qing wore radiant smiles on their faces.

Chu Mang and Fan Le had their fists pumped up in the air and were roaring in pride and laughter.

Those from the White Deer institute all felt extremely gratified in their hearts, they had made the right choice.

They were all filled with anticipation for Qin Wentian's performance. But when Qin Wentian truly stood at the pinnacle of the Heavenly Fate Rankings, other than gratification, they also felt a sense of surrealism, as well as disbelief.

Mustang involuntarily trembled, overcome by his emotions. Yet never had he smiled this widely before.

“Teacher, Junior Brother now stands on the pinnacle of all Yuanfu in Grand Xia. He’s only twenty yet he achieved such an accomplishment, one that most people could never achieve in their entire lives.” Luo Huan laughed, feeling extremely moved as well.

Earning a place on the Heavenly Fate Rankings was the aim of all Yuanfu Cultivators in Grand Xia, yet Qin Wentian had obtained the first ranked position.

“Mhm.” Mustang stared at Qin Wentian as he added with pride, “Never in my wildest dreams would I have expected this disciple of mine would achieve such an unimaginable feat.”

“Teacher, it’s still too early to be happy. That fellow is merely twenty. What would happen after he steps into Heavenly Dipper? Don’t be so emotional now, okay?” Luo Huan teased but the twinkle in her eyes betrayed the fact that she too, was extremely emotional right now.

When she stepped into the vast world, everything she heard had all pointed to the transcendent powers as being those at the peak of Grand Xia.

Pill Emperor Hall, Hua Clan, Ouyang Aristocrat Clan, Great Solar Chen Clan and the rest— they were all highly revered beings that possessed an unattainable prestige. The Heaven’s Chosen that originated from their clans were all the stuff of legends in the entire Grand Xia, but today, those legendary characters were all defeated by her junior martial brother.

If those in Chu knew of Qin Wentian’s current achievements, she wondered what thoughts they’d have in their hearts.

“Let the rankings be fixed.”

Old Man Tianji spoke, causing the gazes of the spectators to be fixated on the shimmering scoreboard.

Because Zhan Chen had fallen, those behind him in ranking all advanced a position ahead.

The contenders for the top three rankings remained unchanged.

Si Qiong, ranked #3.

Chen Wang, ranked #2.

Qin Wentian, ranked #1!

When the three characters forming the name of ‘Qin Wentian’ were engraved onto the board, the spectators collectively drew in a huge breath. They knew that from this moment onwards, Qin Wentian’s name would become a symbol in Grand Xia. A symbol of his generations that would resound throughout Grand Xia, just like Hua Taixu before him.

He would become the idol of countless youngsters of future generations—who would use him as a standard, the one they would look up to and try their utmost to surpass.

From today onwards, there would be countless people discussing him, with worship in their tones as they told of his legendary deeds.

He domineeringly crushed all the Heaven’s Chosen, and stood together with the number one beauty of the Moon Continent, Mo Qingcheng. Their symbolic act of holding hands to announce their relationship to the entire world, they were akin to an immortal couple, and their story would eventually be canonized as legendary.

In fact, many rumors began to be passed around, one in particular declared that Qin Wentian participated in the Heavenly Fate Rankings solely for Mo Qingcheng. To romanticize their story, the embellishers added all sorts of details to spice up the telling of it.

“Qin Wentian.”

At this moment, Old Man Tianji spoke. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze towards him, only to hear him continue, “You obtained first in the ranking battle this time around, consider this as an extremely valuable experience for you on your pathway to become stronger. I hope that you will be able to remember the determination in your heart and strive to achieve even greater heights in the future.”

“Many thanks to Senior.”

Qin Wentian dipped in a slight bow to Old Man Tianji, this was truly a valuable experience to all those who had participated and survived.

“From this moment, here in the Ancient Kingdom, the Heavenly Fate Rankings is thereby concluded. The mark left behind from your battles shall be remembered here for all eternity,” Old Man Tianji stated.

The Heavenly Fate Rankings was concluded!

The various battles between this particular batch of contenders, those who may affect the future destiny of Grand Xia, had been beyond fascinating, truly an exciting spectacle for all who'd witnessed it. Without a doubt, these batch of monsters had left an indelible mark in their hearts!

Chapter 392: An Exceedingly Arrogant Power

Qin Wentian slowly turned and gazed upon those familiar silhouettes.

He looked towards Teacher Mustang, and his Senior Sister Luo Huan; towards Ouyang Kuangsheng, Fan Le, Chu Mang; towards Mo Qingcheng and Bai Qing. A radiant smile appeared in his eyes, he had achieved what he'd set out to accomplish.

“HAHA, AWESOME!” A straightforward voice echoed with laughter, only to see Ouyang Kuangsheng flying upwards, rushing towards the Vermilion Bird arena platform. “First in the Heavenly Fate Rankings, I'm too ashamed of my own ranking.”

Chu Mang, Fan Le, Mo Qingcheng and the rest also ascended the arena platform.

Now that the Heavenly Fate Rankings had already been concluded, those rules that restricted non-combatants from entering the arena platform had naturally been lifted.

Bailu Jing and Bailu Yi also came, standing to the side as they stared at the people celebrating on the platform. Bailu Yi smiled when she saw Qin Wentian pulling Mo Qingcheng into a hug; she truly wished them all the best.

“Boss, this battle felt so good, it blew all our negative emotions away. I feel so satisfied when I look at their faces HAHAAHA.”

Fan Le was grinning from ear to ear—Qin Wentian stared at his friends standing around him, feeling extremely moved in his heart.

He knew that despite obtaining the position of first ranker, he had offended too many people from transcendent powers. To see that his friends were still willing to stand on the same stage, celebrating his victory with him, how could he not feel moved? Their message was clear—they were willing to stand with him against all odds.

“Junior Brother, your luck with the ladies isn’t bad at all,” Luo Huan snickered, as she glanced at the beauties around Qin Wentian.

Mo Qingcheng, Bai Qing and Yun Mengyi were all there and upon seeing that look in Luo Huan’s eyes, Qin Wentian could only helplessly roll his eyes. Luo Huan had a thing for making such jokes, and Little Rascal who was originally being held by her, suddenly transformed into a white beam of light and leapt into Qin Wentian’s arms, rubbing its head against his chest. It then proudly stared at the Purgatory Vermilion Bird above Qin Wentian’s head and growled, as though establishing its dominance.

The Purgatory Vermilion Bird immediately let out a shrill screech as it swooped downwards, enveloping Qin Wentian’s entire body into an embrace with its wings, causing the others to burst out in laughter at its antics.

Qin Wentian’s two demonic beasts were also vying for his affection?

The spectators below stared at the silhouette of the young man standing on the stage as their hearts were filled with warm traces of expectation.

They naturally understood the future Qin Wentian would soon face but still, people always liked to believe in the concept of heroes, of a single man standing alone against the world. They couldn’t help wishing Qin Wentian would succeed, and trusted in him to overcome the odds.

Also, it had been too long since they’d seen such a touching scene. That violent demonic young man who showed no mercy to his enemies—he seemed to actually have such a gentle side to him as well, with a group of friends willing to stand by him even if it meant laying down their lives.

In the direction of the Mystic Maiden Palace, Xuan Xin was about to dash over but was held back by Xuan Yan, who asked, “What are you doing?”

“I want to offer my congratulations as well.” Xuan Xin turned her head as she replied.

“Do you even understand the situation now?” Xuan Yan glared at Xuan Xin, her junior sister was too blind at times. The top ranker this time around was not someone from the seven grand clans, and didn’t even belong to any of the transcendent powers. Such an outcome was unprecedented. Not only that, seeing the vast number of people Qin Wentian had offended, it was still unknown whether anything would happen to him.

“Yup I understand, but he’s Fan Le’s brother. This is something I ought to do.” Xuan Xin smiled and shook Xuan Yan’s hold away, before instantly dashing towards the arena platform. Her sudden action took Xuan Yan by surprise, and when Xuan Yan stared at those silhouettes standing on the stage, her gaze involuntarily landed on Chu Mang—her heart suddenly fluttered, feeling slightly chaotic.

“Nonsense.” Her master from the Mystic Maiden Palace snorted, “Xuan Xin, return here this instant.”

On the arena platform, Qin Wentian and the rest all heard that voice. As they turned, they saw Xuan Xin already at the boundaries of the platform, making a ghost face with her back facing her master. She directed her stare towards Qin Wentian as she stated, “Congratulations for obtaining first place, it seems that you are even more powerful compared to a certain someone.”

“My loss was accidental.” Fan Le grinned. Naturally, he was that someone Xuan Xin was referring to.

“Right.” Xuan Xin mischievously grinned. Qin Wentian stared in the direction of the Mystic Maiden Palace as he said in a low voice, “Xuan Xin, you’d better return first.”

He understood Xuan Xin’s goodwill; Fan Le was truly blessed to have found such a girlfriend.

“Understood.” Xuan Xin made a face, she was naturally unhappy about her sect’s attitudes towards them.

“Qingcheng, you come back as well.”

In the direction of the Pill Emperor Hall, Luo He quietly remarked as she gazed at Mo Qingcheng.

Mo Qingcheng steadily matched her stare. “Master, remember what you promised me?”

She was referring to the fact that Luo He had personally promised her before, that as long as Qin Wentian defeated Zhan Chen she wouldn’t interfere in the relationship between Mo Qingcheng and Qin Wentian.

“Indeed, I did promise you, did you think Master would break her promise to you? Come back with me first, if he wants to woo my disciples, he can pay a visit to our Pill Emperor Hall,” Luo He coldly stated, yet Mo Qingcheng still hesitated.

She naturally wished to stay here together with Qin Wentian, yet her master Luo He had been very good to her. Luo He’s words didn’t seem to say that she wanted to restrict her—she was only asking her disciple to return together with her.

“Qingcheng, you go back first as well.” Qin Wentian held Mo Qingcheng’s hands as he stated in a low voice.

If the Pill Emperor Hall really wanted to stop them, as of now, he truly didn’t have the ability to do anything. But for the sake of Mo Qingcheng, he didn’t mind repairing the relationship between himself and the Pill Emperor Hall. After all, Zhan Chen alone couldn’t represent the entire Pill Emperor Hall.

The grudge between him and Zhan Chen had already reached a boiling point in both their hearts. Hence, he hadn’t hesitated to kill Zhan Chen.

Mo Qingcheng nodded lightly, gazing at Qin Wentian. He smiled warmly back at her and nodded his head in encouragement. “Go on first.”

For Mo Qingcheng, he was willing to take a step back. But if the Pill Emperor Hall tried in any way to renege on their promise to Mo Qingcheng, even if he had to trample the Pill Emperor Hall to dust, he would also do so to bring Mo Qingcheng away.

Hopefully, things wouldn't reach such a stage. After all, there weren't any grudges between himself and Mo Qingcheng's master, Luo He.

Mo Qingcheng could only reluctantly slip her jade-like fingers out of Qin Wentian's hands and walked back towards the direction of the Pill Emperor Hall.

"We are leaving," Luo He stated, and with a flick of her sleeves, those from the Pill Emperor Hall mounted their demonic beasts and flew away.

Mo Qingcheng turned her head back to gaze at Qin Wentian. In her eyes, there was an intense unwillingness to be parted from him.

"Once this matter ends, I will pay a visit to the Moon Continent." Qin Wentian transmitted his words to Mo Qingcheng. Mo Qingcheng nodded, but her eyes started to glimmer with unshed tears.

They'd finally met after such a long time, only to be separated again.

Qin Wentian also felt extremely uncomfortable in his heart. He could only blame himself for not having sufficient strength. If he was the top ranker for the Heavenly Dipper Rankings instead, how could those from the Pill Emperor Hall even stop him? Even if he were to blatantly ignore Luo He, taking Mo Qingcheng away, no one would have dared to say anything.

But now that Mo Qingcheng had left, it might have been a blessing instead. After all, Qin Wentian didn't know what would happen in the near future.

"It's good that she left, if she were here, she would only be a hassle. Don't look down on the transcendent powers, I don't think things will proceed that smoothly between you and her." Yun Mengyi walked over to Qin Wentian, as she stated in a low voice. "Those from the Pill Emperor Hall definitely believe that you will not survive what comes next. You will not survive past today."

Qin Wentian's countenance stiffened yet he understood the truth of Yun Mengyi's words. After all, he had slain several geniuses belonging to the other transcendent powers—how could they let him go, just like that? Although Yun Mengyi gave Qin Wentian a sense of mystery, he had to admit that she was cool-headed and mature in her thinking. It was as though the Heavens themselves could collapse, yet her heart would still remain as calm and as determined as before.

“The Heavenly Fate Rankings has concluded. The Ancient Kingdom shall be closed to all save for the rankers on the Heavenly Fate Rankings. Rankers, you can still stay here and continue on your pilgrimage.”

At this moment, a voice descended from the skies but as to who it belonged to, nobody could tell.

The voice caused the hearts of Qin Wentian and the rest to pound slightly. The owner of that voice should have belonged to the group of power Si Qiong was from. These people were still eyeing the secret arts hidden within the formation world.

“For us, by participating in the ranking battle, we have already obtained the ancient legacies of Grand Xia. Now that the rankings are concluded, we no longer have the desire to stay in the Ancient Kingdom,” A person calmly spoke—this person was none other than Qin Zheng. He could feel the sinister intent from those people belonging to the ancient kingdom.

If they still stayed here now, wouldn't they be slaughtered at will? Their legacies forcibly stolen away.

“This is a custom of Grand Xia, how can we ignore it?” That voice was suddenly infused with a cold tyranny, as it boomed out in the atmosphere yet again.

“I believe we have our own will and freedom,” Qin Zheng quietly replied.

“Obtaining the ancient legacies of Ancient Grand Xia, yet unwilling to continue with the pilgrimage. What are your intentions?” That voice now contained an immense surge of pressure. Those from the Great Solar Chen Clan wore sinister smiles on their faces, adding, “This is a tradition that's lasted throughout the ages, no one can defy it.”

The expressions on Qin Wentian and the others all stiffened. These people had failed once when they wanted to exchange the nine ultimate arts of Grand Xia for their legacies found through the ancient luck. Now that they were forcing them to stay behind, surely they didn't have good intentions.

“This is an ironclad tradition of Ancient Grand Xia. You guys had better follow through with it.” Those from the Hua Clan grinned.

“Follow through with it,” The Wang Clan echoed.

Those who were from the seven grand clans of Ancient Grand Xia, definitely had prior connections with the power behind Si Qiong.

In fact, Qin Wentian even suspected that this mysterious remnant from the ancient kingdom was involved in the rebellion that happened thousands of years ago. After all, history was written by the hands of the victor, no one could say for sure what was true and what was false.

“If you will not respect the tradition, please forsake your legacies and get lost from here.” That cold voice blasted out once more, bent on achieving its objective.

“If you guys are truly people from the ancient kingdom, why do you have a need to hide your faces? Why do you not dare come out in the open?” Qin Wentian inclined his head and stared at the air around him, his eyes gleaming with a sharp light.

As the sound of his voice faded, a row of figures appeared in the air with such speed it was as though they’d teleported.

These group of new arrivals were all extraordinary—they all exuded an aura that didn’t lose out in the least to the transcendent power leaders presently overseeing their respective groups for this expedition.

Their gazes were all filled with murderous intent, as sharp as unsheathed swords as they stared upon Qin Wentian and the rest on the platform.

“Which transcendent power do you belong to?” In the lead, there was a middle-aged man clad in golden robes. His gaze was directly riveted onto Qin Wentian as he enquired.

“None,” Qin Wentian replied.

“Fine then. Since you’ve acquired one of the legacies, this means that you are also a child of destiny. I will grant you the chance to join us. We will definitely nurture you all the way and accomplish your every desire. How about it?” The golden robed man spoke as though with great concern for them. “I shall bestow the same opportunity to those who have acquired legacies as well.”

How arrogant did they sound? Bestowing them this opportunity, the chance to join them? Didn't the legends state that only an extremely weak branch of Ancient Emperor's bloodline remained? The attitude these people were displaying hardly seemed to fit such an image. And evidently, the newly arrived group seemed to belong to a power that surpassed even the transcendent powers—at the very least, they were superior in their exceedingly arrogant attitudes!

Chapter 393: Gathering of the Divine Stele Remnants

Old Man Tianji and the leaders from the various transcendent powers didn't intervene, as though this matter had nothing to do with them.

This made the contenders speculate, who in the world were these people exactly?

Wasn't the ancient kingdom completely destroyed? Weren't the surviving remnants from the ancient kingdom supposed to be extremely weak? It seemed like the story everyone had been told was cloaked in half-truths and half-lies.

The story stated that a few thousand years ago, the ancient kingdom in Grand Xia was overwhelmingly powerful, to an inconceivable extent that far exceeded the combined might of the transcendent powers of the present age. The rebellion cost the lives of countless powerhouses from both sides, and by its bitter end, the ones to emerge were the nine main powers. Each of them took control of one of the nine continents that used to be one united Grand Xia.

But there was no proof to all that had been recorded—history is written by the victorious.

Qin Wentian and the others had a strange glow flickering in their eyes. It was definitely not a shallow relationship between this group of unknowns and the transcendent powers. Earlier, Chen Wang and the others had agreed to the exchange offer, and when Mo Qingcheng was brought away by Luo He, they didn't object as well.

Mo Qingcheng was also one of the contenders that acquired a legacy!

The ancient luck obtained by Qin Wentian, Qin Zheng, Mu Feng and Yun Mengyi, it all led them to their respective legacies, and all were powerful secret arts of Ancient Grand Xia! Yet, none of them agreed to the exchange offer. Naturally, after the ranking battle had concluded, they would become the targets.

At this moment, Qin Zheng and Mu Feng both had extremely cold expressions on their faces. Obviously, they had no intention of accepting the invitation.

With their talent, it wouldn't be difficult for them to join a major power, should they wish it. But for cultivators, they would naturally prefer a major power that closely matched the ideals in their hearts—a transcendent power that was truly to their liking.

But now, this middle-aged man's invitation felt like a threat, a forceful show of dominance. How could anyone be happy when presented with such a choice?

Not to mention after joining them, their fates would all be under the control of this unknown power; who knew what would become of them then? These people were skilled in soul-searching techniques and might very well renege on their promises, turning them into bumbling idiots.

They could never stand for such a humiliation.

Hence, they were naturally unwilling. But the contenders were more worried over the fact that these people originated from a power that far exceeded anyone in Grand Xia. Even Old Man Tianji and the rest of the transcendent powers remained silent, watching as the scene played out.

Qin Wentian and Yun Mengyi, were of the same mind as Qin Zheng and Mu Feng. Both of them weren't willing to join as well.

The Purgatory Vermilion Bird hovered above Qin Wentian's head, emitting a baleful screech of intense rage. It could understand the scene happening before it and knew that this unknown party of people standing before them harboured ill intentions.

“Vile beast.”

The golden-robed man flicked out a finger as a resplendent beam of light shot off from it. The Purgatory Vermilion Bird tried evading the beam, but was unable to do so, resulting in a hole that had cleanly penetrated through its body, causing it to let out a miserable cry.

Its wings were still flapping furiously, as the look in its eyes remained as baleful as ever, showing an unwillingness to submit.

Coldness flashed past Qin Wentian's eyes—he floated upwards and stood next to the Vermilion Bird, gently patting it.

The Vermilion Bird let out a low cry, using its wings to gently envelope Qin Wentian into an embrace as an intense expression appeared in its eyes, as though it desired nothing more than to leave this place immediately together with him.

That expression in its eyes made Qin Wentian's heart clench. Lifting his head, embers of rage flickered in his eyes as he spoke, "Isn't Senior someone who proclaims himself to be from the ancient kingdom? This Vermilion Bird formed from ancient luck is a symbol of Ancient Grand Xia, what do you mean by treating it like this?"

"I am indeed from the ancient kingdom. It's just a spirit birthed from ancient luck that obtained a true body by devouring others. Merely a vile beast, yet it dares to be so brazen? Hence, I taught it a lesson."

The golden-robed middle-aged man exuded an intense arrogance—his actions were also a warning to Qin Wentian and the rest. They controlled everything, and if the rankers dared to show anger or retaliate in any way, they had better be prepared to end up like the Purgatory Vermilion Bird.

Qin Wentian naturally understood the unspoken words, the light in his eyes grew colder and colder. The Purgatory Vermilion Bird was stroking Qin Wentian's back gently with its wings. A look of extreme reluctance could be seen in its eyes, but also, one of unbreakable determination.

It was a true spirit born because of Qin Wentian and now similarly, it would die because of Qin Wentian.

It would have no regrets for this was its destiny.

"It intends to sacrifice itself to summon the true soul of the Vermilion Bird Formation." Yun Mengyi's voice directly transmitted into Qin Wentian's ears—her words were unheard by any of the others.

"Stop." Qin Wentian stared at the Purgatory Vermilion Bird, trembling. The Purgatory Vermilion Bird stared right back at him. Even though it was unwilling to leave Qin Wentian, it knew that it had to do so.

"I forbid you to do this."

The will of Qin Wentian's heart could clearly be felt by the Purgatory Vermilion Bird, its eyes glimmered with unshed tears, visibly moved. It leaned forward, emitting a strong sense of affection for Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian's eyes shifted onto Yun Mengyi.

Yun Mengyi understood Qin Wentian intentions and hence, she transmitted, "You can summon the Divine Stele, as they contain the ancient will and can be used to attack. But I can't be sure as to how much strength the ancient will has remaining, and if you summoned the remnant pieces to fuse the Divine Stele back into one piece once more, who knows how many transcendent powers will end up hunting you down because of it."

Qin Wentian mused, since he had already offended the transcendent powers, there was no harm if he offended them further. To hell with them all.

Qin Wentian's eyes slowly shifted back to the Purgatory Vermilion Bird, his eyes flickering with a sharp glint of light.

How could he watch on impassively while one of his companions sacrificed itself for him?

"Do you know how beneficial it would be for you to summon the true soul of the Vermilion Bird Formation as it recreates the formation world?" Yun Mengyi spoke again, but Qin Wentian's heart didn't waver.

"To me, you are not just something born from ancient luck—you are alive, you are my companion." Qin Wentian gently gazed at the Vermilion Bird, "I won't allow you to sacrifice yourself."

Qin Wentian's gaze contained an unbending resoluteness as he stared up in the air, looking at the golden-robed man. "I don't believe you."

"I don't believe you."

Qin Wentian's voice resounded throughout the area, causing the crowd to freeze. Qin Wentian was truly audacious.

“Senior, are you really someone from the ancient kingdom? How can you prove that?” Qin Wentian quietly asked.

“Proof? Do I even need to prove myself to you?” that golden-robed man coldly replied.

“What if I can prove otherwise?” Qin Wentian’s eyes bore into the golden-robed man. An intense pressure exuded from him, pressing down on Qin Wentian as though the golden-robed man was losing his patience.

“How can you prove it?” Abruptly, a voice echoed out. Qin Wentian discovered that the owner of this voice was none other than Old Man Tianji.

A sharp gleam of light appeared in the eyes of the golden-robed man as he stared at Old Man Tianji. To which, Old Man Tianji merely replied, “Let’s see what he plans to do.”

That golden-robed man remained silent for a moment before shifting his eyes back onto Qin Wentian, a cold smile on his face. “Fine, I shall give you the opportunity. I’d like to see your proof.”

This place was the ancient kingdom of Grand Xia, it wasn’t his territory. Furthermore, Old Man Tianji was being exceedingly unfathomable—since he had requested it, the golden-robed man could only take a step back.

Qin Wentian gazed at Old Man Tianji with a look of gratitude in his eyes. He didn’t think that someone would come to his aid, how unexpected.

Turning his gaze back onto the golden-robed man, Qin Wentian’s countenance turned steel-like with resolution.

With but a thought, a total of four pieces of stele appeared instantly before him; the Yellow Springs Monument, as well as the three-sided Heavenly Stele he obtained from the Heavenly Stele Steps. They were all part of the Divine Stele.

The four pieces of stele floated in the air, causing thunderbolts to go off in the hearts of those who saw this.

“Aren’t these...?”

The golden-robed man's expression faltered as he stared at the four pieces of floating stele.

"Divine Stele," Old Man Tianji whispered, before gazing at Qin Wentian. This young man had actually obtained a total of four pieces of the Divine Stele.

Only to see Qin Wentian mumbling an incantation. The sound of his voice, was transformed by the incantation into a formless mass of energy, being channelled into the Divine Stele. Instantly, the four pieces of the Divine Stele started vibrating intensely, while a terrifying droning sound echoed from them.

An overwhelming ancient will pervaded the air.

"Bzzz!" The ancient will transformed into a beam of light shooting straight up to the Heavens before penetrating the void, scanning through the entirety of Grand Xia.

"What a powerful will." The hearts of the spectators shuddered, they could clearly feel the intense might contained within. At this moment, a stone stele abruptly trembled with violent force within the Venerate Heavens Sect in the Ginkou Continent. It emitted a droning sound, forming a resonance with the ancient will, attempting to obey the summons.

"BOOOM!" An explosive sound thundered, the stele soared up into the skies and zoomed towards its place of summoning at a speed too fast for the naked eye to glimpse.

"What was that?" Those from the Venerate Heavens Sect only saw a blazing trail through the skies. The flying speed of that object was simply too fast, to an inconceivable extent.

A similar occurrence took place in the Great Solar Chen Clan, as well as the Shi Clan.

Not only that, even in the Moon Continent far away, from the Hua Clan and Pill Emperor Hall, two steles enacted the exact same scene and flew with blinding speed towards the summoning location.

In the ancient kingdom, countless spectators stared at the steles hovering above Qin Wentian's head. The eyes of the golden-robed man glimmered with a terrifying light, yet he made no move to stop Qin Wentian, allowing him to proceed with the re-fusion of the Divine Stele.

“A gift from the Heavens.” The golden-robed man coldly laughed in his heart. He would snatch the Divine Stele away the instant it appeared.

“Bzzz...Bzzz...Bzzz...” Three beams of light mingled with Qin Wentian’s four original pieces, and commenced their fusion. A droning sound echoed, incomparably fearsome as it overwhelmingly permeated the entire atmosphere.

“Isn’t that remnant from my Venerate Heavens Sect? They’re all fusing together.” Old Man Tianji trembled.

Indeed, the remnants of the fragmented Divine Stele were fusing together yet again. Was this truly Heavenly Fate?

A short moment later, two more beams of light shot into the mix, as a blinding radiant light exploded outwards.

“How swift!”

Although those from the transcendent powers knew what was happening, even they were stunned by the speed in which the steles gathered.

“All the signs are lining up. Indeed, even destiny is congregating—all for the fusion of the Divine Stele. This young man will definitely influence Grand Xia’s future.” Old Man Tianji had no more doubts. Qin Wentian was whom the demon star represented. He was the one that caused the nine broken remnants of the Divine Stele to once again fuse together.

Back then when the ancient kingdom was destroyed, the Divine Stele was split into nine portions. But today, all nine had congregated in the ancient kingdom, currently fusing back into one. Wasn’t this also a sign? An omen of Heavenly Fate?

The nine remnants of the Divine Stele radiated an overwhelming might that pressed down on everyone on the scene. They fused together, gradually forming into one perfect whole.

The Divine Stele had reappeared in Grand Xia once again!

Peng!

A thunderous sound rang out. There were scars of light marking the partitions of the Divine Stele, as though it could be separated into nine portions again.

The fused Divine Stele had a total of nine sides, but the amount of light each side radiated was different. The amount of ancient will radiating from each side was different as well.

“If senior is truly someone from the ancient kingdom, why is the Divine Stele now in my hands? Unless... Could it be that senior doesn’t know the summoning incantation?” Qin Wentian inclined his head and stared at the golden-robed middle-aged man standing in the air, only to see the golden-robed man laughing coldly as he took a step forward. “Boom!” Instantly, Qin Wentian let out a low groan, that single step felt as if the golden-robed man was trodding right on Qin Wentian’s heart.

“Boom!”

The golden-robed man took another step forward. Not only Qin Wentian, everyone standing on the arena platform coughed out fresh blood from the impact.

The disparity between their strength and his were too great—they were not of the same level.

“How dare you steal our Divine Stele,” the golden-robed man coldly stated. With a grabbing motion, an immense palm-type Astral Nova manifested and directly grabbed at the Divine Stele.

The Divine Stele burst forth with a resplendent light, inexorably blinding, as it suddenly disappeared from its original location, then appearing before the golden-robed man. A sword beam descended from the Heavens, radiant in its magnificent splendor, as it lacerated the void, containing a power of annihilation so mighty that everyone on the scene felt their hearts trembling with fear.

“Aren’t those the Stellar Transposition and Heavenly Swordplay arts?”

Thunderstruck expressions appeared on the faces of the spectators. The Divine Stele was actually able to execute the nine ultimate arts solely by itself?

A drop of blood appeared on the Divine Stele, right before it began to weep blood as a heaven-reaching might of destruction emanated forth from it.

The golden-robed man's expression stiffened as an incomparably sharp light flickered in his eyes, "The ancient will from a few thousand years ago was not diminished in the slightest, is it still thinking of overturning the heavens?"

After speaking, the golden-robed man blasted forth with a palm strike. A great solar divinity seemed to emerge forth from that casual palm, the embers emitted a scorching temperature that evaporated everything around it.

"Sizzle..." The sword beam lacerated the void, breaking the manifested palm apart, as the golden-robed man rapidly retreated with explosive speed. The Divine Stele emitted a shrill echo as blood-colored palm imprints zoomed forth in all eight directions with incredible speed. Those from the golden-robed man's faction drastically changed in countenance, as all of them immediately retreated backwards.

Not all were fast enough to evade that attack, and the droplets of blood from the blood-colored palm imprint sprinkled on the bodies of some. For the unfortunate ones, each droplet immediately burrowed into their bodies, corroding at a speed visible to the naked eye. Two breaths of time later, only their bones remained—they were deader than dead—causing the hearts of the others to palpitate with fear.

"One of the nine ultimate arts of Ancient Grand Xia—Bloodcurse Imprint."

"What a powerful ancient will, the Divine Stele hasn't weakened at all after all these years?"

The hearts and minds of the spectators trembled violently, but the people from the golden-robed man's faction weren't going to be so easily defeated. Terrifying divine weapons appeared in their hands, and an ancient stele of their own suddenly appeared in the air. Countless runic words could be seen projected from the ancient stele, shimmering in the air, as a terrifying sealing energy enveloped the entire space, attempting to seal the Divine Stele with its power.

The Divine Stele frenziedly began to struggle. A slash of inexorable might descended down from the Heavens—Thundergod's Slash—directly cleaving one of the opposing enemies into two before it executed Stellar Transposition, fleeing from the gap it created.

The golden-robed man roared in wrath as a gigantic sword appeared in his hands, with radiant starlight revolving around its edge.

“Bzzz!” The gigantic sword flew up in the skies and flew to block the Divine Stele which was rushing towards the gap. With no way to break through it, the Divine Stele engaged in a violent and intense struggle with the gigantic sword of that gold-robed man.

“Seize him—I want him alive.”

The golden-robed man commanded coldly, his gaze directed on the rankers standing upon the arena platform.

Old Man Tianji frowned while the experts from the Great Solar Chen Clan stepped forwards.

“He’s obtained the position of first ranker, so wouldn’t it seem a little inappropriate for you all to make a move now?” Old Man Tianji slowly spoke, clearly wanting to stop this.

“Senior, you are too polite. Although this brat obtained the position of first ranker, his character is atrocious. He’s actually stolen the stele belonging to my Great Solar Chen Clan. I’m going to seize him for interrogation.” An expert from the Chen Clan spoke as he glanced at the surroundings, “What do you guys think?”

“The stele from my Hua Clan was stolen as well. I agree to the interrogation.” A person from the Hua Clan coldly spoke, taking a step forward to indicate his stance on the matter.

“After the issue has been resolved, I can return the stele to your respective clans,” Qin Wentian stated, his countenance ice-cold.

“Since you’d decided to be a thief, you have already gone past the point of no return. With your personality, you’ll definitely bring great trouble to Grand Xia in the future. Best to eliminate you right now.” A frigid voice echoed out, the person who spoke was from the Wang Clan of the War continent.

The various transcendent powers all stated their stance. Qin Wentian’s talent was too outstanding and in their hearts, they were all extremely unhappy with him—he had already offended many transcendent powers prior to this. Even if the golden-robed man wasn’t around, they would still try to do something in the shadows to deal with Qin Wentian. Now that there was this ready-made excuse, how could they still allow Qin Wentian to safely exit the ancient kingdom, fully ablaze with glory from being in the top ranked position on the Heavenly Fate Rankings?

Leaving aside Qin Wentian, Mu Feng, Qin Zheng and the rest were all people with rankings nearing the top. In the future, it was a certainty that they'd all become extremely fearful opponents. If they landed in the hands of the golden-robed man today,, their souls would be thoroughly searched, causing them to be turned into idiots before being finished off.

“What an eye opener this is, and truly showcases the majestic transcendent powers of Grand Xia. I can practically see the dark mark of jealousy all over your faces. So, tell me, does this mean all the younger generations in your respective clans are nothing but trash?” Ouyang Kuangsheng coldly laughed—the fact that Qin Wentian had stolen their steles was nothing but an excuse for them to act.

“It seems like the ancient will is slowly weakening,” Yun Mengyi added in a low voice as she gazed at the Divine Stele.

In this current era, the imposing and majestic Divine Stele of Ancient Grand Xia had actually been held captive in the hands of a few mere Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns.

Qin Wentian's eyes flickered as he stated, “All of you leave first.”

This matter arose because of him, and all these enemies were here solely because they wanted to target him.

“Fool. Since we are already standing here with you, it already means that we have no intention of leaving,” Ouyang Kuangsheng replied. Ouyang Kuangsheng stared at the transcendent powers, before shifting his gaze onto his own Ouyang Aristocrat Clan.

“Kuangsheng, come back here!” Ouyang Kuangsheng's uncle shouted, only to be met with a shake of Ouyang Kuangsheng's head. Helpless, his uncle could only call out to the other transcendent powers, “Please pardon my nephew and try not to injure him.”

“My disciple is there as well.” Over in the direction of the Mystic Moon Palace, Bai Qing's master quietly spoke as well.

At this moment, those who wanted to deal with Qin Wentian were the seven grand clans. They couldn't stop them and they had no reason to stand against the seven grand clans for matters of the junior generations. It was too illogical.

“Bailu Yi, leave.” Qin Wentian didn’t want to implicate the others, and glanced towards Bailu Jing and Bailu Yi. Bailu Yi adamantly shook her head, she would not leave here unless Qin Wentian did the same.

“Hu...”

Qin Wentian was extremely moved. And when he shifted his gaze back onto the approaching figure, his eyes flashed with a cold and terrifying light.

“If I leave, the rest of you must immediately leave, too.”

Qin Wentian spoke to his friends. After which, he took a step forward as his eyes glimmered with a demonic light.

Directly facing the crowd, Qin Wentian had a cold grin on his face as he started to mumble an incantation. Instantly, as this low sounding rumble from his voice resonated in the air, a surge of ever-increasing torrential energy descended right from the heavens.

“Rumble...” The space within the area began to tremble, as demonic qi madly gushed forth in astronomical amounts. The qi gave rise to a demonic wind that contained an immense aura of destructive might within.

“With the chant of demonic divinities, the ancient will stretches across the skies...”

A terrible light flashed past Qin Wentian’s eyes. His head was inclined, staring at the dome of heavens as demonic qi gathered around him from all eight directions. The demonic wind gusted with increasing strength, striking fear in the hearts of people. What energy was this?

“What’s going on?” On the platform, Ouyang Kuangsheng’s long robes were fluttering about, he found himself unable to keep his eyes open in the face of that terrifying demonic gale. Expressions of shock appeared on all their faces—what kind of power was Qin Wentian using?

A long bird screech filled the air as Heaven and Earth trembled. The immense silhouette of the Vermilion Bird of the Vermilion Bird Formation appeared again, its illusory form interposing with that of the Purgatory Vermilion Bird as the entire space turned into a Purgatory world.

“This...”

The crowd stared at the immense body of the Purgatory Bird hovering above them, cloaked in perpetual flames. The pressure it emitted caused the entire location to violently tremble, and even the surrounding earth began to crumble from its might.

“Do it.”

Those approaching Qin Wentian transformed into beams of light and dashed towards him, only to hear a terrible screech thundering out from the Purgatory Vermilion Bird.

Peng! Its wings created a powerful gust of wind that slammed right into Qin Wentian, disrupting his chant.

He inclined his head and stared at the Purgatory Vermilion Bird with his eyes red, “I can transform into a demon divinity, why are you stopping me?”

“But, you are unwilling to...”

A voice rang out in Qin Wentian’s heart. At this moment, he involuntarily trembled—he could actually hear the thoughts of his Purgatory Vermilion Bird.

Qin Wentian saw unshed tears in the eyes of the Vermilion Bird, filled with a deep sadness. It was no longer just a being in spirit form—it had a life now.

A terrifying palm strike slammed forth towards Qin Wentian, only to see the Purgatory Vermilion Bird separating itself from the illusory manifestation of the Vermilion Bird Formation, then swoop down to place itself before Qin Wentian in an attempt to absorb the blow from him. With a thunderous sound, its body was blasted backwards, causing it to spit out blood. Yet, the perpetual flames around it grew even stronger, as the illusory manifestation of that immense Vermilion Bird grew significantly larger.

“Courting death.” The expert from the Great Solar Chen Clan coldly spat, as he slammed another palm strike downwards.

A wail of anger echoed from the Purgatory Vermilion Bird, it rushed out to block the strike again. RUMBLEEE, its body seemed about to break apart yet its eyes remained clear of terror.

With a sad-sounding screech, the Purgatory Vermilion Bird turned back and looked deeply at Qin Wentian, its gaze filled with an incomparable longing, as well as sadness.

A bright light flashed, as the bird transformed into a ray of light shooting straight up to the heavens, once again merging itself with the illusory silhouette of the immense Vermilion Bird. But this time around, boundless light shone from its body, as it exploded forth into shimmering astral motes that covered the entire skies, giving birth to a Purgatory Constellation. The dark flames rained down madly, and the entire world transformed into darkness.

“What’s going on?”

At that moment when the crowd inclined their heads and gazed upwards, they could only see the Purgatory Constellation forming a pair of eyes and opening them. The entire region trembled, transforming back into a formation world once again.

“Purgatory!” Qin Wentian’s heart was assailed with pain when he stared at the constellation birthed by the distant silhouette of the Purgatory Vermilion Bird.

He had never once treated the Purgatory Vermilion Bird as a tool, but rather, a true companion. Those eyes filled with deep longing casted one last glance, drawing a scar on his heart.

Because it knew that he wasn’t truly willing to become a demon, the Purgatory Vermilion Bird had chosen to sacrifice itself.

At this moment, the immense body of the Purgatory Vermilion Bird flew over, and fixed its gaze onto the expert from the Chen Clan. Great balls of dark flame hurled towards the expert, and the Chen Clan expert’s silhouette flickered, in an attempt to escape. But in a mere few breaths of time, he was surrounded by a sea of flame that transformed into Purgatory Lotuses, wanting to burn him to death despite his resistance to fire.

A bloodcurdling scream rang out, that powerful Heavenly Dipper Sovereign from the Great Solar Chen Clan was instantly incinerated into ashes.

Chapter 395: Facing Danger Headon

Qin Wentian stared at his Purgatory Vermilion Bird before shifting his gaze onto the constellation it summoned. This was an indication of a powerhouse at the Celestial Phenomenon level.

The constellation was like a magical enchantment, turning this place into hell on earth—a true purgatory.

“Are you still there?!”

Qin Wentian’s silhouette soared up into the skies with explosive speed, towards the illusory silhouette of the true spirit of the Vermilion Bird Formation that his Purgatory Vermilion Bird had merged with. Forcibly withstanding the pressure, he wiped the traces of blood away from his mouth as he continued flying upwards. Around him, miserable cries filled with pain and agony resounded, many of the crowd had perished in this hellish Purgatory.

Each of the still surviving spectators all had unmasked terror on their faces, they would never have expected such a thing to happen, not even in their wildest dreams. Under that Purgatory Constellation, the legs of several grew weak as they collapsed to the ground from the gut-wrenching fear—they didn’t even have the energy to run away anymore. With but a single thought, the Purgatory Vermilion Bird would be able to slay them effortlessly.

“Wentian gege!” Bai Qing shouted in panic when she saw Qin Wentian flying up to the skies. That baleful aura the immense Vermilion Bird was exuding gave her pause—was the Purgatory Vermilion Bird still inside there somewhere after the merge?

Qin Wentian finally stood next to the face of the Vermilion Bird. Right now, if the true spirit of the Vermilion Bird formation willed it, he would definitely die.

Qin Wentian stretched out his hand. The true spirit of the Vermilion Bird Formation stared back at him, with no warmth in its eyes, causing the hearts of everyone that stood on the arena platform to pound with nervousness, perspiration drenching their back in a cold sweat.

“I don’t believe that you would vanish just like that.” Qin Wentian stared into the eyes of the Vermilion Bird as his hands gently caressed its face.

“BZZZ!” A massive wind kicked up, as meteors of purgatory flames descended with increasing speed from the Heavens. Violence flashed in the eyes of the Vermilion Bird as it glared at Qin Wentian.

“Wentian, COME BACK!” Fan Le and the rest screamed in worry. This fellow was too impulsive.

It was as though Qin Wentian couldn't hear their calls. He continued looking into the eye of the Vermilion Bird until a hint of warmth and gentleness emerged from within. After which, it let out a soft coo as it lowered its immense head softly against Qin Wentian's palm, allowing him to caress it as he wished.

Upon seeing this scene, only then did those on the arena platform relax. Qin Wentian was really too impetuous; he had no definite odds of success, yet he went ahead and gambled anyway.

“I know you are still inside there somewhere. Although you fused and became a formation's spirit, I will definitely think of a way to bring you back,” Qin Wentian gently stated, hating himself immensely. If only he were strong enough, he wouldn't have had to depend on the Purgatory Vermilion Bird's strength to get out of this danger.

The spirit of the Vermilion Bird Formation issued a screech as it gazed at the cultivators that were trapped in this world. Qin Wentian similarly mirrored its actions, before stating in a cold and emotionless voice, “As for those who made a move against us earlier, kill them all.”

“Qin Wentian, you dare?”

A voice clad in heavy killing intent gushed out.

“If you kill us here, be it soaring up to the skies of Grand Xia, or tunnelling deep into its earth, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN STILL SURVIVE?”

His threatening intent was clearly heard, but as the sound of his voice faded, the Purgatory Constellation shone brightly, and in a single instant, that person let out a terrible scream as he vanished within a sea of purgatory flames.

Qin Wentian turned and gazed at the other figures, his eyes thick with killing intent.

“Regardless of whether I can survive, at the very least, all of you, **MUST DIE.**” Qin Wentian voice radiated with cold fury, these people were the ones that wanted to kill him first, not allowing him to walk out of the ancient kingdom alive. Since they were being so merciless in their decisiveness he would return the favor in kind by killing them to break the grudges formed.

These experts had all tried to escape, yet they simply weren't fast enough. Those experts who'd made a move earlier, those from the Chen Clan, Hua Clan, and Wang Clan, had all died the most miserable deaths. The number of people trying to escape continued on, amidst a sea of death.

The countenance of the middle-aged man grew incredibly ugly to behold—the purgatory flames relentlessly rained down, and even his faction had more than a few who died. At this moment, he unfurled an ancient scroll, containing the power of the concept of space within—it was his life-saving treasure.

With a flick of his hands, the ancient scroll emitted a terrifying light as the power of space enveloped him and his faction within. As the purgatory flame rained down, that ancient scroll trembled intensely before breaking apart, but the silhouettes that it enveloped had all already disappeared.

Such a treasure could only be used once.

Several experts from the transcendent powers were all frenziedly trying to escape. Those spectators who stayed behind dared not remain any longer, as they joined the experts in their escape.

The whole space had already transformed into Purgatory on Earth, easily causing several powerful experts to fall.

At this moment, just when a figure was attempting to escape, Qin Wentian's gaze immediately shot towards that person as he stated in a cold voice, “Di Feng, stay behind.”

The face that turned to look back at him, wasn't that of the old Emperor Azure. It was the pale face of a young man, with an extremely ordinary appearance, looking totally inconspicuous.

That person gazed at Qin Wentian, “Sir, are you talking to me?”

“If you had directly left instead, maybe I wouldn't have blocked you. But because you feared that I would kill you, you actually resorted to changing your entire appearance within the chaos. In that

case, you will have to die here today.” Qin Wentian’s gaze sharpened, as the purgatory flames rained down with greater intensity. Di Feng took advantage of the earlier chaos earlier to change his appearance and tried to sneak away. If it weren’t for Qin Wentian’s monstrous perception, he would never have noticed him.

Di Feng had ruined himself with his own cleverness.

“It seems that you’ve mastered the art of disguise. If that’s the case, there are no doubts he’s the person who impersonated me and interacted with Mu Feng and his family back then.” Qin Wentian’s voice was ice-cold, as an intense murderous urge could be seen flashing past his eyes. Di Feng wanted to act ignorant? Too bad, it wouldn’t work in front of him.

“What did you say?” Nearby, Mu Feng stared at Di Feng, his eyes erupting with a frigidness so cold that those near him could feel the deathly chill.

“I’ve only met you once, yet you wanted me to die so much you would devise such a method to kill me using Mu Feng’s hands?” Qin Wentian stepped out as his aura soared upwards, and a terrifying pressure enveloped Di Feng.

Di Feng’s countenance turned ashen, and he knew that his plot had been seen through. With his skills in the illusion-arts, it was a simple thing to mask his true features.

“We may have this grudge between us, but after today’s performance I’m more than totally convinced of your abilities. I will submit completely, and will aid you in accomplishing great things in the name of the Azure Emperor,” Di Feng replied, in a manner neither servile nor overbearing. This person was extremely intelligent, able to sense the flow of matters.

Yet, the killing intent in Qin Wentian’s eyes didn’t lessen. He replied detachedly, “You are not worthy.”

Di Feng’s countenance turned incredibly ugly, “If you kill me, you will definitely form an enmity with the Di Clan.”

“No matter, I shall clean the Di Clan of trash.” The expression on Qin Wentian’s face was as sharp as ever, his words causing Di Feng’s countenance to turn grim. To the side, Mu Feng walked up, step by step, as poison qi dangerously gushed out of his body.

Di Feng retreated, staring at Mu Feng, "I have no idea what's going on. And if I wanted to kill Qin Wentian, I would have done it myself and not through the hands of others."

Even at this moment, Di Feng refused to admit the truth.

A raging wind kicked up, Qin Wentian's silhouette vanished from its original spot and instantly appeared before Di Feng. With a striking speed akin to lightning, he blasted out with a dragon imprint. Di Feng hurriedly raised his palms in defense, but as an explosive sound thundered out, he was directly flung through the air.

With no lapse in his movements, Qin Wentian appeared before Di Feng once more as countless ancient bells slammed into Di Feng's body. Di Feng's heart pounded rapidly, feeling as though it would explode at any moment as fresh blood sprayed out from his mouth. He had no way to withstand Qin Wentian's attacks.

Mu Feng's poison palms descended as well, slamming into Di Feng's chest. An instant later, a surge of terrifying poison instantly gushed into Di Feng's body, causing his entire face to turn black. Since he was already dying, Di Feng finally revealed his real face, which was harshly painted with malevolence.

"Your sister tasted excellent." Di Feng stared at Mu Feng as he laughed evilly. Mu Feng paled, then sliced one of his fingers, allowing the black-colored blood within to drip onto Di Feng's body. A moment later, Di Feng's body was drying out, as the reservoir of blood within his body slowly turned black.

"ARGHHHH!" A horrifying, gut-wrenching scream rang out. Di Feng's body was contorted by his convulsions, yet the hatred in his eyes never lessened. He never would have thought his cleverness would be the cause of his own downfall. If he hadn't changed his appearance before sneaking away, Qin Wentian wouldn't have noticed him.

The terrible screams rang out without cease, and ultimately, Di Feng turned into a dry husk that shattered into dust with a single touch. He had died an extremely pitiful death.

Mu Feng's eyes were completely red as he stared at the spot where Di Feng was once at. Seeing an interspatial ring in that pile of dust, Qin Wentian made a grabbing motion, causing Di Feng's ring to fly into his hands.

Di Feng had been a successor of the Di Clan, and Qin Wentian wondered if there would be any items in Di Feng's interspatial ring which he could use.

Mu Feng turned his head back to gaze at Qin Wentian. "I've misunderstood you in the past and today you've helped me once again by helping me to unmask my enemy. From today onwards I will follow you up till the point where the transcendent powers of Grand Xia will no longer be a threat to you."

Qin Wentian had a strange glow in his eyes as he looked at Mu Feng, "You don't need to do this."

"I know that my current strength is useless when facing against those transcendent powers. But in the future, you will surely find a use for me," Mu Feng calmly spoke, before turning and walking back in the direction of the arena platform.

Although his personality had undergone a huge change, becoming extremely uncommunicative, he was still filled with great confidence regarding his own future.

And because of the promise he'd made today, in future, the new Poison Monarch Mu Feng would become the character by Qin Wentian's side that his enemies would fear the most.

Qin Wentian turned back as he stared at Mu Feng, yet he didn't say anything. The things he'd done today were for himself, and had nothing to do with Mu Feng. But since Mu Feng was so adamant, there was nothing he could say that would influence Mu Feng's decision.

At this moment in that vast space, not many remained. Those who died, died. Those who escaped, had already escaped. A terrifying energy frenziedly circulated around towards the direction of the ancient kingdom. From this moment onwards, the ancient kingdom became a forbidden location.

Qin Wentian returned back to the platform and stared at his friends with a bitter smile on his face. "I'm afraid I have no idea how we're going to leave here safely today."

Although the Vermilion Bird Formation had slain many that day, this place was still the Ginkou continent and other experts from the transcendent powers would definitely arrive here to surround them before they could make a move.

Stretching out his arms, a violent wind gusted by as the Divine Stele flew into his hands. Qin Wentian then extended his will and immersed it into the Divine Stele. An instant later, his perception touched upon the cultivation arts and innate techniques recorded within.

The nine ultimate arts of Grand Xia!

Qin Wentian opened his eyes and gazed at his comrades, smiling as he stated, “Everyone come here and choose the ultimate art most suitable for yourself to cultivate.”

The countenances of everyone stiffened, when suddenly Ouyang Kuangsheng began to laugh loudly. “Seems like being trapped here has its own advantage. Why be sad when we can cultivate Grand Xia’s ultimate arts? We might as well stay here for a year or two and master them all.”

Qin Wentian smiled bitterly, giving a helpless shrug. He turned his gaze onto the Heavens while wondering in his heart: obtaining first place, was this a blessing or a curse?

But what’s past was past, he’d fight only for the present.

Even if the entire Grand Xia ended up as his enemy, he would still do what it took to achieve his goal—to create a world that belonged solely to him.

Chapter 396: Beginning of Chaos in Grand Xia

The nine ultimate arts of Grand Xia are:

Great Solar Universe Art, Chaotic Art of the Heavenly Devil, Heavenly Swordplay, Golden Dragon Battle Art, Stellar Transposition, Formless Heart Sutra, Seal of Life and Death, Bloodcurse Imprint and Thunder God’s Slash.

Among these nine arts, Stellar Transposition and Formless Heart Sutra belonged to the category whereby it was possible for anyone to learn them.

As for the other seven remaining ultimate arts, the Great Solar Universe Art was most suitable for cultivation by those with an affinity to fire.

For the Chaotic Art of the Heavenly Devil, Bai Qing was already cultivating it. This cultivation art was an exceedingly tyrannical one, so dangerous that any misstep may lead to death. One must not cultivate this art lightly.

For the Heavenly Swordplay, anyone proficient with swords could cultivate in this.

The Golden Dragon Battle Art was suitable for people with an affinity for metal-type elements.

The Seal of Life and Death was yet another extremely tyrannical art that had incredibly high requirements before users could cultivate in it. This art required the user to have a basic understanding of the power of life and the power of death.

The Bloodcurse Imprint was similar to the Seal of Life and Death, both with extensive conditions to learn, as well as the style of attack being in the form of seals. Of those present, only Mu Feng met the criteria for cultivating this.

The Thunder God's Slash contained the mightiest force when it came to single attack power, but one major drawback was the required consumption rate of astral energy. The art converts the user's force into the might of thunderbolts, before further refining it into a sabre's slash, shattering everything that dared stand before it.

"The Divine Stele is a miraculous object. Tell the others to walk up to it, and the respective ultimate art will light up in response to their presence," Yun Mengyi explained.

"The Divine Stele is able to inspect one's heart?" Qin Wentian mused.

Yun Mengyi's understanding of the Divine Stele seemed to be extremely thorough. Qin Wentian glanced at her, before walking up as the first person to approach the completely reformed Divine Stele.

Astral light revolved around the Divine Stele before enveloping Qin Wentian within.

Qin Wentian felt himself appearing in the void. With a groan, he felt a massive pressure pressing against him, not only on his body, but on his spirit, will, consciousness and his heart as well. This felt like an attack, and also a test. Death was a probable outcome should he fail to pass it.

“Bzzz!” Abruptly, a terrifying heat descended on Qin Wentian’s body. In the endless void, his body was bathed in flames, somewhat resembling Chen Wang, with an appearance akin to a Flame Divinity War God. The terrible flames burned intensely, yet Qin Wentian was as calm as ever—he knew that these flames wouldn’t hurt him.

The next instant, tyrannical devil-might gushed right into his body. Thunder snaked down from the skies, as the devil-might suppressed everything. A devilish sabre coalesced from the devil-might and slashed horizontally to aim right at him. Qin Wentian felt as though his body was about to explode—this devil-might was extremely tyrannical, and he had no way to withstand it. His eyes flashed with devilish intent and he appeared close to descending into madness at any given moment, about to begin a slaughtering frenzy.

“Is this the Chaotic Art of the Heavenly Devil?” Qin Wentian involuntarily trembled when he thought of Bai Qing. This was the precise art cultivated by that lass—how much difficulty and how much torment had she undergone exactly to reach her current level?

Different kinds of energy devastated Qin Wentian’s body, who endured through it all and at long last, nine shimmering walls of text and images appeared before him. Each contained an overwhelming power, with all being imprinted into his mind.

Finally, he was ejected from the endless void. Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath, his entire body was already drenched in sweat. Yun Mengyi gazed at him as she asked, “How many ultimate arts did you witness when you were in the endless void?”

“Nine,” Qin Wentian replied.

Yun Mengyi’s countenance faltered as she spoke, “With your connection with the Divine Stele, you would naturally be able to sense all nine arts. I’m asking you, how many of the ultimate arts did you actually witness appearing before your own eyes when you were in the endless void?”

“Nine,” Qin Wentian replied. “Is there a problem?”

“Monster—” Yun Mengyi gasped out after being stunned for a moment. “Do you know what this means? It means that you are qualified to cultivate all nine of Grand Xia’s ultimate arts. But of course, this assessment is a result of your talent. Not all the nine arts might necessarily be suitable for you. For example, since you don’t cultivate the energy of life and death, the Seal of Life and Death wouldn’t be appropriate for you. The Divine Stele didn’t reject you because it judged you as a candidate worthy of cultivating the Seal of Life and Death, that is, once you managed to comprehend and gain energy from the concept of Life and Death.”

Qin Wentian contemplated for a moment before nodding. He understood what Yun Mengyi was trying to say. He then turned to the others. “All of you can go try this out, and see which of the nine arts are suitable for you.”

“Let me try first.” Fan Le waddled up, facing the Divine Stele. Similar to Qin Wentian, his consciousness was brought to the empty void by the Divine Stele.

A few moments later, Fan Le opened his eyes, which gleamed with excitement. “I will cultivate the Great Solar Universe Art and Stellar Transposition. These two are more suitable for me.”

“Your flames don’t appear to be any weaker compared to Chen Wang, and in addition to the power of your Empyrean Flames bloodline, your accomplishments in the future will surely surpass his own.” Qin Wentian nodded.

Chu Mang stepped forward. There were plenty of ultimate arts suitable for him, but he chose to start with cultivating the Golden Dragon Battle Art, Stellar Transposition and Thunder God’s Slash.

Stellar Transposition could be cultivated by everyone, and no one would mind spending a little time to learn it, as it may determine the difference between victory and defeat. The power of this art depended on one’s talent as well as one’s proficiency with it.

Ouyang Kuangsheng’s choice was similar to Chu Mang; Stellar Transposition and Thunder God’s Slash. He had an affinity with the lightning element, hence he was one of the most suitable to cultivate the Thunder God’s Slash.

Yun Mengyi did not make it known what her choices were.

As for Mu Feng, he chose Stellar Transposition and the Bloodcurse Imprint. Among everyone here, he was the only one truly qualified to cultivate this tyrannical Bloodcurse Imprint Art—he excelled in both the Mandate of Blood as well as the Mandate of Poison.

Everyone made their choices, even Mustang and Luo Huan. Qin Wentian had allowed them to try and see if there were any arts suitable for them. Although Mustang’s talent was limited, at the very least he could still be several degrees stronger compared to now.

After everything was concluded, Qin Wentian inclined his head and stared up at the skies. He then stepped forwards and walk to the side of the true spirit of the Vermilion Bird Formation, gently gazing at it.

“Will Purgatory be able to return?” Qin Wentian felt an extreme sadness in his heart. He truly missed the Vermilion Bird, the companion that chose to sacrifice itself for him. It had already become a real life form but in order to summon the Vermilion Bird Formation again, it sacrificed itself and fused together with the true spirit of the formation world.

“It won’t be able to. The Purgatory Vermilion Bird was originally born because of the true spirit of the Vermilion Bird Formation. Now that the entire ancient kingdom has turned into the new Vermilion Bird Formation, the Purgatory Vermilion Bird had to fuse its essence with the true spirit in order to enhance its powers. For your sake, it chose to protect this place and it is fortunate that the transcendent powers are no longer at the peak of their strength. They’re no longer able to compare to the ancient nine grand clans, so even if the current Chen Clan were to amass experts to storm this place, they wouldn’t be able to break the formation apart.”

Yun Mengyi explained as pain flashed past Qin Wentian’s eyes. Could the Purgatory Vermilion Bird that transformed into this new true spirit, forever be unable to come back?

It would stay here acting as the guardian forever, protecting the ancient kingdom, protecting Qin Wentian.

At this moment the true spirit issued a terrifying screech as purgatory flames rained down on the other unfortunate members of the transcendent powers with greater intensity. Emotion flashed past its eyes—despite being part of the true spirit, the Purgatory Vermilion Bird could control the formation to some extent, and it could also sense Qin Wentian’s deep emotions for it.

This made Qin Wentian feel even more guilt, as though it had let down his companion.

“Currently, we should all be trapped here, right?” Qin Wentian asked Yun Mengyi.

“I guess so. Look at how many transcendent powers you managed to offend.” Yun Mengyi nodded.

“Even if I hadn’t offended them, they wouldn’t let me go anyway. If I want to live, they must die,” Qin Wentian calmly spoke.

Several interspatial rings were left behind when the experts from the various powers were burned to death by the Purgatory flames.

Now that Qin Wentian and the rest had learned the ultimate arts, even if the interspatial rings of the experts had nothing good inside them, there would definitely be Yuan Meteor Stones packed within.

Not to mention that now, most of them were preparing their breakthroughs to the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

Qin Wentian's mentality was now even more ruthless and decisive compared to before. Right now, he had only one thought in his mind—to break through to Heavenly Dipper.

Only with sufficient power, would one have the capital.

And as expected there were large quantities of Yuan Meteor Stones stashed within the interspatial rings of these experts. Qin Wentian immediately distributed the stones to his companions as they started cultivating within the protection offered by the Vermilion Bird Formation.

The transcendent powers continued sending more backup, and now outside the formation, numerous people could be seen circling around with indescribable emotion roiling in their hearts.

Qin Wentian obtained the position of the first ranker in the Heavenly Fate Rankings, yet the majority of the transcendent powers wanted to kill him. Not only that, his Vermilion Bird actually summoned the terrifying true spirit and fused with it, destroying countless members that belonged to them.

Only now did they understand why the Purgatory Vermilion Bird kept feasting on the ancient luck of others even after the legacy had been found—to gather enough soul power to summon the true spirit of the formation. They couldn't believe it, had this all been pre-planned by Qin Wentian?

Old Man Tianji hovered in the skies outside the formation, inwardly sighing as he watched on impassively. Because he chose not to make a move against Qin Wentian earlier, the formation didn't target him and allowed him to leave without issues.

The Divine Stele reappears in Grand Xia, and the ancient Vermilion Bird Formation protects the ancient kingdom. Those rankers that still remained within the formation would be the harbingers of change to Grand Xia.

“I truly hope for such a day.” Old Man Tianji sighed in his heart, before turning and slowly departing the area.

The number of experts steadily increased, sent by the various powers that formed a grudge with Qin Wentian. They encircled the formation, leaving no gaps between them as they waited for Qin Wentian to exit.

Of all the clans, the Chen Clan suffered the heaviest losses. A total of seven to eight Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns were slain when they protected Chen Wang, escorting him out of the formation. Now, the other experts of the Chen Clan were eyeing the formation with intense killing intent flickering in their eyes.

Initially they thought that with so many experts around from so many powers, squashing Qin Wentian to death would be as easy as squashing an ant to death. Regardless of how much potential he had, a genius that died before maturity, wasn't a genius.

Yet no one would have predicted the course of events that had taken place.

Those from the Ouyang Aristocrat Clan and Mystic Moon Sect gazed at Ouyang Kuangsheng and Bai Qing in the formation world, together with Qin Wentian. They didn't know whether this was a blessing or a curse.

Those from the Nine Mystical Palace were also depressed. They mobilized several Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns this time around for the sake of capturing Qin Wentian. They initially thought that once Qin Wentian appeared, there was no way he would be able to escape. But they clearly underestimated Qin Wentian's knack for stirring up trouble. Even if they wanted their turn at Qin Wentian, they would still have to queue behind the other transcendent powers.

And right now, because of Qin Wentian, the situation in the entire Grand Xia had become chaotic, very chaotic.

The awkward peace that lasted for several thousands of years, was broken today!

In the blink of an eye, three months passed. In these three months, news of what happened, circulated around the entirety of Grand Xia. Qin Wentian's name resounded throughout the world,

instantly becoming so famous to the extent that there was no one in this world that didn't know of him.

But now, his current state of safety was unclear. He was trapped within the formation and would be killed the moment he stepped out of it. During these three months, the experts sent by the transcendent powers spent their time in utter boredom—not a single person was seen to have exited the formation world, and it was obvious to all that Qin Wentian and his friends were only biding their time. But how much longer could they keep turtling within? And if they did come out, would they even be strong enough to prevail against the combined might hammered down by this many transcendent powers?!

Chapter 397: Qin Wentian's Ambitions

To Qin Wentian, this period of three months was like taking a good, long nap.

In the ranking battle, he broke through to the ninth level of Yuanfu and following the repeated battles, his foundation at the ninth level grew increasingly stable.

And now, another three months passed. The three Yuanfu receptacles in Qin Wentian's body were brimming with astral energy, to the extent of almost overflowing.

Qin Wentian laid down on the arena platform, sleeping quietly. Above him, the light emitted from the true spirit of the formation world cascaded down onto his body.

In the middle of the air, Little Rascal was there as well. Its body shone with golden light as its mouth moved unceasingly as though chewing on something. It appeared to be devouring the star light. After it had eaten its fill, it returned back to the platform, lying beside Qin Wentian, peacefully accompanying him in sleep.

The ancient kingdom was vast, and although the surroundings were still burning from the purgatory flames, there were still places where the people inside could take a break. Other than Qin Wentian, his other companions were in the middle of cultivating as well.

By everyone's perspective, the ninth level of Yuanfu was merely the starting point.

At this moment, Qin Wentian finally moved. He lazily stretched his body and opened his eyes, warm emotion flashing within as he stared at the true spirit of the Vermilion Bird Formation.

“Little Rascal.” Hearing Qin Wentian’s voice, Little Rascal stood up and dashed into his arms. Qin Wentian embraced it and stroked its fur while laughing, “You are not allowed to leave me ever, got it?”

“Yi yaya!” Little Rascal unceasingly bobbed its head, causing a gentle smile to appear on Qin Wentian’s face. As he sat up, Qin Wentian contemplated the state of his body—he had totally recovered and was in tip-top condition. Sleeping for three months had done him good indeed.

“Wentian gege, you’ve awakened!”

A melodious voice drifted over, Qin Wentian turned his gaze towards the voice as a lovely figure strode over.

“Silly girl, how’s your cultivation progress?” Qin Wentian asked.

“Not bad at all, my Mandate of Sabre has already advanced to the second level, and I’m currently preparing to nurture my Astral Nova. I’m close to, barging into the Heavenly Dipper Realm.” Bai Qing sat down beside Qin Wentian. Similar to when she was a young girl, she loved to spend time with Qin Wentian just like this, leisurely chatting away.

That young girl from back then had been naïve and innocent, with no concept of worry.

“Do you have enough Yuan Meteor Stones?” Qin Wentian enquired. Barging through to Heavenly Dipper wasn’t an easy task, even geniuses would require a long time in preparation, using a large amount of Yuan Meteor Stones to condense their Astral Nova. Not only that, the prerequisites for entering Heavenly Dipper Realm were that one’s Mandate must be at the second level, and for one’s state of heart to evolve as well. A cultivator must not be deficient in either of these conditions should they wish to break through to the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

For the rankers on the Heavenly Fate Rankings, the numerous intense life and death battles they faced had long pushed the state of their hearts, as well as the boundaries of their Mandates to the next level. As long as they reached the peak of the ninth level of Yuanfu, in addition to having sufficient time and resources, it shouldn’t be a problem for them to step into Heavenly Dipper.

This was also one of the reasons why the geniuses of countless generations wanted to participate in the battle for the Heavenly Fate Rankings. Only when fighting against geniuses of similar level would they be able to temper their hearts and their wills, allowing them to stabilize their cultivation realms, and even advance their respective will of Mandates.

After receiving such a baptism, the chance of them successfully breaking through the watershed to Heavenly Dipper, would then be much greater.

“Yup, I have enough from the spoils we obtained in the interspatial rings of those experts.” Bai Qing laughed, “But should I first condense a single Astral Nova or condense all three in one go?”

“Since all three of your Mandates have already reached the second level, you might as well condense all three Astral Novas at the same time. They will have a direct boost to your combat strength once you crossed into Heavenly Dipper.” Qin Wentian laughed.

“Mhm, I thought the same as well. But the difficulty. and I wonder if the condensed Astral Novas would be powerful or not.” Bai Qing fluttered her lashes as she stared at Qin Wentian. “Wentian gege, when are you preparing to cross over? Your Astral Souls are all so powerful, so your condensed Novas would also be several degrees stronger compared to others.”

“Yes, but the amount of resources needed for me to condense one would also be exceedingly great as well.” Qin Wentian laughed. The stronger one’s Astral Souls were, the more power the condensed Astral Nova would be.

If an Astral Nova condensed from an Astral Soul that originated from the 5th Heavenly Layer were to clash against one that was condensed from the 1st Heavenly Layer, and if both opponents were at the same level, the latter’s Astral Nova might be even shattered after a single clash.

“I have no specific time frame in mind—I will break through when the time is right and will only start my preparations then.” Qin Wentian gazed at the skies. Stepping into Heavenly Dipper requires a long period of preparation. Cultivators were usually able to sense when that ‘moment’ arrived, increasing their chance of success at breaking through to an immeasurable degree.

“Bleh, you have to be faster. Big Bro Chu Mang has already started condensing his Astral Nova.” Bai Qing stuck out her tongue, Qin Wentian could only helplessly shrug as he smiled in response. Chu Mang’s heart should be the most resolute among them and also considering the fact that he had stayed in the ninth level of Yuanfu the longest, it was only logical for him to be the first one to take the step towards Heavenly Dipper.

“I know, and you too, right?” Qin Wentian pinched Bai Qing’s nose, causing her to roll her eyes.

Bai Qing then sighed as she stared at the skies. “Time passes so quickly. I still clearly remember all those years ago, when Wentian gege taught me how to form an innate connection with the constellations in the Heavenly Layers. Now in the blink of an eye, we’ve already started condensing Astral Novas instead. Wentian gege, we have to work hard together!”

She stretched out her little finger as she spoke.

Qin Wentian smiled and made a pinky promise with her. “Okay.”

“I’m going to cultivate now.” Bai Qing stood up, a sweet smile in her eyes as she left. Despite the passage of years, she was still that adorable little girl Qin Wentian remembered.

“For myself, and also for all of you, I cannot slack here,” Qin Wentian murmured in his heart. Right now he wasn’t just one man against the entire world. He had so many companions willing to share the same fate as him.

He, Qin Wentian, couldn’t stagnate here.

“In the entire Heavenly Fate Rankings, I’m the one who possesses the most dazzling Astral Souls. Hence, the Astral Novas I condense will also be the strongest of the lot.” Qin Wentian’s eyes gleamed with sharpness. He then closed his eyes and adopted a cross-legged sitting position. With a gesture, astronomical amounts of Yuan Meteor Stones appeared from the interspatial rings, clustered around him. The astral energy within them formed a radiance that enveloped Qin Wentian, as he began absorbing them madly in his preparation.

If others were to notice him at this moment, they would all be stunned. Why would someone at the peak of Yuanfu require so many Yuan Meteor Stones to condense an Astral Nova? Even the proud chosen from the transcendent powers would lack the qualification to obtain so many Yuan Meteor Stones from their clan resources as well.

Qin Wentian wasn’t interested in condensing ordinary Astral Novas. He wanted to convert the almost endless amounts of astral energy into Divine Energy, which he would then use to condense a unique Astral Nova that would belong solely to him. The amount of cultivation resources clustered

around Qin Wentian was ten times, or even hundreds of times larger when compared to what other cultivators required when condensing an Astral Nova.

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Spring went and autumn came by, time was the most merciless thing in the world. Time would never stop to wait for anyone.

In the blink of an eye, seven months passed after the Heavenly Fate Rankings concluded. The experts from the Chen Clan still surrounded the ancient kingdom. They had tried more than a few times to break through the formation but were unable to succeed. Not only that, a few of those who attempted it ended up heavily injured, to the point of almost losing their lives. After that, no one else tried to breach the formation any more. However, they didn't give up. As long as Qin Wentian wasn't dead, they couldn't feel at ease in their hearts.

This young man that was supposed to fall in the ranking battle had somehow managed to summon the Vermilion Bird Formation and safely hide within it. Even the transcendent powers couldn't do anything to him now.

The discussion of the Heavenly Fate Rankings gradually faded as time passed. But there would still be people occasionally travelling to the ancient kingdom. However, these visitors could only watch from afar, unable approach it. The Chen Clan had stationed a large number of their experts nearby, effectively sealing all available entrances—even a fly wouldn't be able to escape their notice if it flew in.

They didn't believe Qin Wentian would be able to stay in there forever.

Without any interaction with the outside world, one's cultivation would run into a bottleneck sooner or later. Even if they broke through to Heavenly Dipper, they still had to come out eventually, and when they did, only death awaited them.

Chen Wang had narrowly escaped death, and after a full recovery, he immediately broke through to Heavenly Dipper. Even his shattered arm had been restored. Back then, his clash with Chen Wang had cancelled out most of Qin Wentian's strength, limiting the damage he'd dealt. Hence, Chen Wang's arms hadn't been completely destroyed and still had a chance to be mended

Not only Chen Wang, several of those rankers that survived the ranking battle had also broken through to Heavenly Dipper.

The Heavenly Dipper Realm was the beginning of a whole new frontier. From the moment they broke through, by right, their gazes should no longer be lingering on the Yuanfu Realm. And yet, the knots in their hearts still couldn't be untied...all because of Qin Wentian.

Too many major events had happened through this half year.

For example, in the Moon Continent, although the Star-Seizing Manor couldn't do or say anything about Yang Fan's death, they could still make things difficult for the White Deer Institute even if they couldn't kill Qin Wentian.

They had personally witnessed how close the Bailu siblings were to Qin Wentian, not to mention that when Qin Wentian was still in the Moon Continent, he had once joined the White Deer Institute.

And the White Deer Institute, which initially had been based in the eastern region, was then forced to leave that area from the pressure.

In other locations in Grand Xia, particularly the Qing Continent, the grudge between the Greencloud Pavilion and Nine Mystical Palace also erupted into an all-out war.

Not only that, the relationship between the other transcendent powers had also perceptibly worsened, with mini-clashes happening now and then

But naturally, Qin Wentian had no inkling of all of this. He continued lying on the arena platform, in a deep sleep, unknowing of the changes affecting the entire world.

"How long has it been?" Ouyang Kuangsheng glanced at the sleeping Qin Wentian as he asked Fan Le.

"Almost three months, look at the sheer amount of Yuan Meteor Stones he's using," Fan Le mumbled in awe. The light from the Yuan Meteor Stones glowed dimmer with every second, as Qin Wentian's Astral Souls blazed behind him, brighter and brighter with radiance. Clear gushing sounds from within Qin Wentian's Yuanfu could be heard, the intensity of that sound caused their hearts to tremble slightly in amazement.

“I wonder how much longer he’ll need to finish his preparations.”

It was a thought uppermost in minds of Qin Wentian’s companions. But before long, they too turned and departed the area—witnessing Qin Wentian’s progress, they couldn’t neglect their own cultivation!

Chapter 398: Astral Soul Choices

Cultivation was always something extremely boring. It required endurance, as well as a resolute will. If there was a lack in either of these attributes, it was difficult for one to become a truly powerful expert.

Within the palace of the ancient kingdom, these young cultivators were geniuses not merely on the basis of their talent. They had a resolute heart for their martial path, fueled by their thirst and conviction to grow stronger and stronger.

Among them, Chu Mang became the first to step into Heavenly Dipper.

Today, an incredible sharpness shot up to the Heavens at the location where Chu Mang was cultivating in, and the beam of sharpness was so powerful it was as though it could break straight through the formation world. This commotion naturally didn’t go unnoticed and soon after, several silhouettes flashed, appearing in Chu Mang’s location.

They saw Chu Mang sitting cross-legged as an intense light radiated from him. A starlight manifestation of a Heaven-Cleaving Axe shimmered in and out of existence.

That gigantic axe eventually flew into Chu Mang’s Yuanfu, fusing with his Astral Soul. The light radiating from him grew increasingly brighter, his entire aura was changing, until at last it appeared as though Chu Mang himself was that gigantic axe, exuding a sharpness so keen that nothing could block it.

Astral Nova—it was a clear indication of someone at the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

The Astral Novas that Stellar Martial Cultivators condensed were the combined embodiment of their cultivation levels, the state of their hearts, and lastly of their Martial Mandates. If one of these factors were lacking, it would be impossible to succeed, but once an Astral Nova was successfully condensed, this meant that the cultivator had stepped into the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

Standing up, Chu Mang slowly opened his eyes. A blinding axe light cleaved outwards in eight directions before shooting upwards, forming into a dome of light that enveloped him entirely. The sharpness he radiated made the onlookers feel as though even they would be split apart just from matching his gaze.

A powerful aura emanated forth from him, the aura of Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns. Chu Mang had succeeded in breaking through to the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

“The rate of consuming these resources is truly terrifying. Luckily, I only planned to condense two Astral Novas,” Chu Mang murmured before turning to the crowd and smiling at them. His aura and presence had totally changed, but that smile of his still gave off the same vibe as before, one that conveyed a simple honesty, albeit tempered with sharpness now.

There were too many experts that had fallen in the Purgatory Vermilion Bird Formation and quite a large number of these experts were all Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns. It was all because of them that Qin Wentian and his companions had enough cultivation resources to break through to Heavenly Dipper.

After Chu Mang, it was Ouyang Kuangsheng who would be next to succeed. His Astral Nova took the form of a burning titan, invoking terror at the sight of it.

And then it was finally Qin Wentian’s turn.

“Bzzz!” A terrifying aura permeated the air, causing Bailu Yi and Luo Huan to feel a sense of pressure so stifling that they couldn’t breathe, even though they stood far away. A manifestation of a gigantic Heavenly Hammer shimmered in and out of existence, as the intense light it exuded enveloped Qin Wentian, fusing together with his Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul.

“RUMBLE!~” The fusion between this manifestation of starlight and his astral soul reached completion, taking on a corporeal form. Countless intricate runic outlines could be seen engraved upon the surface of the Heavenly Hammer, and the pressure it exuded felt as heavy as a mountain. Luo Huan and Bailu Yi exchanged a glance, seeing the shock in each other’s eyes.

When Chu Mang and Ouyang Kuangsheng condensed their Astral Novas, they hadn’t felt this great a pressure. It seemed that Qin Wentian’s Astral Nova was somewhat different to the other two. It felt much more powerful, exuding a light that seemed brighter in comparison.

Qin Wentian's astral energy was then channelled into it, causing the light exuded from the Astral Nova to glow brighter in intensity as it floated in the air. Qin Wentian's eyes abruptly opened as he directly grabbed hold of his Astral Nova. A smile painted his face when he felt the dreadful, explosive waves of energy within it.

“Huh, he hasn't broken through yet?”

Bailu Yi froze, a look of bewilderment on her face. Qin Wentian glanced at her, and with a thought on his part, the gigantic Astral Nova shrunk into a miniature form, before entering into his Heavenly Hammer-aligned Yuanfu. Currently, all his Yuanfu Receptacles had expanded significantly and even the quality of the astral energy droplets stored in his Yuanfu had undergone a qualitative change, making him much more powerful compared to the past.

From Yuanfu to Heavenly Dipper, there was a barrier. This was because one needed to comprehend second level Mandates, one needed to expand their Yuanfu, their astral energy to evolve qualitatively, and finally, to condense an Astral Nova. To the majority of Yuanfu Cultivators, this was an incredibly difficult feat to accomplish. Even if they spent their entire lives attempting it, they might not be able to succeed. However, to Qin Wentian and his various companions, the requirements weren't at all difficult to accomplish.

At this moment, although the energy fluctuations coming from Qin Wentian were greatly formidable, it was still an aura at the Yuanfu Realm. This was why Bailu Yi felt bewildered—she didn't understand what was going on.

“I'll wait till I've condensed my two other Astral Novas first,” Qin Wentian remarked. The majority of Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns only condensed a single Astral Nova during the time they stepped into Heavenly Dipper. Maybe this was a result of their insufficient resources, or perhaps their own comprehension of their other Mandates wasn't that great. But to Qin Wentian, since he'd met all the conditions, he might as well condense all three Astral Novas before stepping into Heavenly Dipper. This way, his combat prowess would be greatly boosted the moment he broke through.

Qin Wentian couldn't help but click his tongue when he saw the depleted Yuan Meteor Stones littered around him. Even after obtaining the contents of interspatial ring's belonging to over ten Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns, he still felt that the resources he needed might still be a little lacking.

“I'll continue on with my cultivation.” Qin Wentian smiled at Luo Huan, Bailu Yi and the rest. After which, he took out yet another pile of Yuan Meteor Stones and proceeded the condensation of his second Astral Nova. This required a lengthy period of time.

Time flowed by; Bai Qing, Yun Mengyi and Mu Feng all stepped into the Heavenly Dipper Realm. The last person to do so was Fan Le. He had been the slowest to develop his Mandates to the second level and hence needed a longer time to consolidate his foundations. By the time he condensed his first Astral Nova, the others had either already condensed their second, or even third Astral Novas.

But there was still a person slower than Fan Le—Qin Wentian.

Out of everyone here, the difficulty of him condensing an Astral Nova was the highest. Only after a long time had passed did he finally manage to condense all three of his Astral Novas, all of which rested within each of his Yuanfu.

Right now, the amount of Yuan Meteor Stones on Qin Wentian was almost completely depleted.

Today, roughly around nine months had passed since the conclusion of the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

“Boss, why is your aura still stagnating at the Yuanfu Realm?” Fan Le sought out Qin Wentian, commenting in bewilderment as he felt the latter’s energy fluctuations. This was somewhat abnormal, as Qin Wentian had already finished condensing his Astral Novas, and his foundations were undoubtedly extremely solid. He belonged to the perfect kind of Yuanfu Cultivator that had maxed out their preparation with a total of three Astral Novas, yet why was his body still exuding an aura at the Yuanfu Realm?

“I have no idea either, but there might be a connection to it with the cultivation art I chose to cultivate in.” Qin Wentian had no answer to this question too, and it might be related to the Nine Astariums Cultivation Art he acquired from Emperor Azure. The Heavenly Dipper Realm would allow him to have a total of four Yuanfu—right now, he had only a total of three.

“I see. Anyway, at present only two of my Mandates are at the second level. For my third Mandate, the Mandate of Psyche-force, I still can’t comprehend it deeply enough to level it up, hence I’m unable to condense my third Astral Nova. But leaving that aside, I’m planning to condense my fourth Astral Soul first. Boss, do you have any suggestions?”

Fan Le sighed. In actuality, the fact that he’d stepped into Heavenly Dipper with two Astral Novas wasn’t too bad. The majority of Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns would break through with only a single Astral Nova condensed.

As for those from transcendent powers, their abundant cultivation resources would enable them to condense a total of two to three Astral Novas from the get go. Hence, the gap between ordinary cultivators and themselves could only widen further, right from the start.

For people like Chen Wang, whose Mandates had not only reached the second level, but were already at the Advanced Boundary, as well as taking into consideration the amount of time he spent consolidating his foundations at the ninth level of Yuanfu—geniuses like him could break through without breaking a sweat, as long as there were sufficient resources. This was the difference between talented people and ordinary people.

From another perspective, although Chen Wang was slower than his peers when it came to stepping into the Heavenly Dipper Realm, he suffered no disadvantages whatsoever. He would only lose out in the Yuanfu Realm, but the moment he stepped into Heavenly Dipper, his power would immediately experience a great boost. If not for this fact, those people wouldn't have wasted their time delaying and suppressing their cultivation bases just for the sake of the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

“Your current three Astral Souls are a flame-type, a bow-type and a psyche-force control type. Your attacks are exceedingly precise and you excel in sneak attacks, instantly slaying a thousand opponents with next to no effort. However, the problem is with the explosive strength of your attacks. You might suffer in the future if you were to face off against an opponent like Chen Wang.”

Qin Wentian calmly continued, “Hence, I suggest that you choose an astral soul that will boost your attack and speed, maximizing your current advantages. For strength, I've already explained, and as for speed, if you could increase it even further, the penetration attribute would be inconceivably fearsome. By then, who would be able to dodge or withstand a single one of your attacks?”

When one's attack speed increases, the power of their attack would naturally deliver a greater impact as well. Imagine a fruit's seed lightly flicked against your body compared to one that was shot out, boosted by a speed of 16x.

Qin Wentian could sense Fan Le's potential, and with the power of control he would definitely become one of the most fearsome archers to have ever existed.

“But of course, the most important thing is what path you wish to walk on in the future? I'm merely offering my input.” Qin Wentian smiled and patted Fan Le on his shoulder. It didn't matter if Fan Le chose to disregard his suggestions. As a cultivator, the most important thing was to follow their hearts. Only then would they be able to maximize their power, constantly advancing forward.

“Understood.” Fan Le grinned. He then continued, “You should consider your choice as well. I believe with your current capabilities, your perception and will should be powerful enough to condense an Astral Soul from the 6th Heavenly Layer. In any case I didn’t use up that much Yuan Meteor Stones condensing my two Astral Novas—here, take these.”

Fan Le passed a pile of Yuan Meteor Stones over before leaving. Qin Wentian didn’t reject them. Although the Yuan Meteor Stones were becoming scarce among them, there wasn’t a need to stand on ceremony between brothers.

And like what Fan Le had said, he truly had to properly consider what his fourth Astral Soul would be!

Chapter 399: Fourth Astral Soul

Ultimately, Qin Wentian strongly believed that cultivation was something that should follow the heart of the cultivator and hence, he didn’t put too much thought into what his choices should be.

Strength, attack power, defense, speed—he had no flaws in these areas. Hence, he decided not to think too much and would choose when the appropriate time came for him to choose.

Qin Wentian opened his eyes—he’d just opened his fourth Astral Gate and was currently using his perception and senses, opening up a pathway up to the Heavenly Layers.

Tonight, the starlight was exceptionally resplendent, and once again, Qin Wentian’s perception continuously climbed upwards, soaring up to the Astral River in the Nine Heavenly Layers.

After undergoing so much tempering, his perception was now at a monstrous level. Very swiftly, he bypassed the 4th Heavenly Layer, and soon after arrived at the 5th. At this moment, he felt a strong sense of pressure pushing back against him.

“I already have three Astral Souls at the 5th Heavenly Layer. This time around, I must definitely barge up to the 6th.” Qin Wentian’s will was incomparably resolute, and his perception continued to climb upwards as that sense of pressure grew increasingly overwhelming.

He stepped past various constellations, and even passed by those whose glow was extremely blinding.

“Peak of the 5th Heavenly Layer.” Qin Wentian paused as he regarded the sea of constellations, satisfaction in his eyes. After which, his countenance hardened as his perception rushed upwards.

His domineering conviction led Qin Wentian up to the 6th Heavenly Layer. Over here, even with his level of strength, he still felt fear from sensing the fluctuations of the various constellations.

Even geniuses might not be able to withstand such pressure, or even be capable of climbing to this layer, unless they broke through to the same level as a Celestial Phenomenon. In other words, only those from the Ascendant level were able to use their Astral Souls here to absorb astral light and convert it into astral energy. He, Qin Wentian, may be the only exception.

“A Flame-type Astral Soul, but the flames it emits seem to be that of hellfire. It also contains a hint of the underworld—this fire appears to be one that can be eternally inextinguishable, or at least until its target is incinerated to ashes.” Qin Wentian stared at a constellation near him, however he had no intentions to form an innate connection with it.

His perception continued soaring through the 6th Layer. Right now, he could still control his senses.

“That constellation...” Qin Wentian stared at a sabre-type constellation in the distance. It was completely pitch black in appearance, hanging suspended in the air. Even from such a far distance, Qin Wentian felt as though he could be split in half just from gazing upon it.

Qin Wentian involuntarily thought of Bai Qing executing the Nine Slashes of the Underworld. If the Astral Soul she condensed was this particular one, the power of her attack would definitely be augmented by an inconceivable amount.

Qin Wentian continued exploring, steeling himself against the mounting pressure that caused his senses to tremble.

He saw a constellation that emitted an exceedingly evil aura, in the shape of a gigantic skeleton that had a mountain of corpses and immeasurable remains stacked upon it. Other constellations were extremely far away from it, as though even they were fearful of it.

“This constellation most definitely contains extreme power.” A thought appeared in Qin Wentian’s mind, but he had no intentions to form an innate connection with it.

Cultivation follows one's heart. He wasn't evil by nature and regardless of how powerful an Astral Soul was, if it didn't match him well, that Astral Soul was still useless.

Although one could also use the power bestowed by the evil Astral Soul to do good, eventually the cultivator himself would slowly be influenced. Hence, it was still better to give up on such a constellation.

In the vast astral river of the 6th Layer, Qin Wentian saw many unfathomably powerful constellations. He could sense that he had already reached the edge of the 6th Layer, but when he tried to bridge the gap crossing into the 7th Heavenly Layer, he found himself unable to proceed.

In the nine Heavenly Layers, every three layers represented a gap. The luster of the corona surrounding the Astral Souls would change; for the initial three layers, there would only be a faint golden corona around the Astral Souls; for the middle three layers, there would be a pure golden corona around the Astral Souls; and for the 7th Heavenly Layer, the corona of the condensed Astral Soul would be violet-gold in color.

Astral Souls on the 7th Heavenly Layer totally and completely eclipsed Astral Souls condensed at the 6th Layer.

Qin Wentian's perception was forcibly bounced back, causing his mind to tremble violently as savage headaches wrecked him internally. He wiped traces of blood off the corner of his lips and rested for one full day. In the following days, he tried a total of seven times to breach the gap, and was met with failure every time. But naturally, his time at the 6th Layer wasn't wasted. He explored the Astral River there for quite some time, looking for a constellation suitable for him before he attempted to breach the 7th Layer.

This time around, it was already the eighth time his perception soared into the 6th Heavenly Layer. After some time, his perception reached the peak of the 6th Layer. There, he saw a constellation, right at the peak of the 6th Layer and just before the gap to the 7th. Around this constellation was a vast region of desolation, for as far as the eye could see, there existed only a single constellation.

This constellation was in the shape of a sword, and it appeared to be an ancient gigantic astral sword that was embedded right at the very peak of the 6th Heavenly Layer, suppressing all other constellations beneath it. From the resplendent light it radiated, there lay darkness in its very depths. Billions of floating sword shadows could be seen inside that light, obeying its summons.

Without question, this was a sword-type astral constellation, and it somehow felt like Excalibur—only the worthy could wield it, a sword belonging to a Monarch that would dominate the world.

If one managed to condense an Astral Soul originating from this, then all other sword-type Astral Souls would tremble in fear before it, submitting to it in reverence.

“You’re it, then!”

Qin Wentian’s will gushed forwards, moving towards that king of swords. Instantly, a terrifying wave of energy slashed downwards, attempting to cleave Qin Wentian’s consciousness into two, crippling his mind and turning him into an idiot.

“How tyrannical,” Qin Wentian mumbled, but this only made him want to condense it even more. His heart and will had long been tempered to the point where he didn’t fear anything. His will soared upwards, clashing with the energy wave of that sword. Yet, that unruly energy seemed unconquerable—nobody could control it.

Ordinary people wouldn’t even dream of touching it; they were not qualified to.

This was the first time for Qin Wentian to meet such a constellation, and it was as though it possessed its own power of thought. Yet despite the strong resistance, how could he give it up? His own terrifying will continued forth inexorably, fiercely pushing back the sword’s pressure.

On the arena platform, Qin Wentian’s body began trembling violently, as though it was about to be shredded by an immense pressure.

“What’s going on with your junior brother?” Nervousness painted his face as Mustang turned to Luo Huan.

“I’ve no idea, but there shouldn’t be anything wrong.” Although Luo Huan reply was as such, she also felt extreme worry in her heart.

Qin Zheng’s silhouette slowly walked over. Upon seeing the abnormal situation Qin Wentian was in, his eyes glimmered with a strange light as he commented, “He’s in the process of condensing an Astral Soul, but it seems that he’s met an extremely tyrannical one and he’s not willing to give it up.”

“BZZZ!”

The radiant astral light cascaded downwards, transforming into countless incomparably sharp sword slashing towards Qin Wentian in an unmatched tyrannical manner.

“This...” Qin Zheng stared on, dumbfounded. What constellation was Qin Wentian trying to condense an Astral Soul from exactly?

Qin Wentian’s trembling grew more and more intense, as demonic qi exuded in huge waves from his body. Even his will, determination and heart seemed to transform into tangible energy fusing together, shooting straight up the dome of heavens as it aided him in fighting against the constellation.

The constellation seemed bent on making him give up. The king of swords, mortals wasn’t qualified to wield its power.

Yet Qin Wentian’s heart had already been tempered to such a degree, how could he give up in the face of a mere constellation? He wanted to be the master of it, instead.

Qin Wentian opened his eyes and inclined his head. A terrifying light shone within them as he stared upwards, imposing his will of Mandates within his gaze.

Boundless starlight blasted downwards, and the trembling of his body slowly stopped. The initially aggressive rays of light now gently enveloped his body, as an aura of extreme sharpness pervaded the air. Moments later, an incomparably radiant, golden-colored glow radiated out from him as the astral soul-form of that ancient sword appeared to float above his head. A pitch-dark sword reminisces for the dark flames of purgatory.

“That corona...” Qin Zheng, Mustang and the rest felt terror in their hearts. The pure golden radiance radiating from it was at an intensity they had never seen before.

“An Astral Soul from the 6th Heavenly Layer.”

Mustang was dumbstruck, this disciple of his was constantly surprising him. He wasn’t even fully twenty-one yet and if he were to return to Chu now, he would stand at the very peak.

Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns were already considered legends in Chu.

The Astral Soul gradually finished forming, and then exuded a tyrannical aura of kings.

Qin Wentian hadn't finished yet—after the condensation of his Astral Soul, his next job was to birth his fourth Yuanfu.

Currently, Qin Wentian's combat prowess could already be considered in the Heavenly Dipper Realm. However, he birthed all three of his initial Yuanfu at the very start of the Yuanfu Realm. A period of time would be needed for the amount and quality of Astral Energy in this fourth Yuanfu to match up to the earlier three.

A month later, Qin Wentian finally stopped his cultivation. When he opened his eyes, he noticed several people surrounding him.

“You guys don't want to cultivate?” Qin Wentian asked.

“We've already cultivated for nine solid months,” Fan Le stated, depressed. “And what's going on? BOSS WHY HAVE YOU NOT BROKEN THROUGH TO HEAVENLY DIPPER YET?”

Qin Wentian could only shake his head with a bitter smile on his face. The indication of breaking through to Heavenly Dipper was the birth of an Astral Nova and the qualitative transformation of one's Yuanfu.

To ordinary people, they only had a single Yuanfu. So after their Astral Nova was nurtured and birthed in their Yuanfu, their Yuanfu would evolve and they would officially step into the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

But he, was different. He cultivated the Art of the Nine Astrariums and at the Heavenly Dipper Realm, he could have a total of four Yuanfu. He couldn't step into Heavenly Dipper before all four of his Yuanfu were nurtured and then birthed into an Astral Nova. It wasn't that he didn't want to, but he couldn't do so.

That was why the Art of the Nine Astrariums was so powerful. When he finally stepped into Heavenly Dipper, he would be completely different compared to ordinary Sovereigns. The gap between them was immeasurable. For opponents who only had a single Astral Nova, even without innate techniques, he would be able to effortlessly suppress them with just the number of novas he had alone.

“All of us, including myself, have already reached the threshold of Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns in terms of combat prowess. It’s time we think about how to exit this place,” Qin Wentian stated. To condense his fourth Astral Nova, Qin Wentian would first need to comprehend the Mandate of Swords to the second level. To do so, he would have to temper himself outside in order to break through any bottlenecks that may occur.

“I can send you guys out.”

A voice drifted over, as the gazes of the crowd turned in that direction, they discovered that the owner of the voice was none other than Qin Zheng.

Although Qin Zheng was trapped in with them, he didn’t really have a friendship with any of them. Even when they were learning the nine ultimate arts, he didn’t participate because he wasn’t that familiar with Qin Wentian.

Yet now, he actually said that he was able to send them out of the formation world.

Qin Wentian’s expression faltered, while the light in Yun Mengyi’s eyes brightened.

“I am the same as you, gaining all thirty-six eccentrics’ approval in the Unmatched Realm. Don’t forget that I excel in the Mandate of Space, and Yun Mengyi should be very clear of who my teacher in the Unmatched Realm is. He has given me a life-saving treasure.”

As he spoke, Qin Zheng took out an ancient scroll that emitted terrifying spatial waves—it seemed to belong to the concept of Space.

“This ancient scroll can control the power of space, transferring us ten thousand miles away. This is the treasure my teacher has given me, and we can make use of this to exit the Vermilion Bird Formation. But let me say this first, I have no control over this treasure, so all of us might end up being transferred to different places.”

“Since you have this treasure, why didn’t you use it to exit earlier?” Qin Wentian stared at Qin Zheng in puzzlement.

“Most of us here are from the Unmatched Realm. Although the Unmatched Realm has never interfered with matters of the outside world, my teacher as well as the rest of the eccentrics, do not want us to fall here.” Qin Zheng matched Qin Wentian’s gaze as he replied. He, Qin Wentian, Yun Mengyi, Chu Mang, Fan Le and Ouyang Kuangsheng were all cultivators of the Unmatched Realm.

“Fine, I will trust you on this.. Let’s go out then.” Qin Wentian stared at everyone as he continued his instructions, “After we’re out, everyone must leave Ginkou immediately. Don’t gather together, as this would make it easier to attract attention. Ouyang and Bai Qing, both of you return to your respective powers, there won’t be anyone daring to make a blatant move against you then. Chu Mang and Fan Le, you guys return to the Unmatched Realm in Azure Continent. Bailu Jing and Bailu Yi return to the White Deer Institute... but as for teacher Mustang and Senior Sister Luo Huan...”

There was no need for him to worry about Yun Mengyi and Mu Feng. But Mustang and Luo Huan just weren’t strong enough.

“I won’t go then, it isn’t so bad to stay here to cultivate.” Mustang laughed, “Wentian, after you grow powerful enough, remember the debt the Nine Mystical Palace owes us.”

“I’ll stay here and accompany teacher then.” Luo Huan smiled, “Pick us up when you are strong enough.”

Qin Wentian sighed, his heart filled with melancholy, but he nodded his head lightly. Gazing at Little Rascal, who was being hugged by Luo Huan, a series of yiyiyaya sounds echoed in his mind.

“You want to stay here as well?” Qin Wentian asked Little Rascal.

“Arf!” Little Rascal bobbed its head in agreement.

“Alright, accompany teacher Mustang and sister Luo Huan in my stead then. I will definitely be back for you guys,” Qin Wentian stated, as he withdrew the excess Yuan Meteor Stones in his possession, passing it over to them.

“Wentian gege, I don’t want to be separated from you so quickly.” Bai Qing pulled at his hands, sadness apparent in her eyes.

“You are still so weak, wouldn’t you be a burden if you stayed by my side?” Qin Wentian laughed causing Bai Qing stick her tongue out at him, knowing that Qin Wentian was intentionally teasing her.

“I will put in all my efforts in cultivation when I return. When the Mystic Moon Sect falls to my control, I will come and help you then.” Bai Qing smiled in an extremely adorable manner. Yet everyone knew that under all her smiles and laughter, there lay an incomparably resolute heart—she was a practitioner of the Chaotic Art of the Heavenly Devil after all.

“Mhm.” Qin Wentian nodded, gazing at every one of them. As he drew in a deep breath, he felt a great sense of reluctance at parting with his companions. But despite his reluctance, he understood that no matter what happened, the act of barging through Grand Xia had to be done single-handedly!

Chapter 400: Sword Reverence City

Pill Emperor Hall, Moon Continent. In the 99 flights of steps leading upwards, with celestial qi pervading the air, the main palace of the Pill Emperor Hall was built so tall that its tip reached the heavens, and was revered by people in all the eight directions.

To many, Pill Emperor Hall was sacred ground.

The majority of experts from Pill Emperor Hall were alchemists, and could save the lives of ordinary humans just with the pills they concocted. Hence, most people felt to them, that the Pill Emperor Hall was one of the best transcendent powers to currently exist.

In that main hall right now, fragrant incense permeated the air, appearing truly to be a place fit for immortals to reside. However, right towards the back of all the palaces and halls, there was a forbidden gate where no one was permitted to enter.

Many powerful experts guarded the gate, and beyond it, the celestial qi pervading the air was magnified, transformed into a dense mist. This caused several of the Pill Emperor Hall’s disciples to sigh with longing. Legend has it that this was the sacred place of the Pill Emperor Hall, purely for the current Saintess of the sect to use for her baptism. After the ritual, the celestial qi exuding from the Saintess would be more intense, and her talent would strengthen, causing countless to hold her in reverence.

However, the Pill Emperor Hall had an ironclad rule. Upon entering the sacred ground of their sect, then in this life, for all eternity, they would be the people of the Pill Emperor Hall. They would be unable to marry outside, and thus live and die in the sect.

At this moment, past the forbidden gate, a silhouette could be seen walking forward. This person was none other than Luo He from the Pill Emperor Hall.

Luo He slowly walked forwards, to the end of the celestial mist. In front of her, a cliff could be seen and on top of the cliff there was yet another figure—her senior brother, and Zhan Chen’s master.

The Luo He now was a far cry from her usual self. As she walked up the cliff, she appeared extremely strained and ill at ease, casting her gaze downwards towards the valley depths. If others could see what Luo He saw now, they would definitely be stricken with terror, scared out of their minds.

The sacred Pill Emperor Hall was actually built upon a mountain range, surrounded by a sea of corpses and skeletons.

This mountain range exuded an overwhelming stench of death that originated from the ancient bones buried for all eternity underneath.

Other than this terrifying scene, there were numerous stone platforms scattered around, with several white-robed youthful females sitting cross legged upon it. Their individual beauty was capable of stirring the heavens, yet, what was weird about this scene was that their expressions all seemed a little strange, sluggish...and somewhat lifeless.

And right in the middle of these white-robed females, there was a set of skeletal remains that emitted a red glow, bringing to mind the rhythmic fluctuations of life.

“Have you prepared a total of eighty-one essence-gathering bodies for me?”

A voice rasped, reverberating with extreme evilness, drifting out from the skeletal remains. Luo He’s heart involuntarily clenched, her countenance was filled with acute discomfort as she cast a glance at her senior brother beside him.

“I will do my best,” Luo He respectfully replied.

“Hmph!”

That cold snort magnified the pressure on Luo He’s heart, causing her countenance to turn extremely pale.

“You’d better know your priorities.”

Luo He trembled intensely as she forced a bow. “I will do my best.”

“I will give you one more year of time.” The cold voice resounded as Luo He nodded her head, before silently retreating. She quietly thought in her heart, “Qingcheng, ah Qingcheng, I initially wanted you to succeed me, and on account of your talent I shall give you one last chance. But if you continue being foolish, then don’t blame me for being heartless.”

Today would mark the first year since the conclusion of the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

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In the central region of Grand Xia, there was a city named Sword Reverence City.

Although this city wasn't as luxurious as the nine continents, it was still exceedingly famous over this vast piece of region of about ten thousand miles. Because, other than the Yan Continent, which specialized in swords, this city was another location where sword fanatics would gather.

Hence, it was named as the Sword Reverence City.

Outside the city gates of Sword Reverence City, there was a path that led to the edge of a precipice. Here, the air was pervaded with terrifying sword qi, and at the edge of the land the surface was extremely flat, as though the whole place was formed when a monstrous gigantic sword sundered the earth, cleaving it apart, with the remnants forming the precipice.

Nine swords of incomparable sharpness were embedded at the edge of the precipice, their bodies bent, accepting the worship and reverence of millions of people. Hence, the city at the side of this precipice, was named as the Sword Reverence City.

Today, there was an extremely popular topic running through the city that was heavily discussed by many.

A few months ago, a young swordsman had appeared in the city. This swordsman was clad in white, with an ancient sword strapped behind his back, giving off an aura of sharpness that further enhanced his handsome features.

This young man came to the Sword Reverence City to gain enlightenment into the Mandate of Swords by finding people to spar against him every day. To everyone's shock, this young man actually comprehended the Mandate of Swords in a mere three days.

The first level of insight in the Mandate of Swords, was sharpness.

A sword that was sharp enough had nothing it couldn't cut through, capable of overcoming all obstacles.

This young man comprehended the Mandates of Swords in three days, reached the Advanced Boundary of the first level in ten, broke through to the Transformation Boundary after one month and finally, achieving the Perfection Boundary at three months.

His accomplishments were personally witnessed by many in the crowd, and they couldn't help but believe that in this world, there was truly a genius at that level.

Not only that, this young man's perception was beyond extraordinary. For those that crossed blows with him, he'd actually learn their sword arts and techniques right after the first pass and even use it against them. Such talent truly caused all the spectators to be stunned.

From the time he started on the path of comprehending the sword, all the way up till now when he'd become a sword master, a total of three months had passed. Not only that, he had already defeated several powerful sword cultivators at the same realm as him, purely by sword techniques. It was as if regardless of whoever he fought against, he would defeat them all the same.

Only when he had no more opponents in the Reverence Sword Precipice, did this young man proceed and enter the city.

Right now, in the Sword Reverence City, that young man was currently sparring against another young man around twenty-six to twenty-seven years of age. Both their sword arts were unfathomably consummate, as sword qi devastated the surrounding area of their duel.

"Haha, Brother Qin's sword arts are truly brilliant. I, Zong, am truly impressed." The other young man took a step back and returned his sword to his sheath. He stared at the other party with respect in his eyes. Having such achievements at such a young age, he could truly be termed as a demon-level genius when it came to the path of swords.

This talented young man was naturally Qin Wentian. After he exited the ancient kingdom, he didn't linger behind in Ginkou and left directly, coming to the Sword Reverence City to cultivate in his sword techniques. He had to first comprehend the Mandate of Swords to the second level before condensing an Astral Nova to break through to the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

But in truth, although the aura Qin Wentian exuded was still at Yuanfu, from another perspective, his three Astral Novas would indicate that his combat prowess was already at the Heavenly Dipper level.

"Brother Zong's sword arts are astounding as well, as expected of someone from a powerful sect." Qin Wentian smiled.

Zong Qian's eyes flashed with a bright glow as he smiled back, "Seems like Brother Qin has already figured out my identity. Truth be told, I'm Zong Qian from the Zong Clan of the Sword Reverence City."

There were three major powers in the city, respectively known as the Zong Clan, Li Clan and the Heavenly Sword Sect. They had a countless number of disciples under their wings who had come to this city to join them, enabling the sect and clans to prosper rather than decline throughout the years.

These three powers were all extremely prestigious. Experts were as common as clouds within their groups.

Of all three powers, the Zong Clan was the one with lowest profile, the Li Clan was the most high-handed, while the Heavenly Sword Sect's renown and influence was considered the greatest. The choice of countless young cultivators upon arriving at this city would most definitely be the Heavenly Sword Sect. After all, the other two were only clans.

"I'm Qin Wen." Qin Wentian nodded his head.

"I won't lie, Brother Qin, but I feel a little puzzled by the rumors in the city. Is the matter where you took only three months from a beginner to become a swordmaster really true?" Zong Qian's personality was straightforward, hence he asked directly. In fact, many people felt that Qin Wentian was actually an expert in the sword pretending to be a beginner to gain recognition and fame.

"If I say yes, would Brother Zong believe me?" Qin Wentian laughed.

Zong Qian muttered irresolutely to himself for a moment before replying, "If it was before this, I wouldn't have believed it. But now that I've met Brother Qin in person, if Brother Qin say its true, I will surely believe it as so."

"Why?" Qin Wentian curiously asked.

"Us sword users cultivate our sword heart. Our personality won't deviate from the way we use our sword. For those with strange and crafty sword techniques, their personality will reflect it as such. Brother Qin's sword was sharp and true, overwhelming and tyrannical, pressing courageously forward, and even with a faint sense of a King within. From exchanging moves against you, how could I be unable to tell the sort of character you have?" Zong Qian laughed, causing Qin Wentian to be slightly stunned.

Zong Qian was truly from one of the three sword-wielding major powers, using one's sword arts to evaluate his opponent's character.

“Not only that, Brother Qin’s swordplay is extremely pure, your sword intent clear and sharp. It would truly be a waste if Brother Qin hadn’t chosen to cultivate in the path of swords.”

“Brother Zong praises me too much.” Qin Wentian bitterly smiled.

“We hit it off right from the start, I’m slightly older than you, hence, I should be your big brother. Today, let’s go back to my residence, and we will exchange sword pointers while drinking beautiful wine,” Zong Qian spoke enthusiastically, clutching Qin Wentian by his arm causing Qin Wentian to start slightly. However, as he directed his gaze towards Zong Qian, he discovered his countenance was clean and filled only with pure intentions of forming a friendship, extremely sincere without a hint of hypocrisy.

Just as he’d said earlier, the personality and character of sword cultivators could be inferred from the way they used their swords. Zong Qian’s sword was straightforward and swift, just like his character. He simply did what he wanted to do.

However, at this moment, the whistling of sword qi could be heard gushing over nearby. Lifting their heads, they saw three sharp swords speeding along in the air, instantly landing beside Qin Wentian. The newcomers were made up of two males and one female.

The two males were around thirty in age, while the female had a beautiful countenance, with limpid eyes, aged around twenty-five to twenty-six.

Upon seeing the appearance of these three, Zong Qian instantly relinquished his hold on Qin Wentian’s arms. But the three of them had long seen what happened while they were in the air. Their eyes were like torches, filled with sharpness, as they stared at Qin Wentian.

“Are you that rumored undefeatable swordsman?” One of the males by the side had a blood dot in the centre of his brows, giving people a tyrannical feeling. He stood on his sword, staring at Qin Wentian as he coldly inquired.

“It is I, Qin,” Qin Wentian replied.

“I initially thought that you were alone and hence I wanted to spar against you. Who would have thought that you’d actually be someone from the Zong Clan.” The other male who had sword-angled eyebrows spoke, his words radiating enmity.

“What did I tell you guys, it’s impossible for someone to use only three months to step into the Perfection Boundary of the first level. It’s obvious this entire thing was a setup. He’s originally a

sword cultivator, and not what the rumors were saying—that he was recently a beginner.” The female’s thin lips mumbled, her harsh tone filled with unkindness.

Qin Wentian frowned slightly, only to see Zong Qian icily retorting, “Li Nian, this is the first time Brother Qin came to our Sword Reverence City. He has no relations with my Zong Clan.”

“Oh, are you trying to hide your relationship now? It’s useless. Since he’s someone your Zong Clan invited, I guess you guys must have already made your preparations to fight against us. Since there’s such a good opportunity now, why don’t we exchange some pointers with each other?” the female icily stated. As the sound of her voice faded, the male with the sword-angled brows blasted out a palm strike, and an instant later, a terrifying sword qi gushed out, flying right towards Qin Wentian.

Zong Qian stepped out in front of Qin Wentian, blocking the attack as he coldly replied, “The grudge between the Li and Zong Clan is for us alone to bear. Don’t drag a bystander into it.”

“Since you guys did it, why are you so afraid to admit it? Since this expert was hired by the Zong Clan, why are you so afraid to do battle?” The countenance of the sword-angled eyebrows male grew sharper and sharper, as he continued slamming his palms forth. The sword qi gushing from him was now imbued with the will of his mandates.

Zong Qian immediately responded, exploding forth with his aura. The male he was currently up against wasn’t your average opponent, and not even Qin Wentian’s Mandate of Swords was enough to stand against him, despite already reaching the Perfection Boundary of the first level.

And during their earlier exchange of blows, Zong Qian hadn’t sensed any other Mandates from Qin Wentian. He now believed that Qin Wentian had only comprehended the Mandate of Swords and would only be at a severe disadvantage if he were to go up against the sword-angled eyebrows male—such a move would only invite calamity on himself!

Zong Qian similarly exploded forth with his aura. The current male he was fighting against wasn’t just some run-of-the-mill opponent and although Qin Wentian’s Mandate of Swords had reached the Perfection Boundary of the first level, it wasn’t enough to stand against someone like the sword-angled eyebrows male.

Not only that, when Zong Qian exchanged blows with Qin Wentian earlier, he couldn’t sense the will of any other Mandates from Qin Wentian, he strongly felt that Qin Wentian only comprehended the Mandate of Swords and thus was afraid that Qin Wentian would suffer a severe disadvantage when fighting against this male, inviting a calamity on himself!