

## Resonance 21

### Chapter 0021: Eve of the Examination

Endless cheers could be heard from the wooden platform on the Tree of Resonant Power. With the exception of those from First School, everyone was celebrating jubilantly.

No one had expected such a result.

Everyone had assumed that the competition today would have a foregone conclusion, it was just a formality for the Second School to lose five Gold Leaves. But the tables were turned when the three Sixth Seal Stage cultivators of the First School were singlehandedly wrecked by Li Luo.

This was truly an exciting show from start to finish.

Most importantly, this entire brouhaha had been preceded by numerous dramatic events. Li Luo was a student of the First School who had been demoted to the Second School, and he had a natural blank palace and apparently limited potential as well...

But now Li Luo was standing right in front of everyone with a mysteriously obtained resonance, demonstrating overwhelming strength. Just how complicated would Lin Feng's heart be right now, seeing that the very person he had shunned had come back to haunt him?

The students were all amazed at this sight, inevitably focusing on the youth of the hour, reexamining their own thoughts. Could it be that this youth who had once fallen from grace would rise from the ashes? However, wasn't it a little too late...?

As the noise continued unabated, the students of the First School were looking at each other in silence and with complicated expressions on their faces.

Difa Qing stared blankly at Li Luo. And at this moment, someone behind asked, "Was he not supposed to have a blank palace? How could he suddenly have manifested a resonance?" Song Yunfeng was expressionless as he was unable to fathom how this was possible.

"Being able to manifest a resonance artificially may be rare but not impossible. There are numerous heavenly treasures that allow one to obtain an acquired resonance. Unfortunately, these items are so uncommon that one might only be seen within the Xia Kingdom every few hundred years. However, Li Luo's parents are unimaginably mighty, and this might not be something out of their reach," Lu Qing'er piped in.

Lu Qing'er's Second Uncle was the president of a branch of the Golden Dragon Bank, which also had branches spanning across the continent. As a result of being so widespread, it naturally possessed knowledge that was not common information.

"If he did possess such a treasure, why did he wait till now to use it?" Difa Qing asked.

"Perhaps there are some specific conditions for it. I don't know the details." Lu Qing'er gave a wry smile.

Difa Qing fell into silence before finally replying, "Is this brat finally experiencing a change of fortune?"

The tone was complex as she hailed from the Difa family, one that was in constant struggle against House Luolan. It was significantly smaller than the Song family and hence never directly clashed against House Luolan. As a result, she and Li Luo did not possess significant enmity, except for the fact that Li Luo had stolen Jiang Qing'e from her...

"How could it be so easy?" Song Yunfeng sad inspidly. "Li Luo's resonance should be a water resonance. Judging by the way he clashed against Bei Kun, you can roughly tell that his is only a fifth or sixth-grade resonance. Such a mediocre resonance may not be bad, but it's definitely not exceptional.

"His resonance power should only be that at the Fifth Seal. Can a mere fifth or sixth-grade resonance coupled with Fifth Seal resonant power be considered impressive?"

Difa Qing nodded in agreement. If this was the case, then Li Luo wouldn't even be strong enough to rank in the top 10 of the First School. Even though he had heaven-defying talent when it came to the application of resonance arts, it would still be an arduous task to become someone truly outstanding within the First School.

Most importantly, the final examination was barely a month away. Just how could Li Luo bridge the gap in such a short period of time?

Thus, Difa Qing could only conclude that this was impossible.

At this point, Difa Qing could feel the worry within her heart dissipate and heaved a sigh of relief. Even she did not notice that watching Li Luo's performance had caused her to feel pressure. She was clearly unwilling to see Li Luo ascend to greatness.

Lu Qing'er did not participate in their conversation, merely focusing her gaze upon Li Luo.

"You've finally resolved the issue with your blank palace.... Now, will you be able to catch up during the final segment of the race?"

Whilst the cacophony continued around the platform, the area above the platform was filled with deafening silence as the teachers and dean were speechless.

Even Xu Shanyue was astonished at this turn of events.

Lin Feng, on the other hand, had not spoken from start to end, expressionless like a wooden block.

The rest of the teachers, on the other hand, turned to look at Lin Feng, smiles of mockery on their faces.

In the end, it was the old dean who ended the deadlock with a clap. "It looks like he truly is the son of those two. I suppose he counts as a late bloomer?"

Lin Feng inspidly replied, "Dean, you need to watch your words. Fifth Seal resonant power with a mere fifth or sixth-grade water resonance doesn't mean much."

The old dean shook his head. He knew that Lin Feng was feeling extremely dissatisfied at this point, but he continued to smile. "You are simply just too prideful. It's just a matter of time before you suffer because of it."

Lin Feng did not reply to that and instead turned to Xu Shanyue. "My First School was simply not up to par. As agreed upon, ten Gold Leaves are yours. These kids have no ability to call their own, and teaching them a lesson is not a bad thing."

Xu Shanyue mocked, "I thought you would want to raise the notion of Li Luo re-entering First School."

"You're thinking too much. I will let you know right now that he is not that amazing. My First School does not lack such an ordinary student. More importantly, he should be focusing on catching up within this short period of one month. After all, being able to enter Astral Sage College is what truly matters." Lin Feng smirked.

He had definitely been caught on the backfoot when Li Luo suddenly appeared with his water resonance. However, it wasn't to the point where he felt a sense of pity for kicking Li Luo out.

Furthermore, this water resonance had appeared too late. Li Luo was only at the Fifth Seal Stage, and the grade of his water resonance was not particularly high. Hence, from Lin Feng's perspective, Li Luo had only managed to extricate half of his body from the quagmire he was in. Did Li Luo truly think that the elites of First School were merely decorative objects on his path to the pinnacle? No!

As he had mentioned, the most important fact was that the final examinations were about to arrive and Li Luo had very limited time to catch up. After this point, everyone would leave Southwind Academy, so there was no need for him to care about how Li Luo would develop in the future.

Missing the opportunity to enter the Astral Sage College would be Li Luo's loss. This would not change even with his status as the young lord of House Luolan.

After consoling himself, Lin Feng's expression became more relaxed as well.

At this point, the old dean proceeded to the platform and waved at Li Luo. Seeing this, Li Luo paused for a moment before finally walking towards the dean.

"Good day, Dean." Li Luo greeted him with a smile.

The old dean smiled happily as he examined Li Luo. "Have you solved the problem of your blank palace?"

Li Luo nodded. "Yes. It's a fifth-grade water resonance."

When Lin Feng heard Li Luo speak, he couldn't help but smile. "Li Luo, your water resonance is considered mid-grade. But don't worry, if you work hard, you will definitely achieve something."

"Teacher Lin Feng, you don't have to worry too much about this. Although the resonance's grade can affect one's cultivation speed, it's still possible to reach the Duke or even the King Stage with a fifth-grade resonance," Li Luo patiently explained.

Lin Feng replied almost mockingly. "Reaching the Duke or King Stage with a mere fifth-grade resonance? These are just childish fantasies. Do you truly believe in them?" The old dean waved his hand, indicating for Lin Feng to stop, before saying to Li Luo, "Your confidence is what's most important. However, there's only a month left before the final examination. If you want to catch up, you will have to put in untold times more effort than others."

Li Luo nodded in agreement. "I understand."

After a few more perfunctory sentences, he let Li Luo leave and at the same time turned to face the audience. "There is barely a month's time left before the final examination. In two weeks' time, we will hold our preliminary examinations. Additionally, the Astral Sage College has published their basic requirements for the year. You will have to be at least at the Seventh Seal Stage." This proclamation came down like a sledgehammer on numerous students' hearts. The Seventh Seal Stage was an insurmountable barrier for many, and everyone felt frustrated and dejected upon hearing this news.

Only some of the most elite students within the First School were smiling.

Being the best college of the Xia Kingdom, even when considering its peers in the surrounding kingdoms, the Astral Sage College was not a place where people could enter as they pleased.

"No one below the Seventh Seal Stage..." Li Luo smacked his lips in response. He did not feel that there was anything strange with that request. He was currently at the Fifth Seal, so there were two more stages to go. It looked as though he would have to train feverishly if he wanted to succeed.

Furthermore, this was just the most basic requirement. One still had to engage in battle as well. Thus, if Li Luo required more insurance, he would clearly have to temper his waterlight resonance again.

The only problem was that the gap between a fifth-grade resonance and a sixth-grade resonance was not tiny. After doing some quick calculations, it truly seemed like a coincidence that the entire Tianshu Province's income for House Luolan would just barely be enough. He would wipe it clean.

As he was deep in thought, the students who were in the vicinity gradually started to scatter. At this point, he suddenly noticed someone approaching him.

When he turned to look, he noticed that it was Lu Qing'er calmly looking at him.

"Congratulations, Young Lord."

When he saw her, his instincts kicked in and he reflexively wanted to avoid her. However, just as he took a step away, he awkwardly stopped himself.

"Hello hello. How are you doing?" Li Luo replied with the most perfunctory of greetings.

"You're not planning to hide?" Lu Qing'er probed.

An embarrassed Li Luo quickly replied, "Hide? What do you mean? No such thing has ever happened!"

Lu Qing'er did not bother to follow up on that and continued, "Li Luo, I have always been very thankful for your guidance in the resonance arts. It's just unfortunate that you've chosen to actively distance and hide yourself from me. I have never coveted your position, and you should know that that isn't something that is given but must be earned with strength.

"Li Luo, I am now the strongest within Southwind Academy. If you want to reclaim this throne, then you will have to beat me. I used to worry about hurting your feelings and never wanted to say this to you, considering your situation. However, things are different now since you have solved the issue of your blank palace. If you truly are a man, then you will reclaim what is rightfully yours."

At this sudden declaration, Li Luo could only bitterly smile. "Then it looks like I need to work hard."

Lu Qing'er smiled in response, but Li Luo could sense a cold and slightly annoyed glint leaking out of her eyes... noVelnExt.Com

"I am waiting for you. Let me tell you now. Your actions these past few years have caused me to appreciate you a lot less. If I have the chance..." At this point, she stopped, the cold glare in her eyes evident of her stance.

After speaking, she turned and left.

Li Luo was left speechless as he watched her gradually disappear into the distance, only able to shake his head helplessly. It seemed as though he had offended her. It seemed that the prettier the lady, the more petty they were!

In the midst of his sigh, he could feel that yet another individual was focused upon him, so he turned his head to look.

Right atop the wooden platform was a frosty-looking youth absolutely glowering at him, his expression seeming to be a warning.

This was the second strongest student in the First School, Song Yunfeng.

Their two gazes intersected and clashed. Song Yunfeng continued to scowl at him with a sharp and combative glint in his eyes. He then lightly shook his head and coldly mouthed some words.

"Li Luo, don't stick your nose where it's not supposed to. Stay away from Lu Qing'er." He believed that Li Luo would understand what he was trying to say, as this was something quite obvious.

On the other hand, Li Luo, who was not too far away, was frowning, muttering to himself, "What the hell is that fool trying to do? Why doesn't he just shout out what he wants to say? Why is he making things so difficult?? Moving his lips like that makes him look like a mouse who is sneakily eating scraps. Sigh...what is he trying to get at?"

As he could not decipher what Song Yunfeng was trying to say, he simply shook his head and couldn't be bothered anymore, turning to leave.

On the other hand, Song Yunfeng was still completely focused on Li Luo's silhouette. His eyes seemed to ooze gloominess as he squinted at him.

Li Luo's previous gaze had reminded him of what Li Luo was like at his most glorious period in Southwind Academy. The Li Luo then radiated brilliance and was unmatched.

However, things were no longer the same... Song Yunfeng was so furious at this response that the wooden railing he was grasping cracked.

"Li Luo, what exactly are you trying to do?"

"Do you truly believe that a 5th-grade resonance will allow you to do as you please?"

**Chapter 0022: The Price of a Sixth-Grade Resonance**

Knowledge of Li Luo's fifth-grade water resonance spread throughout the school very quickly. This naturally became the hottest topic of discussion.

"Who would have thought that Li Luo would manage to rise from the ashes! An acquired resonance... this is something I've never heard of."

"I heard that it was a treasure left behind by his parents! It's clearly something rarely seen."

"Having great parents truly makes me green with envy! I'm so jealous!"

"Well, it's not that amazing. After all, it's just a fifth-grade water resonance. It's not that exceptional, and the final examination is barely a month away. How can he possibly catch up to those at the top with so little time?"

"Yeah. He may have beaten Bei Kun and his goons, but those three aren't even in the top ten of the First School. I heard the top ten are all at least at the Seventh Seal Stage. Song Yunfeng and Lu Qing'er are the two scariest ones out of the lot—apparently they're at the Eighth Seal or higher already..."

"Mm. Li Luo has already squandered the most crucial time for growth. I don't think he can catch up in a month."

Whilst everyone was fervently making Li Luo the topic of discussion, the man himself had just finished a round of cultivation and was quickly making his way out the academy.

"Even though I beat Bei Kun today, it was more draining than I expected. If not for borrowing the light resonance power of my resonance to blind Bei Kun at the crucial moment, I might have taken even more time than I wanted..."

Whilst on his carriage back home, Li Luo continued to analyze the day's battles. He wasn't looking relaxed as expected. Instead, a dissatisfied and solemn expression was plastered over his face.

At this rate, his current strength coupled with the waterlight resonance and his expertise at resonance arts would easily allow him to contend with a Sixth Seal Stage cultivator. However, if he were to encounter a Seventh Seal stage expert, his chances of victory would be extremely low.

"This is not enough. This is FAR from enough," he murmured to himself. His aim was to enter the Astral Sage College. The number of hopefuls that were competing with him were too many to count. If he was not at the top, his odds would be too low.

The biggest constraint that everyone had mentioned was his lack of time—barely a month was left before the crucial moment. If he wanted to catch up, he would have to quickly improve his resonant power, and it looked like tempering his waterlight resonance was the only way.

Only then would he have the confidence to face off against Lu Qing'er and those other elites.

The key problem still lay in tempering his waterlight resonance to the sixth grade. This would be no easy matter...

"I guess I need to have a discussion with Elder Sister Cai Wei..." Li Luo's lips were puckered at that very thought. He had this strange feeling that if he were to mention needing huge amounts of fifth-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights to Cai Wei, she might very well just devour him alive...

....

The old manor, the administrative office.

Cai Wei was currently sitting at her table, carefully inspecting the book of records. She was dressed in a pale-yellow robe and her egg-shaped face was enthralling as always, possessing an air of grace.

She had already been at work for quite a while and was getting tired, hence she reached forward and gingerly placed the book down on the table.

"Hu!"

It was as though a weight had been lifted off her shoulders as she gently heaved a sigh of relief, looking clearly more relaxed.

Weng!

It was at this point that the door suddenly swung open and Li Luo strode in with gusto. "Elder Sister Cai Wei!"

Bang!

When the door was slammed, Li Luo noticed the relaxed Cai Wei in front of him. Her mind had clearly not registered this sudden intrusion, and her beautiful gaze seemed a little dazed at the sight of Li Luo.

The atmosphere suddenly seemed to freeze at this moment.

Cai Wei immediately snapped to attention, sitting up straight as though she had been electrocuted. Her fair complexion was tinted with the red of embarrassment whilst her gaze stared coquettishly at Li Luo.

"Did no one ever teach you to knock before entering?"

Li Luo was currently dripping with cold sweat as he hastily nodded. "I'm sorry, Elder Sister Cai Wei! I will definitely take note of this in the future!"

Seeing his respectful attitude, Cai Wei no longer felt ashamed but still asked brusquely, "May I know what instruction the Young Lord has?"

Li Luo looked around sheepishly, making sure that no one else was around before carefully closing the door. "I want to let Elder Sister Cai Wei see a certain treasure of mine..." His voice was lowered, but before he could finish his sentence, he was shocked silly. This was because he saw Cai Wei whip out a gleaming bow, a dangerous smile on her beautiful egg-shaped face.

"Young Lord, before you do anything rash, don't forget that I'm also a resonant master."

Frightened, Li Luo hastily waved his hands, bitterly smiling. "Elder Sister Cai Wei, what do you mean? What are you trying to do!?"

A little taken aback as well, Cai Wei's raised her eyebrow slightly as she asked curiously, all the while focused on Li Luo's every move, "Then just what sort of 'treasure' of yours are you referring to?"

Li Luo was a little confused at this turn of events... However, he didn't speak anymore and instead willed his resonant power to surge. In a blink, blue resonant power started to shroud his body, blazing

upwards. The sight of the resonant power resembled waves of water flowing so much that one could literally imagine hearing it.

He had revealed his fifth-grade water resonance.

Pa!

Cai Wei gradually lowered the bow in her hands as she asked in surprise, "You... you have a resonance?"

Li Luo nodded. "A fifth-grade one too."

Cai Wei was absolutely stupefied at this scene. Only after a good minute had passed did she finally react. "Is this the result of the secret art left behind by the two House Lords?" Li Luo nodded in response.

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At this point, she came to her senses. Thinking of her previous actions, her face flushed a bright crimson-red. Li Luo's previous words seemed to have held a deeper meaning, and she wasn't a naive youth...hence she was flustered and even thought that Li Luo was about to do something extremely unsavory...

She felt incomparably embarrassed at this turn of events. Cai Wei, oh, Cai Wei. What a huge humiliation!

Still, she was someone who had encountered all sorts of experiences and very quickly composed herself, smiling as though nothing had happened. "Congratulations, Young Lord! If Qing'e knew of this, she would be elated."

Li Luo nodded. "There's only a little problem. Perhaps Elder Sister Cai Wei might have already guessed what it is..."

"Do you still require spirit liquids and purifying lights?" Cai Wei frowned slightly after hearing his last sentence.

"Mhm. Unfortunately, I will need fifth-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights. This resonance which my parents left behind requires endless amounts of spirit liquids and purifying lights to cultivate. Otherwise, it might very possibly dissipate..." Li Luo did not want to mention the fact that he could endlessly temper his resonance with copious amounts of spirit liquids and purifying lights. If news of this were to spread, the situation would definitely turn grave, and he temporarily did not wish for this to be revealed, at least not until he could protect himself.

"Fifth-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights..." The frown on Cai Wei's face deepened to the point that even her two eyebrows were touching.

Fourth-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights roughly cost around a thousand pieces of skygold each. Fifth-grade ones would easily cost over five times that.

This was definitely an expensive consumable good.

If Li Luo only required a few, then this would not be a problem. However, from experience, Cai Wei understood that what Li Luo needed was probably in the hundreds... This would not be a small sum.



Cai Wei's expression was constantly changing as she struggled with this though. What was more surprising to Li Luo was that she did not find any reasons to push back and merely nodded. "I understand. I will do my best to carry out your instructions."

She raised her head and saw Li Luo's absolutely flabbergasted expression before breaking out into a smile. "Did you think that I was going to reject you? You are the Young Lord of House Luolan. Everything belongs to you and Sister Qing'e. So long as you're not being coerced into it, whatever you want will become a reality. In any case, now that you have a resonance, you will finally be able to hold some influence within House Luolan. This is incomparable to the physical costs of these spirit liquids and purifying lights. How could I possibly reject your request?"

Extremely touched, Li Luo passionately replied, "Elder Sister Cai Wei! You're truly great at understanding others! In this case, could you please get me several dozen portions immediately?"

Cai Wei began to massage her temples upon hearing Li Luo's excited follow-up. "Well, this can be done. It's just that if you require a similar amount again, we don't have the funds to purchase more." House Luolan's businesses in the Tianshu Province only brought in around three hundred thousand pieces of skygold a year. The previous request for fourth-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights had already cost around a hundred and fifty thousand pieces of skygold. After buying another thirty pieces or so, there would barely be any money left.

Cai Wei sighed deeply. "Young Lord, I plan to sell off some of the businesses within the Tianshu Province.

"House Luolan does not have much strength within the Tianshu Province. Thus, many businesses can be considered burdens to us as we are unable to properly protect them. In a sense, we are overstaffed here. Combined with the suppression of the three families, if this were to continue, it would only result in a grievous loss to us whilst taking up precious resources. The key reason lies with the three families. The three of them have an alliance in place to deal with House Luolan jointly, as they all have similar goals. If we were to voluntarily offer up some businesses and execute this well, it could very possibly lead them to struggle amongst themselves. Ultimately, this will also breed internal strife when their benefits are compromised, making it harder for them to deal with House Luolan in a united fashion."

Li Luo considered her point of view and nodded in agreement after a while. "Elder Sister Cai Wei is truly decisive. You are making a sacrifice for the greater good. I am honestly unfamiliar with such matters and will leave this in your wise hands. Regardless of what you choose to do, I will support your decision," Li Luo said in praise of her.

"I am truly thankful for your trust." Cai Wei gave a small smile.

Li Luo waved his hands and then a thought suddenly came to mind. "Oh, yes! Does the Tianshu Province have any resonance artificers? If I could craft my own, then it would undoubtedly be cheaper than buying them off the market, yes?"

"Well, of course we have resonance artificers. House Luolan has businesses in every aspect of the economy. This sort of profession is always in demand as the supply of spirit liquids and purifying lights is never enough. Our House Luolan has plenty of resonance artificers who are able to craft third-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights. However, for those of a higher grade, the number of resonance artificers who are able to do so are a lot less, thus our production capabilities for that are also low.

When it comes to fifth-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights... I'm afraid there is no one in Tianshu Province who is able to craft them. All of those that can be bought in the market have been imported from Xia City."

A sudden revelation dawned upon Li Luo. Of course! Someone who could craft fifth-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights would be minimally a fifth-grade resonance artificer. Such individuals would only be found in cradles of civilization, the subject of any cultivator's worship. Why would they be hiding in such a desolate area like the Tianshu Province? It was natural that they were rarely seen here as a result.

"Can Elder Sister Cai Wei bring me to where House Luolan crafts their spirit liquids and purifying lights? I have a water resonance and thus would like to gain some knowledge about the path of a resonance artificer." The price of these tempering treasures was exorbitantly high, and he was only talking about fifth-grade ones. In the future, he would even require seventh, eighth, and even ninth-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights! Just how was he going to find them, much less pay for them? He also knew that in the entire Xia Kingdom, there were very few spirit liquids and purifying lights of the 7th-grade and above sold each year.

The only way would be to rely on himself.

Thus, he had to make preparations to progress on the path of a resonance artificer.

Cai Wei did not disagree.

"Alright. I will take you there tomorrow."

### **Chapter 0023: Suncreek Villa**

The next day, Li Luo attended Southwind Academy as per usual.

When he entered the Second School's training field, he could distinctly tell that the originally rowdy field had quietened down by quite a bit, numerous respectful gazes looking at him.

The old Li Luo was not considered weak within the Second School; only Zhao Kuo could beat him after all. Truthfully speaking, what everyone felt towards him was only pity and nothing else. Why would they respect him? That made no sense.

The way they saw it, Li Luo was decently strong, but he still had a blank palace. This meant that his resonant power was limited. It was just a matter of time before they would surpass him.

However, Li Luo had demonstrated his acquired resonance in the competition yesterday, furthermore sweeping all three opponents from the First School in a single bout. This led them to understand that Li Luo was truly not on the same level as them.

Although a fifth-grade resonance was not considered high, it was more than sufficient. This combined with his talent in resonance arts was like adding wings to a tiger. The future Li Luo may not necessarily reach the absolute peak, but he would definitely rank in the upper echelons.

Thus, who would dare to pity Li Luo even now? On top of that, he was also House Luolan's Young Lord. Just who had the right to pity someone so much better than them in every way?

As they saw Li Luo walk past, certain students even took the initiative to greet him. "Brother Luo."

There were even some daring girls who complimented him directly. "Brother Luo looks extraordinarily handsome today."

Taking these greetings in his stride, Li Luo merely smiled at them before returning to his usual seat. At this point, even Zhao Kuo was looking at him with a burning gaze.

"You're a man, right? Can you not look at me that way?" Li Luo frowned.

Zhao Kuo chuckled as he feigned a melancholic expression. "It looks like I have to give up my title of number one in the Second School..."

"Who cares about such trivialities!? Set your sights further," Li Luo snapped.

"Further? In that case, all the best! Once you bring glory to Southwind Academy's males, we will cheer for you from the sidelines!" Zhao Kuo retorted.

"What do you mean?"

Zhao Kuo angrily explained, "Didn't you know? The other academies of the Tianshu Province have been constantly insulting us, saying that we are all feminine sissies, that we lack any form of manly vigor. Eastpool Academy is exceptionally hateful. They always take the initiative to mock the males of Southwind Academy. We first produced the legendary Sister Qing'e and now the strongest one of our generation is Lu Qing'er. It's as though we can only hide behind girls!"

Of course, there were other academies in the Tianshu Province. It was just that most of them were not as famous as Southwind Academy. In recent years, Eastpool Academy had risen through the ranks dramatically and was looking to contest for the title of the best academy in the Tianshu Province.

As the two were bantering, Xu Shanyue entered the training fields. It looked as though his mood wasn't bad, his usual, serious expression replaced with a smile.

"Good morning, students. The First School has kindly provided ten Gold Leaves for the Second School's use. From today onwards, we will have ten more to distribute." Hearing Xu Shanyue's words, the class cheered in excitement. The final examinations were approaching and these leaves might very well provide them with an opportunity to take another step forward.

"These Gold Leaves were obtained by Li Luo's solo victory. All of you should express your gratitude directly." After which, the entire class broke out into raucous applause. There were even some delicate and good-looking girls who shouted out bravely, "I'm willing to have lunch with you to express my thanks!" Everyone could only stare in envy at his good fortune.

Li Luo helplessly smiled, but deep down he sighed. He could not understand where their fascination in him lay and could only ignore their teasing.

Xu Shanyue clenched his fist, signalling for everyone to settle down before proceeding on to the day's lesson.

Three hours later, the class ended and Li Luo approached Xu Shanyue, looking to take the afternoon off.

"You're taking leave again?" Xu Shanyue queried as he thought about the request. If this was in the past, he wouldn't have hesitated to reject his request. However, Li Luo had managed to beat the First School

and had given him the credibility to stand tall against Liu Yang. Hence, he acceded to it. "Sure. Do remember that the final examination is about to arrive and you've already missed out on a week of training. You need to quickly catch up, or there will be no hope in entering the Astral Sage College." Li Luo smiled and agreed, waving goodbye before quickly taking his leave.

Outside the academy gates was a luxurious carriage, akin to a moving palace. As Li Luo made his way into it, he realized that Cai Wei was already sitting within, by the window. *nOVeLnext.cOM*

In her hand was a round laced fan, lightly fluttering. Beside her was also a cup of piping hot tea, the entire scene accentuating her mature beauty. This coupled with her beautiful curves and exquisite features would absolutely captivate any mortal man.

One could clearly see that Cai Wei was a lady with refined mannerisms. The choice of carriage was not only luxurious-looking but also comfortable, demonstrating her exceptional taste that was even better than Jiang Qing'e's.

Li Luo had a feeling that Cai Wei's background was not simple. The only question here was why had she chosen to run all the way over to House Luolan to handle miscellaneous tasks?

"Have you eaten? I've prepared lunch for you." Cai Wei batted a glance at Li Luo, her slender, jade-like fingers beckoning at the table in front, which was currently laid with a sumptuous feast.

"Elder Sister Cai Wei is truly too considerate. Whoever marries you will truly be blessed," Li Luo praised. Cai Wei was capable at managing the affairs of a family whilst being beautiful and mature. No matter how one looked at it, she was truly outstanding.

Amongst the women he had met, in terms of attractiveness and temperament, Jiang Qing'e was the most extraordinary. Lu Qing'er and Cai Wei were both equal, with their own redeeming features.

"Your words are truly sweet." Cai Wei smiled as she beckoned for Li Luo to eat. At the same time, she continued to explain, "Our House Luolan has a specialized department whose purpose is to refine spirit liquids and purifying lights. It's known as the Suncreek Villa, and it is decently well known throughout the market for their tempering treasures when we look within the Xia Kingdom. The Suncreek Villa's headquarters is in Xia City and it has three branches spread throughout the Xia Kingdom. Coincidentally, one of these branches can be found in the City of Southwind. The Suncreek Villa is responsible for a significant amount of the profits House Luolan rakes in yearly. Hence, within House Luolan, Pei Hao has also fought the hardest to take control of them, trying all means to do so. The president of this particular branch left some time ago for some reason and the position was left vacant for a while as a replacement could not be easily found. Pei Hao recruited the vice president and attempted to use him to take control of this branch. Luckily, Qing'e realized his plans and very quickly dispatched someone to clamp down on those moves. As a result, this branch of the Suncreek Villa has some internal complications, ultimately affecting the amount of spirit liquids and purifying lights it produces."

"Pei Hao, that bastard! Truly a waste of air." Li Luo couldn't help but vent. He previously wasn't interested in these matters, but now that he had to utilize significant amounts of resources from the house, he realized just how much trouble that white-eyed wolf really was.

If House Luolan had actually been united, then the amount of resources he could mobilize wouldn't just be this piddling three hundred thousand skygold!

Slightly depressed, the feast in front of him seemed to have lost some of its fragrance...

The carriage passed through the crowded City of Southwind, eventually stopping at the northern part of the city.

Li Luo and Cai Wei both got off the carriage. They could see a humongous pavilion in front of them with a Suncreek Villa sign hung right in front.

The Suncreek Villa possessed strict security with numerous protectors, but they immediately made way and let the duo through once they spotted them.

They entered the building unobstructed, and at this moment, a group arrived to receive them.

Li Luo could see that this group was split into two factions. The group on the left was led by a smiling middle-aged man, while the group on the right was led by a lady that was amazingly beautiful, such that any man who saw her would instantly perk up with attention.

She was an elegant young lady with a pretty complexion; a pert, high nose; and a pair of silver circular glasses. She had long hair that cascaded down her back and she carried an air of undisguised arrogance.

At this moment, Cai Wei quickly brought Li Luo up to speed.

"The one on the left is Zhuang Yi, he's the vice president dispatched by Pei Hao. The beauty on the right is Yan Lingqing. She is a genius resonance artificer from Astral Sage College. She is also Qing'e's close confidante. She is currently a fourth-grade resonance artificer and also one of Qing'e's reinforcements."

Li Luo seemed a little shocked at this as he couldn't help but to stare at the slender, glasses-wearing, cold, and arrogant beauty.

He would never have expected that she was also from Astral Sage College, the place he had always dreamed of attending.

#### **Chapter 0024: Yan Lingqing**

While Li Luo was still in shock at that bombshell revelation, the two groups reached the duo.

"Welcome to the Suncreek Villa, Young Lord and General Manager Cai Wei. Keke. Your presence here truly illuminates our humble dwelling." The one named Zhuang Yi immediately rattled off the top of his tongue, an honest and enthusiastic look on his face.

Compared to his hearty reception, Yan Lingqing was much cooler in response. She merely glanced at Cai Wei before taking a quick look at Li Luo. Following which, she stuck her hands in her pocket. It didn't seem like she was planning to introduce herself.

"Vice President Zhuang Yi's words are too kind. The Young Lord is here to take a look at his house's businesses. There's nothing special about this after all." Cai Wei gave a small smile.

Zhuang Yi was stunned for a moment before he hastily smiled and nodded. "It was I who spoke out of turn." After which, he rushed to Li Luo and greeted him respectfully before excusing himself politely and heading off to settle his other matters.

Li Luo took in all of this and realized it was clear that Zhuang Yi was fully supporting Pei Hao. Hence, when they first met, despite Zhuang Yi's warm reception, he kept his distance and remained on guard.

This was clearly something that was faked.

On the other hand, despite the cold reception from Yan Lingqing, she still continued to stay with the duo, and did not look to get away at the first opportunity.

However, after seeing Zhuang Yi speedily leaving, her expression turned slightly gentle. "Elder Sister Cai Wei, may I kindly know why you are here today?" Her voice was crisp and sweet, sounding like a gentle stream flowing, pleasant to the ear.

Cai Wei walked forward and tightly grasped Yan Lingqing's forearms before smiling as well. "I brought the Young Lord here to take a look around."

Both of them possessed amazing temperaments and were matchless beauties, hence when they stood side by side, it was a feast for the eyes. At the same time, it also allowed one to clearly see the differences between the two.

If Cai Wei was like the vast mountain ranges, with large humps that protruded from the ground, then Yan Lingqing was more similar to the massive plains where horses roamed...

As Li Luo's gaze swept past the two of them, his conspicuous actions were inadvertently spotted by Yan Lingqing... Her snow-white chin raised slightly as she said disdainfully, "Little Brother, just what are you trying to compare...?"

Li Luo could only innocently blink his eyes at that accusation.

Without caring further, Yan Lingqing huffed and dragged Cai Wei away.

Li Luo didn't really mind either and did his best to keep up.

As they entered the depths of the Suncreek Villa, they walked onto a bridge. When one stood upon the bridge, they were able to see that there were two refining platforms that spanned countless levels.

Each level of these refining platforms was split into numerous smaller rooms. Each room had a transparent, crystal wall, and peering through it would allow one to see countless individuals dressed in white busily working.

Peering closer inside each room, there was a table laid out with numerous transparent crystal bottles. These white-garbed individuals were taking all sorts of bottles and canisters, constantly concocting something. Occasionally, these crystal bottles would emit a blue light, signifying the creation of a spirit liquid or purifying light.

"Elder Sister Cai Wei, there are two fourth-grade, nine third-grade, sixteen second-grade, and thirty three first-grade resonance artificers in this branch of the Suncreek Villa." Li Luo continued to peer curiously as Yan Lingqing's crystal-clear voice explained. Hearing this, he smirked inside. Cai Wei was the General Manager and naturally already knew of these matters and hence it was clear that she was only saying this for his benefit.

Jiang Qing'e's bosom friend here may seem quite cool and uncaring, but she was actually a nice person at heart. At the same time, he understood that she was doing this for Jiang Qing'e's sake.

They continued to walk and observe the surroundings as they made their way to Yan Lingqing's workspace. This was her refining workshop.

"I suppose Elder Sister Cai Wei isn't here just to see me?" At this point, she removed her outer robes, revealing a simple outfit within which outlined her slender curves. Her gaze was currently fixated on the refining platform, her thoughts focused upon it.

"It's because of the Young Lord." Cai Wei gave a wry smile. "He wants to become a resonance artificer."

Yan Lingqing gave her a curious look and asked, "Isn't he a ...?" She didn't finish her words, but the implication was clear. Wasn't Li Luo a natural blank palace? Why was there a need to become a resonance artificer?

Cai Wei lightly patted Li Luo and directed a mischievous expression toward him. "Go and start your show. Let's give our little genius the greatest shock of her life."

Li Luo was speechless at Cai Wei's attempt to tease her friend. However, he activated his resonance, causing water resonant power to gradually arise around him.

"This... this is a water resonance?" Yan Lingqing was truly surprised at this turn of events, so much so that she propped up her glasses on her pert, little nose. "You have a resonance? What?"

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Li Luo nodded and sincerely said, "This is a fifth-grade water resonance, and I want to learn some resonance artificering arts in order to become a resonance artificer."

After hearing his request, Yan Lingqing's eyebrows knitted together in slight confusion. "Isn't it almost time for Southwind Academy's final examination? Why are you not bitterly cultivating? Why don't you try your best to get into the Astral Sage College before we discuss any further? After all, the Astral Sage College has the Resonance Tempering Hall, where you can learn from many excellent teachers."

Li Luo could only smile sheepishly. "I want to start familiarizing myself with this."

Yan Lingqing seemed to have understood something upon hearing Li Luo's reply. Even though Li Luo had manifested a resonance, it was true that this was a little too late. With his current strength, he might not be able to make it into the Astral Sage College, and it would only be a matter of time before he would embark on the path of a resonance artificer. He still had a way out.

"It's rare that the Young Lord wishes to improve so fervently. I kindly beseech this genius to guide him," Cai Wei added in.

Yan Lingqing rolled her eyes at Cai Wei's comments, immediately placing a crystal bottle in front of Li Luo. "I believe you should have some rudimentary understanding of what resonance artificers do, yes?"

Seeing that Yan Lingqing was going to teach him, he quickly nodded. Ever since he obtained his water resonance, he spent some of his free time reading up and learning foundational knowledge on this subject.

At this point, Yan Lingqing flicked her finger and a line of blue resonant power shot out of her index finger towards a bundle of books, adhering to it. With another flick, the books were thrown right in front of Li Luo.

"Read all of this." Li Luo didn't say much but simply got to work immediately, sitting down at the table and delving into the subject matter.

"Why don't you take a seat? I have some things I need to do," Yan Lingqing lightly said to Cai Wei after seeing Li Luo obediently begin his study without any indication of impatience. Following which, she proceeded to continue with the work that required her attention.

Cai Wei, on the other hand, lazily stretched and took a seat, quickly dozing off...

At the same time, within another room of the Suncreek Villa...

"What have the Young Lord and the General Manager been up to?" Zhuang Yi was sitting on his seat, questioning an individual in front of him.

"Nothing much. They took a walk and were observing things before heading back to Vice President Yan's workshop," the person replied.

Zhuang Yi nodded. "Tail them closely. Watch out for whoever they interact with and take note of these people. The most important thing now is to ensure I become the president of this branch. Once I'm successful, I can chase away Yan Lingqing and all of her people. At that point, everything will be in my control."

"Understood!"

Zhuang Yi waved his hand and that individual retreated. A chilling smile appeared on his face.

"Jiang Qing'e, did you think that finding a little wench from your school would be enough to stop me? Let me tell you the truth! You're just dreaming! This branch of the Suncreek Villa belongs to me, Zhuang Yi!"

## **Chapter 0025: Resonance Smith**

By the time Li Luo finished going through all those books, five hours had passed. He exhaled deeply, slowly rubbing his sore neck.

Yan Lingqing and Cai Wei had been gaily chatting beside him the entire time. Upon hearing him, they stopped and looked over.

"Not bad. It looks like you are pretty patient." Yan Lingqing indifferently judged him. Despite the tone, it seemed as though she was still quite satisfied with Li Luo's performance.

Patience was crucial for a resonance artificer. They had to spend countless repetitive cycles concocting and refining numerous materials in the process of improving their skills. At the same time, they had to be precise and not make mistakes. Just this fact alone required one to practice for a long period of time.

Yan Lingqing got up and approached the workstation before signalling to Li Luo to come over.

Atop the workstation were numerous crystal bottles, all filled with various strange and weird materials.



"Refining spirit liquids and purifying lights is, at its most basic level, simply following a formula to its completion. This will allow these numerous materials to combine perfectly by relying on their unique characteristics, and to get rid of impurities. The final result will be these tempering treasures."

Yan Lingqing picked up a crystal bottle that contained a blue flower. The surface of the flower was constantly rippling and diffusing some sort of energy. "This is a Three Leaved Algal Bloom." As she spoke, her slender, jade hand lightly shook the bottle and surprisingly, the flower instantly disintegrated into dust. At the same time, Li Luo was able to see water resonance power emitted from Yan Lingqing, which she then guided directly into the crystal bottle, directly fusing with the remnants of the flower.

"During the process of refinement, we have to utilize either water or light resonance power to fuse with the materials. This allows us to amplify the unique characteristics of these items. One has to be extremely careful with the strength of the resonance power. Too much and it will ruin the material, too little and the refinement process will also fail."

Her water resonance power continued to pour into the crystal bottle, and just a brief moment later, one was able to see that the material had gradually fused together to form a dark-blue liquid.

Immediately after, Yan Lingqing proceeded to follow a set of predetermined steps. She quickly blended over ten other materials in a special sequence flawlessly and effortlessly, evidence of her familiarity with the subject.

Half an hour later, the materials and liquid were mixed together. However, things were not as simple as that as the two items seemed to be repelling each other, even to the point of boiling over and causing an explosion.

"What happens next is the final and also most important step. In order to fuse these two sets of materials together, a certain sort of power is required. This power will ultimately influence the tempering strength of the spirit liquids and purifying lights, and it is the most critical aspect of the refinement process. This power is often referred to as watersource or lightsource. In simpler terms, this is the result of when one condenses one's water resonance power or light resonance power to its utmost." Yan Lingqing then pulled out a rhombus-shaped crystal stone with a crystal jar hanging under it.

Her palm was tightly grasping this crystal stone while more blue resonant power was surging out and into it. Ripples could be seen below the stone's surface as it vibrated. A moment later, Li Luo was able to see a single dark-blue drop of liquid gradually dripping from the bottom of the stone, falling into the crystal jar.

"This is a polymerization crystal. Its use is to condense one's resonant power into watersource." Yan Lingqing explained right as she directed the watersource into the crystal bottle in which the materials were boiling over. At this point, a wondrous scene unfolded and the chaotic display of the seemingly incompatible materials repelling each other completely vanished. Then a bright, blue light was emitted from within.

A single spirit liquid had been refined.

Li Luo stared at the liquid, which was radiating blue light, and sighed in praise.

"This is just a single first-grade spirit liquid. Hence, the process is extremely simple and not exceptionally troublesome," Yan Lingqing casually said. She was, after all, a fourth-grade resonance artificer, so such a process could be done on a whim.

However, Li Luo was extremely cognizant of the fact that despite everything having gone smoothly, as easily as breathing, this was only possible due to the foundation built from countless failures. Even he could understand this as someone with a foundational understanding of resonance artificering.

Li Luo gazed at the spirit liquid and asked directly, "Since watersource and lightsource can determine the final tempering strength of the spirit liquids and purifying lights, what determines the quality of the watersource itself?"

Yan Lingqing indifferently replied, "The quality of the watersource or lightsource is dependent on one's resonance grade. The higher the grade of the resonance, the higher the quality of the watersource or lightsource produced. Hence, an individual with a high-grade water resonance or light resonance will naturally become a better resonance artificer than an average individual. For example, if Jiang Qing'e were to become a resonance artificer, the tempering strength of her spirit liquids and purifying lights would vastly outstrip most individuals. It's simply a pity that she is completely uninterested in this. Even the Resonance Tempering Hall spent a whole year beseeching her to pick up the fundamentals, but to no avail..."

Li Luo nodded. Jiang Qing'e had a rarely-seen ninth-grade light resonance, truly someone favored by the heavens. It truly was unfortunate that she had no interest whatsoever in resonance artificering.

"What if she were to create some high-grade lightsource for me to utilize? Would it improve the tempering strength of the spirit liquids and purifying lights the Suncreek Villa creates?"

Yan Lingqing shook her head. "It wouldn't work even if two people with similar resonances and grades created two lightsources of completely imperceptible but different characteristics. For example, the materials I have been refining for half a day have already fused with my resonant power. If someone else were to utilize their watersource to complete the refinement, it would cause a conflict and the refinement would certainly fail. However, there are specific secret arts in this world that allow one to condense a special sort of watersource or lightsource that can further improve the tempering strength of spirit liquids and purifying lights. These are known as secret art watersources or lightsources. This is the hidden ace of numerous powers, but our Suncreek Villa does not possess it."

Li Luo looked pensive as he listened. He was born with a blank palace and eventually refined an acquired resonance. Most importantly, the blank attribute of his palace had remained, and it allowed him to utilize spirit liquids and purifying lights without limits. His watersource should also correspondingly possess a portion of this blank attribute. Would it be of use to him as a resonance artificer?

His waterlight resonance was of the fifth-grade and had the additional attribute of light. The resulting spirit liquid created by him might not be as simple as expected. *nOveLnext.cOM*

Li Luo had confidence that if he were to use his waterlight resonance to refine a spirit liquid and purifying light, the result would not be inferior to one refined by someone with a seventh-grade water or light resonance.

In fact, one would rarely even see a seventh-grade water or light resonance artificer.

Most importantly, there was no rush. He would take his time to experiment once he embarked on his journey to be a resonance artificer.

As Li Luo was still pondering the numerous implications of his resonance, Yan Lingqing wiped her glasses. "If you truly want to become a resonance artificer, come here whenever you're free every day. I will teach you the basics, and when you're able to refine a first-grade spirit liquid or purifying light by yourself, you will officially be a first-grade resonance artificer."

"Then I would sincerely like to thank Elder Sister Lingqing for this." He had achieved his goal today and he couldn't help but smile exuberantly, truly thanking her for her guidance.

Yan Lingqing coolly waved him off and put on her long robe, dragging Cai Wei out of her workshop.

....

During the next period of time, Li Luo's life became even more fruitful and strict.

During the day, he would learn in Southwind Academy. After which, he would cultivate in the skygold room in the old manor, followed by some resonance art practice. Lastly, he would head to the Sun creek Villa and, under the guidance of Yan Lingqing, learn the arts of a resonance artificer.

Whilst all of this was happening, Cai Wei was purchasing fifth-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights. The moment they reached his hands, he would spend some time tempering his resonance.

Time passed extremely quickly, and Li Luo could feel that he was growing stronger as each day went by.

It wasn't until the day before the preliminary examinations that Li Luo finally reached the Sixth Seal Stage.

### **Chapter 0026: An Ordinary Preliminary Examination**

Southwind Academy was bustling with activity on this day. The atmosphere seemed to be fired up as everyone geared up for the preliminary examinations.

This preliminary examination was basically a qualifying round. Only the surviving twenty individuals would be able to represent Southwind Academy in the final examinations.

The Academy Final Examinations, as they were also known as, was a gathering of all the academies in the Tianshu Province in which they would engage in rounds of battles. All of this was part of the selection for the Astral Sage College's strict entry requirements.

This was also to say that only by passing through this qualifying round and entering the top twenty would one have the right to struggle for a place within the Astral Sage College.

Of course, many students also understood that the Astral Sage College was a goal that was simply too lofty. If they were able to perform outstandingly during the final examinations, they would still be able to attend a respectable college in the Xia Kingdom.

Although these other colleges and institutions were not as famous, as large in scale, or as strong as the Astral Sage College, they were still viable paths for one's future.

Hence, this final examination was the final chance for the students to demonstrate their capabilities.

At Southwind Academy's central training field.

The entire place was swarmed with a sea of people. There were tens of rings that had been constructed to serve as the competition fields. The rules were also quite simple: one competitor had to be knocked out of the field or forced to forfeit before the time limit was over to be considered a victory.

When Li Luo and Zhao Kuo arrived in the area, they were shocked at the hustle and bustle.

"Hmph! It truly seems a little noisy." Zhao Kuo laughed.

"Although this is considered a qualifying round, to the vast majority of the students here, this is also their final chance to demonstrate their capabilities," Li Luo replied.

Zhao Kuo nodded as he scratched his head with a melancholic expression on his face. "I don't even know if I qualify to enter the top 20." With Li Luo's sudden rise, Zhao Kuo was now considered to be the second strongest within the Second School. Looking at Southwind Academy as a whole, his chances of entering the top 20 were not small. However, this also required a little bit of luck. If he were to successively encounter individuals that were stronger than him, his overall record would also be tarnished and he might very well be eliminated.

"Everything is up to Lady Luck. Well, luck is something that's innate, and from the looks of things, you might not survive a few bouts after all," Li Luo casually quipped as he looked around.

Zhao Kuo's face turned green as he scolded, "You bastard! I curse that you encounter Lu Qing'er in the very first round!"

"No you."

"No youuuuuu!!!!"

Whilst the two bickered freely, an ear-piercing announcement echoed out from a platform overlooking the field. Everyone's attention shifted to it, and they could see Dean Wei walking out with the rest of the teachers following behind.

"Good morning, students. The preliminary examinations are about to start. I hope that all of you here will do your utmost and display your strongest state. The ranking today will influence your future. The examinations will last three days and the results of these battles can be seen on the stone pillars situated in the four directions of the field. I will not speak any more unnecessary words and hereby announce the start of the preliminary examinations!"

As the words resounded around the field, the shouts and excitement became even more intense and palpable.

Li Luo and Zhao Kuo, on the other hand, had made their way to a stone pillar. On the stone pillar hung a projection crystal. Large amounts of information was scrolling through it as they read it.

After half a minute, they discovered their opponents for the day.

Zhao Kuo immediately heaved a sigh of relief. The two opponents he would be facing did not exceed his expectations. This was sufficient for him.

Li Luo's expression was also indifferent. His two opponents were both from the First School, but they were not even as strong as Bei Kun.

This, however, was normal. Southwind Academy had almost a thousand students. What were the odds of him encountering a metal plate that was ripe for the kicking so quickly?

On the contrary, Zhao Kuo and him were considered to be the metal plates that no one wanted to encounter.

"It's almost my turn. I will go and prepare myself. All the best!" Zhao Kuo looked at the time and said goodbye to Li Luo, excitedly tunneling into the mass of humans and disappearing in a flash.

Li Luo shook his head as he made his way to his own battle stage. His first round was also about to begin.

After reaching his assigned battle stage, Li Luo waited for around half an hour until the administrators announced his name, directly jumping atop in a single motion.

Li Luo's appearance had also attracted the attention of the people around. Furthermore, he had previously beaten Bei Kun and his two friends in one go. He had once again regained a certain level of prestige.

However, not everyone had witnessed that battle personally, so they continued to hold Li Luo in contempt, thinking that his display of prowess was a mere exaggerated tale. Now that Li Luo was actually on the field, they would personally get to knock him down to size.

Li Luo's opponent was a skinny youth at the Sixth Seal Stage. His expression was a little bitter as he was considered to be average even amongst the Sixth Seal cultivators of Southwind Academy. Although this wasn't bad, who would ever have expected him to be so unlucky as to encounter Li Luo in the first round?

Furthermore, Li Luo had manifested a resonance and was ascending towards the skies!

"Begin." Once the administrator saw that both parties had entered the battle stage, he gave the command to start.

The skinny youth did not hesitate to rouse all of the resonant power within him. At the same time, he quickly assumed a defensive position, clearly planning to react to Li Luo's move instead of taking the initiative.

Li Luo did not hesitate either. Blue resonant power akin to massive tides of water surged out and circulated around him.

He dashed out like a bolt of lightning, executing an explosive resonance art.

The battle ended much quicker than anyone had expected.

In just the short span of a few minutes, Li Luo's tempestuous assault rained down upon that skinny youth. His defense shattered instantly and he could only choose to resign.

Hua!

The people surrounding the battle stage burst into an uproar. Numerous horrified gazes were levied at Li Luo, especially from those at the Sixth Seal Stage, their expressions grave and sunken. They could not tell how Li Luo could have gained such explosive power in such a short period of time. It seemed as though even Bei Kun would be inferior in this regard.

Li Luo was unconcerned with the looks he received from the audience. Once the administrator declared his victory, he jumped off the stage and disappeared amongst the crowd.

Li Luo's second match was not long after, and it was even more relaxed than the first. His opponent was completely dispirited and did not even wish to fight, directly conceding.

Hence, Li Luo's first day was a complete victory.

After finishing the battles, Li Luo made preparations to leave. He had to rush to the Suncreek Villa to continue his learning of resonance smithing. After undergoing this period of practice, he could gradually feel that he was about to successfully create a first-grade spirit liquid.

Right as he weaved through the crowd, Li Luo could sense someone in front of him looking directly at him. It was Lu Qing'er.

She was currently wearing white, body-fitting practice robes. Her long legs were slender and accentuated by the robes whilst it snugly wrapped around her perfect waist. Her long hair was also tied up in a ponytail that was let down elegantly. All of this gave rise to a scene so beautiful that one could only sigh wistfully when seeing her.

However, when Li Luo saw her, he could only give a helpless smile and a greeting. "Have you finished your bouts for today? It shouldn't have been too hard." These words were all crap. Lu Qing'er was number one in Southwind Academy. Anyone who encountered her would probably directly forfeit.

Lu Qing'er sized up Li Luo and replied, "It looks like you've grown stronger again. So where do you think you rank in this preliminary examination?"

"I should be able to enter the top 20. Being able to participate in the final examinations will be sufficient." He casually smiled.

He was sincerely disinterested in competing for the highest position he could. There was no need to do so, as a higher rank wouldn't bring about any benefits. In fact, if his ranking was too high, he might even be specially targeted by other academies.

When Lu Qing'er heard his words, she frowned. "With your strength, I feel that reaching the top ten isn't impossible."

"Do you really think so highly of me?" Li Luo laughed.

"Li Luo, I feel that you have no need to hide your strength so deeply. Only by fully demonstrating your capabilities will you be able to make those who doubt you shut up."

Li Luo felt a little helpless at these words. Lu Qing'er might seem like an elegant and graceful lady, but her personality was one that only sought greater strength. Perhaps this was also why she kept tabs on him. After all, he was the only one who had the ability to suppress her in the past. Thus, she held a special interest in him.

Completely opposite of her, Li Luo's personality was not the flamboyant sort. If there was no need to do so, he would not burst forth with his full capabilities for everyone to see.

Perhaps this was a habit that he had unknowingly picked up as a form of self-protection after his fall from grace.

"I understand. I will do my best." Lu Qing'er did not have any bad intentions when she mentioned all this. Hence, Li Luo could only nod and agree with her before quickly finding an excuse to slink away.  
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Lu Qing'er continued to watch his back as he left, also feeling slightly helpless before turning to leave in the other direction.

As the two left, neither had noticed that on a battle stage not too far away was a pair of stalking eyes. A certain Song Yunfeng had been observing the two after an utterly ruinous battle.

His gaze was fixated upon the direction Li Luo had left in, completely immersed in gloominess.

"I clearly warned you... but still you wish to challenge me?"

#### **Chapter 0027: First-grade Refining Workshop**

After leaving the academy, Li Luo did not rush to the old manor but instead to the Suncreek Villa.

The Suncreek Villa's protectors had recently become accustomed to the sight of Li Luo turning up, hence they respectfully greeted him before returning to their duties.

Entering the lightly scented Suncreek Villa interior, Li Luo could feel his spirits slightly lifting. This period of studying the resonance artificering arts had truly developed his interest in this matter.

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"Haha. The Young Lord has truly been diligent in coming to the Suncreek Villa for these past few weeks." Just as Li Luo was in the midst of pondering how he could best refine a first-grade spirit liquid, he was dragged out of his daze by a certain laugh.

Turning his head to look, he noticed Vice President Zhuang Yi beaming right at him.

"I heard that the Young Lord has manifested a fifth-grade water resonance," Zhuang Yi said curiously.

Li Luo had already spent many days practicing the tempering arts, so the news of him possessing a fifth-grade water resonance had already started to spread.

Li Luo closely observed this Vice President who had thrown his lot in with Pei Hao, gently nodding.

"Indeed, I'm currently learning the tempering arts from Elder Sister Lingqing."

Zhuang Yi continued to smile. "Vice President Yan is a genius of the Astral Sage College. Her abilities truly aren't bad. However, her experience has some limitations. If the Young Lord wishes to learn the tempering arts, your humble servant may not be talented, but I believe I can provide some constructive advice."

Li Luo smiled upon hearing this. This Zhuang Yi truly seemed to be big-hearted with those words. However, even an idiot would know that he was trying to closely monitor Li Luo and then personally report the news to Pei Hao. Would he even sincerely guide him?

The choice was obvious if he had to choose between Jiang Qing'e's best friend and a lackey of Pei Hao. There was no hesitation.

Hence, he lightly shook his head. "I feel that Elder Sister Lingqing isn't bad. Perhaps when I do have unanswered questions, I will personally look for Vice President Zhuang."

"Ah, that really is a shame." Zhuang Yi gave an emotional sigh as though he felt that this was truly unfortunate.

Li Luo did not continue to speak and was about to leave before he suddenly recalled something and turned back. "Oh, yes, Vice President Zhuang, I do have a question. I've heard from Elder Sister Lingqing that some of her refining workshops do lack specific materials from time to time. In fact, I heard that you're in charge of procuring more materials. Would you be able to replenish the stock?"

Upon hearing the request, Zhuang Yi frowned slightly before responding in a troubled tone, "Young Lord, this is unfortunately something I cannot assist with. There are times when the materials we purchase encounter some quality issues and thus shortages do occur from time to time. Since the Young Lord has raised this concern, I will pay greater attention to it." Facing Zhuang Yi's respectful tone and the seemingly reasonable, watertight excuse, Li Luo did not push the matter but gave him a deep look before turning to leave.

Zhuang Yi, on the other hand, continued to observe Li Luo as he left, the smile on his face gradually disappearing.

At Zhuang Yi's side was a lackey who softly said, "Vice President, it's truly unexpected that the Young Lord has manifested a fifth-grade resonance. This is truly shocking..."

"It must have been a heavenly treasure left behind by the two House Lords. It truly is a waste to lavish such an expense on a wastrel," Zhuang Yi indifferently commented.

"However, it is just a fifth-grade resonance. It's not exceptional and it won't be so simple for the Young Lord to re-emerge as a contender for the house." Waving his hand, he ordered, "Bring this news to Young Master Pei Hao. Furthermore, let's expedite the confiscation of the first-grade refining workshops. That bitch Yan Lingqing is truly an eyesore."

"Yes, my liege."

.....

Li Luo had just entered a first-grade refining workshop. Numerous compartments with crystal walls as barriers divided the room, with each compartment possessing an individual hard at work.

Furthermore, Li Luo noticed the tall and slender Yan Lingqing walking around, in her long robe and both hands in her pockets. Her expression was clearly icy as she patrolled the area.

She then paused in front of a particular compartment, unenthusiastically observing a particular first-grade resonance artificer's refining process.



Being directly observed by Yan Lingqing caused the resonance artificer to feel a little nervous. He quickly drew out a thin crystal needle engraved with a precise measuring scale.

This was a tempering measurement needle with a simple function. It was used to check the tempering strength of a completed spirit liquid or purifying light.

The crystal needle dipped into the liquid within the crystal bottle and then the measurement scale gradually lit up increasingly.

In the end, it settled at the 46% mark.

Yan Lingqing saw this and coldly commented, "If this sort of spirit liquid and purifying light were taken out for sale, it would only ruin the Suncreek Villa's reputation." The resonance artificer could only dejectedly lower his head.

Yan Lingqing did not become softhearted at this display of remorse, only continuing to mercilessly tear into him. "Your previous refinement had no less than four errors. The White Leaved Fruit was not refined with sufficient heat control, the Moonlight Juice used was too thick, the Smokeless Water was too thin, and most importantly, at the final step, your water resonance power did not attain the minimum saturation requirements.

"Refine it again."

After which, she turned and immediately swept her gaze across all of the first-grade resonance artificers. Everyone was silent out of fear, burrowing their heads into their work and focusing on refinement.

Yan Lingqing carefully wiped her glasses, her beautiful face remaining as chilly as ever. It was clear that the results of this first-grade resonance artificer were not up to standard.

A trace of gloominess could be seen in her pupils. Although she had come at the behest of Jiang Qing'e, she had come in without any assistance, and her influence within this branch could be considered to be even less than Zhuang Yi's.

Within this branch of the Suncreek Villa, there were three refining workshops. They were split into first, second, and third-grades. Different graded refining workshops were thus responsible for the refinement of different grades of spirit liquids and purifying lights.

Upon receiving Jiang Qing'e's order, Yan Lingqing had taken over the first-grade and second-grade refining workshops. However, the third-grade workshop remained firmly within Zhuang Yi's grasp.

The two parties had, as a result, clashed multiple times both openly and secretly for the control of these refining workshops. Whoever controlled these workshops would indirectly control the majority of the resonance artificers. As the Suncreek Villa existed to refine spirit liquids and purifying lights, resonance artificers were the most important resource available.

However, Zhuang Yi seemed to be unable to sit still any further in recent days. He had started to make moves on the first-grade refining workshop. His reason was that he had managed to raise a disciple that could refine a 56% tempering strength first-grade spirit liquid.

This would be the highest tempering strength available in the Suncreek Villa's first-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights. Hence, with this reason, Zhuang Yi spread rumors that Yan Lingqing was unable to guide the first-grade resonance artificers effectively by extension and was not a good fit to be in control. In fact, in recent days, there were signs that some of the first-grade resonance artificers were slightly moved by this rationale.

Yan Lingqing could faintly feel that if things were to proceed this way, control of the first-grade refining workshop would be seized by Zhuang Yi.

Although she possessed the backing of Jiang Qing'e and Cai Wei, Zhuang Yi was not doing anything wrong on the surface. They were unwilling to directly boot this old man from the Suncreek Villa when he had yet to do anything wrong, as this would also be bad for morale. Such an action would also cause chaos to ensue within the management of the Suncreek Villa and would ultimately affect the amount of refined spirit liquids and purifying lights. In the end, House Luolan would end up being the loser.

Her heart was slightly disgruntled and in turmoil as she proceeded to walk into Li Luo's refining workshop. She gave a quick glance and did not say anything.

Li Luo was also very casual as he strode into an empty refining compartment. Beside him, a gorgeous young lady softly said to him, "You're back, Young Lord." Li Luo smiled as he nodded and proceeded to tidy up the materials on the refining platform. He also softly replied, "Sister Yinghua, why does it seem like Vice President Yan's mood isn't that great?"

The young lady who was addressed as Sister Yinghua stuck out a tongue at him in response. "We've all been scolded for an entire afternoon now...." Then she gave him the rundown of the current state of things.

After Li Luo heard all this, he finally understood that everything was for control of the first-grade refining workshop. This was indeed no small matter. If Zhuang Yi were able to take control of it, it would also be a massive blow to Yan Lingqing's influence and prestige. Her position in the Suncreek Villa would only shrink from that point on.

Li Luo frowned as he didn't want to see such a sight. Furthermore, the Suncreek Villa was a large portion of House Luolan's Tianshu Province income, almost half of it. At a point where he required large amounts of capital, he did not want such a complication to arise, as it would affect him significantly.

Most importantly, Zhuang Yi was Pei Hao's lackey. With his personality, the entire Suncreek Villa might even be completely swallowed by that white-eyed wolf.

However, all these thoughts were pointless now. Li Luo could only focus on what was ahead of him. The formula for the first-grade Azure Jade Spirit Liquid was on the platform in front of him as he prepared the materials, beginning his practice for the day.

Two hours of practice went by quickly, and just as Li Luo was getting more familiar with the refinement process, the large doors to the first-grade refining workshop had suddenly been pushed open. Everyone halted in their tasks as they glanced over towards Zhuang Yi and his minions who had just barged in.

Merely looking at the way they had busted their way in, one could tell that they had ill intentions.

## Chapter 0028: Li Luo's First Time

Zhuang Yi and a column of his men had ferociously busted into the first-grade refining workshop, instantly causing the atmosphere to become tense. Surprised gazes were cast in their direction.

Yan Lingqing had also noticed their entry. Her face downcast, she icily demanded, "Vice President Zhuang Yi, how can you act so rudely?"

Zhuang Yi's face was full of smiles as he replied, "Vice President Yan, there is no need to be agitated. I'm here for the issue we raised previously. Ever since the first-grade refining workshop was placed under your command, the amount of spirit liquids and purifying lights produced have decreased. Furthermore, there have been numerous pieces that are not up to par. This has severely affected the Suncreek Villa's business." Zhuang Yi looked deeply worried and even sick at heart at this point.

Yan Lingqing coldly retorted, "A reduction in production? Aren't you most clear on why this is the case? If you had not reduced the amount of materials provided, how could this have happened?"

"Vice President Yan, you are slandering my good name! We have been lacking materials recently, how could I just create more from nothing? Even though Vice President Yan is from the Astral Sage College, you might be lacking some experience and your guidance might not be appropriate for the Suncreek Villa's first-grade resonance artificers. Your pointers might instead mislead them," Zhuang Yi said with a frown on his face.

No one dared to interfere in this war of words within the first-grade refining workshop. Everyone understood that this was an open battle between the two vice presidents, and anyone who dared speak out of turn would inevitably be turned into dust by the aftershocks.

Zhuang Yi continued to stare at Yan Lingqing. "Vice President Yan, as resonance artificers, we should use results to back our words. You've already been in control of the first-grade refining workshop for quite some time, but the results clearly haven't been exemplary. The first-grade resonance artificers you have guided are only able to produce first-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights that barely exceed 50% tempering strength. On the other hand, my disciple, Shi Yun, is already able to refine a 56% tempering strength Azure Jade Spirit Liquid. You have to know that the minimum requirement for the Suncreek Villa's first-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights is 53% tempering strength. Thus, Vice President Yan should act for the good of the Suncreek Villa. I'd recommend you hand the first-grade refining workshop over to me; otherwise, if things proceed this way, our first-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights might no longer have a market in the Tianshu Province."

After speaking, Zhuang Yi turned to face a few of the higher-ups of this branch of the Suncreek Villa. "Don't you feel that what I'm saying makes sense?"

These higher-ups remained deep in thought. Even though they did not wish to involve themselves in this scuffle between the two, Zhuang Yi's words made a lot of sense, and as an organization, only results mattered.

If Zhuang Yi's disciple was able to reliably produce 56% tempering strength spirit liquids and purifying lights, this would indeed be beneficial to all.

Hence, some of the higher ups reluctantly spoke out. "Vice President Yan, why don't you let Shi Yun manage the first-grade refining workshop? This way, you can focus on the second-grade refining workshop. Furthermore, this is our Sun creek Villa's most important product."

Yan Lingqing was emotionless. If she truly gave way here, this would mean that she had lost in the battle against Zhuang Yi and would clearly indicate that the direction of the winds would blow against her. Gradually, she would be forced back more and more.

However, if she did not take a step back here, with how aggressive Zhuang Yi was and with the voice of reason on his side, this would also cause a negative blowback on her end.

Thus it truly seemed as though she was stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Zhuang Yi stared with interest at the clearly conflicted Yan Lingqing, a smirk gradually forming on his face. So what if she was a genius of the Astral Sage College, was she not still tender and fresh-faced?

Weng!

At this point in time, as the pressure on Yan Lingqing was multiplying, the tense atmosphere was shattered by a blue light exploding forth from a specific refining compartment.

This sudden change of events caused everyone some degree of astonishment. Everyone turned around, only to see a certain Li Luo grasping a bottle filled with an azure liquid and an expression full of glee.

This was the first successful spirit liquid he had ever produced, and it had been refined under such tenuous circumstances.

After refining this bottle of Azure Jade Spirit Liquid, Li Luo drew out a tempering measurement needle and tested it.

Surprisingly, he saw the measurement scale on the needle swiftly climb upwards.

Ultimately, the needle stopped at the 60% tempering strength mark.

Hua!

When all of the first-grade resonance artificers saw this sight, they couldn't help exclaiming in shock!

One after another, everyone rushed forward to take a look. "60% tempering strength? The spirit liquid that the Young Lord refined has a tempering strength of 60%!"

"How can this be possible?!" The first-grade refining workshop was filled with cries of disbelief and terror! No one could understand how this was possible, and all the attention that had been focused on the battle between Zhuang Yi and Yan Lingqing dissipated. Everyone rushed towards Li Luo to take a closer look.

After everyone had a chance to lay eyes on the tempering measurement needle's scale, there was a deathly silence. All of their shocked gazes were directed at the smug Li Luo.

They were well aware that he had been learning resonance artificering arts for no more than two weeks! Within such a short span of time, he had managed to not only produce a first-grade spirit liquid, but also produce one with such terrifying tempering strength.

Was this truly what one called a blessed genius of the heavens?

"Make way." Yan Lingqing's voice caused the group to disperse quickly as she strode over with her long, slender legs. Her alluring gaze was purely focused on the Azure Jade Spirit Liquid in Li Luo's hand.

"Let me take a look," she instructed.

Li Luo naturally made way and passed the crystal bottle over. Yan Lingqing then quickly poured out a drop of the Azure Jade Spirit Liquid to check it personally. Her face seemed a little moved at this sight.

"This Azure Jade Spirit Liquid has unmatched purity. It's clearly able to reach the point of 60% tempering strength."

She then shifted her focus onto Li Luo. She never would've expected Li Luo to also be a true genius at resonance artificering.

This was also his first attempt!

Recalling the first time she refined Azure Jade Spirit Liquid, the finished product only had 57% tempering strength, which clearly wasn't a bad result.

At this point, she seemed to think of something, and a cunning smile appeared on her cold face. She grabbed the bottle containing the Azure Jade Spirit Liquid and turned around, looking at the equally surprised Zhuang Yi. "Vice President Zhuang Yi, I don't believe I will hand over the reins of the first-grade refining workshop just yet."

Zhuang Yi's face turned incomparably dark as he scowled at the bottle of spirit liquid. He had clearly heard everyone's exclamations. This brat Li Luo had managed to refine a 60% tempering strength spirit liquid?

If he or Yan Lingqing, fourth-grade resonance artificers, were to take action personally, the first-grade Azure Jade Spirit Liquid would likely only reach the 65% tempering strength mark. Based on his memory, he had not personally refined a first-grade spirit liquid or purifying light in numerous years as such a task was a waste of his time. It was inefficient to do so, and it would fetch perhaps only tens of skygold.

This was the first time he had heard of someone managing to create a spirit liquid with a 60% tempering strength on their first try. His disciple, Shi Yun, had spent an entire year polishing his craft before managing to reach a tempering strength of 56%.

The difference between the two was like comparing mud to the clouds.

Zhuang Yi's mouth twitched a bit before he stiffly answered, "Vice President Yan, did you perhaps utilize some underhanded means? The Young Lord here has barely touched upon the realm of resonance artificering. As I recall, he only started two weeks ago."

Yan Lingqing indifferently glanced at him. "I'm sure everyone here observed the Young Lord personally refining this. Your excuse seems a little too shameless, no? Perhaps you'd like the Young Lord to personally demonstrate his skill to you?" There were numerous individuals around who nodded in agreement. They had clearly seen Li Luo personally refining this spirit liquid.

Zhuang Yi's expression stiffened further as he forced himself to dryly laugh. "I wouldn't dare, I wouldn't dare!" Although he did not respect Li Luo in his heart, this was still the Young Lord. How could he dare to take him lightly in front of everyone?

"Vice President Zhuang Yi, if I were to refine a first-grade spirit liquid with an even higher tempering strength, do you think that would give me the right to be the supervisor of the first-grade refining workshop?" Li Luo smiled as he dealt yet another blow to Zhuang Yi.

Zhuang Yi gave a ridiculing smile. "We would have to defer to Vice President Yan's opinion on this."

He also understood that today's attempt had resulted in a disastrous failure. Thus, he quickly gave some conciliatory words before turning around to leave quickly with a depressed expression on his face.

The atmosphere finally cooled down in the first-grade refining workshop. Following which, numerous congratulatory words came in from all around and everyone began to look at Li Luo with newfound envy and fervor.

Li Luo gladly accepted the compliments before swiftly rushing off to continue his practice. A certain alluring gaze continued to focus on Li Luo as he made his way. "Who would have thought that his first attempt would result in a spirit liquid with such high tempering strength. It looks like you are truly a genius when it comes to resonance artificering."

At the Astral Sage College, Yan Lingqing had seen numerous geniuses, but this was the first time she had seemed someone with so much natural talent. What she found most unexpected was that Li Luo's water resonance was only at the fifth-grade, so what did that mean? This meant that Li Luo possessed a natural affinity and sensitivity towards fusing and harmonizing the characteristics of these materials. This was something innate, and only certain geniuses in the Resonance Tempering Hall of the Astral Sage College possessed such ability.

"Perhaps this was all luck as well," Li Luo wistfully suggested. If he knew how highly Yan Lingqing regarded him, he would have definitely felt extremely awkward. He truly didn't possess this so-called genius. The reason why his first spirit liquid ever had a 60% tempering strength was due to him relying on his waterlight resonance's unique characteristics when it came to refining spirit liquids. When the result was produced, he noticed he had underestimated the impact the water resonance power and light resonance power had on fusing the final product.

Yan Lingqing was disinterested in his thoughts. "It was lucky that you were around this time. I will not bother with superfluous thanks, and the Sun creek Villa's profits technically all go to you so nothing more needs to be said." She immediately paused after saying all this, and a smile bloomed on her snowy face.

"However, my mood isn't bad. I will treat you to a meal tonight, then!"

Li Luo originally wanted to reject her offer as he wished to rush back home to practice his resonance arts... but upon thinking about how strict Yan Lingqing usually was, his survival instincts kicked in and he immediately gave the most radiant smile he possibly could and agreed almost instantly...

"Well then... nothing could please me more!"

**Chapter 0029: I'm Still a Child!**

Night had fallen upon the City of Southwind. Lanterns were lit up all around, heralding the hustle and bustle of nightlife as the chilly wind blew past.

"Your performance today wasn't bad! It truly helped me out of a pinch! Down this cup!"

In a winehouse facing the street, Yan Lingqing was grabbing a cup of wine and shrieking. Her usual cool and collected demeanor had turned into a rarely seen heroic and unrestrained temperament thanks to the assistance of liquid courage.

Li Luo was also a little stupefied at this sudden change of events. Helpless, he could only gently clink cups and then stare in shock as Yan Lingqing downed the entire cup, which was the size of half her face, in a single breath.

This way of drinking seemed to run completely contrary to Yan Lingqing's bespectacled and cold appearance. It was a complete change in personality!

Similarly, numerous gazes within the winehouse had sneakily shifted towards them as Yan Lingqing truly was quite an attractive individual.

"Elder Sister Lingqing, you don't have to say more. Ultimately, I'm just protecting my spending money..." Li Luo laughed.

"Perhaps that might be true. But that bastard Zhuang Yi, always waving around those 'qualifications' of his around me... I've suffered more than a few times thanks to him... I've never seen eye to eye with him." Yan Lingqing let loose.

At the same time, she continued sizing Li Luo up. "However, you've truly amazed me, and now I have a whole new level of respect for you. I had always thought that this Young Lord was just some sort of mascot!" Li Luo was a little embarrassed upon hearing those words. Wasn't she being a little too honest?

Not wasting any time, Yan Lingqing refilled her large cup and continued, "Frankly speaking, there's still a huge gap between you and Jiang Qing'e."

"That is to be expected..." Li Luo honestly admitted. Jiang Qing'e was exceptional, so much so that even the Astral Sage College was merely another stepping stone to her. This sort of honor was something even the prince of the royal family would not be able to receive.

"Though I will continue to struggle and work hard." Li Luo stared at his wine cup and smiled.

Yan Lingqing playfully retorted, "Oh? It sounds like you truly have a thing for Jiang Qing'e."

"Sister Qing'e's excellence does not need to be elaborated on. If I said I never had any funny ideas about her, I'm afraid even you wouldn't believe me," Li Luo said honestly.

He had been with Jiang Qing'e for many years, and their relationship and feelings had naturally become more and more complex. Adding fuel to the flames was the marriage agreement, and from Li Luo's perspective, the two had become deeply intertwined.

Li Luo was sure that this feeling was not exclusive to him but also extended to Jiang Qing'e. It was impossible for her to treat him as an ordinary person, and this was something that Li Luo could sense after being with her for so long.

"How honest." Yan Lingqing downed yet another cup of strong wine. Nodding her head, she gave a smile with a deeper meaning. "If you truly have these sorts of thoughts, then you have a long way to go. You're currently still in the City of Southwind despite all this. Perhaps when you enter the Astral Sage College one day, you will realize how frightening your opponents are."

Li Luo grasped his wine cup, feeling slightly dejected as he thought of how to reply. "Well... I'm still Jiang Qing'e's husband-to-be." Pausing slightly, he chuckled. "If anyone truly wants to harm me, they'd still have to go through Sister Qing'e. I think that when that happens, the ones who will find it most unbearable will be those opponents themselves."

Yan Lingqing's beautiful pupils widened a little at this statement, and she glared at Li Luo. "Wait... aren't you just hiding behind your woman?"

Li Luo replied with conviction and sincerity, "Isn't it the duty of the bride to protect the groom? What's wrong with that!? Huh?"

Yan Lingqing, who was slightly taken aback, couldn't help but exclaim, "You... that's going too far!" Immediately after, she burst into laughter as she understood Jiang Qing'e's personality best. She truly would do such a thing and treat these competitors as pieces of meat, a double blow to their ego and prestige.

Li Luo smiled as he refilled her cup, the two continuing to drink. Towards the end, as he felt his head starting to spin, he noticed that Yan Lingqing had already collapsed atop the table.

Li Luo could finally sigh a heave of relief. He shook Yan Lingqing gently and realized she was completely unresponsive, leaving him speechless.

In the end, he lifted her up with one hand on her slender waist and the other on her knees, gradually carrying her away.

As Li Luo carried Yan Lingqing out of the winehouse, numerous envious gazes were trained upon him!

However, he did not possess their vile thoughts. He quickly flagged a carriage over and a then certain lady then came out to receive them.

This was something previously arranged by Yan Lingqing as she knew that she'd definitely go big before she went home.

Li Luo carefully lifted Yan Lingqing into the carriage before informing the attendant, "Please take Vice President Yan home."

The female attendant respectfully nodded and then proceeded to guide the carriage away.

On the streets, Li Luo watched as the carriage was bathed by the numerous lights within the city. He stretched lazily as he recollected the conversation he had with Yan Lingqing, eventually smiling wryly.



"I guess I have to work harder." Although he didn't mind having Jiang Qing'e protect him, he couldn't be a stain on her reputation either, right?

As he turned to leave, within the swiftly leaving carriage, the originally drunk Yan Lingqing suddenly opened her eyes.

As she lazily lay within the carriage, she murmured to herself, "Not bad indeed. He clearly didn't try to take advantage of me. When I get back, I have to let Qing'e know that while her little husband is not very strong, he is definitely someone that this elder sister recognizes!"

....

When Li Luo woke up the next day, he could feel a pounding pain in his head. Feeling completely helpless, he made a mental note to reject any more drinking excursions with Yan Lingqing.

After hastily cleaning up, he made his way to the front hall, where he spotted the charming and alluring Elder Sister Cai Wei waiting for him for breakfast.

Li Luo gave an apologetic smile at this point...

"Did you have a few drinks with Yan Lingqing last night?" Cai Wei grinned as she passed him a bowl of porridge.

Li Luo nodded. "Who would have expected Elder Sister Lingqing to drink so... heroically?"

"Lingqing truly is too much. You're just a child. Why did she take you out for drinks?" Cai Wei chided.

Upon hearing this, Li Luo felt dissatisfied. "Elder Sister Cai Wei, don't take advantage of my youth! Aren't you only a little older than me? You almost sound like my mom."

Cai Wei glared at him before she praised, "I heard of what happened at the Sun creek Villa yesterday. You're not bad! You've finally reached a point where you can assist us in the bigger picture. I've also taken the opportunity to dispose of some of our more useless assets in the Tianshu Province. I've even provided a bargain for the Difa family and the Bei family. Hahaha. I heard that the Song family tried to discuss some new terms with the other two families, but to no avail. They stonewalled the Song family and said that this wasn't part of the deal. This has created friction and made it more difficult for them to reach a consensus when it comes to dealing with House Luolan. Now that we have gotten rid of some of these burdens, our coffers have been replenished and we should be able to complete your requested purchase smoothly soon."

Li Luo was extremely excited. "Elder Sister Cai Wei, you're just too capable! Unlike Elder Sister Lingqing, who can't drink but still gorges herself silly!"

Cai Wei's thick eyelashes flapped as she blinked in slight confusion. "She can't drink?"

Li Luo nodded. "She drank till she blacked out yesterday! I even had to carry her to her carriage."

Elder Sister Cai Wei had a playful expression on her face. "My dumb little Young Lord. Yan Lingqing's alcohol capacity is incomprehensible. She could out drink ten of you and her face wouldn't even turn red."

Upon hearing this, Li Luo was flabbergasted.

"You didn't have any unsavory thoughts about her, did you?" Cai Wei said as she sized him up. "If you did, she will never utter a single good word about you when she's with Qing'e."

At this point, Li Luo quickly racked his brains as he tried to recollect what happened the previous night. It seemed as though he had not done anything untowards to her... Only upon this realization did he wipe his forehead free of cold sweat.

He had almost been toyed with by Yan Lingqing.

With a slightly awkward expression, he placed his bowl down. "I'm heading to the academy."

Turning away, he swiftly ran off as Cai Wei's melodious laughter echoed out, further increasing his sense of indignation and grief. These elder sisters were just too cunning, and Li Luo had been played like a fiddle.

"I'm truly just a child like they say!" *nOvelnext.com*

### **Chapter 0030: Vagrant Yu Lang**

When the indignant Li Luo finally arrived at the academy, he noticed that the previously ecstatic atmosphere had lessened significantly. In fact, some of the students even had looks of dismay on their faces.

Evidently, the majority of them were those that had not done well in the previous day.

However, there was no choice. Someone's happiness would come at the cost of someone's sadness. In a qualifying examination like the preliminaries, those who were not strong enough would naturally be eliminated.

"Brother Luo, you're here!" Zhao Kuo exclaimed when he saw Li Luo, immediately rushing up to him. "Of your two battles today, one won't be as easy. You're against the First School's Yu Lang. Do you remember him?"

"Yu Lang?" Li Luo racked his brain before finally nodding in agreement. That fellow had a bit of fame within the First School, and his strength ranked amongst the top 20. It was said that he possessed a sixth-grade wind resonance that provided him with unparalleled speed.

"That guy is at the Seventh Seal Stage and is significantly stronger than Bei Kun." Zhao Kuo's expression became slightly grave at this point.

"Seventh Seal, huh?" Li Luo puckered his lips. This would definitely be a troublesome opponent. However, Yu Lang should be within the threshold of those that he could beat.

Hence, he patted Zhao Kuo on the shoulder and smiled. "Relax, I have faith in myself."

Zhao Kuo did not say anything in response as he knew Li Luo's personality. If Li Luo truly knew he had no chance of victory, he would not be putting up a brave front.

Whilst the two were speaking, a student from Second School came running over. "Brother Luo, there is someone outside looking for you."

Li Luo became a little apprehensive after hearing this but still headed out. Standing in the shade of a tree was an unruly-looking youth with a mane of hair that flapped around him.

Li Luo instantly recognized this youth. It was his next opponent, Yu Lang.

"Are you looking for me?" Li Luo smiled.

Yu Lang swept away the hair covering his eyes before giving a deep look at Li Luo. "Who would have expected that after so long, you would manage to rise again? You truly live up to your previous reputation as the man who once ruled Southwind Academy!"

Li Luo sighed before replying impatiently, "Don't speak such meaningless words."

"How is this meaningless?" Yu Lang replied in dissatisfaction.

In the end, Yu Lang stopped beating around the bush and got straight to the point. "Song Yunfeng approached me, and he knew I was your upcoming opponent. He even offered a significant price for me to injure you with all my might."

Li Luo was a little stunned upon hearing this before he laughed. "Are you telling me your secrets? Or do you plan to take advantage of muddled waters?"

"Che! I, Yu Lang, may be unrestrained, but I still have a bottom line. You once guided me in resonance arts, and I owe you for that," Yu Lang disdainfully replied.

"I am here to remind you that if you are not strong enough to be my opponent, then quickly give up for your own good. Of course, if you've hidden your newfound strength so deeply that even I will be beaten silly... if that's the case, then play along with me! Hmm, I suppose you could 'heavily' injure me and send me flying out of the stage. This way, I can even take a bit out of Song Yunfeng's compensation pool.... Plus, that bastard is a foolish spendthrift. He's offered a huge sum after all..."

"Oh, yes, that bit about compensation is just something extra I tacked on to the agreement with Song Yunfeng. I don't think we will have to go that far though... Li Luo, you might not be aware, but this Yu Lang in front of you is no longer the Yu Lang of the past who tripped over his baggy pants!" Li Luo may have been slightly cunning, but he was almost shocked blind at the audacity of Yu Lang's grand plan. In the end, he could only helplessly reply, "You truly are trouble... so I'm reporting you to the teachers."

This chain of events completely caught Yu Lang by surprise. His jaw dropped while staring at Li Luo. "What kind of bastard are you, Li Luo?! Do you think it's easy for me to earn a little bit of money? How can you, a young master, know my pitiful troubles in life?! Why would you make life difficult for meeeeeeeeeee!?!?!" he ferociously scolded!

"Scram, scram, scram!" Li Luo frowned as he waved his hand to chase away this nuisance. It had been years since they last spoke, but he was still as strange as ever, with even stranger schemes...

Yu Lang coldly snorted as he ruffled his hair and turned to leave.

Li Luo continued to stare at him, making sure he was leaving before waving goodbye. "Although this information wasn't that important, thank you nonetheless!"

Yu Lang paused upon hearing his comment, coldly snorting before leaving.

"Young people should always strive to do their best instead of resorting to these means!"

After Yu Lang left, Li Luo frowned slightly. Song Yunfeng's desire to fight had been getting more intense. All of this was due to his infatuation with Lu Qing'er, but also partly to do with the enmity between their families.

"I've been keeping a low-profile, why are you still targeting me!?"

....

The first round in the morning went by with no complications and there was nothing much to say. Before he knew it, it was already afternoon and time for Li Luo's match with Yu Lang.

On the battle stage, Yu Lang's unruly mane floated with the wind as he coldly stared at Li Luo. "Li Luo! It's your misfortune to be facing me!"

Meanwhile, the battle stage was surrounded by numerous audience members. Everyone was extremely interested in this particular fight as it was the first time Li Luo would have to face off against a strong opponent.

Facing Yu Lang's theatrics directly, and in front of such a large crowd, caused Li Luo to feel a little embarrassed. He definitely did not want to get sucked into Yu Lang's circus show, as it would demonstrate he was no different from this fool...

Thus, he quietly activated his resonant power, a pure-blue aura gradually emitting from his entire body, flickering towards the sky. Even the audience nearby could literally feel the air becoming more humid with his presence.

Following the administrator's order to begin, Yu Lang, who had been posing, immediately surged with explosive, green resonant power. One could hear the wind whistling and howling by as this resonant power was emitted. Suddenly, he flashed towards Li Luo like a bolt of lightning, so fast that even the onlookers could only catch a trace of his shadow.

His burst of speed caused Li Luo's eyes to focus intently. Meanwhile, the audience was cheering endlessly as this was a sight to behold! Yu Lang's speed was clearly ferociously swift!

Peng!

In the blink of an eye, a fist shrouded in wind and wrapped with a green light struck at Li Luo like a bolt from the blue. Li Luo could only see a fist speedily increasing in size right in front of his eyes, almost completely blocking his vision!

Yu Lang was clearly not going to hold back during this fight.

Stumbling slightly, he responded with a calm, open palm instead, with blue resonant power gushing out directly, forming a massive, impenetrable wall of water!

The wind-infused green fist struck squarely, and the impact caused the water wall to ripple intensely.

"Waowu!" A weird cry echoed out. Yang Lu's body flickered in response, and numerous afterimages appeared as his speed increased. These afterimages surrounded Li Luo, and each and every one of those

fists and legs were wreathed with green light, howling with piercing wind as they attempted to drown Li Luo in a flurry of blows!

This was a savage direct assault!

Facing these berserk blows, Li Luo quickly adopted a defensive position as the layers of water around him deformed slightly due to the physical strikes, constantly warding off attacks towards his vitals.

To the ones watching this battle, they all understood that Li Luo was planning to drag this into a battle of attrition. This was not surprising as water resonances tended to be more enduring and were better suited for it. The more the fight delayed, the clearer Li Luo's advantage would be.

"Li Luo is once again demonstrating his mastery of the Nine Layered Jade Waves," some of the more astute students commented.

The Nine Layered Jade Waves had once been demonstrated by Li Luo on Bei Kun, and it was perfectly designed for drawn-out battles. One would constantly accumulate greater amounts of power, building up towards a devastating blow that would frighten anyone!

However, Yu Lang was significantly stronger than Bei Kun, so it would not be such an easy task to ward off his tempestuous blows.

"Waowu!" Yu Lang exclaimed strangely once again. His index and middle fingers bent into a hook-like shape and suddenly pierced out with green light condensing on those fingertips. The green light was incomparably radiant, constantly pulsing with energy.

"Wind Finger!" This finger attack that swept towards Li Luo like a tornado directly perforated the water wall that surrounded him and stabbed towards his chest like a bolt of lightning!

Noticing that the opponent's move was blitzing towards him with incomparable might, Li Luo understood that he had nowhere to hide, so he took a deep breath of the moist air around him.

"Gentle Water Fist!" Li Luo pushed a palm out that was shrouded with blue resonant power. Just as the two attacks were about to collide, his five fingers stretched outwards in a flicking motion, directly creating numerous waves within the sea of water resonant power that surrounded him. This created a huge water vortex in the space before him as a result.

On the other hand, Yu Lang's Wind Finger's green light was gradually stripped away by the devastating grinding power of the water vortex, eventually getting completely entangled by this move.

By the time the Wind Finger passed through the water vortex, the attack had been stripped of its fangs!

Peng!

The fist and finger then collided. Their resonant power clashing instantly, sending shockwaves rippling around the stage. Both Li Luo and Yu Lang had been struck directly by the aftershocks, and the two quickly retreated away from each other.

Hua!

Everyone burst into an uproar at this very sight. Shocked glances were directed towards Li Luo.

He had actually managed to weaken Yu Lang's strongest offensive move into a generally harmless strike?

Yu Lang was at the Seventh Seal Stage!

This was also wind resonance power, which was supposed to have an offensive edge over water resonance power!

"Li Luo's usage of his resonance art was just too mystical. He was able to utilize the Gentle Water Fist to its greatest effect, dispelling Yu Lang's brute-force move. How impressive! The Gentle Water Fist is merely a middle-grade resonance art, yet it can perfectly counter Yu Lang's high-grade Wind Finger," said a member of the audience as he sighed in appreciation.

"Li Luo's resonant power is only at the Sixth Seal, which is definitely weaker than Yu Lang's. Yet he is able to persist in the fight for so long..."

"The title of Southwind Academy's resonance art expert is not for show!"

"..." Whilst the people were cheering, Yu Lang's mouth changed into a grin as he focused on Li Luo. This brat truly had hidden his strength deeply! He had not gained any advantage in their previous clashes, which went completely against his own expectations.

"This brat is truly quite abnormal." Yu Lang had even wanted to take things a little easy, but he had no right to do so!

However, this was great! Only a fight like this would hold meaning!

Yu Lang's eyes blazed with excitement as he proceeded to launch his next round of attacks. Green resonant power once again billowed out of him and he shot out like a bullet, taking his speed to the extreme. *novelNext.Com*

Just as he reached his maximum sprint, he suddenly realized that he had lost his sense of balance, and he mysteriously lost his footing and slipped.

Yu Lang's expression was changing constantly from that of excitement, to surprise, to shock when he looked at his feet in the midst of falling. It seemed that at some point, his legs had been entangled by Li Luo's blue resonant power.

This resonant power was like a water snake, coiling around both his legs. When he reached his peak speed, it caused him to lose his sense of balance.

"This is..." Yu Lang's pupils tightened when he realized what had happened.

Li Luo, watching him lose his balance, let out a smile. "Low-grade resonance art, Water Snake.

"You're too careless, Yu Lang. Haha." As Li Luo spoke, he took a step forward and chained that move with a double-palmed follow up. Water resonance power cascaded out of him, a sight that reminded the audience of the waves of the sea.

"Although you're no longer tripping due to your baggy pants, things haven't changed. You're still going to fall, and it's because of my water snake!" Finishing off his banter, he directly slammed his palms into Yu Lang's flying chest.

"F\*ck me! Li Luo! You tricked me!" Yu Lang screamed as he was sent flying away!

Bang!

Whilst he cursed, he was blasted away, eventually colliding with a wall outside the stage, causing a loud bang.

At the moment he landed, a fountain of fresh blood spurted out of Yu Lang's mouth, almost ten meters high! At the same time, copious amounts of fresh blood oozed out of every crevice on his robes, instantly causing him to turn into a bloody figure, a sight that truly horrified the audience.

Li Luo, on the other hand, stood there in a slight daze, his lips twitching slightly. This was clearly going too far! Did the human body even have that much blood?! A completely nonsensical sight! He hadn't even hit him that hard... Was this genius trying to swindle Song Yunfeng out of such a large sum that he could retire in peace?