

Resonance 601

Chapter 0601: Activating the Royal Engraving

"Mmm... your figure is getting better and better."

As Li Luo disrobed, he revealed his striking figure that had been tempered over years of training. Mentor Chi Chan quickly took the opportunity to tease him with a hint of satisfaction in her gaze. An eye for an eye. Who was the one who said she wasn't "caring enough," huh?

Li Luo was clearly left embarrassed after a member of the fairer sex had scrutinized him openly. It naturally felt unnatural! As a result, he could only turn a deaf ear to her slicing words.

Chuckling at his discomfort, Mentor Chi Chan grasped the Royal Engraving and channeled her resonant power through her fingertips. The resonant power gushed out into the jade slip like a tide, causing it to burst into pieces with the overflowing energy. Next, countless green engraving fragments shot out and coalesced into a densely packed object that resembled a bird.

Reaching out with her finger, she prodded several areas on Li Luo's back.

These seemingly casual motions caused goosebumps to form across his back and made all his muscles tighten up reflexively. His body was instinctively reacting to the apparent danger of the situation.

Even Li Luo was taken aback at how sharply his body had reacted to such simple gestures. Perhaps if Mentor Chi Chan had put a little more force into those prods, he might very well be left with several bloody holes in his body...

"Is this the strength that a Duke possesses?" Li Luo's mind quivered at the thought of this frightening prospect. It was as though he was now a tiny chick cowering before an apex predator.

"Hmm. Your physical body seems to have been augmented significantly." Mentor Chi Chan was completely oblivious to Li Luo's current state of mind as she commented on his changes in surprise.

His physical strength had taken a significant leap forward during the Holy Grail Meet.

"Yes... I had the opportunity to form a Thunderpeal Avatar when I went to Thunderpeal Mountain during the competition in the Blackwind Empire," Li Luo honestly explained.

"Your lucky encounters aren't bad at all. The Blackwind Empire's Thunderpeal Avatar is renowned across the East Divine Continent. It is said that the founding emperor of the Blackwind Empire refined that art to the very peak, allowing him to possess an unparalleled fleshly body that was comparable to that of a fifth-grade Duke. Using his physical prowess alone, he punched a path through ten thousand li of mountain ranges, opening up a waterway for his empire. He's a peak legend amongst the annals of East Divine Continent's history."

Li Luo was slightly taken aback, and he gulped in shock. Using one's body to carve out a path across such a massive distance? The founding emperor of the Blackwind Empire was truly ferocious indeed. It would be more fitting to call him a primal beast in human form! On that note just when would he manage to attain such power?

As they spoke, Mentor Chi Chan continued to guide the countless engraving fragments to move in a flowing and determined pattern. It was almost like threading a needle, an elegant motion repeated.

Meanwhile, Li Luo could gradually feel a piercing pain growing on his back. His muscles started to go numb and he felt like an object was trying to burrow inside him.

Countless specks of green fragments that resembled birds constantly descended upon his back. Gradually, a tattoo shaped like a green wing took form. It pulsed luminously, emitting a radiance that seemed to have an influence on its surroundings and speeding up the wind flowing around it. A while later, Mentor Chi Chan paused. "It's done. Channel some resonant power into your back and give it a try."

Li Luo obeyed. He willed his body to act and directed some resonant power towards the area where the royal engraving was. In a flash, his entire body was shrouded with overflowing green light, and the wing engraving seemed to have fluttered to life like a newborn butterfly. A large pair of wings made of light slowly spread out from Li Luo. Each one was about a zhang in length. The wings only flapped lightly one time, but they generated a tempest from that single tiny movement. Despite moving just a tiny distance, Li Luo could feel his vision going blurry at the sheer speed of his sudden and casual movement. He had a feeling that he now possessed sufficient speed to even tear through the void with sheer swiftness.

"Phantasmal Spirit Wing Evasion Art..." Li Luo's eyes lit up with excitement. This was the first time he had experienced the power of a true escape art. The only unfortunate part was that it was a Royal Engraving that could only be refined by Dukes... The effect was simply incredible, and with this precious life-saving tool at his disposal, no one would be able to tie him down if he didn't wish for it.

"The Phantasmal Spirit Wing Evasion Art is basically only useful for increasing one's speed. It's likely that no one under the Duke Stage will be able to catch up to you if you use it. Unfortunately, you are unable to bring out its true potential with your pitiful resonant power," Mentor Chi Chan reminded him.

Li Luo nodded. He had felt the sluggishness of the ephemeral wings when he had channeled his resonant power through them, clearly indicating that his resonant power was simply not dense enough to fully bring out its capabilities. However, once he advanced to the Earth Fiend Stage, the jump in resonant power should be more than sufficient for the needs of the engraving.

The Earth Fiend Stage was a watershed and a metamorphosis. It truly allowed one to transform qualitatively. "Although the Royal Engraving might be pretty useful, it's still a consumable object. It can only be used five times before it completely dissipates," Mentor Chi Chan reminded him patiently once again.

"Only five times?" A pang of sadness arose in Li Luo. Still, he understood that the Royal Engraving was merely an external ornament and aid, not something that was innate to him. Otherwise, why would anyone go through bitter cultivation? That would simply be pay to win! "How much is a Royal Engraving usually worth...?" Li Luo asked now that his curiosity was piqued.

"A third-grade Royal Engraving would typically go for around... three million pieces of skygold. However, you wouldn't even be able to find one in the markets of the Xia Kingdom. Crafting one requires the handiwork of a Duke and many rare materials, and there's even a chance of failure, meaning that the entire project could go to waste. Since you are the young lord of House Luolan with such a huge fortune

and esteemed businesses... this should be within your means to mess around with. Don't you want to buy more to protect yourself?"

"Three MILLION?" Li Luo's face turned taut. Each time he gently "tapped upon" the coffers of the house, he'd drain a neat six hundred thousand skygold or so... That was only to pay for two bottles of seventh-grade spirit liquids and purifying lights. Wouldn't he turn his family destitute in one go if he spent three million?

"Forget about it. My struggling house is unable to afford..." he replied in a tone of resentment. He had thought that if the price was right, buying a couple of these playthings would be great. However, the value of these engravings left his plans halted in their tracks.

House Luolan might've been reascending to the skies, but their profits could only reach a million or so skygold. Affording three to four third-grade Royal Engravings? Forget about it!

Mentor Chi Chan had a smirk on her face. "Royal Engravings are relatively common in the inner divine continent. Their rarity in the outer divine continents means that they simply aren't as cost-effective due to the lack of supply and higher prices."

"Inner divine continent, huh..." Li Luo's expression livened up slightly. That was the nexus of the wider world. The worldly natural energy was simply more dense and concentrated there, giving birth to larger amounts of precious heavenly treasures. It also facilitated the birth and growth of many heaven-defying talents as they had access to much greater amounts of resources. As a result, there would naturally be more engravings readily available.

"In any case, the Royal Engraving has been activated, so you can put your clothes on now." Mentor Chi Chan said as she dusted off her hands.

Li Luo did as he was told before he informed her of the matter with Vice Principal Su Xin and the Duke Art.

"A Duke Art? You really are an ambitious brat." Chi Chan re-examined her student with a little bit of surprise written all over her face.

"Cultivating a Duke Art is completely different from cultivating tiger and dragon-general resonance arts, and each one requires a significant amount of time to cultivate. If one's Duke Art is able to reach Grand Perfection, they become unsurpassed amongst their peers regardless of the actual grade of the art. However, I have to admit that as a dual resonance user, you do have some benefits in cultivating such an art. You seem to possess some talent in resonance arts as well. Giving it a try is better than doing nothing. If a little Resonant Master could learn it successfully, it would undoubtedly be an unfathomable trump card. Someone who is able to learn one can be considered a genius even amongst those from the inner divine continent."

Mentor Chi Chan did not dissuade Li Luo's untamed heart, only stating the facts, but she followed up with a deep sigh. "Why don't you take the next two days off to rest? I'll bring you over there after that. If you're able to find one that suits you, I'll gladly guide you along."

Li Luo profusely thanked his mentor for her kind gesture. Although the clock was ticking, he could not rush things heedlessly. Jiang Qing'e and him had left for over a month, and there were things that needed to be settled in the house.

"Hehe... Mentor..." Thinking of House Luolan's situation, a hint of mischievousness flashed across his eyes as he gave his most radiant smile whilst facing his mentor.

"What now?" Yet the fact was, Mentor Chi Chan already had a sinking suspicion with regards to his new request.

"Cough. You must have heard of House Luolan's upcoming Housemeet in two months' time, right? My house is truly troubled... We had wanted to rope in Vice Principal Su Xin's assistance, but she could not help. She rejected me in such a cruel way! That was such a disappointing result!" Li Luo sighed with deep expression.

Mentor Chi Chan smiled. "Well, this request is too much after all. The Astral Sage College is a neutral party, and no one can change this infallible rule. This is also part of her obligations."

"Well, would you be able to help instead, Mentor? Delivering firewood in the midst of winter will be repaid manifold in spring! House Luolan will fully support you in the times to come in all aspects." Li Luo spoke out the words in his mind.

"Do you really think that Vice Principal Su Xin would allow me to participate in the Xia Kingdom's power struggles?" she retorted without batting an eye.

"Well, I have a plan..."

"What?"

"You can resign from your position, and after all is said and done, rejoin the college! Brilliant, ain't it?" Li Luo cooed.

Mentor Chi Chan glared at him upon hearing his overbearing request. "You truly are a slippery, scheming sprite. Do you actually think that Vice Principal Su Xin and the rest of the Xia Kingdom are blathering and blind idiots?"

Li Luo laughed. Well, it was a joke to begin with as he knew that this was an absolutely absurd proposition anyway. Thus, he was just probing to see her reaction to his plan since it was harmless.

After which, he bade his goodbyes, waved, and left.

Within the pavilion, Mentor Chi Chan continued to watch Li Luo's back as he left. "Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan... you two are really unreliable folk. How could you throw your children into such a situation?" Li Luo could finally feel the full brunt of pressure stemming from the upcoming Housemeet. As a result, he had to attempt any and all opportunities to bolster the strength of his ranks. However, this was easier said than done.

Mentor Chi Chan gradually set down the cup of hot tea before her, watching as her interesting student left through the door. Her gaze flashed slightly, and she came to a decision.

Chapter 0602: Hidden Treasure: Bai Mengmeng!

After leaving Mentor Chi Chan's lodgings, Li Luo returned to his dormitory. Xin Fu was sleeping soundly without a care, but Bai Mengmeng seemed to be missing. Taking a quick walk, he finally discovered her small silhouette hunched over within the refining workshop.

She was in comfortable robes, but due to her slim stature, they ended up looking baggy and oversized. Her solution to this was to use a pink ribbon to secure her clothes like a belt, bringing attention to her slender waist. Bai Mengmeng was currently engrossed in some refining activity, and her platform was filled with countless materials.

"What are you doing?" Li Luo blared as he barged in, standing right beside her. From the looks of things, she wasn't actually developing new spirit liquids and purifying lights, so he felt it was okay to talk.

The focused Bai Mengmeng finally noticed that someone was beside her, and she jumped back several steps in fright. Li Luo gently grabbed her wrist, pulling her back before she collided with a pile of raw materials.

"Wh-wh-when did Leader arrive??" Bai Mengmeng stammered as her innocent face turned beet-red with embarrassment.

Li Luo gracefully let her go and smiled. "Well, I've been here for a while, but seeing that you were busy, decided not to disturb you immediately."

Bai Mengmeng returned to her refining platform, pointing at the mass of materials atop it as she let out a tender and sweet smile. "Well, do you remember your request for me to refine a secret watersource or lightsource? I've been focused on experimenting on just that. The Suncreek Villa has recently regained some of its splendor in the Xia Kingdom. However, what it mostly produces is spirit liquids and tends to lack purifying lights. Thus, I wanted to develop a secret lightsource to amend this deficiency."

Li Luo was so touched by her kind actions that he was about to bawl his eyes out. "Mengmeng! You're the best!" He had never expected his offhand request to have been duly remembered by her, nor that she'd even put in immense effort to accomplish it.

"Did you buy these materials yourself?" Li Luo gestured at the pile. There were several high-grade spirit materials within, with a hefty price tag to boot.

Bai Mengmeng only nodded slightly with a nonchalant reply. "These are spirit materials that the college allows us to buy with our school points. I don't normally use them, and don't forget, I actually have quite a bit of money on hand. Sometimes, my elder sister borrows from me to get the things she needs..." A triumphant smile appeared on her face.

This was met with no surprise. With her ability to independently develop new methods of refining spirit liquids and purifying lights, Bai Mengmeng was able to accumulate massive sums of skygold.

"Don't let my sister know that I told you this. She's actually very shy, and if she feels too embarrassed, she might, uh... beat you up," Bai Mengmeng suddenly said with a bit of awkwardness on her face. A tightly kept secret had been accidentally blurted out. Li Luo grinned knowingly. With how proud Bai Doudou was, she would never tolerate someone else knowing this. The only solution and outlet for her then would be copious amounts of violence... and he may very well be beaten up indiscriminately.

"Well, you having money is your own problem. How can I accept your help in researching a secret lightsource but still expect you to pay out of your own pocket for these miscellaneous fees? You're too innocent and naive! Won't you be taken advantage of and corrupted by those unscrupulous refining houses once you graduate? They'll clean you out!" Li Luo was just getting started on his selfless tirade. "Luckily for you, you've had the fortune of meeting me, a paragon of virtue. After you graduate, the Suncreek Villa will happily fund all of your research in full! Don't worry, I would NEVER take advantage of you. I'm reliable and will definitely take good care of you. You will feel the warmth of a tight knit family when you work with me," Li Luo declared with solemnity.

Bai Mengmeng couldn't help but laugh. "Then I will have to thank you for extending this invitation to me, Leader!"

"In fact, if you ever need any materials in the future, just give me a shout. Do you know how many school points I recently earned in the mixed-level competition? 120,000! If all of it was converted into spirit materials, you'd have enough to fund 10 years of research!"

"Wow! Leader, you are truly amazing!" Bai Mengmeng's dimpled face blossomed with a genuine smile.

"However, Leader... I can't focus on my research with you around..." Bai Mengmeng shot a glance at the materials on the platform. Although she enjoyed spending time and chatting with the charismatic Li Luo, she had too many things to settle on her plate.

Knowing that Bai Mengmeng was focused on delivering a secret lightsource for the Suncreek Villa, Li Luo had nothing else to add, so he could only sigh with sincerity. "Mengmeng, your intentions are pure and noble. For that, even I feel an impulsive urge to dedicate myself to you!"

"Leader, if you really want to do so, you'd probably have to ask Elder Sister Qing'e for permission. I don't think you can decide how your body should be used..."

Li Luo glared at her as he refuted her with vigor. "Nonsense! I'm the true house lord of House Luolan, and what I say goes. No one will ever dare to go against me. In any case, I do have things to settle, so I will take my leave. Please continue with your research." After which, he waved her goodbye and turned to leave.

Bai Mengmeng's eyes twinkled with a hint of humor as she watched him go. Shaking her head, she turned to focus on her secret lightsource research once again.

Li Luo, on the other hand, left the dormitory and made his way to the outskirts of the college.

"Tsk tsk. No one seems to recognize that I'm the one wearing the pants when it comes to House Luolan. All of you will realize that I am the true ruler someday! Then you'll all understand how superficial you have been!" Li Luo grumbled to himself as he remembered how Bai Mengmeng had looked at him.

"Who is superficial?" At this point, a familiar voice rang out. Raising his head, three familiar figures were looking at him from beneath the shaded canopy of a tree.

The one in the middle was Jiang Qing'e, flanked by the First Princess and Yan Lingqing.

The three were enthralling beauties, and when they stood together, they attracted the gazes of every student that happened to pass by.

Li Luo, on the other hand, remained unfazed as he strode over, grinning as he replied to Jiang Qing'e's question. "I was reflecting on my achievements and realized that I couldn't get carried away even though we won this competition. That would have been truly superficial of me.

"He's clearly full of crap. Qing'e, my womanly intuition tells me that he was just flirting with some other girl," Yan Lingqing replied brusquely.

"Sister Lingqing, stop trying to sow dissent between us. Do you want to have a taste of my techniques??" Li Luo gloomily threatened.

Of course, Yan Lingqing was not someone cowed by mere words, only retorting with a belly full of fire. "Oh? Try it, then! If you dare to harm me, let's see who's going to run the Suncreek Villa for you!"

Li Luo was left a little speechless. It turned out he was the one being blackmailed instead! Damn it!

Jiang Qing'e held Yan Lingqing back slightly as she helplessly replied, "Could you two please stop being so childish?"

Li Luo grinned. The relaxed bickering before him was something he had missed. The Holy Grail Meet was riddled with dangers and full of strife. Compared to that, life in school was something he yearned for, allowing his tense nerves to unwind. This was the only place where he could feel the warmth of friendship. If House Luolan wasn't about to face a grievous crisis in two months' time, he could leisurely take things as they came.

"Sister Qing'e, let us head home," he said.

But Qing'e shook her head. "Lingqing and I will head off first. You, on the other hand, should have a stroll with Her Highness." At this point, he turned to look at the slightly beaming First Princess, and it was then that he understood why she was here. She probably needed his assistance to cure the Little Emperor as it had been almost a month since the last time he provided treatment.

"Junior Li Luo, I'm afraid I will have to trouble you yet again," she stated warmly.

Li Luo did not reject. "It is as I promised you, Your Highness."

The four thus made their way out of the college. Jiang Qing'e and Yan Lingqing headed back to House Luolan in their carriage, whereas Li Luo followed the First Princess aboard the royal carriage escorted by a regiment of dignified and fully armored soldiers.

When the two took their seats, the driver expertly guided the carriage forward quickly and smoothly.

Li Luo took a quick glimpse at the heavenly beauty before him before closing his eyes for a quick rest. But the First Princess suddenly piped up with a radiant grin adorning her scarlet lips. "Li Luo, let's speak honestly now. Did you have anything to do with the death of the crimson knight-general?"

Her sudden question took him by surprise, and his heart couldn't help but tremble. What was he going to say?

Chapter 0603: Princess Sensitivities

The question struck like a bolt from the blue, and Li Luo was taken aback. Her tone seemed to hold a trace of suspicion and even an inexplicable sense of certainty in her assertion. As a result, he felt a little astonished. Had she discovered something?

His thoughts revolved quickly and he came to a decision as to his answer. He reflexively shook his head whilst replying, "Huh? What are you trying to say? As you know, I'm just a tiny Resonant Master. Don't you think it's a little outrageous to think I would be able to threaten an opponent that a Heavenly Pearl Stage cultivator like you had problems with?"

The First Princess' gaze roamed across the carriage without looking directly at Li Luo. "I spoke to the vice principal." She smiled sweetly.

Li Luo's eyes almost popped out of their sockets in surprise. Had he been betrayed by Vice Principal Su Xin? No, that didn't make sense. Vice Principal Su Xin was cautious, and regardless of the First Princess' stature and influence, she would never leak the details of what had happened. The First Princess was ultimately still a member of the royal court and thus the college would control any information they provided to members of their faction.

Taking all that into account, there was only one possible reason why she would lie about this.

She was trying to pull off a bluff!

At this point, Li Luo continued to shake his head with a puzzled face. "What did Vice Principal Su Xin do?"

The First Princess' phoenix eyes focused intently upon Li Luo before she gave yet another smile. "You're a sharp one. As you might already have guessed, I just have a lingering suspicion that you were involved in the death of the crimson knight-general. There's no need to attribute all the credit to Qing'e. She may have a ninth-grade light resonance and possibly even some sort of secret trump card, but one fact remains true. When I snapped out of the illusion, I could not sense any remnant light resonant energy in the environment, indicating that a heaven-defying light resonance art had not been used at that point in time. Furthermore, when I awoke, you were already bouncing around. Looking at this with common sense, how could the weakest individual present recover the quickest? Perhaps Jiang Qing'e resuscitated you, but your complexion was pale, as though you had experienced an arduous battle. Vice Principal Su Xin's attitude towards you also seemed a little special, wanting to speak to you personally after all was said and done. I understand her personality very well, and even though she's gentle and caring, all students are treated the same. However, she seemed to have acted out of step by giving you preferential treatment. Thus, there must have been some exceptional circumstances that led up to this. As a result, based on all the above, my conjecture is that Qing'e could not have been the one who killed the crimson knight-general. Instead, it was you. So, Li Luo, do you want to explain how you did it?" At this point, her gaze was full of interest and curiosity as she looked at the young lord with her phoenix eyes.

Li Luo was shocked numb by her complicated explanation. He had never imagined that the First Princess would possess such deductive prowess. This wasn't some random intuition, she had thought out a whole spiderweb of logical inferences. Just how meticulous and observant could one be? Based on her line of inquiry, even Li Luo had to admit that the situation at hand didn't add up.

However, he could not openly admit to this, and thus he continued to shake his head furiously. "Your Highness, that seems too exaggerated. Common sense will tell you that a Resonant Master could not possibly match up to a Heavenly Resonance Stage cultivator. What are you talking about?"

Looking at Li Luo stubbornly resisting, the First Princess could only bite down on her lip in helplessness. Although her train of thought was logical, the conclusion she had reached was simply ridiculous. No one else would entertain such a ludicrous conclusion. It was the fact that she was a little suspicious at how the situation had turned out that she had done such an in-depth analysis.

Perhaps she felt this way because she had witnessed Li Luo creating mind-boggling miracles multiple times.

"Well, even if you don't admit to it now, we'll see how long it takes for the truth to come out," the First Princess thought to herself as she turned away.

She no longer pursued this line of questioning and changed the topic, starting to chat with Li Luo about other matters.

The mood in the carriage turned lighter as a result.

Li Luo smiled and agreed, secretly sighing in relief internally. The First Princess was truly a difficult girl to handle when compared to the likes of Lu Qing'er or Bai Mengmeng.

As they conversed happily, the carriage eventually arrived at the palace, and Li Luo once again met the Little Emperor.

He was wearing brilliant, yellow dragon robes that seemed to emit an aura of grandeur. However, when this was contrasted against his pale, childish face, they looked a little less majestic and awe-inspiring. When the Little Emperor spotted the First Princess, his face broke out into a beaming smile and he pounced over happily.

The First Princess coughed lightly, and he quickly regained his composure and bearing, instantly taking on a noble aura.

Seeing that Li Luo was standing behind her, he quickly formed an expressionless face and regained a dignified appearance.

"Your Majesty, please make your preparations. I'll begin your treatment in but a moment." Li Luo bowed deeply as he spoke. In any case, he didn't really care if the little kid was being rambunctious, as it was normal behavior for a child.

The Little Emperor gave the First Princess a glance before she nodded towards him. He immediately made his way into the inner hall to change his robes.

Li Luo was invited in after a short period of time, and the Little Emperor was sitting atop his adorned, yellow bed with his back facing him. His upper robes had been taken off and his fair and transparent skin contrasted strangely against the black lotus mark, looking extremely dazzling with a deathly beauty to it.

The petal that he had previously diffused had started to show some semblance of being restored, ruining some of Li Luo's previous efforts to treat him.

"Li Luo, you're truly amazing. After our last session, my body felt better than ever. You must know that even Dukes couldn't resolve what had been plaguing me!" the Little Emperor said in a clear voice.

"Your Majesty, I'm simply lucky. Perhaps my dual resonances are simply better fitted for this task than others." He would not tell the other party that the reason behind his success was the combination of three kinds of resonant power.

The First Princess slowly walked in and sat down beside them gracefully, simultaneously beckoning a female servant to provide them with some refreshments. She then enjoyed it in a leisurely manner. Even the First Princess felt a certain sense of disconnection when comparing the current relaxing atmosphere with the ascetic troubles they had faced in the Holy Grail Meet.

On the other hand, Li Luo was fully focused upon the treatment of the Little Emperor.

The treatment ended up being even more effortless and smooth than the previous round, a testament to Li Luo's resonant power advances.

An hour later, Li Luo wiped off his forehead full of sweat. His gaze was focused on the back of the Little Emperor, where yet another petal of the black lotus had been dissolved.

The Little Emperor excitedly turned around and exclaimed, "I can feel my body becoming lighter! Thank you, Li Luo!"

Li Luo smiled and nodded as he looked at the jubilant Little Emperor. He could see that the boy was gradually looking more and more alive. A hint of color had returned to his lips and his teeth had whitened. Wait, did his detoxification technique possess a beautifying side effect? "Tell me, Li Luo, what sort of reward do you want? Do you like beauties? My palace has many outstanding ladies of all sorts of temperaments and types. Just say the word and I'll send some your way!" the Little Emperor promised as he was engrossed in his happiness. A hint of embarrassment was seen on Li Luo's face as he declined profusely whilst shaking his head. Was this kid joking? If he dared to bring a legion of girls to House Luolan, he might very well be stopped at the gates!

The First Princess spoke up at this point. "Your Highness, there's no need to worry about this. I'll find a way to thank Li Luo on your behalf." Happiness was also clearly evident in her eyes, and she extricated Li Luo from his new predicament. After a quick conversation, she escorted Li Luo out.

"I hope you aren't angry at me for rejecting His Majesty's well meaning gifts," the First Princess teased as the duo walked out side by side.

"Well then, how else will you show your gratitude, Your Highness?" Li Luo countered back with a smirk.

"I'll just give you one person instead." Smiling, the First Princess raised a single, jade-like finger.

Li Luo was taken aback by this comment. Immediately after, he inadvertently started to size up the voluptuous and regal First Princess before saying with great difficulty, "Your Highness, you may be the beauty of the nation, but I, Li Luo, am an engaged man of the highest values..."

The words immediately caused the First Princess to arch her eyebrow in irritation, and she glared at Li Luo. "Li. Luo. What sort of unrealistic dream are you having? Huh?"

Li Luo coughed dryly in embarrassment. "Ahem. Then what were you trying to say when you said you were going to give me a single person?"

The First Princess gave a cold snort and her tone turned officious.

"Two months from now. House Luolan's Housemeet. I'll send a representative. Just one. A Duke."

Chapter 0604: First Princess' Investment.

"A Duke expert?!" Li Luo's eyes started shining like saucers and his breathing instantly became heavy as he looked at the noble and beautiful lady before him. For a moment, hot tears welled up in his eyes. Wasn't that the whole point of him reaching out to Vice Principal Su Xin? To find a Duke expert for assistance?

In the end, the college was unable to assist. Yet the First Princess was willing to deliver firewood in the midst of winter.

He was literally on cloud nine.

But at this point, he suddenly calmed down and snapped back to reality. "Your Highness, if I may. Could I know the reason for your abrupt support?" The First Princess might have access to virtually limitless wealth and she had shown goodwill to Jiang Qing'e and him previously, but it was never to this extent. Simply speaking, she had never gone out of her way for them, unlike now.

In the past, she had always offered support verbally. Words were cheap after all and did not always have to be backed with actions. But this was completely different. She was clearly expressing the side she was taking by providing a Duke expert.

This meant that she was truly investing and taking a bet on House Luolan.

The First Princess gave a faint smile. "Why? It's because of you. You're becoming more and more valuable even in my eyes. The previous House Luolan only had Jiang Qing'e supporting it, and things were uncertain. Nowadays, I am more and more convinced that your potential is in no way inferior to hers. When the two of you are allowed to bloom, the possibilities will be endless. Absolutely unfathomable. My investment in House Luolan will be worth more than ten times what I've put in today."

After which, she winked at Li Luo. "Don't you think I'm very pragmatic?"

Li Luo nodded attentively. "No, no. I just think that your foresight is impeccable. I'm the best choice around after all."

Hearing his characteristic cockiness, her smile became even more dignified. "Li Luo, no one knows what will happen next. If House Luolan cannot be protected, I hope you'll do the smart thing and give up. So long as you and Jiang Qing'e remain alive, House Luolan will exist in spirit. Reckless action without strength will only lead to an early end. Forbearance is your friend. You will then be able to win the war despite losing the battle."

The First Princess' warning was the exact same as Vice Principal Su Xin's. Li Luo took both their words very seriously. He understood perfectly that potential needed time to blossom. Without that, it was worthless.

Potential was not strength that could be mobilized immediately, so it did not possess any deterrent effect at all.

"I'll remember your words clearly, Your Highness. I do have to add that if you want to make sure your investment is not wasted... Why not bet a little more? I reckon if you can send three Dukes, this crisis will easily end in a flash. What do you think? Isn't that a great idea?" Li Luo laughed.

The First Princess rolled her eyes in response. "Do you think Duke experts are cabbages that are found anywhere? The number of Duke experts in the entire royal court can be counted with your fingers, and we can only command so many. Furthermore, the safety of the Emperor is of the utmost priority. How can we provide three Dukes so easily?" Li Luo guffawed mischievously. He'd thrown it out just for fun, and similar to the situation with the vice principal, he knew that such a request was simply impossible. Additionally, if one considered the circumstances the royal court was in, the bulk of the power she was talking about was probably held by the Regent.

"Additionally..." The First Princess paused as she vacuously stared at the halls before them, a heavy expression forming on her face. "Whilst House Luolan has problems, we have ones of our own. In fact, it won't be too many days after your Housemeet."

Li Luo paused for a moment, and that was when it struck him. He furtively glanced around before whispering softly, "Your Highness, are you referring to the throne ascension ceremony?"

Ever since the old king had passed away, the young Little Emperor had been responsible for taking his place and eventually succeeding him. But the fact was that he merely carried an empty title. The true power was held by the Regent as the Little Emperor was merely a child. Although the First Princess was cognizant of this fact, she was quite young too, and resisting the Regent was practically impossible at that point in time.

As time passed, the Little Emperor grew older and the First Princess made a name for herself in the Xia Kingdom and the royal court with her achievements, increasing their factional strength over time. This inevitably threw them into direct conflict and a power struggle against the Regent.

It was only natural as they sought to regain control and displace him.

The Little Emperor's throne ascension ceremony would be the turning point where the Regent would accede power back to the throne. Once this was completed, the Little Emperor would formally become the Emperor as well.

Of course, whether or not the Regent was truly willing to hand over his authority was a separate question altogether. The kingdom was rife with speculation, whether it was amongst the populace or the powers that be.

Everything going smoothly would be most ideal, but if anything happened, it would undoubtedly lead to startling changes within the kingdom.

Frankly speaking, this was of much more consequence compared to House Luolan's Housemeet.

The internal turmoil of a family could not compare to that of a kingdom.

As a result, Li Luo sympathized with the First Princess' concerns. Furthermore, he was familiar with the Regent and how far reaching his strength and influence were. This was basically the most powerful man in the Xia Kingdom bar none. Additionally, it seemed as though the royal court had become increasingly tyrannical through his guidance.

From another point of view, perhaps the Regent was indeed suited to rule a kingdom.

However, the fact remained that the Little Emperor was the rightful heir.

Despite a tranquil look on the First Princess' beautiful face, her eyes were shrouded with an unfathomable deepness that seemed to contain immeasurable worry.

"Your Highness, there is no need to worry. This was something the Regent promised to the entire Xia Kingdom long ago. The Little Emperor is the true ruler, and there are many within the royal court that support him," Li Luo said after a moment of thought.

The First Princess heaved a deep sigh. "I hope for that too. Uncle Regent has contributed greatly to the royal family, and I don't want things to end this way." Li Luo nodded. Things had definitely become complicated.

With the First Princess' support, this would mean that House Luolan would also inevitably be branded as a supporter of theirs. Whether or not he agreed with it no longer mattered because anyone else would think that way. If that was the case, how would the Regent deal with them?

This realization caused Li Luo to heave a sigh of his own. Clearly, there was no such thing as a free lunch.

Unfortunately, there was no other way around it. The First Princess had provided her assistance. Who knew what the Regent was thinking anyway.

If House Luolan could not overcome this trial, there was no need to care about the Regent. Li Luo would just have to slink back into the Astral Sage College and cultivate to the Duke Stage. At that point, he would have his revenge and these enemies slinking in the dark shouldn't think of escaping.

"I'll walk you out." The First Princess did not continue to discuss the topic with Li Luo. All of this was royal politics that should not involve outsiders. If she had not decided to take a bet on him and Jiang Qing'e, she would never have shared so much about their internal situation.

Li Luo nodded and was escorted out, directly heading back towards House Luolan.

Upon arriving home, he was greeted by good news.

The miracle paste concocted by Ox Biaobiao was finally completed.

Chapter 605: Ox Biaobiao Returns

"Uncle Biao! I've missed you so much!" Li Luo rushed into the main hall emotionally. With a single glance, he noticed the shiniest head in the room, which belonged to Ox Biaobiao. His exaggerated build had not changed and he still reminded one of a butcher... If he had a meat cleaver hanging on his waist, the look would be complete.

The sight of him also brought great relief and a sense of safety.

With the Housemeet looming over them, Ox Biaobiao could be considered the only combatant able to fend off a Duke. Perhaps this was his parents' backup plan all along.

Ox Biaobiao had been speaking with Jiang Qing'e before he heard Li Luo call his name. He hurriedly stood up and glanced in the direction of the youth who was rushing towards him with a benevolent smile on his face. "Young Lord. It has been a while, and you've not only grown more handsome, you've even inherited some of your father's gravitas."

"Uncle Biao! Let's not waste time on such trivialities. I am the strongest One Star Hall student in the East Divine Continent! Can you feel my greatness?" Li Luo grinned as he bragged without a care.

"I've heard the news from Qing'e. Your outstanding performance in the Holy Grail Meet has brought House Luolan fame and repute!" Ox Biaobiao was all smiles as he spoke. Taking a moment to inspect him closer, he nodded approvingly. "You should have reached the Fourth Changing, and your resonant power is plentiful and robust. You should be able to push towards the Earth Fiend Stage now. It's only been a few short months, and yet you've made great strides in your cultivation!"

"Well, I've only got, what, four years of life left? If I don't hurry up, it'll be like I'm just waiting for death to take me, right?" Li Luo exhorted.

"Hey! Don't speak of such awful things!" Jiang Qing'e frowned and chided unhappily.

"There's no need to worry, Young lord. With your heavenly talent, the Duke Stage doesn't seem like too high of a goal. Four years is more than enough time," Ox Biaobiao consoled. "However, before you break into the Earth Fiend Stage, you need to resolve the issue with your damaged foundation. The longer that wound is allowed to fester, the greater the impact on you in future. Inevitably, it will affect even your ascension to the Duke Stage."

After making that statement, he removed a jade bottle from his robes. On closer inspection, there was a green liquid within that seemed to contain a glint of starlight, looking extremely mysterious. Despite the bottle being sealed, a dense and vigorous medicinal aura wafted from it, causing anyone who smelled it to feel extremely relaxed.

"This is the miracle paste that I have refined for the Young Lord! It will be able to resolve the issues with your foundation."

Li Luo gladly accepted the jade bottle and thanked Ox Biaobiao sincerely. Without his assistance, the sequelae from forming his second resonance might very well have been a hidden danger further down the road. If it truly prevented him from entering the Duke Stage, then this would undoubtedly be a literally fatal blow to him.

Jiang Qing'e also stood up to express her thanks. The miracle paste was absolutely critical for Li Luo.

"Hey! Why are you all acting so courteous?" Ox Biaobiao laughed as he waved his hand. "This has to be applied over your entire body, and it's best catalyzed with restorative resonant power. This way, the medicinal effects can be utilized to their full potential. Perhaps it would be best for Qing'e to assist you with it. With her ninth-grade light resonance, you should be cured in a few days' time."

Li Luo was slightly taken aback by those words before he quickly chimed out, "Hey! I actually have water resonant power. Can't I do it myself?"

As an upright young man of great moral standing, the process of applying the miracle paste would be relatively private, and despite the special relationship he had with Qing'e, it still felt extremely embarrassing.

Ox Biaobiao stroked his chin as he pondered over it. "Well, I doubt the effects of your resonant power will be better than that of Qing'e's. You don't need to feel embarrassed, Young Lord. The two of you will eventually become husband and wife, so Qing'e is the perfect person for the job."

Before Li Luo could say anything else, Qing'e stopped him and nodded slightly. "You can rest assured, Uncle Biao, I'll take care of him."

As a result, he did not continue to struggle, immediately changing the topic. "Uncle Biao, there are only two months left until the Housemeet. That will also be when the defensive ward around House Luolan will be weakest. The wolves in the dark will definitely take the opportunity to bare their fangs."

Ox Biaobiao gave a cold snort. "Those prancing clowns! When your parents were around, they wouldn't even dare to let out a fart in their presence. Now that the two have gone missing, all sorts of unsavory characters have popped out of nowhere. Do they really think that House Luolan is a soft persimmon?"

"Uncle Biao, did my parents leave behind any other protective measures? For example, are there a few hidden Dukes waiting to pop out and smash these pests to death?" Li Luo asked optimistically.

Ox Biaobiao responded with an awkward scratching of his nose. "Well... How do I put it? No? Umm, I'm the only Duke remaining in all of House Luolan. Also, I can't go too far from the house or my strength will fall drastically. However, you can relax. So long as we remain in the core regions, even a fourth-grade Duke will have to reconsider their actions if they want to face me and my knife."

As he spoke, he lightly patted his gleaming pig-butcher cleaver that emanated a terrifying air.

"A fourth-grade Duke, huh..." Li Luo's gaze flashed as he had already known that the Duke Stage consisted of nine grades, similar to the secular world. First-grade was the weakest and ninth-grade was the strongest. A Duke had to establish nine Duke Platforms within their body during the Duke stage, and it served as their foundation and source of power.[1]

"Uncle Biao is still quite mighty. A fourth-grade Duke is considered a top-tier fighter in the Xia Kingdom. Based on what I understand, only Vice Principal Su Xin has reached that stage of cultivation within the college. The rest of the Violet Vibrance mentors are merely at the first or second-grade," Jiang Qing'e added from the side. Li Luo nodded. He had not paid much attention to this information originally as the grade of a Duke didn't matter to him. All of them could swat him into meat paste with a casual blow.

"The First Princess has informed me that she will be deploying a Duke expert to assist us during the Housemeet." Li Luo raised this particular topic at this time.

"The First Princess...?" Jiang Qing'e sighed deeply. "Her assistance has tightly bound us to her ship. However, it doesn't really matter. If we can't get past this ordeal, House Luolan will be no longer. Other matters are of no concern." She clearly saw through the truth of the situation in a moment. The Regent wouldn't even be concerned with them with the destruction of their foundation and support.

"Well, we still don't know how many Dukes will have their eyes on House Luolan during the Housemeet." Li Luo sighed in tandem with Qing'e. Pei Hao was just a minor distraction now. The real

crux of the matter lay with the danger that hid below the surface, the dark hands that used Pei Hao as a blade, those who had plotted for countless years in the dark. Their true target was the divine matter that was hidden away within the underground palace of House Luolan.

That day's shocking confrontation would inevitably reverberate throughout the Xia Kingdom.

"No matter. Different situations call for different actions. We will react accordingly. If anyone wishes to break into House Luolan, they'll have to see if my blade here permits it. Speaking of which, it has not tasted the blood of Dukes in quite a while now." Ox Biaobiao laughed as he spoke. His fleshly and rotund visage coupled with that diabolical cackle only seemed to make him look even more ferocious.

Yet to Li Luo, his savage appearance only brought him a greater sense of safety.

Ox Biaobiao continued to chat with the two for a while more. "Well, it's no longer early, so you should head back and rest. Qing'e can assist you with the medication." He beamed gently before he took his leave, shooting Li Luo a naughty wink as he closed the door behind him.

Li Luo stared at the tightly shut door before turning to face Jiang Qing'e and awkwardly speaking his mind. "I think Uncle Biao was just kidding. There's definitely no need for someone else to help me. I'm a grown man, I can do it myself!"

Jiang Qing'e expressionlessly grabbed the jade bottle containing the miracle paste, her chin slightly raised as she commanded, "Back to the room. Take off your clothes. Lie down."

Chapter 0606: The Watchful Eye of Jiang Qing'e

Li Luo spent the next few days in relative ease and comfort.

In the daytime, he would help Jiang Qing'e work on the house's administrative tasks that had piled up over the past month. In the evenings, he would indulge in the medicinal paste application sessions that he looked forward to recently.

"Ah! That hits the spot, Sister Qing'e!"

Constant moaning could be heard from Li Luo's quarters every night. Fortunately, there was nobody within the vicinity to hear the strange noises, or it would only be a matter of time before scandalous gossip began spreading.

Pa!

A loud smack echoed clearly from within the room.

"Can you shut up?" said a visibly irritated Jiang Qing'e as she retracted her palm from Li Luo's bare shoulder. "Why are you making those weird noises?"

Li Luo was sitting cross-legged on his bed, wearing nothing but his shorts. His body was fully lathered in a turquoise paste that glittered mysteriously. Jiang Qing'e was sitting behind him, brilliant light resonant energy pouring out from her dainty palms, catalyzing the medicinal power of the miracle paste.

When the curative properties of the miracle paste settled in, wispy emerald halos began to float above the surface of Li Luo's skin. They honed in on his pores like they had minds of their own, entering his flesh and bloodstream.

"Sister Qing'e, this isn't my fault! The effects of the miracle paste are too comforting, I can't help it!"

Li Luo felt slightly wronged, as it was indeed the strength of the miracle paste that had caused him to moan involuntarily. He felt a mysterious sense of fullness, as if a live current was sent straight through his scalp and to his toes, naturally expanding the pores all over his body. Jiang Qing'e's lips curled slightly as she glanced at the toned and muscular figure seated in front of her. "Well, after cultivating the Thunderpeal Avatar this fellow's body has toughened up and feels rather pleasant to the touch," she mused to herself.

She did not show what she was thinking deep in her heart, so her resonant power did not waver in the slightest. Wave upon wave of light resonant energy radiated from her hands as she rubbed Li Luo's body, gradually reacting with every inch of the applied miracle paste.

When the final vestiges of miracle paste entered Li Luo's body, Jiang Qing'e clapped her hands together, signalling the end of the day's treatment. Climbing off the side of the bed, she sauntered over to the bedside table and poured herself a cup of tea, which she began sipping on lightly.

Li Luo hurriedly got dressed. Despite being rather thick-skinned, he was still embarrassed at being almost naked in front of Jiang Qing'e.

Although the two shared an uncommon relationship, the last time he was this exposed in front of her was when they were children.

However, the shyness that Li Luo felt was fleeting, and he let go of the sentiment once he realized that Jiang Qing'e seemed indifferent to seeing his bare body.

After putting on his clothes, Li Luo could not resist stretching. He could almost feel his flesh and bones humming with joy. Although the miracle paste had not advanced his cultivation in any noticeable manner, he could feel a wholeness in his core that was previously lacking.

Li Luo knew that his foundation was being replenished.

The debt he had to pay for forging the second acquired resonance would finally be settled.

"This is all thanks to Uncle Biao. The miracle paste is undoubtedly invaluable to me. Without him, who knows how much time and resources I would've had to spend searching for the treasures required to repair my foundation." Li Luo couldn't help but sigh.

The basis of one's foundation was still a mystery—it could not be compared to physical ailments that could easily be detected. If not for Ox Biaobiao's careful examination of Li Luo, there would've been no way for Li Luo to know just what he had lost from forging the second acquired resonance.

The longer this unknown variable was left unchecked, the more danger it would've put Li Luo in.

Jiang Qing'e raised her teacup as she mused, "The method to create the miracle paste must have been largely researched by the Master and Mistress before they left."

Li Luo was doubtful for a moment, but this line of reasoning made sense the more he thought about it. His current cultivation path had been set by his parents after all, so surely they had the foresight to prepare for the pitfalls on his journey too.

He slowly walked over to the window, staring out at the unblocked view of Luolan headquarters. "Sister Qing'e, Uncle Biao said that my parents are not natives of the Xia Kingdom. Where do you think they came from? If it was the inner divine continent...then why would they leave such a prosperous place to come to a remote place like the East Divine Continent?"

Jiang Qing'e moved to join Li Luo's side at the window. Her clear, golden irises reflected the buildings and pavilions of House Luolan as she said, "To me, their origins do not matter. House Luolan in the Xia Kingdom is my home because there is the Master, the Mistress, and you."

It was apparent that Jiang Qing'e did not care where Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan came from, because it was this very place that held the most meaning to her.

Li Luo chuckled. He felt the same way about House Luolan since it was his birthplace and the place that his father had chosen to lay his roots in. The place should have represented immense power. After all, even Pang Qianyuan, a King, had been deferential towards Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan.

Veins of Heavenly Emperor Li.

Li Luo could not fathom how much weight those few words carried yet. He could only imagine that the Xia Kingdom, the Golden Dragon Bank, and even the Astral Sage College could not compare to the power of a Heavenly Emperor. This was because not even Principal Pang could qualify as one. Still, this did not matter.

He may have been a little curious of his ancestral origin, but it was as Jiang Qing'e had said—this was unquestionably his home.

"That sneaky bastard Pei Hao has once again retreated into the shadows, I don't know where he's disappeared to this time," Li Luo said in a sour tone.

"He is just a mere court jester prancing around. If not for the dark forces backing him, he would lose his life the moment he meets us as we are now," Jiang Qing'e replied nonchalantly. However, there was a hint of killing intent veiled behind her words.

"You have progressed frighteningly quickly over the past year, so he must be scared to face the power of your ninth-grade light resonance now," Li Luo quipped. He still remembered that when Pei Hao had met Jiang Qing'e in the City of Southwind to discuss business a year ago, he was still a step ahead of her in cultivation. However, a year had passed in the blink of an eye, and Jiang Qing'e was now at the Fiend Finisher Tier, far ahead of where she was before.

Pei Hao would certainly suffer a miserable end at Jiang Qing'e's hands if he was not able to advance to the Heavenly Pearl Stage by the time they met again.

"Pei Hao is not worth my time, and I have never considered him my opponent to begin with. It's up to you to end him at the upcoming housemeet," Jiang Qing'e calmly retorted as she looked straight at Li Luo.

"M-Me?" Li Luo stuttered.

"Mhm, it has to be you. The true heir to House Luolan will be decided at this housemeet, and only the three of us are qualified to stake a claim on it. I have no intention of doing so, so it will be between the two of you. If you manage to kill him, all the strife and internal struggles of House Luolan will be laid to rest while your name will soar to even greater heights," said Jiang Qing'e.

"But he's a Fiend Finisher Tier expert..."

"He might be more than that. I wouldn't put it past the forces behind him to have something up their sleeves after backing him for all these years," replied Jiang Qing'e calmly.

Li Luo's eyes glazed over.

"Actually... Sister Qing'e, you don't have to exclude yourself from claiming the position of house lord. Everything could be settled easily with your strength, and you do not have to back off just to save my reputation," said Li Luo sincerely as he stared at the beautiful face of the girl next to him.

Jiang Qing'e's reputation within House Luolan had never stopped growing while she was taking care of matters for Li Luo, and she was favored over him to be the true house lord after being in charge for such a long time. If she was willing, the seat of house lord was already practically hers.

But Jiang Qing'e was obviously uninterested in this proposal, or rather, she did not want to overshadow Li Luo any longer.

"Still pushing the load to me after making me carry it for all these years?" teased Jiang Qing'e as she grinned slightly.

She then shook her head. "Li Luo, do not belittle yourself any longer. The role of house lord fits you far better than me. It's not like I'm washing my hands clean of house matters—I will still be supporting you from behind."

As she continued staring at Li Luo, her gaze turned more serious. "The position of house lord is only secondary. What I want more than that is for you to defeat Pei Hao in front of everyone in House Luolan. I want you to show everybody that you are undoubtedly the pillar of House Luolan and that Pei Hao is just a blind dog who depends on it. He is nothing compared to you."

Li Luo did not know whether to laugh or to cry. He felt like Jiang Qing'e just wanted him to personally exact revenge on Pei Hao for all the trouble he had caused instead of for the right to be called the house lord.

It almost seemed like Jiang Qing'e harbored even more hatred for Pei Hao than Li Luo himself.

This was the first time that he had witnessed this side of Jiang Qing'e.

She shot him a quick glance and lightly pursed her lips, her majestic eyes pondering for a moment before turning to him. "If you manage to kill Pei Hao, I will allow you to cancel our engagement."

As soon as she finished her sentence, Li Luo's head began rushing with blood.

A terrifying killing intent wafted from his burning gaze.

A haughty voice rang out.

"Drawn or quartered?"

Chapter 0607: Third Resonance - Thunder Dragon Resonance

"Phew."

Li Luo was sprawled on his bed with his eyes tightly shut. The miracle paste smeared all over his body was glowing mysteriously as it tunneled into his blood and flesh. This was his fifth time going through the process, and although his resonant power was no longer increasing significantly, he could feel a hint of lightness within his body, as though it was gradually ascending to a higher state to reach perfection.

His qi and blood were bubbling with vigor. A perfect body that had been made whole.

Jiang Qing'e was beside the bed, staring at the minute changes happening to Li Luo. A trace of relief could be seen on her entrancing, jade-like face.

Five applications of the miracle paste had allowed Li Luo to regain and perfect his foundation.

She knew that he was currently in the midst of adjusting and harmonizing the effects of the medicine on his body and hence left him alone, quietly leaving the room and closing the door behind her.

This process took a full two hours to complete.

After which, the mysterious glow on his body faded, and the effects had fully fused into his flesh and blood. It was then that he finally opened his eyes, a newfound deepness hidden within. At the same time, he couldn't hide the uncontrollable joy he felt.

"My foundation has finally recovered!" He was all smiles as the sequelae left behind by his second resonance had been completely dealt with today.

Although this process had not resulted in the direct growth of his abilities and strength, he could feel that his mental state had become even more complete. This ascension of the mind gave him greater confidence in future breakthroughs.

"Hmm... but I truly wonder what the corresponding price for the third acquired resonance will be." Li Luo felt a pang of worry. The first one had left him teetering on the edge of life with merely five years left to live, an absolutely disastrous result. The second had crippled his foundation. Relatively speaking, the second one was much more acceptable, considering the fact that the solution was much more attainable.

Li Luo possessed weak resonant power back then and was unable to support the price that had to be paid for the power of an acquired resonance. Thus, his lifeblood had been used as compensation.

However, there was no other choice at the time. He had no other way to awaken his resonance, and thus, that was the only method to enter the world of cultivation. Insufficient resonant power? That's fine. My lifespan will do!

After all, if he could not awaken his resonance, he would never gain enough resonant power to utilize an acquired resonance. It was a chicken and egg problem. At least Li Luo didn't have a solution to that predicament then.

Regardless, he had managed to take the first step, and that step had put him on a path that led him to reach the heights he had today. Thus, based on what he knew, the third acquired resonance's side effects should not cause as many issues, considering the fact that he now possessed power equivalent to that of an Earth Fiend Stage cultivator.

Li Luo's imagination ran wild as he thought of the possibilities. Eventually, he shook his head and snapped out of his trance. There was no point to this thought experiment. He would bear any price for the third resonance. It was necessary.

He had struggled for so long, all for this day, no?

"Speaking of the third resonance..." Li Luo's expression shifted slightly. He had already refined it, and it was the perfect opportunity to integrate his third acquired resonance. Once that was done, he would break into the Earth Fiend General Stage directly.

With this train of thought, he swiped his hand over his pocket sphere, and a golden, triangular object surfaced. Engraved upon its surface were numerous ancient patterns that intertwined in an esoteric manner.

This was the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Wheel that Mentor Chi Chan and Yu Hongxi had kindly assisted with refining. [1]

The most critical object required in obtaining an acquired resonance.

After which, Li Luo removed two more objects from within the pocket sphere.

One was a silver core of a fruit, emblazoned with patterns of thunder and lightning. Occasionally, an arc of lightning would sputter out from it, coupled with a thunderous boom.

Li Luo had acquired this gift from the Thunderpeal Tree with his virtuous actions on Thunderpeal Mountain during the Holy Grail Meet.

The fruit core contained the purest thunder energy and was a heavenly natural treasure. It was perfect as an ingredient for the third resonance.

Other than the silver fruitcore, he also possessed a dragon's bloodpearl. A shadow of a massive dragon seemed to writhe below the surface of this object, constantly giving out potent and suppressive roars.

This was obtained within the Dragon's Belly during the competition, an area that contained the blood essence of an actual dragon.

This was the final configuration of the acquired resonance that Li Luo had decided upon.

A dragon resonance and a thunder resonance.

The dragon resonance would be the main resonance, and the Thunder resonance would support it.

A Thunder Dragon resonance! "AAAAAH. A Thunder Dragon resonance! That's so cool!" Li Luo gushed excitedly. He had put great thought into these two resonances. His previous resonances were both inclined towards recovery and endurance. These were intentionally chosen to offset the lifespan loss that had been inflicted upon him. They were more gentle and more inclined towards vitality in terms of affinity, so they would gradually rejuvenate his body and prevent any long-lasting damage.

However, he knew he would be at the Earth Fiend General Stage when the time to make the third resonance arrived. He would be considered an actual cultivator with a robust foundation at that point. This would thus broaden his choices for his resonances.

He already possessed healing and defensive powers, and now he lacked a resonance with a more offensive slant to complete the holy trifacta. This had often caused him a headache, and he had to use his ingenuity to make up for this deficit.

Dragons were top tier existences amongst spirit beasts. It was said that the moment a pure-blooded dragon reached maturity, they would be Duke Stage existences. Thus, the dragon race could be considered to be behemoths in this world.

Naturally, a dragon resonance born in the blood of a dragon would be a peak beast resonance. Dragons were terrifying and tyrannic, able to move mountains and shift the seas. Furthermore, they possessed refined physical bodies with amplified physical strength and resilience.

Beast resonances were brutal and full of destructive prowess, and the dragon resonance was no exception. If Li Luo was able to possess a dragon resonance, then he would gain a massive increase in offensive abilities and potential.

When it came to the thunder resonance, he was particularly interested in its speed. When he had competed against Jing Taixu and Lu Ming, he could clearly feel the advantages of a resonance that specialized in alacrity. Furthermore, the importance of quickness could not be understated when compared to raw power.

Thus, the supporting resonance that was chosen, the thunder resonance, belonged to the category of resonances that emphasized this.

Once he obtained this Thunder Dragon resonance, Li Luo's strength and speed would both be augmented by a significant amount, allowing him to shore up his previous deficiencies.

As a result, his anticipation towards the new resonance only grew stronger.

Without any further hesitation, he took a deep breath and began to adjust his state of mind to its peak. After which, he raised his palm and activated the resonant power within him, activating the Godly Forging Art.

At the same time, the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Wheel began to emit a splendourous mystifying light. The worldly natural energy began to show signs of being roused, and all of it was gathered towards the object, lighting up all of the engraved patterns. When the light solidified and projected itself onto the space before it, it looked like countless ancient runes that had vaulted right out of the annals of history.

Li Luo carefully observed the scene before him before making a slight movement with the materials.

The dragonpearl and silver fruit core then directly dove right into the forging wheel in two streams of light.

At this very moment, a deluge of mystical light and colors radiated from the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Wheel, encompassing the two materials as they gradually sublimated.

Draconic roars and booms of thunder continuously echoed throughout the room as this occurred.

The much-awaited third resonance was finally going to make its appearance.

Chapter 0608: Plan

The third resonance had been refined successfully, and that was to be expected. He was in the middle of his home, not some dangerous locale. The Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Wheel was mystical, and Li Luo simply had to sustain the flow of his resonance energy into it for it to operate autonomously, assisting with the fusion of the two materials.

Thus, as the refining continued for several hours, Li Luo gradually felt that his resonant power was draining dry. Fortunately, a resplendent light spilled forth from the wheel at this point and covered the room, looking a little like starlight in the night skies.

A special sound could be heard within the midst of this starry light. It almost sounded like an embryo's very first heartbeat.

This acquired resonance was something unique. Using the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art would enable one to combine different resonances and spiritually smelt them into an entirely perfect fusion. This was basically unheard of in the East Divine Continent.

When Li Luo first encountered the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art, he had not understood its implication and wonder. However, now that he had continued to learn more about cultivation and experienced more of the world, he finally caught a glimpse of how heaven-defying and marvelous this art was.

Just how had his parents come across this?

This resonance art was a perfect fit for his three blank palaces.

Li Luo continued to stare unabated at the pervasive mysterious light, breathing as lightly as he could, as if it would disrupt the proceedings.

Gradually, the light began to recede, and when the last rays dissipated, a small ball of light the size of a thumb appeared from within the center of the wheel.

The ball of light seemed extremely feeble, as though a small gust would cause it to extinguish.

Li Luo's heart was palpitating as he stared at it. He understood that this was his long-awaited third acquired resonance! Although its initial form was extremely fragile and it could be extinguished with a puff, he knew that he had to keep it safe. Otherwise, all of his materials would be squandered without result!

Fortunately, Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan had provided some notes on their experiences with refining acquired resonances, and Li Luo had some ideas on how to strengthen the nascent Thunder Dragon resonance.

With a measured pace, Li Luo bit the tip of his tongue, and a glob of blood essence shrouded in his resonant energy was spat out. The blood essence quickly condensed and compressed into a thumb-sized blood pearl in a blink.

Immediately after, Li Luo's complexion quickly turned pale.

The blood pearl landed in the center of the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Wheel, right atop the ball of light. At that moment, small wisps of blood were extracted from the pearl, merging into the light ball.

Gradually, the light ball began to intensify in brightness.

If one listened carefully, they would hear faint, draconic roars and the booming of thunder coming from within.

At the same time, Li Luo could feel a strange connection forming between the Thunder Dragon resonance and himself.

A weary but excited smile surfaced. He knew that the refinement of the Thunder Dragon resonance was a success. The difference between this and the woodearth resonance was that this new one required time to be continuously nurtured by his blood essence. Only when it had reached a certain level of growth could he integrate it into his blank palace.

There was no need to rush the process. Either way, Li Luo had yet to break into the Earth Fiend General Stage. As a result, he did not dare to forcefully integrate it. If anything were to happen, his Resonant Master Stage power might simply not be enough to prevent a disastrous outcome.

After all was said and done, he gingerly stored the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Wheel in his pocket sphere.

There were two months left until the Housemeet, and he had many things to accomplish before that point.

Firstly, he had to break through his cultivation stage. This would provide a significant boost to his strength, considering the massive gap between the Resonant Master and General Stages. In the struggle against Ao Bai, he had clearly felt the disparity in sheer power between them despite him only being at the pseudo-General Stage. The four best students of the One Star Hall had to collaborate closely in order to barely suppress him.

If Ao Bai had been a true Earth Fiend, with a fully refined Fiend Palace, Li Luo and the rest would not have managed to turn the tables.

However, breaking into that stage was not a walk in the park. Strictly speaking, it had only been a year since he obtained his first acquired resonance. In such a short span of time, he had achieved growth beyond anyone's wildest dreams. Although the Holy Grail Meet had provided certain tailwinds, the college would not easily part with their cultivation resources for him to squander. Still, this was a monumental achievement that would shock those who knew the full story.

And Li Luo was doing this in the One Star Hall, which would undoubtedly lead to even more surprise. This would be a new record as he would be the first One Star Hall student to do so.

Even Jiang Qing'e had not managed such a feat.

Though it has to be said that this was because the secret cultivation technique she utilized had suppressed her cultivation speed in the lower levels. Its purpose was to create a strong foundation, enabling her to eventually leap forward later.

Regardless, if Li Luo was able to break through in the next two months, he'd definitely be heralded as the student with the most potential in the Astral Sage College.

However, based on his own estimations, his probability of reaching the Earth Fiend Stage right now was around 30%. If he had another half a year's worth of time, it'd probably rise to around 80%. Well... he didn't have half a year's worth of time.

He had to personally cut down Pei Hao during the Housemeet after all.

Pei Hao had Fiend Finisher Tier strength, and if Li Luo wanted to achieve his goal, he would have to utilize the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's power. Yet this was a double-edged sword because he would be corroded by its evil intent.

The more he took advantage of the beast's strength, the stronger the effect on him.

If Li Luo wanted to have better control over this borrowed strength, he would have to improve himself, and reaching the Earth Fiend Stage would be the best form of additional protection.

"The Holy Tree Marrow Crystal would probably increase my chances by about 30% as well," Li Luo mused to himself. Vice Principal Su Xin had promised it as a reward, and it provided a substantial boost to one's chances of breaking through.

With that in mind, his chances would rise to about 60%.

Yet he felt that this was still not enough.

Thus, he would have to strengthen his resonances as well.

Currently, his waterlight resonance was at the lower seventh-grade and the woodearth resonance was at the sixth-grade.

If the waterlight resonance was able to reach the upper seventh-grade and the woodearth resonance the lower seventh-grade, his resonant power would become significantly denser and more plentiful. At that point, his total chances of breaking through would reach 80%.

This would be the most perfect outcome in his view.

Cultivating a Duke art would likely have to wait till after his breakthrough. This would then increase his chances of cultivating one successfully.

"It looks like I will have to pick a weaker Duke art as per the vice principal's suggestion." Li Luo was pressed for time, so he had to maximize every opportunity to improve himself. As a result, he had to create a comprehensive plan.

"It looks like the next order of action will be to upgrade my resonances." Li Luo took a deep breath and hopped off his bed. It looked like a trip to the Golden Dragon Bank was in order.

This was because Cai Wei had previously instructed him to be the one in charge of purchasing spirit liquids and purifying lights. In a normal situation, there was no need for the young lord himself to be doing menial labor. So why did he have to go in person? Well, the fact of the matter was that Cai Wei had realized that whenever Li Luo himself went to purchase spirit liquids and purifying lights, he'd actually be able to get a lower price than others... Thus, the task of purchasing these items would naturally fall to him!

On the other hand, Li Luo also understood why he received a discount. It was all because of Lu Qing'er's help, and he naturally had a guilty conscience for taking advantage of her soft-heartedness and kindness towards him.

Unfortunately, House Luolan required significant amounts of resources for development, and he could only note down her generosity in his heart.

At the same time, he would also need to pay a visit to Yu Hongxi.

Vice Principal Su Xin had previously reminded him to watch his back. The Golden Dragon Bank was undoubtedly a powerhouse, and Li Luo needed to confirm her intentions towards House Luolan.

The thought of having to interact with Yu Hongxi also caused Li Luo to give a gentle sigh. He did have a good impression of her and she had provided invaluable assistance all this time. He truly respected her as an elder.

Hopefully, she held no malice towards House Luolan.

Chapter 0609: Infuriated Yu Hongxi

Li Luo arrived at the Golden Dragon Bank shortly after, directly making his way towards the purchases department. Immediately getting to work, he started on discussions for a large purchase of spirit liquids and purifying lights. However, not long after, a familiar face popped up. Lu Qing'er had snuck in front of his very eyes with her hands behind her back.

"Hey! Why didn't you look for me?" She was dressed in a white top with a short skirt, revealing her snow-white thighs as she beamed at Li Luo. At the same time, she turned to face the supervisor in charge of the purchasing department with the same smile. "Steward Mu, as per the usual rules."

The one addressed as Steward Mu similarly smiled and nodded. "Yes, Young Mistress. I understand."

As a result, Li Luo's discount was maximized to the greatest extent possible. The tiny margins from this deal were inconsequential to the Golden Dragon Bank, and offending the young mistress was unwise. An envious look was shot towards Li Luo. It seemed that being handsome truly had benefits.

"Qing'er... you're making things difficult for me. People will think I'm taking advantage of you!" Li Luo's expression turned gloomy.

Lu Qing'er complimented in response, "Aiya! You're now the East Divine Continent's most outstanding One Star Hall student, achieving glory for all of the Xia Kingdom. The Golden Dragon Bank actually wants

to collaborate with you, allowing us to benefit from YOUR fame. Thus, will Young Lord Li Luo reconsider and give us a chance?"

"Well, if that's the case..." Li Luo pondered over it for a mere two seconds before giving an extremely exaggerated expression. "Just this once, then. Not because I really want it... but it would be a waste if I didn't..."

Lu Qing'er's smiling face seemed to bloom upon hearing his words. "Thank you, esteemed Young Lord!"

On the other hand, Steward Mu, who had heard their conversation, was rolling his eyes in absolute disgust, berating Li Luo in his heart! Just what sort of twisted person would force the young mistress to beg him to be on the receiving end of such wondrous benefits? Was there any sort of justice or fairness in this world? So what if he was handsome?

However, he also knew that the two were just messing around. Furthermore, this was not the first time this had happened. It was merely that as a fellow member of the sterner sex, he felt like retching upon seeing this.

Everyone also knew that the Golden Dragon Bank was the richest amongst the factions of the Xia Kingdom. As a result, Yu Hongxi was the richest matriarch around, and as her only daughter, Lu Qing'er was naturally the Xia Kingdom's richest young lady. Whoever caught her fancy and married her would literally be able to lug a mountain of gold back home as a result.

Li Luo, on the other hand, was not planning to do whatever the envious Steward Mu was imagining. All of the assistance that Lu Qing'er had accorded him was deeply etched into his mind, and there was no need to bring this favor up amongst friends. So long as Lu Qing'er required his help in future, he would wholeheartedly devote his assistance to her. The two continued to chat for a bit before he finally raised his request. "Qing'er, I'd like to meet President Yu."

Yu Hongxi was often tied down with daily affairs and had an endless stream of appointments. If he wanted to have a quick chat with her, the only way would be through her daughter.

"Well, luckily, Mom is still around. Just follow me." Lu Qing'er chuckled.

After giving a few instructions to the steward, she led Li Luo through the depths of the Golden Dragon Bank, directly into Yu Hongxi's office.

Under her guidance, Li Luo had managed to get through without any form of obstruction. At the same time, a head burrowed within mounds of files raised to inspect this new disturbance. She seemed unsurprised, and as a Duke expert, she had long sensed the duo's approach.

A hint of dissatisfaction could be seen as she glanced at her daughter. That brat simply couldn't resist any of Li Luo's requests!

"Oh? Isn't that the East Divine Continent's strongest One Star Hall student? Your presence graces these halls. It's truly an honor." Yu Hongxi drawled sardonically as she snapped the file in her hand closed. Clearly, the Holy Grail Meet's results had been publicized throughout the entire Xia Kingdom. Furthermore, it was an event of huge importance because the Astral Sage College was the representative of the Xia Kingdom. Standing out amongst the colleges of the East Divine Continent and winning the competition in one fell swoop had brought about much pride to the common people.

Li Luo's reputation and name had naturally also resonated amongst the populace.

It was then that numerous people came to the realization that the blank palace young lord of House Luolan had finally spread his wings. The new generation of House Luolan would possess a strong foundation, and soon it would be their time to shine.

On the other hand, Li Luo modestly replied, "Honestly speaking, I was lucky! I simply managed to hold on a little longer than Jing Taixu."

"No need to act humble here. The Holy Grail Meet is the gathering of the East Divine Continent's most elite youths. Being able to distinguish yourself is a testament to your ability. Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan truly have a good son," Yu Hongxi replied indifferently. However, her gaze seemed to contain some appreciation for the youth standing before her. Anyone who valued talent would be interested in him, considering the fact that he held both potential and ability.

Li Luo smiled as he continued to banter a bit more with the president.

"So, why are you here?" Yu Hongxi eventually put a stop to the pleasantries, cutting right to the chase as someone exceptionally experienced in negotiations. Li Luo was definitely here for some reason, and she too had many things on her plate to idly chat all day, unlike Li Luo.

Li Luo hesitated as he contemplated how he would bring up the topic. He decided he would just look Yu Hongxi right in the eye with no intention of hiding anything. "President Yu, you must know about House Luolan's Housemeet in two months' time."

Her eyes flashed in response and she gave a wry smile. "Who wouldn't know of the most momentous event that is about to befall the Xia Kingdom. Countless peak powers are carefully observing the situation, and whether one of the great houses will fall remains to be seen. Everything will be decided in two months' time. If you would like to find the Golden Dragon Bank as a backer, then I will have to disappoint you, unfortunately. The Golden Dragon Bank is in a similar situation to the Astral Sage College. We will not interfere with the internecine strife of the kingdom. After all, harmony breeds wealth," she calmly added.

Li Luo shook his head. "Well, that wasn't my intention. I am very clear on the Golden Dragon Bank's stance of neutrality. How could I request something so unreasonable? It's just that someone was kind enough to give me a reminder that I had to be wary of the Golden Dragon Bank as well..."

Yu Hongxi's eyes turned into slits upon hearing those incendiary words. "Hmm? Does Young Lord Li Luo feel that the Golden Dragon Bank covets House Luolan? That we will stoop down to your level and strike you when the chips are down?" Her tone had turned icy-cold, contrasting against the boiling atmosphere in the room.

On the other hand, Lu Qing'er's expression had changed into one of anxiety.

"Hmph! House Luolan might have some broken-down magical trinkets left behind, but I, Yu Hongxi, would never care for such trifles. I even know that Li Taixuan left behind a formation that borrows the power and influence that House Luolan wields to suppress any Duke experts. The stronger House Luolan is, the stronger the formation. Do you think that would be enough to stop me if I truly wished to get past it? You borrowed the success of the Suncreek Villa to bolster House Luolan. But have you thought about

the source of that success? All of the materials you used to craft spirit liquids and purifying lights were purchased from the Golden Dragon Bank! We monopolize 60% of the Xia Kingdom's materials, and if we so wished, we could snap your supply lines like a twig. What would the Sun creek Villa do then? Li Luo, do you think that the other peak factions of the Xia Kingdom haven't already tried to convince the Golden Dragon Bank to cripple your last lines of survival? They had even offered up massive amounts of wealth! You are too naive." Yu Hongxi snorted frostily. Her sharp words bit deep. Her gorgeous face held traces of contempt and was cold like a glacier.

Seeing Yu Hongxi's sudden explosion, Lu Qing'er hurriedly tugged at her forearm, attempting to soothe her. "Mom! Please calm down. If Li Luo indeed suspected that you were masterminding a scheme, would he have approached you directly?" At the same time, she quickly shot Li Luo a meaningful glance.

Li Luo immediately cupped his fist and bowed his head slightly, displaying a face full of sincerity. "Aunt Yu, I definitely know that you've been taking care of House Luolan from the shadows. In fact, I'm greatly appreciative of all that you've done. I wasn't suspecting you, I merely wanted to point out that the internal workings of the Golden Dragon Bank are complex and I'm concerned that dangers lie beneath the surface. The Housemeet holds exceptional importance to us, and the Golden Dragon Bank is the mightiest behemoth in the Xia Kingdom. Even a fart would throw everything into disarray... I know that the bank has always remained neutral, but I worry others may harbor less savory thoughts. Unable to differentiate their professional duties from their personal interests, it would only be detrimental to your reputation."

Yu Hongxi thunderously replied, "What did you call me? 'Aunt Yu?' Address me by my proper title: President Yu!"

Li Luo was taken aback by this, and since he clearly knew that she was fuming, he could only sheepishly accede to her request. "President Yu, please."

Another cold snort echoed throughout the small room, and she continued to glare at Li Luo intently. A moment later, the coldness in her expression seemed to dissipate and her tone regained its usual calmness. "I don't need your concern when it comes to the inner affairs of the Golden Dragon Bank. I will deal with it myself. You had better think about how to resolve your own predicament during the Housemeet. Otherwise, House Luolan will cease to exist in two months' time."

Li Luo smiled at the positive change in events. "House Luolan is the result of my parents' blood and sweat. I will naturally do my best to protect it. If I'm unable to do so, Sister Qing'e and I will definitely cut our losses and escape. Once we reach the Duke Stage, we'll come back to settle the accounts."

"Do you think a Duke is that great?" Yu Hongxi retorted.

The response was met with a self-assured smirk. "Well, if the Duke Stage isn't sufficient... then we'll reach the King Stage."

His handsome face seemed to contain an inexplicable confidence. Coupled with his assertive smile, even Lu Qing'er was swayed by his charm, and she lightly bit her lip upon this sight.

Yu Hongxi's previously apathetic gaze seemed to focus at that moment. The King Stage... This was something that even she could not touch. Anyone with such a title was a titan in their own right, even when it came to the main branch of the Golden Dragon Bank.

"You're barely grown up, but your words are already so haughty," she rebuked. "This brat has a wild temperament and an even wilder imagination." Although he had spoken of entering the Duke Stage, this was something that she had never doubted given his potential and enough time. However, to reach the King Stage? This was a chasm that many heavenly geniuses were unable to vault over throughout the annals of history. Yet this reckless dual resonance cultivator in front of her was spouting such grand words. "Alright, you can leave now. All you have to do is settle your own affairs." Yu Hongxi waved her hand as though she was shooing a fly away before immersing herself in her work once again.

Thoughts ran through his mind, but he stopped himself from engaging in any more superfluous words. After bowing with his hand clasped once again, he glanced up to bid farewell to Lu Qing'er and then turned to leave.

Just as he was about to open the door, Yu Hongxi's commanding tone rang out once again.

"Wait."

Li Luo turned curiously to see what was going on.

What greeted him was a steely-faced president. "Call me 'Aunt Yu.'"

Slightly taken aback and not knowing whether to laugh or cry at this new development, Li Luo hurriedly said, "Aunt Yu." Then he took his leave and tightly shut the door behind him.

As she looked at the closed door, Yu Hongxi angrily slammed the table as she grumbled, "That brat doesn't know his limits. He actually thought I'd covet his crappy house? Preposterous!"

Lu Qing'er hurriedly rushed to her mom's side, quickly massaging her shoulders in an attempt to calm her down. "Mom, you can't blame Li Luo... He's under massive amounts of pressure, and if he didn't trust you, he would never have brazenly spoken out like that."

Yu Hongxi shot daggers at her treasured daughter. "That brat is trying to take advantage of your mom and you're still siding with him?"

Lu Qing'er sincerely replied. "How am I siding with him? He was clearly trembling like a mouse before you."

"Hmph. He's clearly putting on an act. It's surprising how the son of Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan turned out this way, considering how different their personalities are!" she disdainfully replied.

At the same time, a smile bloomed on Lu Qing'er's face in amusement. "Mom, do you think there is some truth to Li Luo's words? Could it be that within the Golden Dragon Bank..." A frown formed on Yu Hongxi's face and her eyes narrowed. Yet nothing else was said.

Lu Qing'er didn't probe any further, only obediently massaging her mom's shoulders, hoping to restore a sense of tranquility to this eventful day.

Chapter 610: Spirit Condensing Pill

For the next few days, Li Luo did not rush back to college, instead opting to cultivate within House Luolan. His next objective was to refine his two resonances, and staying at home was the most convenient option.

House Luolan had the golden cultivation room. Although it was slightly weaker than the Tree of Resonant Power, it didn't pale too much in comparison.

Li Luo was currently seated right in the middle of the radiant and dazzling skygold room. At this moment, he drew out a bottle of seventh-grade spirit liquid and quaffed it down whilst using his resonant power to begin the process of refinement. Soon after, a mysterious energy entered his resonant palace. Much like the spring rain, it started to rejuvenate the parched and thirsty resonant palaces.

Within the waterlight resonant palace, there was a manifestation of a pool that seemed to have expanded several times in size. Additionally, there was a miniature sun-like object that was radiating light, and the effects of the spirit liquid caused this light to become more brilliant and even slightly penetrating!

As for the woodearth resonance, a manifestation of a little tree was rooted in a pile of dirt. The refinement of the spirit liquid seemed to instill a greater sense of life within the tree, and its branches started to sway and emit countless rays of light.

Li Luo quietly observed the activity within his resonant palaces, feeling a strong sense of relief. His resonant manifestations were much more robust and solid than they were when he had just stepped into the Resonant Master Stage, indicating his meteoric growth in resonant power.

The rain of light produced by the refinement of the spirit liquid continued to fall onto the resonances, strengthening them step by step.

This was the effect of refining a spirit liquid.

Li Luo's attention then shifted to the area above the resonant palaces, and he started to count down within his mind.

When he reached zero, a ray of purple light descended upon each of his resonant palaces. This strand of purple light contained the most pristine and pure form of special energy. Taking a closer look, it contained a drop of a mysterious liquid that exuded an inexplicable sort of charm, and the phantom of a divine tree could be seen within!

The purple liquid then entered the resonant palaces themselves before directly landing on the manifestations of the resonances.

The pool of spiritual liquid within his waterlight resonance began to churn, and ripples were set off, creating the sounds of waves. For his woodearth resonance, the little tree suddenly grew taller and more branches and leaves appeared. The soil itself also expanded in a circle around it.

Feeling the drastic change in the manifestations of his resonances gave Li Luo a great sense of happiness.

The mysterious purple liquid was naturally the byproduct of the Violet Resonant Tree Brooch obtained from the Holy Grail Meet.

It was not merely a violet-eye treasured artifact, it also possessed resonance tempering effects. Every day, it would produce a small amount of Violet Spiritliquid. Each droplet had a tempering effect that was both mild yet pure of spirit, and it was able to strengthen one's resonance. Most importantly, the effects

of the Violet Spiritliquid would not clash with the tempering provided by spirit liquids and purifying lights. As a result, they could work hand in hand to achieve a greater synergistic effect.

Within these few days, Li Luo continued to use these two sources to temper and raise the grades of his dual resonances.

The effects were to be celebrated. Based on the efficacy of these tempering materials, there was a good chance that both his resonances would rise in grade within a month.

Li Luo could intently feel a sense of life coming from within his resonances. He'd wait for the tempering effects to cease before calming himself down to cultivate.

This was his way of life for half a month as he steadfastly sought to improve himself.

At this point, he could feel both resonances becoming more and more active and restless, which brought him even greater exuberance. This was not a foreign feeling! It heralded his dual resonances being on the edge of being tempered to the next grade.

It seemed as though the day he had been waiting for was almost here.

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One day, early in the morning.

Li Luo, Jiang Qing'e, and Cai Wei were all having breakfast together in the dining hall.

Cai Wei still possessed the alluring and delicate charm she always exuded. Her every expression, be it a smile or frown, was full of graceful charisma. She had already eaten before and was now accompanying the two.

As the other two continued to break bread, Cai Wei continued to provide an update on House Luolan's numerous businesses and happenings.

"It's our great fortune to have Sister Cai Wei assisting us. It's only because House Luolan has been managed so well by you that Qing'e and I can cultivate in peace," Li Luo complimented with a deep sigh after hearing her complicated report.

"The Young Lord has a honeyed tongue. However, I have to correct you. The current situation was brought about by your efforts and not mine." Cai Wei beamed sweetly. "If you hadn't provided the secret water source to the Sun creek Villa, I would never have been able to redirect the profits into House Luolan's other businesses."

Jiang Qing'e also nodded as she agreed with the assessment. "Sister Cai Wei's words are the truth of the matter. Ever since you arrived in Xia City, House Luolan's reputation has changed for the better. Now it's actually flourishing. If I had known that you were so useful, I'd have dragged you over much sooner from the City of Southwind."

Listening to the two girls' flattery, Li Luo felt a sense of pride deep down, but he did not deign to show it. Instead, he remained cool and collected, only asking a question in response. "Sister Cai Wei, has there been any progress in my request for a Spirit Condensing Pill?"

This Spirit Condensing Pill he was referring to was a type of pill used to facilitate one's breakthrough in stages. It could amplify one's resonant power by several times for a brief moment. The aftereffects were mild and gentle, so it was a great tool to assist one in their breakthrough attempt.

Li Luo wanted to obtain one of those pills for the sake of his preparations in attacking the Earth Fiend General Stage.

Cai Wei nodded, but her smile faded slightly. "I've dispatched a few men within Xia City to check out the pharmacies and enquire with the Golden Dragon Bank. The strangest thing that's almost impossible to believe is that there is no Spirit Condensing Pill to be found. Zilch! Whether it's of high or low quality!"

Li Luo frowned upon hearing this. Spirit Condensing Pills held great value, and one could easily go for several hundred thousand skygold. Normally speaking, few merchants would hold this treasure, but it was not to the point where the markets were completely cleared out of it.

"Clearly, someone has been buying up the supply," Jiang Qing'e assessed dully.

Li Luo squinted upon hearing her assessment of the situation. "Clearly, someone has guessed that I'm about to break into the Earth Fiend General Stage... Sigh... They decided to cut off a pound of flesh just to deal with little, old me. Buying out the entire city's stock of Spirit Condensing Pills couldn't have come cheap."

Jiang Qing'e shot him a look with an upturned eyebrow, almost impressed at his perceived self-importance. "Well, perhaps they might not be targeting you..."

Li Luo was slightly taken aback by her reply.

"Well, that's also because I stand a strong chance in breaking through before the Housemeet as well. By devouring the entire stock of Spirit Condensing Pills, they can hamper our strength even by a little. Furthermore, high-grade Spirit Condensing Pills also have some effect on me," Jiang Qing'e explained.

This was met with a resentful grumble from Li Luo... "So I was thinking too highly of myself? Gosh!"

However, he understood where Jiang Qing'e's analysis was coming from. Any third party who observed House Luolan's situation would identify Jiang Qing'e as a key problem to be dealt with. Although she was currently in the Fiend Finisher Tier and was insignificant before the full might of a Duke, all problems should still be resolved cleanly in advance to prevent any complications from arising.

And the pitiful Li Luo in the Resonant Master Stage wasn't even of any consideration.

Cai Wei, on the other hand, couldn't help but cover her mouth and chortle at the sight of this.

Jiang Qing'e's lips also turned up in a smile. "To be fair, I don't think anyone would have expected you to break into the General Stage in these two months. You have only spent so much time cultivating after all. The speed at which you have developed is honestly comparable to me, and I have a ninth grade light resonance."

Li Luo shook his head. "Forget about it. If there aren't any, then so be it. The pill is just a supplementary aid, and if I were to truly rely on such treasures, that wouldn't befit my status as the BEST One Star Hall student in the East Divine Continent. Why would I need to stoop down to a normal person's level! Psh!"

Utilizing a Spirit Condensing Pill would definitely guarantee his breakthrough, but he already possessed two resonances and two resonant palaces, resulting in his resonant power far surpassing that of the average Resonant Master, who craved for the additional support the pill would bring. Most importantly, he was also fully confident in himself.

However, right at this time, a bodyguard rushed in bearing tidings.

"Young Lord, Young Mistress, the Golden Dragon Bank's Young Mistress Qing'er has arrived at the headquarters bearing a gift." The bodyguard respectfully bowed as he placed a jade case atop the table.

"Qing'er sent it personally?" Li Luo was slightly taken aback. Curiosity got the better of him, and he immediately opened the case. Within sat a single round pill. Strands of pill qi gradually wafted upwards, seemingly forming some sort of mystical pattern in the air.

This was a high-grade Spirit Condensing Pill.

"Hehe. Young Lord, your female friend certainly cherishes you very much. She even sent such a crucial gift during your time of need," Cai Wei teased.

Li Luo felt a little exasperated as he quickly asked, "Where is she?"

"She left after delivering it."

"This is a token of her goodwill. Just accept it, and when you next see her, you can repay her appropriately, with skygold," Jiang Qing'e calmly suggested.

Agreeing with Qing'e's judgment, Li Luo nodded.

At this point, the guard paused for a moment as he chose his next words very carefully. "Before Young Mistress Qing'er left, she specifically mentioned that this was meant for Young Mistress Qing'e. It's not that she doesn't want to provide it for the Young Lord, it just that she has full faith and confidence in the Young Lord's own abilities."

Wait what? This wasn't meant for him but for Qing'e? What was going on? Were they on such good terms?

Meanwhile, Cai Wei continued to watch with a bemused expression as the show unfolded. "Lu Qing'er is indeed an interesting maiden."

Jiang Qing'e gaze flickered for a moment before she replied neutrally, "Although I don't need it, this is still an expression of good faith, so I will accept this gift. However, when you next meet her, we will have to return her the skygold."

Li Luo nodded in agreement.

At this point, she stood up.

"At the end of this month, I will contest for the position of a Seven Astral Pillar."

Li Luo glanced at Jiang Qing'e, who was currently walking towards the inner courtyard, with a tumultuous feeling within his heart.

She was planning to compete for the position as a Three Star Hall student. Her success would set a new record within the Astral Sage College.

Her very presence seemed to have become even more radiant and striking at this point in time.

Li Luo heaved a deep breath and resolved himself. Since Jiang Qing'e was doing her best, how could he take it easy? If things went to plan, his dual resonances would improve a grade in the next few days.