

Ancient GM 401

Chapter 401: Legend of the Demon Sword

At this moment, Qin Wentian felt slightly depressed. He'd just been acquainted with Zong Qian and yet he was being treated as someone hired by the Zong Clan. And now there were even people who wanted to deal with him. What utter nonsense.

His gaze swept ahead over to Zong Qian, only to see him similarly blast forth with his palms as resplendent sword rays shone, materializing into many terrifying sharp swords floating before him. He then turned and spoke to Qin Wentian, "Brother Qin, this matter has nothing to do with you. You leave first, they wouldn't really dare do anything to me."

"You want to leave? Do you think you will be able to succeed?" The female in the middle snorted coldly, as a sharp sword appeared in her hand. Among the three major powers of the Sword Reverence City, almost everyone focused their cultivation on swords.

Qin Wentian felt the tip of the sharp sword pointing at him, feeling its sharpness boring down against him. He sighed in his heart, these opponents were all at the ninth level of Yuanfu and were pretty strong. But sadly, opponents at the ninth level of Yuanfu weren't even worthy of mention.

"You better move your sword away." Qin Wentian glanced at the female as he emotionlessly spoke. "I, Qin, have just arrived at the Sword Reverence City, and I am not willing to fight against anyone."

"Hmph."

That female evidently didn't appreciate his words. Killing intent gathered at the center of her brows as she icily retorted, "Since you are hired by the Zong Clan, you should be very clear on the rules. Why do you have to pretend to be a beginner, lying to others? What purpose does that serve? And since you've already been embroiled in this matter, you should already be prepared for death."

"Li Nian, stop being so barbaric." Zong Qian's sword-type Astral Soul erupted forth as he hovered in the air, radiating battle intent.

"I'd rather kill someone unjustly, than spare an innocent that might be guilty." Li Nian's voice contained a deathly chill within.

"Oh, are you bullying people from my Zong Clan just because you win in numbers?" A cold snort drifted over from afar. Sword-light flashed as the whistling of flying swords slicing the air apart with great speed could be heard. In that moment, several people descended around the area beside Zong Qian, coldly regarding the three from the Li Clan.

“Nian`er.”

Yet another voice resounded in the air. All of them inclined their heads, and their countenances changed. A character around the age of thirty stood atop a flying sword, projecting an extraordinary aura while staring down at all of them.

“Li Ran.” The expressions of those from Zong Clan grew incredibly unsightly when they noticed the arrival of this person. Li Ran’s status in the Li Clan was ranked quite highly. He’d stepped into the Heavenly Dipper Realm at the age of thirty and his combat prowess was astonishing. He could be considered one of the rare elites with outstanding talent, the strongest among the younger generation. His sword was like graceful lightning, killing people so quickly that they died even before their blood stained his swords.

In the near future, the three major powers of the Sword Reverence City intended to vie for the ten-year rights of extraction around the flatlands of the sword precipice. This was an extremely important issue, enough for them to bare their teeth with daggers drawn in a state of mutual hostility. This was especially true for members of the younger generation, as they were the focal point of this whole event. Hence, when these people from the Li Clan discovered Qin Wentian was ‘hired’ by the Zong Clan, they readied themselves to deal with him.

Li Ran’s sharp gaze swept over everyone, before finally landing on Qin Wentian. The intensity of his eyes seemed capable of piercing through Qin Wentian, yet his gaze merely lingered for a moment before turning to Li Nian. “Nian`er, what’s going on?”

“This person was the rumored beginner sword cultivator that was practicing in the Sword Reverence Precipice. But we found out that it was all a lie—he was already proficient in swordplay and is someone hired by the Zong Clan,” Li Nian calmly spoke.

Li Ran’s eyes turned back to Qin Wentian as he stated detachedly, “In this, I won’t bully you. Fight against Li Nian and if you win, you are free to go.”

“What if I lose?” Qin Wentian’s countenance looked extremely indifferent. A recent Heavenly Dipper Sovereign? That was basically the same level as him, he didn’t fear Li Ran at all.

“In the future when you represent the Zong Clan to fight on the platform, defeat means death. Since that’s the case, then if you lose here today, you should already know what will happen,” Li Ran casually spoke, as though he was speaking of a matter of no significance.

Qin Wentian coldly laughed. If he won he can go, but if he lost, it meant death?

Flicking his sleeves, Qin Wentian took a step forwards, prepared to act.

“Li Ran, don’t go too overboard.”

At this moment, Zong Qian's voice rang out. A ruthless light flashed in his eyes, and with an intention of his will, a small resplendent sword appeared in front of him. The keening of this sword made the entire space shudder from the intensity of sword intent gushing forth from it.

"This sword was bestowed on me by an elder in my clan. Don't push me too far or I will definitely take Li Nian's life as compensation."

Zong Qian's expression was ice-cold.

Li Nian's countenance changed, becoming exceptionally unsightly. She could feel the sword locking down on her.

She rapidly stepped back, only to see the small sword instantly zooming forwards, hovering before her as the sword keen increased in intensity.

"If I choose to kill you, then you cannot escape." Zong Qian's voice was filled with a strong sense of threat.

"If you kill her, all of you will die here by my hands." Li Ran stepped forth, and the instant he did so, the entire sky seemed to be swallowed whole by a towering sword-might. Those from the Zong Clan felt as if their bodies were about to be lacerated into pieces. This was the oppressiveness from a second level Mandate of Swords.

"One breath, and I will reap her life." Zong Qian's voice was ice-cold. He then stared at Qin Wentian and spoke, "Brother Qin, let's go."

Initially, Qin Wentian was already prepared to act. But seeing how Zong Qian was treating him as a friend, he didn't want to stir up any trouble from the Zong Clan and thus, refrained from doing so.

His temperament now was already different from the past. Even Li Ran wasn't worthy of mention in front of his eyes. To kill or not to kill him, it was just a matter of whether he wanted to do so or not.

These few opponents didn't have the qualifications to stir up his anger.

Nodding slightly, Qin Wentian left with Zong Qian. That keening of the small sword was still tightly locked on to Li Nian, causing her countenance to pale as she trembled with impotent anger. Several moments after Zong Qian and the others disappeared, only then did the small sword fly through the air, returning back to Zong Qian.

“If I meet them again, I will definitely slay them,” Li Nian icily stated.

“You will have the opportunity to do so soon enough, there’s no need to be so hasty about it,” Li Ran calmly spoke, before their group departed as well.

Right now, Qin Wentian and Zong Qian were heading towards the Zong Clan. Zong Qian bitterly shook his head as he smiled, “How dangerous. Li Ran is truly powerful and could be considered one of the strongest in our generation. He has already stepped into Heavenly Dipper and if it weren’t for my sword treasure, we might all have suffered badly today. I’m truly sorry to have implicated Brother Qin in this, and humbly seek your forgiveness.”

“It’s a small matter,” Qin Wentian casually replied.

“Brother Qin is a magnanimous man indeed.” Zong Qian laughed. “This matter arose because of the existence of that range of swords. In the depths of the Reverence Sword Precipice, there is an ancient demon sword embedded within. It was rumored to have descended from the Heavens, while others also said that this sword was left behind from powers who warred against each other during the primordial era. The precipice itself was sliced apart by that very sword, and right now in this age, it still remains deep within the depths. It is able to absorb demonic light from demon-aligned astral constellations within the Nine Heavenly Layers. Eventually, this formed a range of swords below, occasionally causing terrifying demonic beasts to manifest.”

“Is this true?” A sharp light flashed in Qin Wentian’s eyes. He had witnessed the exalted majesty the Reverence Sword Precipice exuded. Could it really be birthed from the terrifying sword slash of a sword that had sundered the earth? If that was true, how powerful would that sword be?

“Yes. And many precious swords were also unearthed from that sword range, hence, every ten years, the three major powers each select three people to contest for the rights of excavation. They mistakenly assumed that Brother Qin is someone our Zong Clan hired and hence tried to make a move against you.”

Zong Qian slowly explained, as Qin Wentian nodded in understanding. So this was what was going on. The three powers could enlist the help of an outsider for the sake of the contest. No wonder they had reacted so sensitively and wanted to remove him.

“Experts are as common as clouds in the three powers, but why has no one seized the demon sword for themselves yet?” Qin Wentian puzzledly inquired.

Zong Qian had a wry smile on his face, “This sword is too demonic, capable of absorbing the blood of others. Previously, there were indeed people who wanted to acquire it, but the instant they

touched it, all the blood in their bodies drained out, and they turned into a dry husk. The sword is simply too terrifying, and no one dares to even think of obtaining it.”

“Truly, it does live up to its name as a demon sword,” Qin Wentian mused.

“There’s something even more bizarre. Once every year, the demon sword lets out wails filled with sadness, as though it yearns for an owner. Every time the wailing starts, an abundance of demonic energy descends from the demonic constellations above in the Nine Heavenly Layers, vibrating and immersing the sword range. I know it sounds unbelievable, but any swords unearthed from the sword range after that are all demonic swords. They’re able to absorb demonic-aligned astral energy, resembling the shape of a demon, and even has the potential to evolve further.”

Zong Qian shook his head as he spoke. Were it not for him personally witnessing all this, he wouldn’t have believed it himself.

He would often wonder, would there be a character in the future that could master the demon sword?

At this moment, Qin Wentian and the others had already arrived at the sword clan. Outside the entrance to the Zong Clan, nine gigantic swords could be seen embedded in the earth, with each reaching a height of twenty metres. A terrifying sword intent pervaded the air, so strong that it made people breathless.

“Indeed, as befitting a major power that focuses on swords.” Qin Wentian stared at the nine swords as he laughed.

“Brother Qin is too nice.” Zong Qian smiled, only to hear Qin Wentian inquiring, “The roots of the Zong Clan are too deep, how powerful is your clan exactly?”

Zong Qian was slightly bewildered, and he stared at Qin Wentian as he replied, “Truth be told, I’m not sure how strong my clan is exactly. But I’ve once heard my clan lord stating that disciples of our Zong Clan, should all be as low profile as possible, taking pride in being reserved rather than revealing their brilliance to the world. Hence, our Zong Clan refrains from recklessly offending others. But that’s only applicable during normal times. For sword cultivators, when they truly explode forth with their brilliance, they have to do so overwhelmingly, ensuring that all will be dazzled by their performance. With a sword in their hands, nothing in Heaven and Earth can stop them. If there’s anyone who dares to step on our heads just because we maintain a low profile, we shall retaliate in kind.”

Qin Wentian’s countenance froze slightly, before he nodded. The clan lord of the Zong Clan had such strength of character. With the amount of hidden reserves they possessed, in terms of resources and talents, the Zong Clan had no need to fear either of the two other major powers.

“Your clan lord’s principles strike the chords in my heart. Will Brother Zong introduce me to him?” Qin Wentian smiled, his words causing Zong Qian to regard Qin Wentian curiously. “You wish to meet with the clan lord?”

“Mhm.” Qin Wentian nodded lightly. “You will know of this in the future, it’s not appropriate for me to talk too much now.”

A bright light flashed in Zong Qian’s eyes before he laughed, “Seems like even if I didn’t invite Brother Qin over, Brother Qin would have taken the initiative to visit my Zong Clan. But no matter, since Brother Qin desires a meeting with my clan lord, I will do the initial introductions and pave the way for you.”

“Many thanks.” Qin Wentian clasped his hands. He hoped that the Zong Clan wouldn’t disappoint him.

Everyone knew that in Grand Xia, there were several places one could go to to cultivate in the sword. The Yan Continent was one of the best locations, even stronger compared to Sword Reverence City. However, Qin Wentian chose to come here because other than cultivating the path of swords, he had another purpose in mind.

“But before all that, Brother Qin must still accompany me to drink till we’re both satisfied,” Zong Qian replied, irreverently straightforward. Qin Wentian answered him with a smile. “Sure, with excellent wine, how can I reject such an invitation?”

Chapter 402: Sword Son of Zong Clan

In a study room inside the Zong Clan, a middle-aged man quietly sat, studying a scroll with his head lowered.

Not far away from him, the silhouette of a young man standing patiently could be seen. This young man was none other than Qin Wentian. Zong Qian made good on his promise and did the primary introductions, acquiring the chance for a meeting between Qin Wentian and the clan lord of the Zong Clan.

After several moments, the middle-aged man slowly inclined his head. There were streaks of white mixed with black in the hair on both sides of his temples. He exuded a reserved aura, yet within that tranquil and calm bearing, Qin Wentian could sense a terrifying sharpness hidden within.

A single glance from him seemed to be able to penetrate to the very depths of Qin Wentian’s soul.

“Zong Qian mentioned that you’d garnered some fame in Sword Reverence City recently. Comprehending the first level of the Mandate of Swords to the Perfection Boundary in just three months?” The clan lord of the Zong Clan was named Zong Yi. He calmly inquired, as he gazed casually at Qin Wentian.

“Mhm.” Qin Wentian nodded his head lightly, as a strange glow flashed past the clan lord’s eyes. “To be able to comprehend the Perfection Boundary of a first level Mandate in three months... Strange. Could it be that this is your fourth Astral Soul?”

“Senior is wise.” Qin Wentian smiled. As the sound of his voice faded, Zong Yi’s eyes flashed with sharpness. “You are already at the Heavenly Dipper Realm, what’s your name?”

“Qin Wentian.”

Qin Wentian calmly stated, and an instant later, the sharpness in Zong Yi’s gaze heightened even further, resembling sword beams directed straight at Qin Wentian.

“A year ago, Qin Wentian, the first ranker of the Heavenly Fate Ranking, was still trapped within the Vermilion Bird Formation in Ginkou.” Zong Yi glared at Qin Wentian.

“I came to the Sword Reverence City around three months ago. By that time, I had already exited the formation world,” Qin Wentian calmly continued. Zong Yi suddenly stood up, his sharp gaze now filled with heaviness. Why had the first ranker of the Heavenly Fate Rankings come to his Zong Clan?

“Since you are Qin Wentian, do you not know the number of people who want your life? Are you not afraid that I will capture you instead?” Zong Yi stared at Qin Wentian intently, as a terrifying sword-might enveloped the study room.

“Sword users should follow their heart, and do what they want to do, holding their heads up high as they laugh arrogantly at the nine heavens. Clan lord has the entire Zong Clan keeping a low profile, not exhibiting their true power. I wonder, has the hot blood within your veins run cold?” Qin Wentian didn’t answer but instead chose to reply with another question. Zong Yi’s brows furrowed deeply. “What are you trying to say? What is your purpose here?”

“To take control of the sword that is the Zong Clan.” Qin Wentian looked straight into the eyes of the clan lord as a terrifying light glimmered within his own. He stretched his arms out, only to see an authority token clutched in his palms.

In that instant, Zong Yi's body violently trembled, as though countless thunderbolts had struck down in his mind. The fearsome sword-might pressed down on Qin Wentian, yet Qin Wentian calmly continued to survey him, his face a mask of resolution.

"Bzzz!" A sword wind gusted, as the door to the study room slammed shut.

Zong Yi took a step forwards, his eyes glued to the authority token in Qin Wentian's hands.

"And what if I kill you now?" Zong Yi's aura surged upwards. Right now, if he truly held any malicious intentions, then Qin Wentian would die without a doubt.

"Does Clan Lord know the reason why I chose to participate in the Heavenly Fate Rankings?" Qin Wentian asked.

"No," Zong Yi replied.

"Your clan isn't the first hidden faction I came to. Before the Zong Clan, the first faction I found had the same thinking as Clan Lord. But afterward, we came to an agreement—as long as I obtained the third ranking in the Heavenly Fate Rankings, they would follow me unconditionally and listen to my every command. In fact, I was ranked first."

Qin Wentian slowly spoke while Zong Yi's gaze flickered, many thoughts appearing in his mind.

Although the Zong Clan resided in the Sword Reverence City, they still paid attention to the major events of Grand Xia. The scroll that he'd been reading contained the information report on the Heavenly Fate Rankings held a year ago. He knew that the recent ranking battle had one of the strongest batches of contestants. There was even the emergence of a mysterious power that had tried to slay some of the rankers of the Heavenly Fate Rankings.

After reading that scroll, Zong Yi sighed. If their Zong Clan had such a character, then even if it meant their collective deaths, they would still go all-out to support that person, aiding him to conquer Grand Xia.

And right now, that person was standing right in front of his eyes with the Azure Emperor Token in his hands.

Grand words indeed, had the hot blood in him run cold? Grand words indeed, to take control of the sword that was the Zong Clan.

"The Zong Clan has no need for your control." A terrifying ancient sword appeared in Zong Yi's hands and with a burst of movement, he closed the distance and pointed the tip of the sword directly

at the center of Qin Wentian's brows. Qin Wentian was an inch away from death yet the resoluteness etched on his face never wavered.

"Are you not afraid that I will kill you?" Zong Yi coldly stated.

"Does Clan Lord know of the Celestial Lake Palace?" Qin Wentian unperturbedly spoke.

"Fairy Qingmei." Zong Yi's countenance faltered for a moment. There were too many rumors about Fairy Qingmei and the Azure Emperor.

"If I die while inside the Zong Clan, the Zong Clan will definitely suffer an all-out annihilation." Qin Wentian didn't waste words. Zong Yi stared at him. "Are you saying that Fairy Qingmei is the protector of the successor?"

Qin Wentian didn't comment; his eyes flickered as all three of his Astral Novas burst forth into being, trembling the void with their might.

"What powerful Astral Novas." Zong Yi stared at the three Novas with a thunderstruck expression on his face. Following which, he saw Qin Wentian's fourth astral soul appearing above Qin Wentian's head. That terrifying pure golden corona surrounded a pitch dark sword, exuding an aura that made those who saw it immediately wish to submit.

"6th Heavenly Layer." Zong Yi's heart clenched. Such talent was almost unbelievable.

"If Clan Lord doesn't want me to be the one to wield the Zong Clan, there are two more choices. First, you kill me, which will result in unknown consequences. Second, you let me go. And if I survive and unite the rest of the hidden factions in the future, I will definitely come back to clean the Zong Clan up." Qin Wentian spoke slowly, the determination behind his words caused Zong Yi's countenance to waver.

This was the first time he trembled when coming face to face with someone from the junior generation.

Zong Yi had never imagined that a young man would be capable of giving him such pressure.

"Bzz!" The sword was retracted as the sword-might enveloping the room dissipated completely.

Zong Yi stared at Qin Wentian, and a smile could be seen on his face. "Seems like the Azure Emperor has a true successor. Only... Wentian, although you have outstanding talent, but with your

current prowess, to clash directly with the various powers would be like using an egg to smash a stone.”

“Does Clan Lord think that I am the hot-headed and reckless type?” Seeing the warm smile on Zong Yi’s face as well as sensing the dissolution of tension, Qin Wentian also laughed, as though he hadn’t been bothered by Zong Yi’s earlier actions.

In Zong Yi’s shoes, he probably would have done the same thing as well.

As the head of a clan, one had to shoulder the heavy responsibility of the member’s well-being. How could he let a mere authority token dictate the lives and fate of those under him? At the very least, the successor must have talent at a level high enough that he would be able to rest assured.

And if earlier, Qin Wentian had cowered before the face of death, how could Zong Yi even have the slightest amount of confidence in him?

Zong Yi waved his hands, and momentarily, a small sword floated in front of Qin Wentian. The ancient character of the word ‘Zong’ was engraved upon the body of the sword.

“Since the Azure Emperor has a successor, my Zong Clan will definitely aid in paving your path ahead. This sword is the symbol of a Sword Son of my Zong Clan. Other than elder-level characters, all members will have to follow your orders. Wentian, are you willing to accept it?” Zong Yi slowly spoke. Qin Wentian received the sword, as he nodded his head.

“I am.” Qin Wentian smiled. Zong Yi relaxed as he laughed, “Wentian, this matter must not be divulged until the time is right. In the future, you can just address me as Uncle Zong when we are out in the open, but if there’s no one around us, you can just refer to me as Zong Yi.”

“Uncle Zong must be joking. As a junior how could there be an incident whereby I refer to my seniors directly by their names?” Qin Wentian naturally understood how to act, and he retracted his Astral Soul and Astral Novas together with the small sword Zong Yi gave him.

“Good.” Zong Yi patted Qin Wentian on his shoulders before seriously replying, “Sword users should follow their heart, doing what they want to do, holding their heads up high as they laugh arrogantly at the nine heavens. The blood of the Zong Clan still runs hot!”

“Let’s go; I will accompany you around.” Zong Yi stepped out. Qin Wentian nodded with a smile on his face.

The Zong Clan was different from the White Deer Institute. According to Zong Qian, the clan lord Zong Yi was able to dictate all matters without the need to consult the other elders. Since the clan lord supported him, this meant that Qin Wentian's mission at the Sword Reverence City was successful. At the very least, it was much smoother sailing compared to back then when he went to the White Deer Institute.

With the White Deer Institute, he currently had two factions under his control. However, although these two clans had hidden themselves well and were pretty powerful in their own right, they still needed to be nurtured for a period of time. If not, it was basically impossible to stand against the other transcendent powers in Grand Xia.

Afterward, the Zong Clan released the news that the clan lord had personally selected a candidate to become the Sword Son of Zong Clan. This person was named Qin Wentian.

The previous generation's Sword Son had already become an elder-level character. For this generation, the clan lord initially still hadn't made a decision, with seven members of the younger generation contesting for it. But now, he had chosen Qin Wentian.

This matter spread quickly throughout the Zong Clan, causing a huge wave of commotion. In the history of the Zong Clan, this was the first time the title of 'Sword Son' had gone to an outsider. This was no small matter.

Many wanted to see what sort of person this Qin Wentian was, and there were several from the younger generation that wanted to challenge him. How had this person managed to gain this title?

But strangely, not one elder-level figure went ahead to seek out Qin Wentian. Most likely after the clan lord selected Qin Wentian, he'd conveyed special instructions to the elders. After all, the matter of the Azure Emperor was extremely important, and even though Zong Yi could dictate what happened in the Zong Clan and the future direction they should take, he still needed the silent cooperation of the other elders.

After Zong Qian knew of this matter, he was left dumbstruck. At this moment, the gaze he used to stare at Qin Wentian with, was filled with bizarreness. "Brother Qin, you used merely three months to comprehend the Mandate of Sword. Your comprehension level is off the charts, but I never imagined that you would become the Sword Son of my Zong Clan. I truly envy you."

Zong Qian was merely one of the seven nominees fighting to gain the title of 'Sword Son'. Sadly, the seven of them still hadn't managed to gain the approval of the clan lord.

Currently, Zong Qian was extremely curious, and he wondered what had happened during the meeting with Qin Wentian and the clan lord.

"What did you and the clan lord talk about?" Zong Qian involuntarily inquired.

“About the matters of obtaining the rights to the sword range.” Qin Wentian laughed. The matter of the Azure Emperor was too confidential, and naturally, he would refrain from mouthing off to others.

“Seems like the clan lord wants to use your power to aid us, so he must be quite confident in your abilities. However, in the contest between the three powers, each of them will be represented by three members. Since the clan lord personally selected you to be one of the three, I believe you have the capability of winning your own battle. However, I have no confidence we will win the other two, especially for the Heavenly Dipper-level battle—that fight will most likely end in our loss.. I don’t hold much hope that we’ll come out victorious this time.”

Zong Qian sighed. He didn’t feel too good about the Zong Clan’s prospects in gaining the rights to the sword range.

The two of them walked around the Zong Residence, but right at that moment, several people headed over, advancing towards their direction as a surge of sharpness bore down on Qin Wentian.

Zong Qian’s gaze abruptly shifted over to these people. He frowned as he stated, “Zong Hong, what are you guys trying to do?”

“Not long ago, I heard that those from the Li Clan were saying that you brought an outsider back here, wanting to invite him to fight for our clan. But this person was so cowardly that he didn’t even dare to accept Li Nian’s challenge, and yet today, he has been conferred the title of ‘Sword Son’. I, Zong Hong, would really like to see how talented this guy is to gain the qualifications to become a Sword Son of my Zong Clan.”

As the sound of Zong Hong’s voice faded, he stepped out and pointed his sword straight at Qin Wentian.

“Zong Hong, Brother Qin is a Sword Son selected by the clan lord himself,” Zong Qian berated.

“So what of it? If he doesn’t dare to battle, he isn’t qualified to be a Sword Son.” Zong Hong tyrannically snorted, staring at Qin Wentian with disdain. “Don’t worry, since the clan lord himself has personally selected you, I won’t take your life.”

Chapter 403: Wails of the Demon Sword

Qin Wentian swept a glance at Zong Hong, instantly discerning his cultivation base—ninth level of Yuanfu.

If Qin Wentian were to make a move against him, it would undoubtedly be a case of the strong squashing the weak. He really wasn't too comfortable doing that.

Zong Qian glanced bewilderedly at Qin Wentian. The longer he was acquainted with Qin Wentian, the more he felt he couldn't see through him. Regardless of when he'd faced Li Ran and Li Nian, or against Zong Hong, Qin Wentian was still as calm as water, his heart unwavering. Humans with such a temperament were extremely scarce, and those were the people that would find it easy to focus wholeheartedly in their cultivation.

However, maybe Zong Qian didn't know that Qin Wentian had never once regarded these people as his opponent. In that case, why should he be angered by them?

"Indeed, he acts the same way as when Li Nian challenged him. A person with such a character, how is he fit to be the Sword Son of my Zong Clan?" Zong Hong coldly snorted, as others around him laughed along coldly. Evidently, they were all unhappy regarding the clan lord's decision to select an outsider with a different surname.

Many found it difficult to accept.

"Bzzz!" Abruptly, a buzzing sound could be heard as a sword appeared in front of Zong Hong. Zong Hong froze, the sword was merely an inch away from his eyes, and a terrifying sword intent gushed forth from the sword locking down on him.

"Since you know my identity as the Sword Son, if you still insist on showing disrespect, don't blame me for being heartless."

Qin Wentian spoke coldly, before making a movement that caused the unsheathed sword to fly back to him. He then slowly walked away, totally disregarding Zong Hong and the rest who stood there in a stunned state.

"Kacha!" Zong Hong tightly clenched his fist as a terrifying sharpness flashed in his eyes. "I don't believe you can hide in your shell forever."

Qin Wentian acted as if he hadn't heard that remark, walking away as intended. A few days later, another rumor spread out.

Qin Wentian, an outsider who became the Sword Son, might be selected to participate in the sword range battle. This news was circulated around the Zong Clan and there were some saying that he was as cowardly as a rat, all because he hadn't dared to accept Zong Hong's challenge. Not only that, he'd once retreated in the face of Li Nian. There were just too many rumors involving Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian knew that this commotion was caused by him taking on the identity of Sword Son. So what if he defeated Zong Hong? There would be another, ten others, a hundred other Zong Hongs appearing to challenge him. If he wanted the members of Zong Clan's younger generation to shut up, the only option for him was to display a might and talent so far above their levels, thereby stunning them into silence.

Qin Wentian was currently sitting cross-legged in the library of Zong Clan, reading.

The scrolls in the library contained sword techniques engraved by previous generation experts, or a history of what they faced when they cultivated.

Qin Wentian was trying to figure out the Mandate of Swords. The first level was the foundation, universally the same with others. But the second level had to depend on one's luck and destiny. Hence, he wanted to broaden his horizons by reading through the experiences of cultivators in the past.

"There was once a sword expert that sat seven years in meditation. He merged his heart together with his sword, and eventually comprehended a second level insight named Sword Heart," Qin Wentian quietly remarked as he read the scroll.

There was no difference between the first level insights, but the power of second level insight of the same Mandate varied immensely in their degree of power.

Sword Heart uses one's heart to resonate with the sword, causing sword intent to resonate with the hearts of others, lacerating the hearts of opponents in a single instant. How terrifying was that? The will from second level insight: Sword Heart alone, would be superior to his Heartbreak Echo.

"There was another sword expert that comprehended the second level insight, Sword Shadow. Everytime he slashed out with his sword, the sword light would turn illusory, while the sword shadows of his sword would turn into reality, achieving an incredible level of unfathomable attacks. With the comprehension of this second level insight, the way one killed others would be formless."

Qin Wentian continued reading as he marvelled at the profoundness of different types of second level insights. During battles between cultivators at the same realm, a sword would be sufficient to instantly steal the life of one's opponent.

Swords, were the king among weapons, using only a single instant to reap lives. Fighting against powerful sword experts required one to be exceedingly careful.

“It seems like I need to temper myself further before I can comprehend it. Just sitting here and poring over books can only guide me so far. Damn, I don’t have much time left.”

Qin Wentian mused, before placing the scroll back and exiting the library.

Right now, it was already late at night. Qin Wentian soared up to the skies as a sword formed from astral energy appeared beneath his feet. He continued soaring ahead, speeding away in a certain direction.

There were many who flew on flying swords in the Sword Reverence City, so Qin Wentian wouldn’t look too conspicuous.

After several moments, Qin Wentian arrived at the precipice outside Sword Reverence City. Qin Wentian flew down towards the precipice, where the sword range beneath it was bathed in cold moonlight.

A monstrous sword intent gushed forth and pushed against him, but the astral sword beneath his feet unceasingly resisted its power.

Finally, by virtue of the moonlight, Qin Wentian saw a gigantic sword of approximately one thousand metres in length buried deep inside the earth. An exceedingly fearsome sword-might emanated forth from the sword, causing the surrounding mountains to be contorted into the shape of a sword underneath that mighty pressure.

Nearby, there were several cultivators standing on guard. When they noticed Qin Wentian approaching, somebody called out, “The sword range is off-limits. You are forbidden to go any nearer.”

Qin Wentian once heard Zong Qian mentioning that in the past ten years, the sword range was under the control of the Heavenly Sword Sect. Hence, these guards on duty should be members hailing from that group.

“This sword is too terrifying.” Qin Wentian felt his heart trembling. The body of the sword alone was one thousand metres in length, and it was almost as tall as a mountain. There seemed to be some truth to the rumors, that the precipice was created from a sword blow using this sword.

In fact, although Qin Wentian could clearly see the body of the sword at this moment, there was still an extremely vast distance between him and that gigantic sword. If this place wasn’t underneath the precipice, but was on flatland instead, this sword would be visible even from several hundred miles away.

“No wonder no one could pull out this sword despite the passage of so many years.” Qin Wentian mused.

How heavy was this sword exactly?

Even if a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign could pull the sword out, how could he use it in combat? It was too unwieldy, and basically impossible. It was already a feat of immense difficulty for ordinary humans to even hold this sword.

Above the dome of heavens, the starlight cascading downwards was absorbed by the demon sword, causing the demonic qi in the area to become even greater in intensity.

“Demon sword, gigantic sword. Can a slash from this sword truly sunder the earth?”

Qin Wentian turned back, carving out a cave in the mountains nearby and sat there in a cross-legged position. He didn't believe that he was capable enough to acquire the demon sword. He was merely curious after hearing Zong Qian's tale and wanted to personally feel the energy fluctuations from the demon sword.

He then closed his eyes and immersed himself in his meditation. As long as he didn't step foot inside the sword range, those members from the Heavenly Sword Sect wouldn't bother him.

Qin Wentian meditated there in silence. In the depths of the night, a demonic wind gusted by, containing a slight wailing noise, like a cry... a cry of death!

This sound was extremely minute, and if it weren't for Qin Wentian's powerful perception, he wouldn't have heard it.

This sorrowful wail gradually transformed into the miserable howl of a demon. Within such wretched cries, a hint of sword keening could be heard, and yet somehow the sound only kept growing clearer to him.

His perception was too strong, and his sensitivity to demonic beings was extremely high as well.

“ROAR...!”

Abruptly a terrifying demonic howl resounded in his ears, and Qin Wentian felt a beam of sword intent gushing towards him. He instantly retreated with a speed as fast as lightning, and when he

was a distance away, Qin Wentian touched his fingers to his neck, only to feel a wet sensation on his finger tips, startling him severely.

His heart pounded violently—that illusory sword intent, as well as that sorrowful wail, both vanished completely as though they were never there.

His neck had almost been sliced apart in that instant.

Such an eerie scene shook Qin Wentian’s heart and he couldn’t understand what had happened.

“Hu...” Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath as he resumed his sitting position once more. Sending out tendrils of his perception, he realised that the demonic wailing had begun again. Not only that, the sound was getting louder, transmitted by that demonic wind as it pervaded the entire region.

It was as though Qin Wentian could see a dragon-shaped sword shadow, a vermilion bird-shaped sword shadow, a white tiger-shaped sword shadow and a Xuanwu-shaped sword shadow. All varieties of sword shadows appeared before him as they transformed into reality, clearly showing up in his perception scan.

These sword shadows originated from the bedrock the demon sword was embedded in. The bedrock itself contained a powerful sword intent and after so many years, if the sword shadows could break out from the ground into the light, they would gain sentience and become demonic swords.

“Seems like everything I’ve heard about the demonic swords in this sword range is real.”

Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath, when suddenly the roar-like keening of an angry demonic dragon sword echoed out. Qin Wentian felt a strong surge of pressure gushing towards him, wanting to strike him dead from where he stood.

Qin Wentian immediately retracted his perception and an instant later, the sword intent vanished completely. As did that overwhelming pressure, and that sword keening.

“Indeed, as expected.”

Qin Wentian’s heart pounded. What a terrifying energy. What if he could use this to aid him in comprehending his second level insight in the Mandate of Swords? What sort of insight would he gain then?

Qin Wentian’s heart palpitated with eagerness as he immersed himself completely in his meditation.

The sun and moon waned as time flowed by. Qin Wentian had already been in the cave for seven days.

As it was situated so close to the sword range, more and more people could be seen appearing in this region, all because the battle for the rights would soon commence.

In these few days, the Sword Son of the Zong Clan, Qin Wentian had disappeared completely, drawing speculation all around. Wasn't this too bizarre? Was Qin Wentian hiding because he knew he couldn't be compared to the opponents from the two other major powers?

It seemed as though the day after Zong Hong had challenged him, Qin Wentian had never appeared again.

Currently, at an area in the Zong Clan's residence, two groups of people were in a confrontation with each other. The leaders of these two groups were none other than Zong Hong and Zong Qian. Zong Hong sarcastically remarked, "The good friend you invited, where the hell did he hide to this time around?"

"Brother Qin naturally has his own matters to settle, he has no need to report his whereabouts to the likes of you." Zong Qian replied. Yet, Zong Hong coldly laughed, and his supporters all wore mocking expressions on their faces. They were totally unconvinced and were unwilling to accept Qin Wentian.

Especially one among them, Zong Peng. This person was a 'nominee' Sword Son that had been chosen to participate at the Heavenly Dipper level in the battle of the sword range. This battle was considered as the most crucial of the three—if he won, it would secure their victory 100%. The only exception would be if one of the three major powers won two consecutive battles at the Yuanfu Realm before the third and final showdown.

Zong Peng had always thought that after the battle, the title of Sword Son would fall to him. To think that it had now been given to an outsider.

"After the battle at the sword range, I shall strip him of his position." Zong Peng gazed at Zong Qian as he calmly stated this. His words caused the others nearby to break out in cold, mocking laughter, as they turned their eyes towards Zong Qian.

Chapter 404: Sword's Keen

Underneath the precipice, outside the region of the sword range, Qin Wentian continued to sit quietly while immersed in a world of his own.

One of his objectives for coming to the Sword Reverence City had already been accomplished. Next, he needed to concentrate and further deepen his insight into the Mandate of Swords, and afterward condense an Astral Nova, officially stepping into Heavenly Dipper with a total of four Yuanfu.

The night was as still as water, with the light from the stars illuminating the entire region. Qin Wentian abruptly frowned, and as he stretched out his perception, he could 'see' an extremely powerful sword cultivator about 30 years of age in the area. The cultivator was guarded by members of the Heavenly Sword Sect, who was also currently using this place to aid in his comprehension of the Mandate of Swords.

The sword intent from the demon sword was extremely domineering. However, the insights one gleaned from it ultimately depended on a variety of factors and would be different for every cultivator.

The perception of the other party was akin to a sword firing off sword beams straight at him. Qin Wentian's countenance remained unchanged and he remained sitting in the cross-legged position. When those sword beams pierced into Qin Wentian's sea of consciousness, his eyes abruptly opened as the light of enlightenment dawned within them. It was as though he had comprehended something.

"It seems like I have you to thank for this," Qin Wentian murmured. After which, he walked out of the cave and soared into the skies with his eyes closed.

With an intention of his will, the ancient sword strapped to his back floated onto his hands.

Slicing the sword through the skies, a sword beam was slashed out from it. Yet, that sword beam contained no hints of power nor ferociousness. It felt as though that slash wasn't a stance from any particular sword art or sword technique.

However, Qin Wentian continued swinging out sword slashes, paying no mind to standard sword stances. Neither did he conform to any sword rules nor sword laws. Yet the sword itself was the law. Each and every sword contained a unique sword rhythm, giving people a marvelous sensation. But it was merely that—a marvelous sensation. There was no feeling of might to it.

From afar, at the sword range, several silhouettes flew over in the direction of Qin Wentian. Upon seeing Qin Wentian foolishly waving his sword about, a comical expression involuntarily appeared on their faces.

“That sword technique seems clumsy beyond comparison? What a joke, I’m sure any sword technique from our sect would be able to defeat it.” A tall and lanky female stared at Qin Wentian as contempt filled her voice.

“Seems like he’s nothing but an ordinary sword cultivator. He truly doesn’t know how high the heavens are. At his level, coming here to comprehend the sword is naught but a waste of time, and he even disturbed senior brother Jian Feng’s cultivation.” Someone among the group coldly laughed.

The female earlier had an expression of worship when the name ‘Jian Feng’ had been mentioned. Their Senior Brother Jian Feng was one of the three Sword Sons from the Heavenly Sword Sect. Be it talent or power, he was extremely outstanding in both fields.

“Earlier, Senior Brother Jian Feng felt a disturbance when he was comprehending the sword; hence he sent us out to investigate.”

Qin Wentian finally halted his movements and opened his eyes, glancing at this group of people. He was currently feeling extremely joyful, and the corners of his lips were curled up in a smile. His handsome countenance was imbued with hints of regalness underneath the starlight and was extremely striking, especially to those of the opposite sex.

The expression on the female changed when she looked at Qin Wentian. However, she then coldly laughed, “A handsome appearance, yet totally useless in a fight. What use is that?”

Qin Wentian had a bizarre expression on his face when he heard the words of the female. He shifted his eyes over to her, and as their gazes met, the female felt as though a surge of electricity had entered her brain, causing her to shiver from an unknown emotion. She then stated, “This place isn’t somewhere you can stay, leave here quickly.”

“I’m pretty far away from the boundaries set by your Heavenly Sword Sect,” Qin Wentian coldly replied.

“How dare you talk back.” The girl coldly snorted, the Heavenly Sword Sect in the Sword Reverence City enjoyed a status far up in the heavens. Nobody dared to disrespect them, and the disciples of the Heavenly Sword Sect were superior to others. Even when they were out walking in the city, people would also hold them with reverence and respect.

“Your clumsy sword techniques are an eyesore, desecrating our eyes with filth.” The female stated with an overwhelming sense of arrogance. Since this was the command given to them by their Senior Brother Jian Feng, she naturally had to ensure it was carried out. If this cultivator was going to be this dense and recalcitrant, she wouldn’t mind teaching him a lesson.

“My sword techniques are an eyesore, desecrating your eyes?”

Qin Wentian smiled wryly as he faintly added, “It’s not that my sword techniques are clumsy, it’s just that some people have eyes but are blind, unable to see through its profoundness.”

After speaking, Qin Wentian turned and walked away from the area.

“You...” That female pointed a trembling finger at Qin Wentian’s back, choking on her words. Although she’d been merely sent here as a guardian to protect the sword range from intruders, she was at the very least, someone at the eighth level of Yuanfu whose Mandate of Swords was already at the Transformation Boundary of the first level. Yet, she was now being mocked by Qin Wentian, saying that she had eyes but was blind. How could she stand for it?

“Arrogant.”

“Ignorant.”

“Junior Sister, just ignore him,” remarked someone at the side.

“How laughable, this fellow is so weak with swords yet he dares to be so brazen,” another person consoled. That female continued staring at the departing back of Qin Wentian, before gritting her teeth and turning away, as the whole lot of them flew back to the location they came from.

That female then shifted her eyes towards a cavern in a random direction where Jian Feng was currently cultivating in.

Jian Feng had the strongest sword talent in the entire Heavenly Sword Sect, and he was the only one selected to be the Sword Son. Although he currently wasn’t the strongest, no one doubted his future achievements. There was even a very high probability that he would end up as the leader of the Heavenly Sword Sect.

Qin Wentian left the area, but he didn't immediately depart from the precipice. He chose another location and cultivated there for three days before returning to the Sword Reverence City.

When Qin Wentian returned to the Zong Clan, his return caused many to notice which kicked up another storm of discussion about him.

During the few days when he'd 'disappeared', the majority of discussion topics were focused on him.

Currently, Zong Peng had already let out news that after the battle at the sword range, he would strip Qin Wentian of his Sword Son title.

And now, Qin Wentian had returned.

Qin Wentian could sense the others' eyes on him, but he paid no heed to them. Right now, he wanted to find clan lord Zong Yi since he needed some Yuan Meteor Stones.

As Qin Wentian passed by a training field, several glanced at him as a voice sounded out, "Qin Wen!"

When he shifted his gaze over, his eyes landed on Zong Qian. "Zong Qian, can you bring me to the clan lord?"

"Sure." Zong Qian nodded, flying up. Those below all had cold smiles on their faces, with Zong Hong interjecting, "Brother Qin, when are you going to turtle until?"

Qin Wentian glanced at Zong Hong, shaking his head. "Zong Hong, your purpose should be to improve your sword skills and comprehend your second level insight in the Mandate of Swords rather than trying to provoke me."

Seeing how Qin Wentian's tone sounded like an elder lecturing an ignorant junior, Zong Hong's countenance turned chilly as he retorted, "Comprehending a second level insight isn't something that can be done in a day. And what's more, do you even have the qualifications to lecture me? You dodged the fight when I challenged you previously, and now you're back after several days hiding in some god-knows-where location. Are you back to seek shelter from our clan lord?"

The others all had their eyes fixated on Qin Wentian. Several of them had mocking looks reflected on their faces. Upon seeing this, Qin Wentian sighed and continued walking forward.

“Such a coward isn’t fit to be a Sword Son of my Zong Clan. How about you hand over the Sword Son’s Sword to me?” Zong Hong’s tone grew increasingly arrogant, and the provocation within it was evident. The others standing around were all regarding Qin Wentian with derision.

“You guys. Wait for me here.”

Qin Wentian spoke faintly before leaving with Zong Qian. The sudden departure caught Zong Hong unawares, leaving him stunned for a moment before he recovered with an icy smile on his face, “Fine, I’ll wait for you here.”

Expressions of excitement could be seen on the others, this news was swiftly circulated, and other members of the younger generations in the Zong Clan soon gathered over. Some of them looked down on Qin Wentian and felt that he wasn’t worthy of the title Sword Son, others merely wanted to take a look at how powerful the Sword Son selected by their clan lord was.

Qin Wentian and Zong Qian eventually met up with Zong Yi, who had a smile on his face when he noticed their arrival.

“Uncle Zong,” Qin Wentian called out, Zong Yi nodded in response as he inquired, “I heard that you weren’t in the Zong Clan for the past days. Why are you free to come visit your Uncle Zong today?”

“Not withholding the truth from Uncle Zong, I need several Yuan Meteor Stones. The meteor stones on me have since run dry, and I wonder if it’s possible to borrow some from Uncle Zong.” Qin Wentian bitterly smiled. Although he was the successor of the Azure Emperor, he hadn’t accomplished anything in the Zong Clan and was already stretching his hands out asking for resources. Qin Wentian felt somewhat ashamed, this wasn’t his usual kind of behavior.

“Don’t worry about it, if you need them just let me know. Don’t even mention the word ‘borrow’.” Zong Yi flicked his sleeves, and momentarily, a huge amount of Yuan Meteor Stones appeared before Qin Wentian. There were even some from the 4th Heavenly Layer, exuding an energy so terrifying that Zong Qian had an expression of shock on his face.

The clan lord really treated Qin Wentian too well.

“Still not sufficient.” Qin Wentian smile grew even more bitter. The Astral Nova he was condensing was different from most others; hence his consumption of energy would be even more astronomical in comparison.

Zong Yi froze, he glanced at Qin Wentian before seeming to understand something. He then smiled, “Fine, fine.”

After speaking, he waved his arms, and a miniature mountain of Yuan Meteor Stones stacked up to form a pile taller than even a human. The sight of this caused Zong Qian to suck in a breath of cold air.

Qin Wentian flicked his sleeves, collecting all the stones into his interspatial ring. His gaze landed on Zong Yi as he stated, “Uncle Zong, I will participate in the battle at the sword range.”

Zong Yi nodded his head, “With your presence, I am free of worries. It’s about time the rights of that sword range fell to our Zong Clan.”

“I’ll be leaving first.” Qin Wentian bid farewell as Zong Qian left with him. Zong Qian was somewhat speechless when he met Qin Wentian’s gaze. This fellow, what did he talk about with the clan lord previously? The attitude the clan lord showered onto Qin Wentian didn’t seem as simple as that of an elder towards a junior.

Qin Wentian returned to the training field from earlier. He stood in the air gazing down at Zong Hong as his countenance suddenly turned sharp. The Qin Wentian right now had an entirely different aura compared to before, no one dared to gaze at him with contempt.

“Those who aren’t convinced of the reason I was selected as the Sword Son, you can all stand forward right now,” Qin Wentian stated detachedly. Quite a few of those from the Zong Clan let out cold snorts when they heard that. They stood together with Zong Hong; these people were all nominees for this generation’s Sword Son’s position before Qin Wentian’s arrival.

“Come at me together,” Qin Wentian’s voice drifted out as his long hair fluttered in the wind.
Comment by Lord Bluefire: rew0rd

Zong Hong and the rest exchanged a look, both emanating forth a terrifying sharpness that gushed towards Qin Wentian. Since he wanted it so much, they would utterly waste Qin Wentian.

The cries of swords unsheathing echoed as cold light reflected from the metallic blades covering the entire skies. For a single moment, the entire space was silent.

“Feel this.” Qin Wentian took a step forwards, and instantly, the ancient sword strapped to his back propelled itself a distance out from its sheath, yet not fully unsheathed. A single note of sound from the sword sealed the entirety of the sharpness emitting from that group.

“BZZZ!” Qin Wentian took another step forward as the ancient sword behind his back propelled out by another half an inch.

The sword keen sounded out again, and the cold light reflected off of it resembled blood. A terrifying sound note wavered in the air, Zong Hong and the rest felt their faces go cold as fresh blood dripped from their cheeks.

An instant later, their faces were all filled with terror when they gazed at Qin Wentian in the air. An inconceivably cold and sharp sword intent enveloped the entire region, exuding a sense of majesty resembling the king of swords.

“Are you guys even worthy of cultivating the sword?”

As the sound of Qin Wentian’s voice faded, he took another step forward. A light keening resounded as sounds of laceration echoed in the void. Zong Hong and the rest all fainted, falling onto the ground, with visible laceration marks on their clothes and throats. If the sword intent had sliced half an inch deeper against their throats, they would have died without a doubt.

Silence reigned in the training field. The thunderstruck gazes of everyone there were fixated on the person standing in the air.

Qin Wentian looked down with imperiousness in his gaze before coldly snorting, flicking his sleeves and walking away. An instant later, that oppressive sword intent vanished into complete nothingness!

Chapter 405: Attitude

Zong Qian was also stunned by what he saw. He stood there dumbstruck, and even before he could recover, Qin Wentian was already walking away.

“How powerful.”

Zong Qian had an expression of awe on his face. And not just him, those present from the younger generation were all in a similar state of extreme shock.

It was too powerful—from the beginning to the end, Qin Wentian’s sword hadn’t even been completely unsheathed. He had only taken a few steps forwards, and somehow Zong Hong and the others ended up in such a pitiful state. They’d been unable to put up even the slightest bit of resistance, and could only wait to be slaughtered. If Qin Wentian had taken another step forward, propelling his sword out of its sheath by another half an inch, all of them would already be dead.

Both parties were on completely different levels.

Qin Wentian's talent with swords was too monstrous—had he really comprehended the Perfection Boundary of the first level insight in a mere three months?

Zong Qian finally understood why the clan lord regarded Qin Wentian so highly, and why he'd selected him directly as the Sword Son of this generation.

“Hu...”

Drawing in a deep breath, Zong Qian's gaze was directed at Zong Hong as he stated, “Now, you should understand why Brother Qin refrained from accepting your challenge. He isn't a coward, it's just that the both of you are basically not on the same level.”

After speaking, Zong Qian turned and followed after Qin Wentian.

Right now, he wore a bitter smile on his face. When he thought back to Li Nian's provocation towards Qin Wentian as well as his own actions—standing in front of Qin Wentian and asking him to leave first—all of that was revealed to be completely unnecessary now that he'd witnessed Qin Wentian's true might.

In fact, he was wondering what would have happened if Qin Wentian had really clashed with the Heavenly Dipper-level Sword Son of the Li Clan back then.

Qin Wentian should've already comprehended a second level insight in the Mandate of Swords. If not, the sword intent he'd produced earlier couldn't possibly have manifested such a powerful sword-might. However, strangely enough, Qin Wentian's cultivation level still seemed to be at the Yuanfu Realm.

“Yuan Meteor Stones.” Abruptly, Zong Qian recalled Qin Wentian asking the clan lord for the cultivation resources earlier. The clan lord didn't even utter a word of protest before handing over an astronomical amount of Yuan Meteor Stones over. Could it be...

Thinking of this, Zong Qian's heart pounded violently. Could it be that Qin Wentian wanted to condense an Astral Nova!

The battle between Qin Wentian and Zong Hong couldn't even be called a battle, it was simply Qin Wentian teaching them a lesson, showing them what it meant for someone to have the title 'Sword Son'.

Qin Wentian said that they weren't worthy to cultivate the sword, and under that set of circumstances, their Dao hearts were indeed affected. However, if they were really so weak-minded, then the whole lot of them wouldn't even be fit to be candidates for the Sword Son position. Now, the only thing left to see was whether they could untie the knot formed in their hearts, achieving greater proficiency in their sword techniques.

There were people already comparing Qin Wentian with the Zong Clan's 'nominee' Sword Son, Zong Peng, who was at the Heavenly Dipper Level. They were speculating who would win if Qin Wentian fought with Zong Peng.

Zong Peng's prowess was extremely powerful, and there weren't many Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns among the younger generations of the Zong Clan. Zong Peng was one of them, and with his remarkable proficiency in sword techniques, he was considered one of the stronger ones. He had also once said that after the ranking battle, he would strip Qin Wentian's of his Sword Son's title.

But now, after Qin Wentian's strength was revealed, nobody knew who would end up the victor between the two of them.

Those that had personally seen Qin Wentian's strength with their own eyes, they knew that he was undoubtedly well-qualified to be given the title 'Sword Son'.

There were also those who hadn't witnessed Qin Wentian's strength, and who were hoping for Zong Peng to strip Qin Wentian of this title. They felt that the prestigious title of 'Sword Son' should only be inherited by someone from within their clan.

Currently, in Zong Peng's courtyard, Zong Hong stood facing him. His face was contorted by a heavy trace of futility stemming from that defeat, it was as though he'd suffered from a great impact.

"Why? Is just a single defeat sufficient to cause you to be in this state?" Zong Peng gazed at Zong Hong as he smiled faintly.

Zong Hong looked at Zong Peng, shaking his head helplessly, “You don’t understand, that battle... it was too much of a humiliation.”

He would never be able to wipe that scene of Qin Wentian’s dominance away from his mind. Back then, when Qin Wentian advanced step by step, Zong Hong couldn’t even move under the mounting pressure. If Qin Wentian truly wanted him dead, he would have died right there and then.

Even his sword didn’t need to be fully unsheathed. Qin Wentian could have killed him with a single thought.

That battle left him feeling extremely dispirited.

“He must have comprehended a second level insight in the Mandate of Swords, and it’s one of the more powerful types. It’s only normal for level one insights to be suppressed. What does he have to boast about?” Zong Peng smiled, as though trying to console Zong Hong.

“But the distance between us is too overwhelmingly great,” Zong Hong continued, unable to forget that dominance Qin Wentian had exuded.

“I’ll show you.” Zong Peng stood up, his actions causing a bright light to flash in Zong Hong’s eyes.

Ever since Zong Peng stepped into Heavenly Dipper, because the disparity was too great, Zong Hong couldn’t continue sparring with Zong Peng. Now, he truly wanted to see how far the distance was between them.

“Watch this clearly.” Zong Peng’s silhouette flickered, vanishing from sight. Zong Hong’s gaze stiffened, and he rapidly retreated but at that moment, he suddenly saw sword shadows covering the entire skies. He couldn’t differentiate which of the sword shadows were real, and could only stand there and wait for death.

The sword shadows vanished, Zong Peng stood in front of him as he asked, “Do you understand now?”

“The disparity between the second and first level is truly great indeed.” Zong Hong nodded his head.

“Naturally, when dealing with you, my second level of insights in the Mandate of Sword could easily destroy you. Qin Wentian is the same, since he already comprehended a second level insight, it’s not strange that he was able to suppress you so easily. You were merely scared by his stance and aura back then. If I was the one facing him instead, do you think he can defeat me?”

Zong Peng laughed, as Zong Hong nodded his head in agreement. He could clearly sense the confidence exuding from Zong Peng. All of a sudden, Zong Hong’s conviction flared up intensely—he too wanted to comprehend a second level insight and maybe even break through to Heavenly Dipper. Only then would he be able to soar up the skies, only then would he have the capability to seize the title from Qin Wentian.

“I’ll give you a suggestion. Earlier, you should have felt my second level insight. Now, you can pay a visit to Qin Wentian and get him to show you his Mandate, then use your perception to sense his second level insight directly. After that, you can come and discuss with me your findings and I can explain things to you. This will aid in widening your knowledge and that might grant you a higher probability of breaking through.”

Zong Peng had a face full of smiles as he guided Zong Hong, causing traces of gratitude to bloom in Zong Hong’s heart. Yet all of a sudden, he shook his head dejectedly. “I was always provoking him, so why would he help me?”

“Just say that you were wrong before. Since he holds the title of ‘Sword Son’, he can also be considered part of our Zong Clan. With such an important position, it’s only natural that he’ll feel responsible for the guidance of his juniors. And if you say that you had acted wrongly, and then treat him with courtesy and respect, how can he not agree to guide you? If he refuses, he truly isn’t worthy to be a Sword Son of our Zong Clan.” Zong Peng then continued, “In fact if you are unable to let go of your pride, I would be truly disappointed with you.”

After speaking, Zong Hong bid his farewell and left.

At this moment, Qin Wentian was sitting crossed-legged inside a courtyard. Darkness has already descended, and he was preparing to condense his fourth Astral Nova.

However in that instant, sounds of footsteps could be heard. When Qin Wentian opened his eyes and glanced towards the entrance of the courtyard, a voice drifted over to him. “Zong Hong humbly requests an audience with Senior.”

“Come in,” Qin Wentian quietly spoke. A moment later, Zong Hong entered the courtyard, and Qin Wentian stared at him with puzzlement in his eyes.

“Qin Wen, I apologize for what has happened between us in the past. I’m here today to humbly learn the sword from you, and to seek your guidance. Could you allow me to feel your second level insight? I wish to draw some clues from it to comprehend my own,” Zong Hong explained, his words causing the expression on Qin Wentian’s face to warm up. It seemed like this guy wasn’t so bad, after all. He was able to see where his own mistakes lay and had the courage to apologize and correct them—the matters of the past could indeed be forgiven.

“First level insights are the base and foundation, so everyone enjoys the same effects. Second level insights will depend on the individual. My path may not suit yours.” Qin Wentian slowly spoke as he continued, “You can consult the ancient scrolls to have an idea of the different types of second level insights there are. It’ll give you a better idea on forming your own comprehensions. There’s no need to ‘feel’ another cultivator’s insight because their insights are their own path, formed by their own comprehensions.”

Zong Hong frowned, what Qin Wentian was saying was completely different to what Zong Peng had told him. Could it be that Qin Wentian was really so selfish? Was he completely unwilling to guide him?

“I understand, but I would still like to ‘feel’ your second level insight.” Zong Hong furrowed his brows as he stated. Yet, how could Qin Wentian be fooled? Earlier, he had seen the micro-expressions on Zong Hong’s countenance. He could only sigh in his heart and lament the fact that in the first place, Zong Hong hadn’t really put down the grudge in his heart, and wasn’t truthfully seeking him out for guidance.

“I’ve said what I wanted to say. You can leave now, but I really hope you will be able to snap out of it sooner or later.” Qin Wentian closed his eyes—if he hadn’t noticed the micro-expressions on Zong Hong’s face, he would have fulfilled Zong Hong’s request and allowed him to ‘feel’ his second level insight. But now, he could only hope that Zong Hong wouldn’t be consumed by his grudge. Qin Wentian wasn’t so magnanimous that he’d invest time trying to straighten Zong Hong from his thoughts.

Indeed, after hearing what Qin Wentian said, Zong Hong’s brows furrowed intensely, as a look of unhappiness flashed in his eyes. He coldly stated, “As a Sword Son, you truly disappoint me with your actions. Although you are powerful, I feel sad that my Zong Clan has chosen you.”

As the sound of his voice faded, Zong Hong flicked his sleeves and walked away.

Qin Wentian stared at him, and he shook his head slightly, abandoning all thoughts relating to this matter, clearing his heart of debris. Such a minor matter wouldn’t affect his state of heart.

As the night deepened, Qin Wentian inscribed a Divine Inscriptions Formation, causing his body to shimmer in and out of existence. After that, he closed his eyes as an astronomical amount of Yuan Meteor Stones appeared beside him.

Right now, he already had a total of three Astral Novas. Regardless of whether he absorbed astral energy from the Nine Heavenly Layers or from the Yuan Meteor Stones, his speed of absorption was much faster compared to before.

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The incensed Zong Hong returned to Zong Peng's residence. After telling Zong Peng what happened, Zong Peng's eyes momentarily flickered with a cold burst of light before he quickly recovered with a smile. "Zong Hong, Qin Wentian's moral standing is abominable, but you don't have to take this to heart. What's important is that you should focus on your cultivation."

"Regretfully Qin Wentian is already the Sword Son. Such a character, aiii..." Zong Peng sighed. Zong Hong coldly snorted, "Zong Peng, you should get rid of him as soon as possible."

After speaking, Zong Hong turned and departed. And very swiftly, many rumors circulated throughout the Zong Clan. The majority of these rumors were all debasing Qin Wentian's moral character—Zong Hong had sincerely approached him to seek his guidance yet was received with a completely insincere attitude. He'd brushed him off, whereas Zong Peng was the complete opposite. For Qin Wentian to be holding onto the title of Sword Son, it was truly a tragedy for their Zong Clan.

Tonight, the starlight shining down on the region where the Zong Clan was located was extremely resplendent.

Clan lord Zong Yi's gaze rested on Qin Wentian as the hint of a smile flashed past his eyes. "If this young man proves himself truly able to rise up, there's a chance that the Azure Emperor's resplendent glory from ages past may appear in Grand Xia once again."

And while the members from the Zong Clan's younger generation were vilifying Qin Wentian, their clan lord continued to place his trust in him. Zong Yi believed that in the future, Qin Wentian would be the one to lead their Zong Clan, reviving their faded glory!

Chapter 406: You, are unqualified

A lie that is repeated often enough, would be accepted as the truth. Now that several members in the Zong Clan had started discussing Qin Wentian's lousy character and conduct, gradually the others all started to believe it too.

Regarding Zong Hong, the others were all quite clear about his character. Although he might be somewhat arrogant, his character wasn't vile. Since he'd said that he'd paid a visit to the Sword Son Qin Wen, then it shouldn't be a lie.

Zong Hong went to pay Qin Wen a visit, seeking guidance while begging for forgiveness. Yet the Sword Son, Qin Wen, as the leading figure among the younger generation, had acted in such a manner, casually brushing him off with a few words of ‘common sense’ advice. Apparently, Qin Wen’s character was truly unbecoming for a Sword Son.

And gradually, even some elder-level characters started to dislike Qin Wentian.

Especially one among them—Zong Hong’s uncle. He had personally gone to speak with the clan lord requesting to strip Qin Wentian of his title of Sword Son, yet he was harshly rebuffed instead. He then went to speak to the Doyen-level figures of the clan, only to receive the same treatment from them as he did from the clan lord.

Qin Wentian naturally didn’t know of all this. These past few days, he was completely immersed in condensing his Astral Nova.

Another night passed, and the skies above the Zong Clan’s location suddenly flashed with sword light, as columns of sword-shaped astral light cascaded down from the Heavens. Abruptly, an exceedingly terrifying sword-might enveloped the entire Zong Clan.

Several people in the Zong Clan stared at the resplendent astral light from the skies, their hearts all trembling with terror when they sensed the domineering sword-might.

“This sword intent actually contains a kingly aura within it,” somebody murmured. Who exactly did this intent belong to?

Naturally, cultivators of the Zong Clan were extremely sensitive to sword intent. Many of them wondered who had produced such an intent—only clan lord Zong Yi knew that Qin Wentian’s fourth Astral Nova had just been birthed.

Many stretched out their perception, causing their senses to follow the sword intent. Yet suddenly, that sword intent vanished completely. Their perception led them to a courtyard, and inside there, Qin Wentian sat on the ground, staring up at the heavens with a faint smile etched on his face.

“Hmm? What’s going on?” At this moment, Qin Wentian spoke. Naturally, he could feel the perception of many currently being concentrated on him.

The streams of perception faded away like the ebbing tide, and they all felt extremely puzzled in their hearts. Why was Qin Wen here? Was he cultivating here earlier?

Earlier, that sword-might that contained within it a kingly aura, where did it originate from?

Sensing the streams of perception fading away, Qin Wentian closed his eyes again. There was now a sword-shaped Astral Nova sitting in his fourth Yuanfu. His fourth Yuanfu receptacle was gradually undergoing a transformation, expanding further in size as the quality of the astral energy within it substantially improved. This, was a qualitative evolution.

His four Yuanfu connected and the resplendent astral energy within each of them formed a bridge, as the astral energy circulated fiercely within his body, causing an exceedingly powerful aura to gush forth from him.

That, was the aura of a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign.

All four of his Astral Novas had been condensed. Finally, Qin Wentian had officially stepped into the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

Not only that, he had four Yuanfu and was already a terrifying existence that had condensed four Astral Novas before stepping into the Heavenly Dipper Realm. For others, even if they had more Astral Novas, their novas would all be situated in a single Yuanfu. As a cultivator of the Art of the Nine Astrariums, he was markedly different from the others.

By then, darkness gradually faded away, and a ray of light shone from the eastern horizon—the people from the Zong Clan were starting a new day.

The night was for resting, for meditation, as well as for sleeping, while the morning was best for stretching one's limbs and tendons, cultivating one's innate arts and techniques or sparring against each other in terms of swordplay.

Qin Wentian stretched himself, before slowly walking out of the courtyard. He had fully concentrated on condensing his fourth Astral Nova these past few days, and never had a chance to properly relax. Right now the morning air was extremely cool and refreshing, and taking a stroll around the Zong Clan seemed like a pleasant activity.

Qin Wentian met quite a few people during his stroll. All of them intentionally averted their gazes when they glanced in his direction, causing Qin Wentian to wear a bitter smile on his face. Was it truly so hard for an outsider selected as the Sword Son to gain approval from the masses?

As he continued walking, Qin Wentian arrived at the training field in the Zong Clan, where many younger disciples were currently practicing their swordplay. The majority of these disciples were all at the Yuanfu Realm, with people ranging from the first level of Yuanfu to the ninth level. Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns were all considered important characters to the Zong Clan. For Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns at the third level and above, they would be able to elevate their status, taking on the roles and responsibilities of an elder. For Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns at the sixth level and above, they would be able to become Doyen-level characters.

A smile appeared on Qin Wentian's face as he gazed upon the various silhouettes brimming with youthful energy. Although he'd only spent a short span of five years in cultivation, he had been through countless trials and was tempered by his experiences. He currently exhibited a seriousness rarely seen from someone his age, projecting a presence totally different compared to the other cultivators from the younger generation.

Maybe it was a result of what he had personally experienced or maybe it was a result of his higher cultivation realm.

However, Qin Wentian's acute perception quickly told him that these youths from the Zong Clan all had feelings of animosity and unfriendliness towards him.

He might be someone with a different surname, but surely they didn't need to behave like that, right?

At this moment, a young girl of around 15 to 16 years of age walked up to Qin Wentian. This young girl had exquisite features that still contained hints of childishness in them. She walked to the side of Qin Wentian, adopting a pointedly reserved manner. To her, Qin Wentian felt extremely powerful, the exhibition of his might that day—even before his sword was totally unsheathed—Zong Hong and the others didn't even have a chance to fight back.

“Qin Wen, did you really brush Zong Hong away when he went to seek you out for guidance?” That young girl asked in a light tone of voice, her words causing Qin Wentian's brows to furrow. He then puzzledly inquired, “Did Zong Hong say something?”

The young girl's lips slightly twitched before looking at Qin Wentian and replied, “Qin Wen, although you are very powerful, as the Sword Son, you shouldn't be doing this, oh. Since Zong

Hong went to seek you out for guidance, that means he'd already intended to apologize. You should be guiding him properly, instead!"

Noting the clear gaze of the young girl before him, Qin Wentian could tell that the young girl before him had a simple and straight-forward temperament. But the gazes of others in the training field all seemed to be silently cursing him in their hearts.

"Gossip is truly a fearful thing." Qin Wentian silently mused. After which, he smiled at the young girl, "What's your name?"

"Zong Lian," the young girl replied lightly.

"Cultivation is a path that solely belongs to oneself. Everyone takes a different path, has different levels of talent, different experiences and naturally different comprehensions. When you cultivate in the future, do not ever blindly follow the path of others because you feel that he is strong. What you have to do is to find the path most suited to you. At most, you can take another's comprehensions as a slight reference, but do not let it direct your path. Comprehend that which you'd like, and only then will the path you tread be the most suited for yourself."

Qin Wentian smiled as he continued, "Cultivation has to follow one's heart. If your heart isn't even sure of the path you want, how can your cultivation be smooth? This is my understanding, so listen well. I won't explain in detail my comprehensions to you, imposing onto you a concept that might do more harm than good."

Zong Lian was deep in contemplation before she nodded her head lightly, a smile could be seen on her face. "In that case, it wasn't that you were unwilling to guide Zong Hong but rather, you wanted him not to be overly influenced by you?"

"Zong Lian, come here." At that moment a cold voice echoed out. Zong Lian inclined her head, staring in the direction of the voice. The owner of this voice was a young man who had an extremely cold look in his eyes.

Zong Lian stuck out her tongue before sneaking a glance back at Qin Wentian as she whispered, "I'm leaving first."

Qin Wentian shifted his gaze over in the man's direction, only to see the silhouettes of Zong Peng and Zong Hong appear behind that young man. They were also similarly staring in Qin Wentian's direction.

Zong Hong's countenance was cold as he spoke, "If I can defeat you, please strip yourself from the title of 'Sword Son'."

Qin Wentian stared at him as he shook his head in disappointment. He then sternly commented, "Sword users should have an upright heart, only then can they master their sword. Earlier, you used language to provoke and humiliate me, yet I held no quarrel with you. When you came to me in apology, I told you to comprehend your own path yet you smeared my name behind my back in an attempt to destroy my reputation. With such a character, how can you be fit to cultivate the sword?"

As the sound of his voice faded, Qin Wentian took a step forwards as a surge of sword-might gushed forth. His eyes were as sharp as swords and the instant their gazes locked, Zong Hong felt his body involuntarily trembling. Qin Wentian's words struck him to his very soul, it felt as though Qin Wentian wanted to break his sword heart.

"As a sword cultivator, your heart should be fully committed to your sword. The stronger your sword heart, the stronger your sword Dao. The identity as a swordsman is not essential, so what's the use of calling yourself one? You know what you are. But in your case, you've already sunk. Zong Hong, just ask yourself this, how can you be worthy of the sword you hold in your hands?" Qin Wentian coldly spoke, his gaze turning even sharper, and his words causing Zong Hong's heart to tremble.

"Impudent."

A sound of beratement echoed out, only to see sword intent gushing forth from a middle-aged figure towards Qin Wentian, enveloping him within.

That person's anger surged upwards as he stared at Qin Wentian, stating in an icy voice, "As the Sword Son, do you feel proud humiliating Zong Hong like this?"

"Elder." The surrounding people gazed at the middle-aged figure who spoke, as they all dipped into a slight bow.

This elder was none other than Zong Hong's uncle. It was precisely him who'd gone to complain to the clan lord, seeking to strip Qin Wentian of his Sword Son's title.

Qin Wentian turned his gaze onto the speaker. The cultivation level of this person was at the third level of Heavenly Dipper.

"As the Sword Son, using your strength to bully the weak. When Zong Hong personally sought you out to consult you for advice, you brushed him off like a fool. How could the clan lord bestow the

title of Sword Son to someone like you?” That elder slowly stepped out, as his terrifying sword intent whistled through the air, boring down upon Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian continued to stand there calmly, with no fluctuations to his expressions as he stared at the elder.

“The title ‘Sword Son?’” Qin Wentian shook his head. “How hopelessly idiotic can you be?”

“What did you say?” That elder’s voice turned even colder. Qin Wentian actually dared to throw back a rebuttal.

“Qin Wen, you have gone too far.” At this moment, Zong Peng, who had remained silent up till now, finally spoke. His gaze was fixated on Qin Wentian as he coldly stated, “We can set aside you using your strength to bully the weak, but today, you even dared argue against an elder. You are unfit to be the Sword Son, your title incites public wrath. I, Zong Peng, initially wanted to strip you of your title after the sword range battle was over. But now, since you have proven to be so impudent, I have no choice but to act now.”

As the sound of his voice faded, Zong Peng stepped out. Sword intent similarly gushed forth from him as he stared right into Qin Wentian’s eyes. “I, Zong Peng, challenge you to a battle. If I win, I will not make things difficult for you, but you must hand over the position of Sword Son. You, are unqualified.”

Qin Wentian turned his gaze onto Zong Peng, before shifting it onto Zong Hong beside him.

Zong Hong’s gaze was flickering in deep contemplation, apparently the words spoken earlier by Qin Wentian had somewhat reached Zong Hong. Although this person was proud and arrogant, he didn’t seem like someone despicable.

Turning his gaze back onto Zong Peng, whose face was painted with false justice, Qin Wentian felt that he was looking at a hypocrite.

“You, are unqualified,” Qin Wentian softly spoke, his words causing everyone to be stunned.

What a brazen fellow. Before Qin Wentian appeared, Zong Peng was one of the few that truly had the power to fight for the title ‘Sword Son’. Yet now, when he’d issued a challenge to him, Qin Wentian said that he wasn’t qualified.

Chapter 407: Suppression by Sword Intent

Upon hearing Qin Wentian’s words, the sword qi gushing forth from Zong Peng increased in intensity. A burst of astral light flashed as an ancient-sword Astral Soul manifested above his head.

A four-colored, Sword-type Astral Soul. In that moment, a surge of sword qi ravaged the entire skies and earth, carrying within it an aura that promised utter annihilation.

Qin Wentian said that Zong Peng, wasn't qualified?

"How powerful." The spectators trembled, a shiver running through their countenances. Before Qin Wentian, Zong Peng was the strongest nominee with the highest probability to become the Sword Son. His fourth Astral Soul originated from the 5th Heavenly Layer, and appeared to be a sword of shadows, without trace nor form, exuding a terrifying might.

Qin Wentian didn't seem to be concerned at all. In fact, he hadn't even glanced at Zong Peng.

Keeping his eyes fixed on Zong Hong, Qin Wentian took a step forward as an overwhelming oppressive surge of sword-might enveloped Zong Hong. The nature of this sword-might was neither tyrannical nor malicious, and it was filled with positive righteousness and an air of majesty, pressing down on Zong Hong's Sword Heart.

Qin Wentian looked at him directly, and in the centre of Qin Wentian's brows, it seemed as though there was a third eye there, focusing its stare onto Zong Hong as well.

"That night, who was it that asked you to seek me out?"

As he spoke, he took another step forward. His powerful will gushed into Zong Hong's sea of consciousness, slowly eroding Zong Hong's will.

The stifling aura made him almost unable to breathe. He howled—Zong Peng!—as his body trembled under the throes of convulsions.

"Qin Wen, you've gone too far with your bullying." Zong Peng roared in anger, stepping out. Qin Wentian swept his gaze over to him, as his terrifying will thundered into Zong Peng's sea of consciousness. The power of that fearsome third eye abruptly halted Zong Peng's steps.

Qin Wentian ignored him, glancing back at Zong Hong as he faintly spoke. "As a sword cultivator, your heart is not resolute enough, this is why others managed to make use of you. Go back and properly reflect upon this."

As the sound of his voice faded, Qin Wentian pressed forward with his palms. In the same instant, Zong Hong's body flew backwards from the force generated and landed on a training platform far away.

Coughing out blood, Zong Hong's face was painted with a sudden glimpse of enlightenment. To him, that short period of time felt like an eternity. When facing off against Qin Wentian, he had the feeling that Qin Wentian was an incomparably huge mountain that was impossible for him to exceed.

The disparity between him and Qin Wentian was actually too great.

However, the words said by Qin Wentian earlier caused alarm-bells to start ringing in his mind. His Sword Heart wasn't resolute enough, hence people were able to make use of him?

"You actually dared to bully the weaker ones in front of my presence?" The elder in the air spoke in a towering rage. The sword intent radiating from him grew increasingly terrifying.

Qin Wentian inclined his head to stare at him, with no fluctuations to his countenance. He was like an incomparably sharp sword as he directly matched the gaze of that elder.

"Elder, let me handle it. This person is too unruly." Zong Peng drew in a deep breath as the sound of swords keening filled the entire space. In the middle of the air, his fourth Astral Nova shone with resplendent sword light and in that instant, the entire space echoed with a cacophony of sword wails and keens. The other spectators all retreated, they were too afraid to go near it.

If one's sword intent was powerful enough, they could use it to kill their opponents from far away.

Zong Peng had already been in the Heavenly Dipper Realm for two years, and succeeded in condensing his fourth Astral Nova. As such, he was exceedingly powerful. The battle intent in his eyes surged in intensity, towering over the heavens as he stared at Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian's eyes slowly shifted upon Zong Peng.

Zong Hong's actions had been instigated by Zong Peng. If that was the case, the person standing before him was someone extremely devious. He wanted to steal the position of Sword Son away, yet didn't act openly. He chose to first destroy Qin Wentian's reputation, making it difficult for Qin Wentian to establish his footing in the Zong Clan.

Zong Peng's character could be described using a single word—despicable.

“Peng!”

Qin Wentian stepped out as the Heavens and Earth shuddered. A kingly sword-might burst forth and an instant later, the swords strapped on the spectators’ backs began to react, vibrating violently without cease.

In a single moment, the hissing of hundreds upon hundreds of swords could be heard, forming an unending cacophony.

Zong Peng flicked a finger outwards, and instantly, his fourth and most powerful Astral Nova flew forward with explosive speed. However in that same instant, Qin Wentian took another step forward as the ancient sword strap behind his back propelled slightly upwards. The kingly sword-might swept over everything, and even Zong Peng’s Astral Nova was forcibly halted by an overwhelming forceful suppression. It trembled violently in mid-air, unable to advance a single inch forward.

Such a bizarre scene caused the eyes of everyone present to narrow, as great shock painted their faces.

“How is this possible?”

The scene before their eyes was completely unbelievable. Especially for Zong Peng, whose gaze stiffened as even the sword-might radiating from him actually turned sluggish.

His Astral Nova felt as though it was being impeded by a force. It couldn’t advance forward.

“KILL!”

Zong Peng howled in rage, and continued pressing forward with his finger. An instant later, sword-might whistled, concentrating onto his Astral Nova, powering it, allowing it to forcibly advanced forward.

However at that moment, Qin Wentian took yet another step forward. That simple step caused the entirety of the sword qi within that space to gather into a single body. He was the origin of this sword qi, he was the sovereign of this sword Dao.

“Rumble!”

An exceedingly fearsome sword intent, akin to the howling of demons, emanated forth from Qin Wentian. Zong Peng’s Astral Nova, that was forcefully advancing forward, slowed down once again.

Seeing this scene happening once again made Zong Peng lose all his face. He roared in anger as he soared up into the skies, arriving to stand before his Astral Nova. His will of the Mandate of Swords erupted out in a frenzy, powering his Nova.

With a wave of his hand, the will of his Mandate transformed into a curtain of swords that completely enveloped his Nova, bursting forth with brilliant rays of light as though capable of making the day even more resplendent.

“With your lowly character, you are not worthy for me to draw my sword.”

Qin Wentian spoke faintly, his calm voice shaking the void. The hearts of the spectators had already reached the extreme limits of shock, incapable of further increase.

Zong Peng, how powerful was he? Yet Qin Wentian actually announced that Zong Peng wasn't worthy of him drawing his sword, right to his face.

In that moment, Qin Wentian's aura erupted forth, allowing the others to view the truth for themselves. His cultivation was the same as Zong Peng—he was also in the first level of the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

Yet from his body, a surge of kingly sword-might was emanating outwards. It was as though he was the king, the monarch of everything before him.

Qin Wentian took yet another step forward. The keening of the sword continued unabated as a crisp, crackling sound punctured the air. In the air, Zong Peng actually let out a groaning sound—he could sense that the Astral Nova he summoned was about to be shattered into pieces.

Astral Novas were the foundation of Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns. Once their Astral Nova was shattered, even their Yuanfu would be damaged.

For Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns that only condensed a single Nova, once their Nova was shattered, their Yuanfu would be broken; but if a Sovereign had condensed a total of four Astral Novas, when one was shattered, huge cracks would be seen on the surface of their Yuanfu, dropping their combat prowess immensely. Yet if his fourth Astral Nova was shattered, the Yuanfu would be completely destroyed, and the Heavenly Dipper Sovereign would become nothing more than a cripple.

At this moment, Zong Peng was still facing off against Qin Wentian, and he could already feel that his Astral Novas were showing signs of cracking.

This was suppression, a suppression of Astral Nova. How strong was Qin Wentian's sword-type Astral Nova exactly?

A clear and sharp sound echoed from all around, and when Qin Wentian advanced forward, the swords strapped on the backs of the spectators all shattered into pieces.

The entire space, was filled with the sounds of wailing swords.

“Pu...”

Zong Peng felt something sweet rushing up his throat, and finally, he could hold back no longer and spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, his countenance turning pale-white.

“STAY YOUR HAND!”

The Elder in the air sensed that something was extremely wrong and attempted to stop Qin Wentian. But it was then that Qin Wentian stabbed out a finger, instantaneously causing a resplendent sword to burst forth, piercing towards Zong Peng's Astral Nova

“Kacha, Kacha...”

Shattering sounds endlessly rang out, and Zong Peng gave a blood-curdling screech as he coughed out several mouthfuls of fresh blood. In the end, the cracks appearing on the Astral Nova widened more and more, eventually shattering into pieces.

The powerful Zong Peng, his Astral Nova had been completely fractured into pieces.

BANG!

Zong Peng's body was ruthlessly slammed onto the ground. His countenance was as pale as paper and without a hint of color. From the aura fluctuations he was currently emitting, it seemed as though his life force could vanish at any moment.

His fourth Astral Nova had been annihilated—he had become a cripple.

Inclining his head, Zong Peng gazed at Qin Wentian with difficulty. His eyes were filled with towering hatred and incomparable venom.

He, Zong Peng, had cultivated bitterly for many years and eventually birthed a total of four Astral Novas. This should be the highlight of his years, the time for him to shine the most, and yet Qin Wentian had only been in the Zong Clan for a few days and shattered his Astral Nova in front of the other Zong Clan members.

“You are truly malicious.” Zong Peng’s voice held a chill that seemingly came from the abyss.

Qin Wentian coldly laughed, “Since you’ve been planning to act against me, destroying my reputation and even issuing a challenge to me. The ending you have now was all orchestrated by your own hands. You are unfit to be a member of the Zong Clan.”

Silence permeated the entire surroundings, while the hearts of everyone present pounded violently.

Even now, the spectators had yet to come back to their senses, they were all struck dumb when they looked at Zong Peng.

Zong Peng’s Astral Nova was shattered by Qin Wentian, and yet from the beginning of the battle until now, Qin Wentian’s sword hadn’t even left its sheath!

Qin Wentian dealt with Zong Peng with as much ease as dealing with Zong Hong, both were a piece of cake.

At this moment, Zong Hong was sitting on the ground, staring at the end result with disbelief etched on his face.

That day, Zong Peng’s words made him feel that Qin Wentian’s heart was narrow and petty-minded. His strength was far below Zong Peng’s and in the future, Zong Peng said that he would surely take the title of Sword Son away from Qin Wentian.

But today, when the truth came out, Zong Peng ended up as the one being completely suppressed in a fight.

This made Zong Hong reflect on his actions that day—had he truly done wrong?

Was Zong Peng really using him?

That day, Qin Wentian hadn’t brushed him off in an arrogant manner. Right from the start, his exact words to him was telling him to study the ancient text more, gleaning more perspectives before

embarking on his own path. Qin Wentian's tyrannical sword Dao, wasn't that a result of him walking his own path?

Now that he thought about it, when Zong Hong glanced at the young man again, he actually felt a deep sense of shame at his own inferiority. Qin Wentian even seemed younger than him.

Qin Wentian's attainment in the Dao of Swords had already convinced everyone present here today.

However, having strength was having strength, he'd actually crippled Zong Peng.

Zong Peng was still a member of their Zong Clan, while Qin Wentian was an outsider with a different surname.

What made people speechless was that earlier when the elder called for him to stop, Qin Wentian continued stabbing out with his finger, destroying Zong Peng. And when that elder finally wanted to act, he had reacted too slowly and was late by a single step.

At this moment, he stood in front of Zong Peng's shattered Nova, as he stared down with fury at Qin Wentian. His gaze was akin to a sharp sword, wanting to penetrate through Qin Wentian, while an immense killing intent gushed forth from his body.

"You... Very well, it seems that I must clean up the garbage on behalf of the clan lord." That elder's body trembled slightly as his aura surged up; he was many times stronger compared to Zong Hong.

Qin Wentian's gaze was completely devoid of fear, as he matched gazes with that elder, stating in a cold voice, "I wonder if Elder would take action if Zong Peng was the one who crippled me earlier?"

"Hmph." The elder took a step forward, his killing intent causing the hearts of the crowd to tremble.

Qin Wentian coldly laughed, and with a flick of his wrist he produced the sword that was the symbol of the Sword Son, sending it soaring in the skies, before hovering in mid-air.

"I've angered Elder, hence Elder wants to kill me. But with my identity as the Sword Son, Zong Peng angered me, going against his superiors. What's wrong with me crippling him?" Qin Wentian continued laughing coldly as he continued, "And since this is the case, with the symbolic sword of the Sword Son as proof, I really want to see how you'll kill me, the Sword Son of the Zong Clan."

As the sound of his words faded, Qin Wentian advanced, soaring into the skies.

He actually wanted to fight against the elder!

This scene caused the pupils of the surrounding crowd to widen in disbelief. Once again, their hearts pounded violently without cease, utterly dumbfounded in their amazement!

Chapter 408: Contest over Control of Sword Range

In the middle of the air, where sword qi swept across the entire void, Qin Wentian's eyes were fixated onto that Zong Clan's elder as a terrifying battle intent radiated out from him.

This young man effortlessly crippled Zong Peng, someone at the same level of cultivation as him, and now, he actually wanted to face off against an elder.

That elder stared at Qin Wentian as he coldly stated, "Fine, I really want to see how capable you are."

As the sound of his voice faded, a terrifying Astral Nova manifested, floating above him in the air. This Astral Nova contained an extremely fearsome sword-might within; countless thin and fine sword threads could be seen revolving around it, so sharp it was as though just a single sword thread was sufficient to kill people.

Not only that, the speed of these sword threads were extremely terrifying, like light rays shuttling across space, emitting an intense and resplendent sword light.

That elder then took a step towards Qin Wentian as the entirety of the sword threads began revolving at an increased speed, being fired straight toward Qin Wentian's location. It seemed that he would be able to kill Qin Wentian with just a thought on his part.

Sounds of laceration sounded out within Qin Wentian's body. An instant later, the sound of a sword keening permeated the void as an incomparably dazzling manifestation of that kingly sword floated above his head.

At this moment, the glow surrounding that sword was completely beyond comparison, and just a single glance was sufficient to determine that it was on the level of the ultimate, supreme swords. It seemed as though every part of the sword's body was formed from the countless repeated condensation of sword essence—none of the spectators had ever sensed such a terrifying Astral Nova before.

In addition, this sword exuded an exalted, imposing aura of majesty, like it was the king of all swords, projecting a might as if it sought to destroy all other swords before it.

“Is this his Astral Nova? How is it so powerful?”

The hearts of the crowd trembled, and even the elder’s Astral Nova didn’t make them feel this way. Not only that, it seemed that the elder’s Nova was being faintly suppressed by Qin Wentian’s.

Qin Wentian’s stare directly bore straight into the elder’s eyes, his countenance emotionless, detached of all expression. The elder’s Astral Nova started to tremble and vibrate lightly, letting out an incessant buzzing.

Such a scene caused the elder to turn ashen. With a wave of his hands, the millions upon millions of sword threads transformed into an intense beam of sword light, shooting straight at Qin Wentian, aiming to envelop him within.

Qin Wentian’s expression turned cold, and he similarly stretched his hand and flicked his finger outwards, causing his Astral Nova to shuttle through the air, as endless sounds of sword keening could be heard, resembling the crazed shrill cries of demonic beasts.

A burst of light flooded the area, forming a light screen. That intense sword beam made from countless sword threads was actually being blocked, forcibly suppressed by Qin Wentian’s Astral Nova to the point where it couldn’t advance forwards.

“I truly want to see how strong you really are, an elder that doesn’t discriminate between right and wrong, wanting to punish people just because you see fit to do so.” Qin Wentian snorted coldly. Gushing sounds could be heard within his body as demonic energy gurgled, manifesting his third Astral Nova.

This Astral Nova was in the shape of his Astral Soul as well, with a tall and mighty physique resembling an ancient demon from the primordial era. Towering amounts of demonic qi filled the air, and the tyranny of the energy it projected was so intense that even the surrounding space began to tremble.

“What a terrifying demonic qi!”

The expressions of the spectators turned sluggish. Qin Wentian had just stepped into the Heavenly Dipper Realm, yet both his Astral Novas were so domineering, the people were left with a feeling of overwhelming suppression. They were powerful enough to shatter the Astral Novas of others.

“Go.” Qin Wentian pointed out with his finger once more as the terrifying demonic Astral Nova unleashed a roar resembling a dragon. That Astral Nova rumbled as it zoomed through the air, projecting a sense of tyranny, adding to the suppression effect produced by the kingly sword. The

vibrations shuddering through the Astral Nova of that elder increased in intensity, emanating a sense of instability, like it could fall apart at any instant.

At this moment, he finally understood why even before Qin Wentian's sword was unsheathed, Zong Peng's Astral Nova had already shattered.

This was a suppression due to the quality of Astral Novas, the grade of Qin Wentian's Astral Nova was one tier higher compared to the rest.

There were several disciples in the surroundings currently spectating this battle. That elder had said earlier that he wanted to kill Qin Wentian, clearing up the rubbish of the Zong Clan. He was already on the back of a mounted tiger unable to get off. No matter what, he had to win this battle or the prestige of the elders would be lost, all thrown away by his hands.

A terrifying glint of light flickered in his eyes, the Astral Novas in the elder's body manifested one by one as the will of his Mandates coated them all. The two of them were about to enter a heaven-sundering battle.

“PRESUMPTUOUS!”

A powerful shout caused the blood and qi in the bodies of the spectators to circulate wildly, containing an impressive impact akin to a thunderbolt, even blurring the consciousness of some of the weaker spectators.

The battle intent of both Qin Wentian and the elder abruptly dissipated, that huge volume of concentrated shockwaves seemed to have vanished into nothingness by the might of that powerful shout.

“Clan lord.”

“I've already understood the entire process of why this has happened, there is no need for either of you to explain further. Zong Peng made use of Zong Hong, asking him to seek the Sword Son out for guidance. Qin Wentian didn't deliberately make things difficult for him, yet Zong Hong intentionally besmeared the reputation of the Sword Son. Meanwhile, you, as an elder, without consulting me on the matter, you intended to strip away his title? I gave you face as you are an elder and remained silent, yet you have no appreciation of the gravity of things and actually wanted to clear the clan of garbage? Who are you clearing the garbage for?”

Although Zong Yi was imposing, he was normally an extremely warm character when interacting with the others. Yet now, he was truly infuriated. Silence immediately descended upon the entire surroundings—all were intimidated by the clan lord's aura.

Although that elder felt dissatisfied in his heart, he also lowered his head and dared not argue. After all, his status was different compared to Zong Yi. Zong Yi was the clan elder while he was merely an elder. Above him, there were still the Doyens.

“Zong Peng's heart went stray, which was why Qin Wen had to intervene. Furthermore, from now onwards, when the Sword Son Qin Wen takes actions, no one is to question him or even investigate his motives,” Zong Yi icily stated. After which, he turned his gaze onto Zong Hong as he spoke, “Zong Hong, I know your character isn't bad, yet your heart is not resolute enough. This is why others find it so easy to make use of you. I'm currently stripping you of your title as a Sword Son nominee. Go into seclusion and reflect on your actions.”

“Yes, clan lord.” Zong Hong bowed to Zong Yi. Earlier, his heart had been badly shaken when he witnessed Qin Wentian's display of power. He knew that right from the start, Qin Wentian couldn't even be bothered to argue with him. With such power, and with Qin Wentian's character, he wouldn't have intentionally made things difficult for an existence like Zong Hong.

If not, when he'd earlier provoked and challenged him a few times, Qin Wentian could have easily killed him just by casually throwing out a palm strike.

“The matter today shall conclude today, no one else is to pursue it further. In fact, go and prepare yourselves, the battle for control of the sword range will commence in five days time. When the time comes, don't tell me you lot are only good for showing off to each other,” Zong Yi stated before flicking his sleeves and departing. From the start till the end, he hadn't said a word to Qin Wentian, yet everyone understood that clan lord Zong Yi placed an immense amount of trust in Qin Wentian and was evidently favoring him.

But truthfully speaking, Qin Wentian's level of power did in fact broaden their horizons. To think that he even dared to fight against an elder.

At this moment, the spectators involuntarily thought that if Qin Wentian was participating in the battle for the sword range, maybe this time around, their Zong Clan had an opportunity to win.

For the disciples of this generation, both the Heavenly Sword Sect and the Li Clan were all exceedingly powerful, whereas the disciples from the Zong Clan weren't outstanding enough. Although they often comforted themselves, everyone knew that they didn't have too much chance to win the sword range battle. Most likely, the victor would be the Heavenly Sword Sect.

But now, a ray of hope had appeared.

With a thought, Qin Wentian retracted his Astral Novas back into his Yuanfu, then he glanced at the elder before turning and departing the area. This matter wasn't able to shake his heart.

“Consider yourself lucky.” That elder had a grim look on his face as he too retracted his Astral Nova. Yet he couldn’t help but coldly spit out the words, as though if it weren’t for the appearance of the clan lord, Qin Wentian would definitely have died.

Qin Wentian continued walking away, totally disregarding him. In order to maintain the slightest shred of face, that elder had no choice but to say what he said. Yet if the both of them truly engaged in battle, the one to suffer a disadvantage definitely wouldn’t be Qin Wentian.

The spectators all mused, if the clan lord hadn’t appeared, who would have been the victor in the battle between Qin Wen and the elder?

Qin Wentian’s Astral Nova was extremely terrifying, yet the elder held an advantage in terms of cultivation level. If they truly fought, the ending was unknown. But the probability of the elder winning the battle, who was two levels higher in terms of cultivation base, was slightly higher.

Naturally, this matter would always be a mystery, there wouldn’t be an answer to it.

“Qin Wen is so powerful.” The young girl Zong Leng stared at the departing back of Qin Wentian, with an amazed look in her eyes. The battle earlier had truly shocked her.

The clan lord truly had good judgement, no wonder he selected this person to be the Sword Son.

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This matter caused intense echoes to reverberate throughout the Zong Clan. Zong Peng’s family members hated Qin Wentian with a passion in their hearts, but since the clan lord had spoken, none of them dared to take any action.

However, for those members of the younger generations who had witnessed the battle, they had long forgotten the matter of Zong Hong besmearing Qin Wentian’s reputation. They only remembered how awe-inspiring Qin Wentian was when he battled. That tyrannical manner and the effortless victory he’d obtained had been deeply imprinted in their memories.

Crippling Zong Peng even without unsheathing his sword, facing against an elder with no hints of fear nor terror. Such a character was truly extraordinary.

In fact, several of the younger generations all felt worship in their hearts for Qin Wentian. They would frequent Qin Wentian’s residence to seek him out for guidance. Qin Wentian didn’t reject any of them and would patiently explain some of the matters they might come across in cultivation,

immensely benefiting those youngsters. Those who received his guidance went back and informed their seniors and elders of this matter, and after a while, Qin Wentian's popularity and prestige among the younger generation in the Zong Clan was, for a short time, uncontested.

Qin Wentian probably hadn't imagined things would turn out like this as well.

In the blink of an eye, five days passed. Today, many silhouettes gathered in the training field of the Zong Clan. Atop a tall platform, clan lord Zong Yi stood gazing down at the disciples of the Zong Clan.

"The sword range battle will affect the control of the sword range for the next ten years. Let's hope this time around, my Zong Clan will be the one victorious," Zong Yi spoke, and with a gesture, an ancient sword appeared beneath his feet as he stood upon it.

"Those that wish to spectate can come along as well. Move out," Zong Yi passively spoke, and an instant later, the sword he stood on soared up into the skies and zoomed towards the location of the sword range.

Everyone respectively stood on their swords, and moments later, sword qi pervaded the air at the training field as one silhouette after another flew through the skies, constituting an extremely spectacular sight.

The one in the lead was none other than Zong Yi, while the others beside him were Doyens of the Zong Clan. Next in line were the elders, Qin Wentian following closely behind as he led the group of disciples forward.

Qin Wentian was standing on his ancient sword, with his arms crossed in front of his chest, exuding an incomparably calm aura. Several gazes all landed onto him, the weight of responsibility in winning the battle would depend heavily on the Sword Son.

The members of the Zong Clan moved out together, flying outside the Sword Reverence City. However, towering sword-might exuded in another direction, as another group of people appeared. When people from both sides matched their gazes, a formless sword intent clashed against each other in the middle of the air.

The other party was one of the three major powers of the Sword Reverence City, the Li Clan. They too, had arrived!

The leader of the younger generations from the Li Clan was naturally Li Ran. He would be their representative for the battle at the Heavenly Dipper level. Those members that followed behind his back all shifted their gaze onto the people from Zong Clan. Their eyes were filled with provocation as well as heavy disdain.

Chapter 409: Disregard

The one standing right in front of the other group was naturally the clan lord of Li Clan, Li Zhentian. The gaze of this man was filled with extreme sharpness as he turned it in the direction of Zong Yi. His gaze also took in the doyens, the elders, as well as the person behind them, Qin Wentian. “Is this the Sword Son of your Zong Clan?”

As the sound of his voice faded, the members from the younger generation of the Li Clan all shifted over to Qin Wentian.

Seeing how close this young man was standing next to Zong Yi, his status shouldn't be ordinary. There was a high possibility that he might be the Sword Son Zong Yi selected to participate in the battle to control the rights to the sword range.

Li Ran and Li Nian had already met Qin Wentian before. Li Nian then stated, “This man was the person rumored to spend a total of merely three months when he achieved the Perfection Boundary of the first level insight into the Mandate of Swords. Earlier, he still denied saying that he was invited by the Zong Clan, but now I see the reason why—he's afraid of death. Back then if it weren't for Zong Qian taking out his divine weapon, that man would have already died.

“Oh?” Li Zhentian had an expression of interest on his face. After which, he coldly laughed, “It seems like the more time passes, the more the Zong Clan deteriorates.”

Zong Yi merely casted a glance at him without issuing a rebuttal. The most imperative thing this time around was to gain control of the sword range.

Qin Wentian didn't even bother to glance at Li Nian. That day, if he hadn't just arrived at the city, and was unwilling to overly trouble himself over his opponent, Li Nian wouldn't even be here today. Yet to think that now, the moment this woman saw him, she still dared to be so arrogant.

“If we hadn't retreated back then, the person who would have died wouldn't be Brother Qin, but your genius Senior Brother Li Ran.” Zong Qian coldly snorted, the Zong Clan was already fully aware of Qin Wentian's prowess. The younger members from the Zong Clan all had cold smiles on their faces as they mockingly stared at Li Nian.

“Who doesn't know how to brag? I hope when we meet you on the battlefield for the contest of the sword range, you will still be able to maintain such confidence,” Li Nian retorted.

“You are right. It's just as you say, everyone knows how to brag. My members from the Zong Clan will not wage a war of tongues with you. When the time for battle comes, I want to see if you can still keep that smile on your face.” Zong Qian wasn't willing to appear weak, as he countered Li Nian. In the Sword Reverence City, with the three major powers sharing control, as well as the appearance of the demonic sword range, their relationships were like water and fire, how could they lose out in forcefulness even when just comparing stances?

“Qin Wentian seems completely unperturbed.” Those from the Zong Clan glanced at Qin Wentian as they mused in their hearts—when the time for the sword range battle starts, Li Nian would definitely feel as though the words they exchanged today like a tight slap across her face.

The two groups of people made haste and soon after, they arrived at the precipice. They directly descended into the bottom of the ravine. Over at the surrounding area of the sword range, an actual battle arena platform could be seen. Those from the Heavenly Sword Sect stood at its edges, all cloaked in green with swords strapped behind their backs, exuding an extraordinary demeanor. Upon seeing the arrival of the Li and Zong Clan, a terrifying sword intent gushed upwards, radiating overwhelming sharpness. Even before the contest started, they were already revealing their battle intent.

The Li Clan and Zong Clan took their respective corners, and all three major powers lined up into a triangular formation.

Li Zhentian and Zong Yi both took a step forwards in the direction of the Heavenly Sword Sect. The sect leader of the Heavenly Sword Sect leisurely stepped out, and when his gaze came into contact with the two of them, he stated, “I trust that the two clan lords have been well since last we met?”

Li Zhentian clasped his hands as he spoke, “Sect Leader Wuyou, let’s not reminisce about the past. The ten year period has ended and this contest shall later decide who among us will possess the rights to the sword range for the next ten years. Will the rules of the battle be the same as before?”

The three major powers of the Sword Reverence City were all extremely powerful, yet not one of them could completely crush the other two. If not, that power would have long dominated the Sword Reverence City.

And because of this delicate balance, the three powers chose a somewhat gentler method, by allowing the disciples under them to be representatives in the fight to control the rights of the sword range. Nobody sought to disrupt the balance.

As for the rules of the battle, each of the powers would select a total of three candidates, with the criteria that all three must not be over thirty years of age. A total of two disciples at the Yuanfu Realm and one at the Heavenly Dipper Realm would be selected, and the usage of Divine Weapons was prohibited.

A total of three rounds would decide the victor. For each round, the candidates selected by the three powers would stand upon the stage, and the last man standing would be the victor.

Three battles, and if there was a case where a single power wins two battle, they would directly gain the rights to control the sword range for the next ten years. If all three powers won one match, then

in that case, priority would go to the Heavenly Dipper level battle. Hence, the battle at the Heavenly Dipper Level was the most crucial.

But in this place, the three major powers weren't the only ones present. On the edge of the precipice, several silhouettes appeared. Whether they were here alone or in a group, they'd all come here to spectate the battle.

The battle for the control rights of the sword range wasn't a small matter in the Sword Reverence City. Held once every ten years, the three major powers would do their best to nurture the younger talents of their clan so they would have a chance to win the battle. In other words, the battle here today would be a battle at the pinnacle among those from the younger generations.

"We will stick with the old rules, I suppose," Zong Yi calmly added. Those behind him all had smiles on their faces—as long as Qin Wentian was here, the battle at the Heavenly Dipper level was basically in their pockets, provided that one power didn't achieve a total of two victories in the first two battles.

"It seems like both the Li and Zong Clan are extremely confident."

Upon seeing how Zong Yi and Li Zhentian were acting, the spectators all started discussing intently. However, based on rumours, the strongest candidate this time around should be from the Heavenly Sword Sect by right.

The Heavenly Sword Sect had a few outstanding disciples, and all of them were extremely powerful.

"Fine, since both clan lords want it to be as such, we will stick with the old rules then. For the first battle, Jian Han, go," Jian Wuyou casually spoke, as a young man that exuded an aura of coldness walked up to the stone platform situated in the center. Instantly, a cold and icy sharpness radiated forth, incomparably tyrannical.

"Li Nian, you are up," stated Li Zhentian, the clan lord of the Li Clan. Li Nian's silhouette flickered as she followed suit and stood on the platform.

"Zong Qian. You will fight the first round." Zong Yi selected Zong Qian.

The three candidates stood atop the stone platform. This scene before them made many of the spectators feel puzzled, Jian Han was definitely more powerful compared to Li Nian of the Li Clan. Yet Li Zhentian actually chose her for the first battle? The selection seemed somewhat unwise.

It was even more strange when both Li Nian and Jian Han actually joined hands and made a move towards Zong Qian at the same time.

“You guys...” Zong Qian’s countenance turned cold as his Astral Souls erupted forth. Yet a surge of coldness had already enveloped him as a sword beam flashed past, containing the chill of death within it.

Li Nian used her movement techniques to get behind Zong Qian, sealing off his path of retreat. Sword flowers bloomed, as pinpricks of light blossomed in the void.

Zong Qian wasn’t a weakling either. He flicked his finger out, causing a gigantic sword containing the strength of a mountain to manifest. It slashed towards Jian Han, wanting to suppress him. At the same time, his left hand wavered and blasted forth a powerful palm imprint towards Li Nian.

“Puchi...” A crisp sound echoed out, the spectators saw Jian Han continue to rush forwards. He ignored Zong Qian’s attack, allowing the sword to freely slash at his body in exchange for his own sword to slice apart Zong Qian’s throat.

Zong Qian had to make a decision, choosing between life and death in a single instant.

He retracted his left palm, and used it to grab at Jian Han’s sword. At the same time, a palm strike blasted on his body, instantly destroying his clothes as terrifying sword qi directly penetrated into his body. This scene caused the expressions of those from the Zong Clan to falter.

“DIE!” Jian Han was someone that had already comprehended a second level insight. A sword light that emulated the properties of flowing water swept out, completely unblockable. Zong Qian hurriedly retreated with explosive speed, jumping off the platform. Only then did he narrowly avoid the sweep of Jian Han’s sword.

“Hu...” Taking a deep breath, Zong Qian turned ashen. Even if Jian Han suffered injuries in exchange, he still wanted to blast him off the platform.

After which, the spectators saw the injured Jian Han continue to enjoy a tremendous advantage as he easily suppressed Li Nian. Such a display filled the hearts of the spectators with bewilderment.

The Li Clan selected Li Nian to battle, yet Li Nian combined forces with Jian Han to defeat Zong Qian, before allowing herself to be defeated.

“The Li Clan must have formed an agreement with the Heavenly Sword Sect.”

The expressions on the faces of the crowd stiffened. Zong Yi had also predicted it, and indeed, for the next method, the Li Clan sent out a slightly more powerful candidate while the Heavenly Sword

Sect sent out a weaker one. This already indicated that for the second battle, the Heavenly Sword Sect was allowing the Li Clan to win on purpose.

When the battle started, the candidate from Li Clan and the Heavenly Sword Sect simultaneously struck out towards the candidate from the Zong Clan, and their combined forces drove him off the platform. After which, the Li Clan effortlessly obtained a victory for the second round.

The Li Clan and the Heavenly Sword Sect had won one battle each.

“Despicable.”

“What schemers, both the Li Clan and Heavenly Sword Sect. They actually opted to use such a disgraceful method.”

The members of the Zong Clan were all infuriated as they coldly stated this conclusion. Yet their clan lord Zong Yi remained unperturbed. He quietly gazed at the other party as he stated, “Clan lord Li and Sect leader Jian seem to be having a lot of fun.”

Jian Wuyou indifferently glanced at Zong Yi, and even before he spoke, a look of contempt could be seen on Li Zhentian’s face as he stated mockingly, “In this generation, the members of your Zong Clan are the weakest. They basically have no qualifications to even fight here for the control of the sword range. Let’s consider your Zong Clan to be eliminated from the contest directly so as to save your clan’s prestige. Zong Clan’s members have no right nor capability to participate in the next battle.”

One could infer from Li Zhentian’s words that he evidently looked down upon the entire younger generation of the Zong Clan. Him joining hands with the Heavenly Sword Sect wasn’t because he was afraid for the Zong Clan. But rather, it was because the Zong Clan didn’t even have the qualifications to compete against them. If that was the case, they might as well eliminate them first.

On the other hand, both the Li Clan and the Heavenly Sword Sect had the utmost confidence in their Heavenly Dipper Sword Son. The chance to possess the control rights of the sword range, they were betting it all on the next battle.

As for the Zong Clan, they were being pushed to the side by the two major powers.

This manner of disregard made the Zong Clan's members boil with anger. The Li Clan had definitely crossed the line.

Zong Yi stared at the arrogant Li Zhentian, and the expression on his face was still as calm as before. The members of the younger generation were indeed slightly weaker in comparison.

Jian Feng from the Heavenly Sword Sect, Li Ran from the Li Clan were both exceedingly powerful. No wonder the two leaders were so confident, and wanted to leave the last battle to the both of them. And because of the presence of these two powerful candidates, none of the attention and focus of the spectators were directed at those from the Zong Clan. If not, during the past few days they would definitely have been able to find out that an unfathomably powerful Sword Son had just appeared in their Zong Clan during that time.

"Jian Feng, we will leave this in your good hands then." Jian Wuyou stared at the person behind him. This person Jian Feng was none other than the one whom Qin Wentian's perception had sensed when he was meditating in the sword range.

Jian Feng, a disciple from the Heavenly Sword Sect, 29 years of age, someone with outstanding talent whose current cultivation base was at the first level in the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

"Li Ran, you will fight against him to decide the battle today," Li Zhentian calmly spoke. For the next ten years, the control rights to the sword range absolutely must not land in the hands of the Heavenly Sword Sect again.

Jian Feng and Li Ran both stepped onto the stone platform in the center. Although their auras were still contained, just standing there made people feel that they were radiating the incomparable might of extremely sharp swords.

As though, they were both swords themselves.

"Qin Wen, go."

Zong Yi quietly spoke, Qin Wentian nodded his head in response as he advanced forwards. At this moment, the gazes of everyone from the Zong Clan were riveted on Qin Wentian.

Earlier, they had once vilified and contemptuously looked down on this young man. Yet today when they saw Qin Wentian stepping out, their hearts began to burn as the blood within their bodies grew hot.

They thought of how they'd been wronged, first by the Li Clan's humiliating words, and then from the utter disregard that the Heavenly Sword Sect had shown. Sword Son, Qin Wen, would definitely wash clean the slate for the sake of the Zong Clan!

Chapter 410: Sword Keening, Death

During his duel with Zong Peng, the members from the Zong Clan were already aware of how powerful Qin Wentian was.

Utterly tyrannical, these were the only words to describe him. Even without unsheathing his sword, Qin Wentian had shattered Zong Peng's Astral Nova.

Although Li Nian and Jian Feng might be stronger compared to Zong Peng, but would they be able to do what Qin Wentian did? Completely and overwhelmingly suppress Zong Peng, obtaining an effortless victory?

Currently, what the Zong Clan members were worrying about was that Li Nian and Jian Feng—the strongest in their respective power among the younger generations—might join forces to deal with Qin Wentian.

“Who is that person?”

Currently on the edges of the precipice, several of the spectators shifted their gazes onto Qin Wentian. They had never heard of Qin Wentian's name before. However, the eyes of those from the Zong Clan seemed to contain a blazing fire within.

It was as though they had immense confidence in this person, and they believed that he would surely be able to defeat both Li Ran and Jian Feng.

Currently, there were also some that recognized Qin Wentian. Back then when Qin Wentian cultivated his sword at the precipice, there were many that had crossed paths with him. Right now, they involuntarily started—so the guy they had met before was a helper that had been invited by the Zong Clan.

But even so, in front of Li Ran and Jian Feng, no matter how powerful this young man was, he would at most take the role as a spectator. There was nothing to do with him because to put it simply... he just couldn't be compared to either of the two.

“You actually dared to participate in the Heavenly Dipper level battle?”

At this moment in the direction of the Li Clan, a strange glow flashed past Li Nian's eyes as she spoke, feeling somewhat puzzled.

“Li Nian, if Brother Qin hadn’t been unwilling to destroy you that day, do you think you would even be here today?” Zong Qian retorted.

Li Ran’s eyes also shifted over to Qin Wentian. A look of disdain could be seen on his face as he spoke, “Just get off the platform.”

The next battle was a battle between him and Jian Feng. He had been anticipating this fight for a very long time, hence the Heavenly Sword Sect and the Li Clan came to an agreement, ousting the Zong Clan from the contest. Their victory would be decided by Li Ran and Jian Feng.

Jian Feng had an extremely serene look on his countenance, he glanced at Qin Wentian as a thought flashed past his mind. Wasn’t this the cultivator that he sensed that night?

He only took a casual glance at Qin Wentian, before shifting his eyes back to Li Ran. Similar to what Li Ran thought, he felt that this battle had nothing to do with Qin Wentian.

It would be for the best if he got off the platform on his own initiative.

Qin Wentian quietly stood there. Although his opponents were Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns, to him, battling against opponents at the same level didn’t give him any pressure.

That day in the ancient kingdom, with all the geniuses at the pinnacle of Grand Xia gathering there, including the demon-level talents of the transcendent powers, didn’t he also obtain the first ranking?

And now in the Sword Reverence City, if it weren’t for the sake of helping clan lord Zong Yi to acquire the rights to the sword range, he wouldn’t even have bothered participating in this battle.

To him, this was a battle that had no meaning to it.

The unperturbed Qin Wentian acted as though he hadn’t heard Li Ran’s words. Li Ran, who was currently focusing his attentions on Jian Feng, frowned in displeasure as a glint of coldness flickered in his eyes. His eyes gradually narrowed into slits as he turned his focus towards Qin Wentian and with a whistling sound, the ancient sword on his back suddenly floated before him, pointing its sword tip straight at Qin Wentian.

“You shouldn’t participate in this battle. Your first mistake was to agree to help Zong Yi. Earlier I gave you a chance to retreat and you didn’t cherish it...that was your second mistake.”

Li Ran spoke indifferently, after which he added to Jian Feng, “We shouldn’t bully him too much. One sword move each, let’s see who can kill him first. How about it?”

After Jian Feng heard Li Ran’s words, he turned his eyes to Qin Wentian as he stated, “You won’t be our match, so you’d better get off the platform now while you still can.”

In the Sword Reverence City, Jian Feng didn’t believe there would be any opponent capable of defeating him if both of them were on the same level. The only exception was Li Ran from the Li Clan. It was said that Li Ran’s talent was extremely outstanding as well, and he was the only person that could make Jian Feng feel interest.

When he was still in Yuanfu, the Heavenly Sword Sect leader, Jian Wuyou had already selected him as the Sword Son. Not to mention now, after several years of cultivation, his Sword Heart had grown even more resolute. He firmly believed that in the Sword Reverence City, it was basically impossible for someone at the same level as him to be able to defeat him.

“Since you are unwilling to make a move, let me destroy him first before fighting against you.”

Li Ran could see that Jian Feng wanted to give Qin Wentian a chance. Yet, he had no patience left. His hands moved forwards, grabbing hold of his hovering sword as he advanced towards Qin Wentian step by step.

Rays of resplendent light shot out from the sword, so dazzling that the spectators couldn’t even keep their eyes open. His entire sword was glimmering, so bright and eye-piercing that its glare was akin to that of a blazing sun.

The wind rose up, the glow brightened.

The crowd only saw Li Ran’s body seemingly transformed into a beam of sword light. Those who were weaker had no choice but to raise their hands, placing them in front of their eyes.

Why was the light from Li Ran’s sword so intense? It felt like the harsh rays from the blazing sun.

The dazzling light flashed, and in the next moment, Li Ran's sword slashed down and almost instantly, an intense beam of light appeared right in front of Qin Wentian. This beam of sword light flashed by, giving others a bone-chilling sensation.

Li Ran wanted to slice Qin Wentian's throat apart with a single move.

It was rumoured that because of his pride, Li Ran rarely used his sword. But today at the battle of the sword range where countless people were spectating, and before his battle with Jian Feng, he decided to unleash his most showy and attention-grabbing strike to finish off Qin Wentian.

Using the life of the Zong Clan's Sword Son as an offering to his sword.

Even with the blinding glare, several in the crowd were still squinting their eyes. They all wanted to take a look at the life-stealing sword technique of Li Ran.

The members of the Li Clan all had the corners of their lips slightly curled up, as hints of arrogance and pride could be seen on their faces. As for Li Nian, a sneering expression could be seen painted on hers.

The moment the sword descended would be the moment when Qin Wentian would die.

The spectators only saw him closing his eyes. Qin Wentian's sword, that was strapped on his back, abruptly propelled out of its sheath at a speed akin to lightning, flying up in the air before landing into his outstretched palm. His actions seemed impossibly casual, and incredibly smooth. In addition to that, he didn't even try to dodge the sword slash by Li Ran.

Such an incredibly quick sword only needed the timespan of a blink of an eye to steal his life away.

But although Li Ran was fast, Qin Wentian's sword was faster.

His hand that held his sword trembled as the keening of a sword resounded out with its vibrations. However, the spectators could already envision Qin Wentian being killed by that intense sword beam of Li Ran's.

Even those from the Zong Clan were stunned, why wasn't Qin Wentian dodging?

But right now, with the attack speed of that sword, there was no longer a chance for Qin Wentian to dodge, even if he wanted to.

The sword beam descended, Qin Wentian's silhouette was slashed apart as the spectators watch on dumbfoundedly.

Those from the Zong Clan felt their hearts grow cold, while the others felt that it was only to be expected. The corners of Li Nian's lips curled up even higher as the sneer on her face grew even more prominent.

"Mhm?" Right at this moment, a bizarre occurrence took place. They saw a faint shadow gradually lengthening, before manifesting into a figure that eventually appeared two steps behind Li Ran. Li Ran directed the sword beam to slash the silhouette apart, only to see that the silhouette had completely vanished, causing his slash to land on nothingness.

"This...How swift!" The spectators drew in a cold breath of air. Even with his blinding attack speed, Li Ran didn't manage to hit his opponent?

The sword intent vanished, and with it, the sword beam dissipated. Yet Qin Wentian could be seen standing in his original spot, with his back facing that of Li Ran's. The spectators all fixated their gazes onto him, they wanted to see if Qin Wentian had been injured by that strike.

Li Ran slowly turned, yet Qin Wentian remained motionless. This caused the spectators to sigh, Qin Wentian still hadn't escaped from Li Ran's attack.

"How is this possible?"

A hoarse voice broke the silence. Li Ran who turned his body, gasped. A bloody wound could be seen on his throat, as fresh blood flowed unceasingly from it.

In that instant, the gazes of everyone all focused over at him, as expressions of terror appeared on their countenances.

Li Ran slowly fell onto the ground, dead.

The sword keens, a person falls.

When sword cultivators crossed blows, the sword wind was the most dangerous. With but a misstep, the throat can be slashed.

Li Ran thought himself as someone superior, flaunting his mediocre skills ‘magnanimously’ and granting Qin Wentian the chance to give up on the battle of his own accord. Yet in the end, he was killed from a slash on his throat. The Sword Son of the Li Clan, has fallen.

An intense cold enveloped Li Nian’s body. Overwhelmed by horror, she stared at the scene in front of her with disbelief. Gazing at the fallen figure, her body involuntarily started to tremble.

Those from the Li Clan all had ashen expressions.

They came to an agreement with the Heavenly Sword Sect because they wanted to allow Li Ran a chance to fight against Jian Feng, to see who among them would be able to acquire the controlling rights to the sword range for the next ten years. But now, the Li Clan was actually eliminated from the contest and they even lost a Sword Son.

“Excellent.”

“Sword Son, Qin Wen.”

The eyes of those from Zong Clan all blazed with fanaticism. Earlier, they were still nervous, but now their disappointment disappeared completely without a trace, leaving only hot blood surging through their hearts.

That sword attack was too magnificent, sweeping aside the entirety of Zong Clan’s humiliation, transforming it into a hard smack across the faces of those from the Li Clan.

Earlier, the words that the Li Clan’s clan lord, Li Zhentian had said, were still resounding in the air. Now, he was simply slapping himself in the face.

“Clan lord Li, do not count your chickens before they are hatched,” Zong Yi indifferently spoke, his words causing a terrifying cold light to flicker in the eyes of Li Zhentian as he stared at Qin Wentian standing on the platform.

“Clean that up.” Li Zhentian waved his hands as someone from his clan went up and took away Li Ran’s corpse.

The three powers all agreed that life and death in the contest would be determined by their own fate. Li Ran wanted to kill Qin Wentian but was killed instead.

Over at this area, everyone had astonished expressions on their faces—it seemed that the Zong Clan had long made their preparations.

Initially, the Li Clan had wanted to directly engage the Heavenly Sword Sect in the final battle to obtain the control rights of the sword range for the next ten years, yet they hadn't anticipated that they would become the victims, paving the way for the Zong Clan instead.

For the next battle, as long as the Zong Clan was victorious, the control rights to the sword range would belong to the Zong Clan.

When the gazes of the crowd shifted to Qin Wentian once again, they only saw him inclining his head to stare at Jian Feng. "You might as well get down the platform while you still can."

Qin Wentian's tone of voice was extremely ordinary, without any fluctuations. Earlier Jian Feng had 'allowed' him to get down the platform and now, he was returning the words spoken back to Jian Feng.

But the situation now was different from before.

Before this, everyone thought that Jian Feng's words were reasonable, but now, their positions were reversed.

A single sword move had slayed Li Ran, and although Jian Feng was the candidate with the strongest talent in the Heavenly Sword Sect, was he strong enough to fight against the Sword Son of the Zong Clan?

That day in the flatlands underneath the precipice, that female who'd once mocked Qin Wentian's sword arts as incomparably clumsy felt a surge of surrealism assailing her senses. The one whom she'd ridiculed before, was telling her esteemed Senior Brother Jian Feng to get off the platform of his own accord.

"Sword keening, manifesting sword shadows. What second level insight did you comprehend, exactly? Jian Feng asked. Such a sword intent even made him feel a chill in his heart.

"I have no idea what others call it. But I named it, Sword Melody," Qin Wentian indifferently spoke. Jian Feng nodded his head, "Sword Keen, Sword Melody, it is an extremely apt name for it. I'm afraid if I fight against this intent, my ending will be the same as Li Ran's. I admit my defeat."

Jian Feng's words resounded in the air. Taking no heed for the opinions of others and ignoring the prestige of the Sword Heavenly Sect, he turned and walked down the platform. He was conceding defeat.

Was this from fear of death? Or was his Sword Heart not resolute enough?

On the contrary, it was directly because Jian Feng's Sword Heart was resolute enough that he could utter such words, with openness and honesty in that situation. If he were to cross swords with Qin Wentian, his death would surely be imminent, so he chose to get off the platform instead!