

ABSOLUTE RESONANCE

Chapter 0001: I Have Three Blank Palaces



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The Xia Kingdom. Tianshu Province.

The June sun was blazing, scorching the city of Southwind with its heat.

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Many youthful faces could be seen within a bright, spacious training area of the Southwind Academy. The young boys and girls were all dressed in training gear and were seated in the lotus position. They were arranged in a circle, and their gazes were directed towards the center, where two figures were engaged in a rapid-fire duel. Clear ringing sounds could be heard echoing throughout the training area each time their wooden swords clashed.

Both of the duelists were young, roughly fifteen or sixteen years of age. The youth to the right was quite slender and handsome, with a pair of lively eyes and an elegant demeanor. His spectacular leather clothes alone drew the rapt, bashful gazes of quite a few of the maidens present.

“Go, Li Luo!” A particularly brave maiden let out a cheer of support.

Li Luo’s opponent was another youth, but a much more muscular one. His face looked significantly more brutish, and his skin was swarthy and dark. The duel between him and Li Luo almost looked like a battle between a man and a black bear.

When he heard the maiden cheer for Li Luo, he grimaced in a rather jealous manner, then roared out, “Li Luo, I’m not going to hold back any longer!” He took a step forward, causing the floorboard to tremble, then chopped out with

his wooden sword towards Li Luo. The sword seemed to screech as it sliced through the air.

Li Luo's gaze flickered as he saw the shadow of the sword reaching towards him. He suddenly leapt forwards, moving as agilely as a swallow as he sidestepped this fierce, ponderous strike.

"The Windsparrow Step!" someone cried out with a hint of praise. The Windsparrow Step was just a basic resonance art which quite a few of the people present knew, but not many were able to execute it with Li Luo's level of skill.

Li Luo shot towards the muscular youth like a flying sparrow, then suddenly struck out in a move akin to drawing the sword. A ray of light seemed to flash with incredible speed as his sword pierced towards his opponent's chest.

"The Lesser Nimblelight Sword!" another called out in surprise. Li Luo's strike had flashed forward like the curved horns of an antelope, an attack that was both fast and vicious. The onlookers couldn't help but sigh in praise. *The most talented student of the Southwind Academy truly lives up to his reputation!* The look on the muscular youth's face changed when he saw Li Luo strike at him. However, he was no pushover himself. At this critical moment, he forcefully stabilized himself and then rapidly leapt several steps backwards.

Right at this moment, a faint silvery glow exuded from his hand, seeming to take the form of a blurry silver bear's palm as he grasped the wooden sword. Accompanying the glow was a faint, deep, bearlike growl that seemed to emanate from somewhere within the muscular youth's body.

One of the many watching students let out a surprised cry. "That's Zhao Kuo's fifth-grade Silver Bear Resonance. It seems he's really taking this seriously!"

Accompanied by many amazed cries, Zhao Kuo took a step forwards, causing cracks to appear in the floorboards beneath him as he delivered a chopping

blow towards Li Luo. His heavy wooden sword was filled with an aura of dominating power and accompanied by an ear-piercing gust of wind, and a rapid silver glow was quickly coalescing atop the sword as well.

“Brutal Chop!” the muscular youth roared out, delivering a brilliant blow directly against the incoming piercing sword-shadow.

Boom! The two swords slammed into each other with such tremendous force that Li Luo’s wooden sword started to crumble into pieces. In the end, the entire wooden sword was blown apart by the forceful, dominating, grizzly-like strike. Faced with this tremendous power, Li Luo was knocked dozens of steps backwards.

After stabilizing himself, Li Luo lowered his head to glance at the remnants of his wooden sword, then let out a helpless chuckle. “Fine, Zhao Kuo. You win.”

“Aww.” This regretful sound simultaneously came from the mouths of multiple maidens as they heard his pronouncement. However, many of the young men watching let out little sniggers of joy. As lusty young men in the prime of their health, they naturally felt quite a bit of jealousy towards Li Luo, due to the amount of affection the young maidens present bore him.

“What a pity! Li Luo’s attack was clearly deadlier. He’s considerably superior to Zhao Kuo when it comes to applying resonance arts. If it wasn’t for the fact that he has yet to awaken a resonance, he definitely would’ve won this duel,” an onlooker evaluated.

“Agreed. Zhao Kuo has a fifth-grade Silver Bear Resonance that grants him astonishing power. In addition, I suspect his resonant power has reached the fifth seal as well. He lives up to his reputation as the strongest member of the Second School.”

“Li Luo is definitely incredibly talented in learning and using resonance arts, but he was born without a resonance of his own. This is an incurable

weakness. No matter how skilled you are in applying and using a resonance art, your attacks won't be of much use if you don't have sufficiently powerful base of resonant power supporting it."

"Hah! No need for you to pity him. Think about who Li Luo is! He's the young lord of House Luolan, one of the four great houses of the Xia Kingdom. His parents, in turn, were the youngest Dukes in the kingdom. In ten short years, their newly established House Luolan quickly ascended to become one of the four great houses. Not only are they famous in the Xia Kingdom, they've even earned a reputation beyond our borders!"

"Ugh, all that is ancient history. Three years ago, his parents went missing during the Noble's War, and ever since then House Luolan has grown much weaker. And, from what I've heard, there's currently a lot of dissent within House Luolan itself. In the future, it might even break apart. I doubt he'll be the young lord for much longer."

"Oh? Is that really true? The current leader of House Luolan is Jiang Qing'e, right? One of our senior classmates."

When this name came out, ardent looks appeared in the eyes of all the young men present. This was because the name Jiang Qing'e had reached mythical status in the annals of the Southwind Academy. Still – when they remembered the special relationship she had with Li Luo, the ardent looks transformed into gazes aimed at Li Luo that were rather odd.

As the young men and women present all whispered and gossiped with each other, Zhao Kuo walked towards Li Luo, then patted him on the shoulder. Smiling, he said, "You alright? Don't blame me for seizing an unfair advantage."

Li Luo chuckled. Zhao Kuo was the straightforward sort, and the two of them were usually on quite good terms. The man hadn't broken any rules either.

The fact that he was born with a blank resonance was his greatest weakness; he couldn't blame Zhao Kuo for that.

A middle-aged man had been watching the two of them from the sidelines for quite some time. Finally, he turned his gaze away. This man's name was Xu Shanyue, and he was the teacher of the Second School.

Xu Shanyue's eyes were also filled with a lot of regret. Li Luo truly was an incredibly talented figure, and he was able to learn any resonance art faster than an average person. In this, he had clearly taken after his two incredible parents, and in fact he actually surpassed them. Unfortunately, the fact that he was born with a blank resonance would prove quite problematic for him when it came to improving his resonant power.

When humans trained, they had to rely upon their own resonance and use it as their foundations. They would use their resonances to draw upon the natural energy of the world, then convert it into the force known as power.

There were countless different types of resonances, but most could be roughly divided into one of two camps; elemental resonances and beast resonances.

Elemental resonances referred to the various elements that filled heaven and earth, such as water, fire, wind, or thunder. As for the beast resonances? According to the legends, during the earliest dawn of human civilization, there was an almighty figure that attempted to strengthen humanity by extracting the spirits of countless beasts, then infusing these spirits into the various human bloodlines, giving birth to what was now called 'beast resonances'. In general, both elemental resonances and beast resonances could be roughly divided into nine different grades.

Normally, when a human child reached his teens, a cavity known as the 'resonant palace' would appear within that child's body. Once it manifested, it would naturally give birth to that child's resonance.

Zhao Kuo, for example, had awakened a fifth-grade Silver Bear Resonance within his resonant palace. This obviously was one of the many beast resonances. This resonance specialized in granting tremendous strength, and when combined with his own formidable resonant power, it was capable of unleashing truly destructive levels of power.

And this was where Li Luo's problem lay. Even though his resonant palace had appeared, no resonance had manifested within the palace. It was completely empty. Cases like this were incredibly rare, and were generally referred to as having a 'blank resonance'. Since he had no resonance to serve as a foundation for drawing and refining energy from the natural world, it was very difficult for him to gain a high level of resonant power. This was the fundamental reason why he had just been defeated by Zhao Kuo.

He had no resonance within his palace!

The Academy had already performed many different tests to understand why this was the case. His parents were both outstanding figures, after all, and the high-level members of the Academy had very high hopes for him. They had initially believed that in the future, he would definitely be able to gain entrance into the best high-level academy of the Xia Kingdom, the Astral Sage College.

When Li Luo had first entered the Southwind Academy, he had lived up to their expectations, demonstrating an absolutely astonishing aptitude for training in resonance arts. He had been immediately granted entrance into its First School, where all the most talented students of the entire Tianshu Province were gathered.

Alas, as time advanced and as all the students began to manifest their resonances, his current problem had reared its ugly head. By now, he was the only one with a resonant palace but nothing inside it. As a result, although he was always faster to learn new arts than the other students, his resonant power grew at a much slower rate. By now, his resonant power had actually fallen to be below the average for the First Academy.

The whole point of learning resonance arts was to be able to apply your resonant power to greater effect, but if your resonant power was weak to begin with? Well, there was a limit to what even the most profound of resonant arts could achieve.

After subjecting Li Luo to a battery of tests, the administrators had come to the conclusion that Li Luo's body simply, innately, lacked any resonance at all. In the future, it would be incredibly difficult for him to advance in his cultivation. After they reached this conclusion, the resonance instructor of the First School immediately requested that Li Luo be removed from the First School and sent to the Second School.

To be fair, this made sense. The First School was the place where all the most talented students were gathered, and the teacher simply didn't want Li Luo to hold the others back. But of course, the other, more important reason was that right at that time, both of Li Luo's parents had vanished. With them gone, House Luolan had quickly become the weakest of the four great Houses. Their position was now quite awkward.

And so, in the end, Li Luo had been sent to the Second School.

Xu Shanyue sighed to himself. When Li Luo had first arrived at the Second School, Zhao Kuo wasn't even a match for him. Now, a mere semester later, Zhao Kuo was able to overwhelm him. If this continued, his ranking within the Second School would most likely continue to drop over the course of the next semester. Unless he was able to dramatically improve his performance, it was

likely that he would stand no chance at all of being granted entry into the Astral Sage College.

The more Xu Shanyue looked at Li Luo's calm, handsome features and his suave demeanor, the more pity he felt. He knew that the youth was incredibly hard-working, but his parents were simply so spectacular that everyone had incredible expectations for him. As a result, their prestige had become a source of tremendous pressure.

Everyone knew the saying that talented parents often had useless children, but few would delve deeper into the reasons behind this.

Li Luo cast a glance at the many pitying gazes aimed at him, swept the splinters off his clothes, then sat down cross-legged. He knew exactly what all of them were thinking, of course.

A blank resonance, eh? This pretty much guaranteed that his future prospects were dim. *But...* Li Luo smirked slightly. He couldn't help but unconsciously reach down to touch his lower abdomen.

He had a secret which no one else knew. In his resonant palace, there was more than just a so-called 'blank resonance'.

For cultivators of this world, at first their bodies would give birth to a single resonant palace; only later, when they reached the Duke stage, would they gain a second resonant palace. Finally, upon reaching the King stage, they would gain a third. However, the number of Dukes in the Xia Kingdom could be counted on one hand, while Kings were virtually unheard of despite how powerful the Xia Kingdom was.

But of course, there were no absolutes. Supposedly, there were some especially blessed individuals who had a chance of gaining a second resonant palace even before they reached the Duke stage. This happened naturally as their resonant power advanced, but the chances were incredibly low.

And this was what made Li Luo special. Although he was still at the earliest Ten Seals stage, he didn't have just one resonant palace in his body – he had three, which was completely unheard of!

Normally, only supreme experts who had reached the King stage would have three resonant palaces, but somehow this had manifested within his body. But what was even more shocking... was that all three palaces were blank!

Having a blank resonance meant your future prospects were dim. But three blank resonances – did that mean you had a future, or not? Li Luo let out a sigh, a rather depressed look on his face.

Just as Li Luo was feeling all these mixed emotions, Zhao Kuo came over and sat down next to him. Zhao Kuo whispered, “You still haven't resolved your resonance problem, eh?”

Li Luo silently shook his head. Upon seeing this, Zhao Kuo let out a helpless sigh as well. Actually, he knew that this was a dumb question. A person was born with a resonance; it was innate, and no one had ever heard of someone later filling in a blank palace with something else. Clearly, Li Luo was facing a serious problem.

As the two chatted, Xu Shanyue walked into the dueling grounds. After giving Li Luo a few words of encouragement, he turned and said to the many students present, “Everyone, important exams will be starting next month. Your chances at entering a college will be dependent on your performance in the exams. I urge you all to train hard.”

The students were all silent, and they all had solemn looks on their faces. All their years of hard work were focused towards the exams coming up next month. If they were able to get into a college, then their future prospects would improve dramatically.

After this, Xu Shanyue announced that class was over. Li Luo and Zhao Kuo walked side-by-side as they left alongside the other students.

“I’m going to spend some more time training my resonance arts. Honestly, you gave me a good scare today. I suspect that if your resonant power was just slightly higher, you’d beat the pants off of me,” Zhao Kuo said with a sigh after exiting the training grounds. He then waved goodbye towards Li Luo.

Li Luo smiled as he watched Zhao Kuo depart. He knew the truth; Zhao Kuo was afraid that Li Luo was in poor spirits after this defeat, and so wanted to give him some alone time. What Zhao Kuo didn’t understand was that by now, Li Luo had grown accustomed to it all.

Li Luo withdrew his gaze, then turned and followed a tree-lined road that led outside the Academy. He ran into quite a few students as he walked, and all of them, both male and female, would glance at him as they passed. It wasn’t just because of his good looks; rather, it was because he was now a rather notorious figure at the Academy.

In the face of their gazes, Li Luo maintained a look of practiced indifference. He continued to follow the pathway until he reached the Academy gates, at which point he paused.

In front of him was a large number of students who were all speaking in a lively manner. These students were all surrounding a very special bluestone wall – the Southwind Academy’s Wall of Honor. It contained the descriptions of all the mighty figures who had once graduated from the Southwind Academy.

By now, all the students had seen the Wall of Honor countless times. Logically speaking, they should’ve grown weary of examining it long ago, but for some reason they were quite focused on it today.

Li Luo pursed his lips. He knew what was going on. The vast majority of the students here were because of 'her'.

Li Luo turned his gaze to a very specific point on the Wall of Honor. There was a gleaming crystal at that point, emanating rays of light that slowly coalesced into a tall, willow, and almost lifelike figure.

The figure was that of a girl. She was dressed in the school uniform of Southwind Academy – a light blue cape, a simple white tunic, and a short black dress. She had a pair of long, dainty legs that were perfectly white and pleasing to the eye.

Her facial features were similar exquisite. She had an elegant, raised nose, long and thick lashes, and snow-white skin. All of these were quite mesmerizing to behold, but it was her eyes that truly engraved her in everyone's mind.

Her pupils were golden, and they emanated an ineffable feeling of purity. If you stared into them long enough, you would begin to feel a sense of pressure.

Her gaze was rather cool, and she stared straight ahead, with one hand on her slender hips and the other resting on the hilt of a heavy sword. Any who saw her would instantly feel a sensation of heroic, fierce majesty emanating from her. She truly was a soul-stirring girl, in terms of both appearance and demeanor.

The wall behind her projection held her name – Jiang Qing'e. She was one of the dazzling star graduates of the Southwind Academy, born with a ninth-grade Light Resonance and enough talent to cause the countless people of the Xia Kingdom to sigh in amazement.

After spending just two years in the Academy, she had been immediately recruited by the Astral Sage College even though she had yet to take her

graduation exams. In the past hundred years, she was the only person in Tianshu Province to receive such an honor. By now, she was a legend of the Southwind Academy, and the many students who had enrolled after her practically worshipped the ground she walked on. In fact, she was now incredibly famous throughout the entirety of the Xia Kingdom.

Li Luo stared at the projection of Jiang Qing'e in a daze for a few moments, before noticing that quite a few gazes had turned towards him. Those gazes were filled with a look of resentment, envy, and puzzlement.

Li Luo maintained his look of practiced indifference. He knew exactly why they were staring at him like that. It was because Jiang Qing'e, venerated almost like a goddess by both the male and female students of the Southwind Academy, had two other statuses. She had been trained by his parents since she was young... and she was his betrothed.

Or, to put it another way, she was his fiancée.