

ABSOLUTE RESONANCE

Chapter 0005: Senior Pei Hao

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After leaving the Golden Dragon Bank, Jiang Qing'e was silent within the carriage. Li Luo followed suit and spoke nary a word, only clutching the suitcase. Who knew what he was thinking.

Eventually, they arrived in front of a manor, within which dotted numerous undulating hills and magnificent pavilions—an awe-inspiring sight.

This was where Li Luo's parents had constructed the family home of House Luolan.

The four beastial lionhorses stopped gracefully in front of the gates and then the duo exited the carriage.

"This place seems to have become a lot colder and lifeless." Jiang Qing'e sighed as she stared at the manor.

Back when Li Luo's parents were still around, this was the administrative epicentre of House Luolan. The bustling activity as people hurried about then greatly contrasted against the decrepit silence seen now.

"House Luolan's headquarters has long shifted to Xia City, this is just an old manor. I suppose this peace and quiet is expected." Li Luo smiled.

Whilst the two spoke, some individuals approached the entrance to usher them in.

At the fore was an old man, with a lady right behind him. The old man had a gentle and amiable expression. The lady, on the other hand, wore a face of makeup that accentuated her maturity, providing an attractive countenance.

What was most outstanding was her well-rounded figure; her twin peaks were well endowed, much like two completely ripe peaches, a sight that would slay men as they swayed gently.

"Uncle Liu," Li Luo cried as he ran towards the old man. He was someone who had followed Li Luo's parents long ago. Nowadays, he stayed to maintain the estate whilst taking care of Li Luo.

Yet Li Luo did not recognise this well-endowed lady and doubts began to arise in his mind.

"Uncle Liu, it has been a long time," Jiang Qing'e said as she nodded her head before introducing the lady to Li Luo. "This is Elder Sister Cai Wei, my assistant in Xia City. She has been helping me to arrange the numerous affairs of House Luolan."

"Greetings, Young Lord," the mature beauty Cai Wei said with a smiling expression as her eyes sized Li Luo up.

Li Luo nodded in reply. "It must have been hard on you, Elder Sister Cai Wei."

"Elder Sister Cai Wei will be staying in the City of Southwind for a period of time. She will be taking care of House Luolan's affairs in the Tianshu Province and will be directly reporting to you in all matters," Jiang Qing'e explained.

Li Luo was momentarily shocked. Ever since House Luolan's headquarters relocated to Xia City, nothing much had cropped up within the Tianshu Province and things had been stable since then. Now, in the blink of an eye, why had Sister Qing'e suddenly deployed such a capable individual to assume control of the situation?

"Has something happened?" Li Luo queried as he sighed deeply.

Jiang Qing'e's sudden return was clearly unrelated to his upcoming seventeenth birthday tomorrow.

Jiang Qing'e paused in deep thought. Her usual, exquisite expression had turned cold as she strode towards the interior of the manor, Li Luo trailing right behind her.

"Although you've been left in the City of Southwind, I suppose you have not heard of the news surrounding House Luolan. I did not speak of these things for fear of affecting you." As they walked on the light gravel road, scattered light filtered through the leaves of the surrounding trees, bathing their path with warmth, contrasting against Jiang Qing'e's direct and cold words.

Li Luo nodded. Although he did not take part in House Luolan's affairs, even a blockhead could guess that with the absence of his parents, House Luolan would be faced with turbulent winds.

Starting a house within the Xia Kingdom was not such a simple task. The most important rule was that one had to have a Duke.

Within the Xia Kingdom were five great houses, and House Luolan was one of them.

Out of these five, House Luolan had the shortest history and had also risen the most abruptly. This was due to both of Li Luo's parents entering the Duke Stage.

Mysterious Yang Duke, Li Taixuan.

Misty Duke, Tan Tailan.

A house with two Dukes. This was the key reason why House Luolan had catapulted into the ranks of the five Great Houses so quickly. Whilst the rest of the five Great Houses had long established histories, House Luolan was a complete upstart. As a result, this also meant that they had less of a foundation and barely any assets to speak of, and were thus weaker than the other four by a fair margin.

This was originally not an issue as Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's abilities were more than sufficient to cover this gap during this time.

Hence, it was a pity that they both had disappeared.

Losing their two main pillars of support, House Luolan's strength declined rapidly. At the onset of their disappearance, their reputation still served to deter any unsavory intentions. However, with the passage of time, the lack of news regarding Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan had ended up birthing rumors that they had met their demise in the Noble's War.

House Luolan, as one of the five Great Houses, had numerous businesses under them. This was undoubtedly a fat, succulent piece of meat for any power within the Xia Kingdom. Numerous factions had been eyeing it covetously, drooling at the mouths for a potential bite.

Thus, with the passage of time, Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's inheritance had been gradually whittled down. A few wolves could barely resist the temptation in these past few years and had taken quite a few mouthfuls.

With such a situation afoot, Jiang Qing'e had to put pause to her studies in the Astral Sage College to take over the affairs of House Luolan. As a result, her reputation in the Xia Kingdom had soared. Unfortunately, she had yet to enter the Duke Stage, so her strength was insufficient to deter this pack of hungry wolves. In this dire situation, she had chosen to give up some of the businesses, opting to recover them when the House had recouped its strength.

By showing little resistance, it signalled to the wider world that the situation within House Luolan was terribly unstable, battered by the oncoming winds.

Li Luo understood very clearly at this point that without sufficient strength, trying to guard a mountain of gold would only bring trouble to oneself.

Patience enduring was the sensible long-term strategy.

"I've heard of House Luolan's decline in these few years. Perhaps things have begun to stabilise?" Li Luo asked curiously.

Jiang Qing'e pursed her lips as she calmly replied, "External pressure has temporarily reduced. However, the problem now lies within House Luolan's headquarters."

Li Luo was dumbfounded for a second before he slowly asked, "Is it due to Senior Pei Hao?"

Cai Wei stared at Li Luo with a flabbergasted expression.

"Although Sister Qing'e has not been in charge of House Luolan for long, your charm is unparalleled and your strength within the house is not insignificant. The only member of House Luolan who can compete with you is that Senior disciple my parents took in." Li Luo smiled as he explained his deduction.

Pei Hao was a wandering vagrant in his youth. He had offended an enemy and would have been executed if not for the lucky intervention of Li Luo's parents. Seeing how pitiful he was, they accepted him into House Luolan and his talents were gradually unearthed, demonstrating his genius. When House Luolan officially made their mark, he was officially taken in as a disciple.

With this background, Pei Hao's position in House Luolan soared into the heavens, and by the time of Li Luo's parents' disappearance, he had already accumulated quite a bit of power.

When his parents were still around, Senior Pei Hao would often come to interact with Li Luo. Over the years, these interactions had gradually become more rare, especially after it was discovered that Li Luo had blank palaces...

It was clear that Senior Pei Hao wasn't a very genuine person.

"Pei Hao has always objected to my control of House Luolan. He has also acted arbitrarily when it came to decisions regarding the house. His influence

within House Luolan is not minor—at least half of the Inner Council of Nine supports him. This has brought about some unsavory influences on the situation.

"Frankly speaking, if he was willing to act on behalf of House Luolan, then all of this would be tolerable. If not for Masters' orders, I would not have wanted to make a move and take control." Li Luo nodded in agreement. With Jiang Qing'e's personality, she definitely disliked this sort of responsibility. Focusing on cultivation would've been ideal, considering her gratuitous talents.

Though in the end, all of these problems had arisen because the Young Lord just wasn't up to par. Both of them understood that with his current predicament of possessing blank palaces, he was helpless in such a situation. If they passed control to him, it would more or less spell doom for everything his parents had toiled for. *novelNExt.COM*

Furthermore, in this world, might made right.

"It must have been hard on you, Sister Qing'e," Li Luo sincerely said from the depths of his heart.

Jiang Qing'e shook her head. "No need for this display. We are already engaged, and I'm also part of House Luolan... in case you already forgot and need a beating to remind yourself," she replied bluntly.

Li Luo was speechless at this retort, whilst Cai Wei laughed while coyly covering her mouth, her appearance capable of moving anyone.

Jiang Qing'e continued, "Ever since the two Masters disappeared, everyone has been on tenterhooks. Although I have done my best to pacify everyone, the situation House Luolan is in is not something that can be resolved easily. Meanwhile, Pei Hao continues to goad and rally the support of the people, constantly seeking to suppress me. I've done some investigating, and I suspect that there are greater forces at play, secretly assisting him."

Li Luo reached out to catch a falling leaf before musing, "We seem to have raised a wolf in our home."

"Pei Hao will bring some men to discuss terms in the City of Southwind tomorrow. If we are unable to come to a consensus, the worst case scenario is that House Luolan will directly disintegrate and a heavy blow will be dealt to us." Jiang Qing'e's golden pupils seemed to become as icy as the cold of winter—even a trace of killing intent could be seen.

Li Luo raised his eyebrows in puzzlement. House Luolan was surrounded by wolves in the Xia Kingdom, and furthermore, there were even more tigers eyeing them from the sidelines. If they did fall apart, House Luolan would be severely weakened, and inevitable troubles would follow.

All he could do now was sigh. He was just too weak, unable to influence the situation at all. The title of Young Lord within House Luolan was an empty one. In fact, people had completely disregarded and forgotten about him.

Everything stemmed from being powerless.

"I apologize. I have been unable to help," Li Luo said.

Jiang Qing'e shook her head as she lightly replied, "Rest assured. Even if turmoil engulfs House Luolan, I will ensure it is rebuilt before I hand it back over to you." Li Luo did not reply. He didn't really mind either way. Even if House Luolan were the mightiest one around, it was ultimately external strength. In this world, only personal might was absolute.

If he could enter the King or Duke stages at some point, all of these problems would disappear like a wisp of smoke.

The two then entered their old home and had dinner. Immediately after, Jiang Qing'e excused herself and rushed off, evidently to make preparations for tomorrow.

Li Luo did not disturb her. Instead, he spent two hours practicing the resonance arts before retiring to his room for rest.

Try as he might, he couldn't fall asleep. When the clock struck midnight, he directly rolled off his bed and grabbed the suitcase before wrenching it open.

He pulled out the mysterious, black crystal ball and carefully clasped it between his hands. Li Luo could feel his heart palpitating as it almost burst out of his chest in excitement.

"Father. Mother. Just what did you leave behind for me?"

Li Luo lightly patted his chest as he spoke self-deprecatingly, "There's no way you left behind a birthday cake you made countless years ago... right?" He gulped.