

F Disciples 451

Chapter 451: Golden Basin Auction House (I)

Today was finally the day of the Grand Annual Auction of the Golden Basin Auction House. Chen Wentian had been waiting for the event for a couple of weeks. If the Gift Exhibit was the prelude to the main event for the Sacred Daughters, then this was the equivalent for the acolytes.

The auction would be held in the Golden Citadel, the seat of power for the Golden Basin Auction House in the Martial Brilliance Continent. The Golden Citadel was a moderately sized city in the center of the Golden Basin, a peculiar geographic formation in an unremarkable desert province.

The Golden Basin was a circular crater a hundred kilometers across. Jagged peaks formed a perfect ring on the outer edge like a natural set of walls. Inside the ring was a sloping valley like a washbowl where the rocks and dirt were a dull golden color. Under the harsh sun, the entire land glittered and sparkled.

It was said that the ground within the basin consisted of almost pure gold. It was also said that many thousands of years ago, the Golden Basin wasn't a basin at all but a massive, solitary mountain. There must have been a stupendous amount of gold within the mountain. Only with such a fathomless treasure could the Golden Basic Auction House resist the other major powers of the continent and grow to its current position.

Chen Wentian flew into the basin, toward a golden city that was built upon a pillar of golden rocks. The Golden Citadel wasn't a place for idle mortals. It was a playground for immortals only.

Today was the day of the Grand Annual Auction so the teleportation arrays were flashing non-stop with new arrivals. The city was situated in an advantageous central location within the continent. It was like a nexus and served as a hub for trade for many powers.

Chen Wentian flew to the gates and presented his identity badge as an acolyte of the Virtuous Order. He didn't choose to come via the teleportation arrays as he didn't want to run into troublesome people.

The guards allowed him entry and guided him into the vast auction house complex. It was a massive eight side pyramid made of golden stone. The inside of the structure was mostly hollow and held a cavernous auction floor at the center. There were already several hundred immortals gathered but there was still room for more.

As he stepped into the seating area, he was met with a wall of chaotic spiritual energy. The combined auras of so many immortals swirled around dangerously, almost pushing him back out. He quickly summoned a fiery cloak to protect himself and proceeded to his seat which was among the last rows.

All around him, there were countless Spirit Lords, Spirit Kings, and even a few Spirit Emperors which were a rare sight. It was a sea of unfamiliar faces. Nobody paid him any attention and he melded into the crowd.

Chen Wentian tried to study one of the Spirit Emperors, a wrinkled elder carrying a horsetail whisk. He only managed to get a few glances before the stingy grandpa glared in his direction. The spiritual sense of a Spirit Emperor was something else entirely. The old fart didn't hurt him but the lesson was learned and he kept his eyes to himself.

After a while, the steady trickle of immortals increased in volume suddenly. Shouts of excitement rang through the chamber as many heads turned towards the source. Chen Wentian couldn't help but look up as well.

A large group of immortals entered from a nearby entrance. They were a mix of Spirit Kings and Spirit Lords with distinctive clothing. Chen Wentian recognized them; they were the members of the Seven Potentates of Jiannan. True to their infamy, they strutted down to the front rows like they owned the place.

The first was the Starry Wei Clan. Their title was a reference to their cultivation art which utilized spiritual energy from the stars. It was an esoteric Dao that was rarely seen in the world. Outsiders rarely had a chance to experience their power because those that did often died without a trace.

They had the most influence among the Seven Potentates and could be said to be the founding member. There were rumors that the Wei Clan's background wasn't limited to the Martial Brilliance Continent and that they actually came from a blessed realm.

In this endless world of cultivation, a blessed realm was a region that was one tier above a main continent. The same way several subcontinents put together could not compare to a continent, many continents together could not contend against a blessed realm.

There was also one more tier above a blessed realm and it was known as a holy world. These places were far beyond the capabilities of ordinary immortals. They were where divine beasts, archdemons, and the greatest cultivators in all of humanity battled for supremacy.

Following the Starry Wei Clan was a group that Chen Wentian had heard of but had never seen before. They were the Sunken Empire of the East. They were people who lived deep within caves. They wore black armor or black robes with a macabre design that clashed harshly with their pale complexions. They were supposedly fearsome warriors that guarded the eastern borders of the continent against enemies of humankind.

The next group was the Beast Mountain Alliance. They were another group of beast-loving cultivators, similar to Beast God Sanctum of the Eastern Sanmu Subcontinent but much stronger. Several of their cultivators emitted truly wild auras that were indistinguishable from beasts. It was unclear how they could achieve this feat but outsiders speculated that they infused the bloodline of powerful beasts into themselves.

Right after them was the Yang Clan of Great Waves. They resided in a region with a vast inland sea that was as big as an ocean. Their clothes were distinctly blue with embroidered white patterns. They all specialized in Dao related to water.

As the Yang Clan passed by, Chen Wentian found a familiar and detestable face among them. It was Immortal Bamboo Wave Yang Gehu, the one who had harassed Long Yifei at the Gift Exhibit. Chen Wentian glared at that criminally handsome face, wishing he could use his dragon flames and burn it to a crisp. His opponent seemed to sense his animosity and turned in his direction. Their eyes connected and waves of mutual animosity crashed into each other.

Yang Gehu said something to his people and several heads turned in Chen Wentian's direction.

Chen Wentian cursed under his breath. It seemed that he wouldn't be able to escape the provocations of the Seven Potentates, even at the Golden Auction House.

Yang Gehu then laughed loudly and didn't give Chen Wentian another glance, like he wasn't even worth considering as an adversary. Chen Wentian stared at the back of Yang Gehu's head with unexpected malevolence. For someone who dared to covet his disciple so openly, they deserved to die a slow and painful death!

Chen Wentian was so angry that he barely paid attention to the last three of the Seven Potentates. He knew them as the Frostfire Nation, the Profound Sword Palace, and the Undying Medicine Valley. Once all of them took their seats, there was a short period of calm before the auction hall erupted once more.

"On my heavens, a Great Beauty is here!"

"Look, it's Mao Tongxiao! The Western Smile of the Four Great Beauties!"

Chapter 452: Golden Basin Auction House (II)

All the heads in the auction hall turned as one towards the source of the commotion. A figure descended from one of the high balconies, floating gently towards the center of the hall. Their voluminous blue robes fluttered in the air behind them. A large hood and a face veil obscured the majority of their facial features, leaving only a pair of round eyes and startling grey irises.

Chen Wentian had heard of the Four Great Beauties but he didn't know much. Supposedly, they were the four most beautiful and all-around most talented and powerful women in the Martial Brilliance Continent. There was no official ranking or method of joining or leaving the group. The denomination was purely based on reputation and word of mouth.

This Mao Tongxiao was also known as Immortal Frostfire Hurricane, a cultivator at the Spirit Emperor Realm. She was the wife of the sect master of the Frostfire Sect as well as the empress of the Frostfire Nation. Although her beauty was hidden, her power and status were peerless.

Chen Wentian's first impression of her was that she wasn't anything impressive. He didn't see why she had to dress so conservatively and hide almost everything from view. Not only did she obscure her face, but she was also stingy about showing her body. With so many layers of puffy clothing, there was no way to tell if she was skinny or fat.

Even Long Yifei hadn't bothered hiding her physique. He considered her, along with Jasmine, the two most beautiful women he had ever met. Although the various abbesses and prioresses were certainly a cut above ordinary beauties, they were still a bit lacking in his eyes compared to his two most stunning disciples. He could only wonder how beautiful one had to be considered among the Four Great Beauties.

Mao Tongxiao landed in front of the first row of seats. The people there all parted to make way for her, even the Spirit Kings. It wasn't clear if they were fearful of her reputation or something else. Nobody dared to speak but everyone's eyeballs were still glued to her figure, following her every movement.

Mao Tongxiao approached a hunched-over elder carrying a horsetail whisk and bowed with a level of respect that surprised many in the hall.

"Junior Mao Tongxiao greets Golden Emperor Hu." Her voice was soft but it was hard to grasp. Fitting of her moniker, it was filled with tenderness as well as coldness.

The elder chuckled and stroked his long white beard, "Mmm, your frostfire has improved yet again. Perhaps Frostfire Nation will once again be able to improve its ranking within the Seven Potentates of Jiannan... These are certainly splendid times we live in."

Chen Wentian frowned. That old man was actually Immortal Golden Basin Hu Bao, the master of the Golden Basin Auction House. He didn't expect the master of such a powerful auction house to be so old. The oldest person he had ever seen before was Immortal Solemn Duke Huang Wuji and yet this person looked even older. Although Hu Bao was a Spirit Emperor Realm cultivator, it was likely that he was already reaching the limit of his lifespan. Chen Wentian wasn't sure if living for over a thousand years looking like death was even worth it.

Mao Tongxiao bowed once again, "Golden Emperor Hu, please don't jest like that. Our Seven Potentates are all of equal standing. There is no point trying to figure who is stronger or weaker as that would only hurt our harmony."

Her words were reasonable but far from the truth. Everybody knew this but didn't bother to argue. Humans were naturally competitive. Someone had to be the strongest, someone had to be the weakest, and others fell in line in between.

She continued, "Golden Emperor Hu, I heard that a certain item is going to be auctioned off today, a certain flower I had been looking for for a century. Is it true?"

Hu Bao's lips split into a knowing smile, revealing pink gums that were devoid of teeth, "Indeed, we have it. There was some trouble obtaining it but it is here. If your money bag is heavy enough, perhaps you will be able to obtain it!"

Melodic laughter rang out. Mao Tongxiao's entire demeanor changed as happiness radiated off her in great waves. Her eyes turned into inverted crescent moons as she serenaded the auction hall with joy.

At that moment, nobody dared to breathe. It seemed impossible that a single woman could capture the souls of over a thousand immortal men. But she was doing it somehow. Her laughter pierced even the most impenetrable hearts; she was irresistible.

This was the ability of a Spirit Emperor Realm beauty, one of the Four Great Beauties of the Martial Brilliance Continent. It was truly fearsome. Already, weak-minded Spirit Lords around Chen Wentian were staring at her with hopelessly lovelorn eyes. Some Spirit Kings were actively trying to fight her off while others willingly gave up trying to fight a hopeless battle. Only the few Spirit Emperors weren't affected and watched the scene with amusement.

Chen Wentian had to retreat into his soul realm to escape from her captivating power. He hid behind one soul after another as her intoxicating laugh addled his defenses one by one. He was so focused on his task that he didn't notice her shooting a curious glance in his direction.

"Alright, alright. That's enough." Hu Bao said. A wave of golden spiritual energy swept over everyone's heads, freeing everyone from Mao Tongxiao's power. "Xiaoxiao, take a seat. We're starting."

With a swish of his horsetail whisk, he flew into the air above the main platform. He spun slowly in place and addressed the auction hall. "Welcome, all the heroes of the continents and lands far beyond our borders. Welcome to the Golden Basin Auction House for our Grand Annual Auction!"

A roar of approval rose among the crowd. Over a thousand immortals let their voices out as well as their spiritual auras. It was the greatest gathering of Spirit Lords, Spirit Kings, and Spirit Emperors that Chen Wentian had ever seen. It was a scene befitting of the reputation of this auction house and the goods it was able to provide.

Hu Bao raised his hands together in a salute, "I, Immortal Golden Basin Hu Bao, master of the Golden Basin Auction House, am honored by your attendance today. The goal of us holding this auction is for the continued prosperity of the Virtuous Order of Chunzhen, our precious partner in everything we do, as well as all who are allied with our values. As such, of the proceeds the auction house receives for all auctioned items, we will share half of it with the Virtuous Order! This is how we have always conducted business here at the Golden Basin Auction House and it will continue as such for many millennia!"

Another roar of support came from everyone. Although everyone had their own intentions, the anchor that held them all together was indeed the Virtuous Order of Chunzhen and the Sacred Daughters.

"Good, good!" Hu Bao laughed spiritedly, "I see you are all excited to get started. So am I! We have some shocking and stirring items today. Let's have a good show. Let's begin!"

Chapter 453: Fighting With Money (I)

The atmosphere within the auction hall flipped immediately upon those words. Those that had been distracted by the appearance of a great beauty regained their composure and focused on the actual purpose of today. They weren't here to ogle women they could never obtain. They were here to obtain precious items for their Sacred Daughters, to spend money like they didn't care about tomorrow,

Chen Wentian was also ready. He had prepared for this event for a long time, ever since he stepped foot in the Martial Brilliance Continent. He had braved many dangers to be able to confidently sit among so many powerful immortals today. He wasn't about to leave empty-handed, without obtaining everything that Long Yifei wanted and so much more.

The auction master, Immortal Golden Basin Hu Bao, flicked his horsetail whisk and an item appeared on the stage next to him. It was a wide landscape painting, enclosed in a clear crystal case. The entire case rotated slowly, allowing everyone to study a curious scenery that depicted roiling gray clouds, sheets of rain pelting down from the heavens, and a soaring bird with sky blue feathers, a blood-red crown, and a single leg.

"This!" Hu Bao's voice echoed around the hall, "This painting is named 'A Moment of Clarity in a Storm, the Shangyang Sees Whole World'."

This declaration was followed by impressed murmurs and many people nodding their heads. Even Chen Wentian, who was basically uneducated when it came to the appreciation of art couldn't help but be impressed. The painting was deeply infused with spiritual energy, from each brush stroke by the immortal painter to the vivid colors that told a mysterious story.

"Honored guests, if you didn't know, a shangyang is a divine beast, a bird that is born with rainclouds. It could predict the weather and its appearance in the sky is always followed by rain. When it dances on one leg, it is a sign that a calamitous storm was approaching! The artist that painted this piece wishes to

remain anonymous. Even if you wanted to know, I cannot tell you. This is because they managed to befriend a shangyang and they want to protect it. Hahaha! That's right, can you feel it? The spiritual energy of the sky, of rain, of water that exudes from this painting... this is the spiritual aura of an immortal shangyang! Whoever can obtain this painting can study it regularly to improve their understanding towards this path greatly. Come, come, let's start the bidding at one million taels of gold!"

One million taels!

Paintings weren't as expensive as musical instruments but it was usually expected that Sacred Daughters studying the classic of art have many different paints of different subjects and styles. This 'A Moment of Clarity in a Storm, the Shangyang Sees Whole World' was a high-quality work at the Spirit Lord Realm so the price was worth it.

Soon, there was a burst of spiritual energy and a shout.

"One million!"

A Spirit Lord on the opposite side of the auction hall from Chen Wentian raised their invitation badge. This person was sitting near the back rows, a sign that they were independent cultivators or members of weak and inconsequential factions.

Another surge of spiritual energy and a shout quickly followed, "One million and one hundred!"

This caused the first Spirit Lord to glare at the second one hatefully.

"One million and two hundred!" The first guy countered.

"One million and three hundred!" The second fought back.

After this, a third person jumped into the fray, followed by a fourth and then a fifth. The bids became chaotic as the price rose steadily and quickly surpassed two million taels of gold. Chen Wentian watched

the scene with great interest, trying to guess what the final price would be. If he were to obtain this painting, he wouldn't pay more than four million.

True to his estimate, the fervor of the bidders diminished as the price approached four million. The first bidder was still the most enthusiastic and looked to be the winner. However, when the price barely crested four million and as the second to last bidder signaled their defeat, a new challenger appeared.

"Five million!"

It sounded very familiar to Chen Wentian and his eyebrows shot up when he saw who it was. It was Immortal Bamboo Wave Yang Gehu, the insufferable idiot that had harassed Long Yifei and was on Chen Wentian's list of people to utterly destroy. It seemed that this person wasn't content just bullying defenseless women, he liked bullying random Spirit Lords as well.

"Five million and one hundred!"

The first Spirit Lord was fully invested in getting the painting and quickly made a counteroffer. However, it was obvious that he had already surpassed his limits. His face was rapidly alternating between shades of green with regret and red with anger.

This was when a second member of the Yang Clan piped up, "Five million and five hundred!"

This caused Yang Gehu to burst into laughter, "Big brother, if you want to bully someone, wait your turn. I can handle someone like this by myself! Six million!"

Chen Wentian rolled his eyes and stopped paying attention to their nonsense. He didn't know what was wrong with people from the Yang Clan of Great Waves and he didn't care. It was probably mental illness, one that was passed down through the generations.

The first bidder bowed out reluctantly and Yang Gehu won the painting for an even six million taels of gold. By bidding two million over the market price, it was a loud declaration of the might of the Seven Potentates of Jiannan.

Auction Master Hu Bao clapped his hands to close the first sale and moved on to the next item. It was an instrument, an erhu made from the bones of a sun crane and with strings spun from its feathers. A sun crane was an origin beast with the power of flames. Music from such an erhu would produce music with fire and passion.

A crowd of loose cultivators fought over the item as it was a decent instrument in the lesser realms that lay between mortality and immortality. However, it was still won by a member of the Seven Potentates, Undying Medicine Valley in the end.

The third item followed and it was something Chen Wentian wanted. It was an ancient song carved into a stone tablet. Its name was 'Hymns from a Wintery Flower Orchard'. The tablet was around waist height and crumbling at the edges. The song was one of many artifacts steadily unearthed from the famous ruins of an empire that fell to mysterious circumstances. Some of the text was lost to history but most of it still remained. It had a connection to a lost history, the cold winter, and all kinds of flowers. It was everything Long Yifei wanted as it connected many aspects of her background.

Excitement surged within him as the auction master finished describing the item. He wanted this song and he had in his spatial bag piles of gold and spiritual crystals begging to be spent. Long Yifei was depending on him and he couldn't let her down.

"Two million!" He shouted the starting bid.

Chapter 454: Fighting With Money (II)

The individual songs from the 'Hymns from a Wintery Flower Orchard' were not at the Spirit Lord Realm. They were at the various lesser realms directly below the threshold of immortality. However, the ancient tablet held at least six complete songs and four more partial ones. It was a great learning tool and Long Yifei would be able to cultivate her voice steadily for a long time while having many different choices of what to sing.

It wasn't only Chen Wentian who had the same evaluation and a couple of competing bids flew in right after him. fr eewebn ovel.com

"Two million one hundred!"

"Two million two hundred!"

He glanced at those two people, both Spirit Lords. He vaguely recognized their faces as acolytes that were at the opening ceremony for the school year though it was now impossible to guess if they were independent or not. They may have started the school year independent but many would have already allied themselves with the Seven Potentates. The resident powerhouse of the continent would surely not stop with a single one like Immortal Drifting Axe Han Baohu. It was one of the ways they managed to remain so firmly in power.

"Two million three hundred!"

"Two million four hundred!"

The price for the tablet of ancient songs rapidly increased. Several more independent immortals joined in on the action. It quickly surpassed three million, four million, and even five million.

At this point, some of the riff-raff stopped bidding. They weren't really in it to win the final bid but to arbitrarily increase the price for the fun of it. The ones that remained, like Chen Wentian, actually wanted the item for their Sacred Daughters and they continued the fierce battle with money.

Several more minutes passed and the price reached ten million gold taels.

Chen Wentian was the one who finally pushed his opponents to this point as he shouted, "One kilogram of orange spiritual crystal!"

There were a few murmurs of excitement at his proclamation. This was the first time today that an auction item's price reached this threshold. Red spiritual crystal was the lowest tier of spiritual crystal and it was worth one hundred thousand taels. Orange spiritual crystal was the next tier up and contained spiritual energy at the Spirit Lord Realm. It was only fitting that it was a hundred times more expensive.

When it came to fighting with money, the real players only dealt in spiritual crystals. Those that could only peddle gold taels were considered inconsequential by the powerful immortals gathered here today!

"One-point-one kilograms of orange spiritual crystal!" Another immortal countered.

At this current juncture, there was no point for anyone to bid in smaller increments. One kilogram of orange spiritual crystal was worth ten million gold. Point one kilogram of it was worth one million gold. If anyone still dared to bid in tiny increments, it was an insult to the honor of all immortals!

Chen Wentian's voice responded quickly, "One-point-two kilograms!"

He had plenty of money on hand. His budget for this item was at most two kilograms of orange spiritual crystal. In terms of wealth among independent Spirit Lords, few could compare to him. Although he had squandered a lot of it on his disciples already, he still had a sizable reserve.

He continued to raise the price and suppressed all the other independent immortals. Finally, they all fell silent at his latest bid of one-point-seven kilograms.

"One-point-seven kilograms of orange spiritual crystal. Anyone else!" Auction Master Hu Bao shouted, "This stone tablet is one of a kind that we managed to acquire with great difficulty from the ruins. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!"

After a long pause, he was about to clap his hands to complete the sale when a lazy voice drifted up from the front rows.

"Two kilograms!"

It was Immortal Bamboo Wave Yang Gehu. Who else could it be?

The detestable man turned around and gave Chen Wentian a mocking smile. "Immortal Blue Dragon Chen Wentian, a very impressive name for a not-so-impressive man. If you have to ability, then keep bidding. If you don't, then move aside and leave it to someone else!"

The attention of the auction hall turned to these two people, including many Spirit Kings and Spirit Emperors. Up until this point, the Seven Potentates hadn't openly antagonized anyone. In the eyes of many, this Immortal Blue Dragon was an unlucky person. Those who drew the ire of the Seven Potentates never survived in the continent for long. It was a sad situation for the victim but also cruel amusement for those not involved.

Chen Wentian kept his facial expressions neutral and replied evenly, "Immortal Bamboo Wave Yang Gehu, I presume. I have heard of you but I have no quarrel with you. I simply want to obtain this stone tablet. If immortal Yang wishes to do so as well, then we will have to fight with our wallets instead of our fists. But perhaps, the winner can treat the loser to a drink afterward?"

He turned back to the auctioneer, "Two-point-one kilograms!"

Yang Gehu laughed, "Only so much? Come on, let's fight! Three kilograms!"

This led to more murmurs across the auction hall. The stone tablet wasn't worth that much money. It was good but it wasn't a Spirit Lord Realm item. This kind of bidding could only be described as overbearing, with a complete lack of regard for money.

Chen Wentian laughed as well, "Immortal Yang certainly has a way of squandering money. Unfortunately, this immortal Chen also likes to squander. Four kilograms!"

This caused even more commotion. Nobody expected Chen Wentian to be equally as brash. Since he had made the bid, then he had the funds to do back it up. Some shook their heads at the ridiculous cock fight between two minor Spirit Lords. Others who knew more about the situation studied Chen Wentian with keen interest.

Yang Gehu scowled and glared at Chen Wentian hatefully. He didn't expect this kind of counterattack. Since he had provoked Chen Wentian first, it was now a matter of pride. How could he let the pride of the Seven Potentates of Jiannan be tread upon by a lowly no-name Spirit Lord and lose face in front of everyone?

But, he didn't immediately shout out a counter bid. Orange spiritual was still orange spiritual, an important resource for cultivation in the Spirit Lord Realm. They didn't grow on trees and even someone Yang Gehu couldn't squander it without some forethought. But thinking about how he had to utter crush Long Yifei's acolyte in front of all the immortals of the continent, it was an easy decision to continue with the fight.

"Four-point-five kilograms!" He declared.

"Five kilograms!" Chen Wentian responded, "I sincerely apologize, Immortal Yang. I really must obtain this song tablet. It is the perfect gift for my Sacred Daughter! She is my most precious person and I cannot disappoint her."

His words were reasonable to everyone but to Yang Gehu, they cut deeply into his psyche. He wanted Long Yifei, badly, ever since he had laid eyes on her. It hurt to hear Chen Wentian talk about her so intimately. It sounded irrational but he was an irrational and passionate person to begin with. He shuddered at the thought of Chen Wentian hugging Long Yifei, kissing her, doing more intimate things to her... No! She belonged to him!

"Six kilograms!" Yang Gehu shouted.

This was met with silence. It was a ridiculous situation but nobody could argue with the sheer wealth that the Seven Potentates possessed. Although Yang Gehu was acting crazily, he could afford to do it!

As for Chen Wentian, he wasn't angered by the situation but amused instead. He had expected some bullying but this amount really was too much. His opponent was simply being too wasteful. Thus, he could only move aside and not stand in the way of their generosity.

He looked away from Yang Gehu's challenging stare and pretended to be greatly interested in the auction brochure. A long moment passed but he didn't respond with a counter bid. He had enough money but he simply gave up.

Unlike these immortals of major clans and powerhouses, he didn't grow up as a prince or young master. He had little regard for something so trivial as one's face. It might be worth six kilograms of spiritual crystal for someone like Yang Gehu to keep his face but to Chen Wentian, it was utterly ridiculous.

"Alright! Anyone else? No?" Auction Master Hu Bao said merrily.

"Wait! What about..." Yang Gehu tried to argue but he was ignored.

Hu Bao clapped his hand loudly, drowning out Yang Gehu, "Sale complete! What an exciting round! Let's have more like this, next item!"

Yang Gehu looked as if he wanted to say something else but it was already too late!

Chapter 455: Secrets of Frostfire (I)

Chen Wentian tried to keep a straight face while laughing inside. There was nothing better than doing nothing and letting others humiliate themselves. What kind of concept were six kilograms of orange spiritual crystal? It was a fortune for ordinary Spirit Lords. It was almost enough to buy any Spirit Lord Realm treasure they desired. To spend three times as much for a song tablet that might be useful for a mortal Sacred Daughter was ridiculous.

The auction continued with other items. Many were those from the Gift Register while a few interesting ones weren't. Chen Wentian took a break for a while as there was nothing he specifically wanted. He glanced at Yang Gehu. The man's handsome face was marred by an ugly expression. One of his peers seemed to be comforting him.

Still, it was only a minor victory, not a large one, and the battle still wasn't over. The Seven Potentates continued to bully the other attendees even if Yang Gehu was momentarily incapacitated. Whether it was valuable musical instruments, exquisite art pieces, or profound tomes, they fought with everyone and anyone.

They didn't always win but they didn't lose often. Some more wealthy independent immortals managed to win a few times. Some were affiliated with some other powers who bought some items.

A while later, another item that Long Yifei desired. It was a set of songs from the personal collection of a prioress of the Virtuous Order. As promised, Immortal Winter Hymn Xuan Xina had put up some of her songs for auction. Long Yifei did not want to accept such a heavy gift but she still wanted them as they were well suited for her development, even more than the song tablet before.

Chen Wentian again opened the bidding and as expected, Yang Gehu once again tried to oppose him. However, this time, Chen Wentian was determined to this item. He raised the bid by the minimum amount each time and wore his opponent out until they ran out of patience.

He was finally able to win the songs with a price of five-point-four kilograms of orange spiritual crystal. It still ended up being three times the expected sale price and a massive overpay. This in turn caused Yang

Gehu's mood to greatly improve as making Chen Wentian waste money was just as good as preventing him from obtaining the actual item.

Chen Wentian shook his head and accepted his 'loss' this time around.

The Grand Annual Auction continued at a furious pace. Items flew off the stage while gold and spiritual crystals were spent in great waves. The amount of wealth being exchanged was incomparable to anything in the subcontinent.

Over a thousand immortals competed against each other in one room throughout the morning. The spiritual aura in the air was chaotic and stirring.

Chen Wentian attempted to bid on a few more items but lost out each time. The Seven Potentates continued to fight him at every turn. In addition to Yang Gehu, other idiots from their faction joined in the bullying. He could have fought back hard but sometimes he didn't have to. Other people wanted the same items too and there were a few times that the Seven Potentates lost out on items he had bidding on to other, unknown groups.

He still had plenty of money, enough to make another big purchase. However, he let the situation develop naturally and did not fight to the death for any more items. For an independent Spirit Lord of his background, being able to bring out over seven kilograms of orange spiritual crystal was already impressive. If he acted too wild and unreserved, it would arouse more animosity from the Seven Potentates as well as unwanted attention from other groups.

He had to spend money but he also couldn't spend too much. It was a vexing situation. Frustrated, he stopped paying attention to the auction and simply sat back to enjoy the scene. The journey of cultivation was a long one filled with all kinds of battles and dangers. It was important not to lose sight of the small details. It was good to be introspective.

He felt that this approach to dealing with the Seven Potentates was the only option. Although he didn't care too much about face or reputation, it was still necessary. If he didn't fight back at all and just let himself get rolled over, it would be bad for him and Long Yifei. Those annoying women of the Order would look down on him even more. He couldn't let his disciple be bullied because of him.

And it wasn't like he was just going to let these insults go. These bastards from the Seven Potentates could do whatever wanted for now but he was going to get payback for everything, even the smallest slight when the right opportunity came around in the future.

After a few hours of Spirit Lord Realm items, a few items at the upper realms popped up. The auction house was once again filled with buzzing energy as the powerhouses finally got into the action after a boring prelude.

"Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed immortals of Martial Brilliance Continent!" Auction Master Hu Bao shouted with way more excitement than his frail body could seemingly handle, "This next item is quite exciting! Everyone, please pay close attention!"

With an exaggerated gesture, a pink flower with seven petals appeared. It was stored in a cylindrical glass case along with its stem which was dipped into a milky white liquid.

Immediately, ice and fire spiritual energy emanated from the flower in great waves. The aura was light blue but also deep red at the same time. It was a mix of both as if the flower was a source of both attributes at the same time.

"This..."

"Amazing!"

Many immortals couldn't hold back their reactions. This was a treasure!

Hu Bao laughed, "Your eyes have not deceived you. This is a fully bloomed Frostfire Flower, a supremely rare flower that only appears in an area that is naturally imbued with both ice and fire spiritual energies. You all should know how rare such an environment is. And on top of that, the Frostfire Flower only blooms once every one hundred years after accumulating enough both types of energy."

"It just so happens that we have a Frostfire Nation which is among the Seven Potentates of Jiannan. They are expert practitioners of ice and fire Daos. But some guests or newcomers to the continent may not know that their secret art relies on dual-attribute constitutions in their upper ranking members so that they can cultivate both ice and fire together. Mmm, that's right! It is exactly as many of you have

already guessed. This Frostfire Flower is a key ingredient in producing cultivators with such a dual-attribute constitution!"

"Such an item could be immensely useful to some but completely useless to others. The Golden Basin Auction House managed to obtain such a flower through great luck. We even almost lost it to an ambush but were able to thwart it with timely intervention of a talented friend." Hu Bao stroked his beard and he smiled mysteriously, "Anyway, enough of my rambling. Let's begin with a base price of one kilogram of orange spiritual crystal, any bidders?"

Frooh!

Just as Hu Bao finished his sentence, a surge of icy yet passionate spiritual energy erupted from the front rows.

"I offer one kilogram of yellow spiritual crystal!"

Chapter 456: Secrets of Frostfire (II)

Yellow spiritual crystal was the spiritual crystal one tier above orange spiritual crystal. It was a legitimate treasure at the Spirit King Realm. One kilogram of it was worth a hundred kilograms of orange spiritual crystal!

The person who made the bid was obviously Immortal Frostfire Hurricane Mao Tongxiao. There could have been nobody else. She was the empress of the Frostfire Nation. She was the wife of the sect master of the Frostfire Sect. She was, in effect, the mother of all its disciples.

Nobody dared to make any snide comments but everyone was thinking roughly the same thing. This Frostfire Flower on the auction block was most likely a cherished treasure within their faction. As such, there was nobody with a face thick enough to compete with her for this flower. However, having no other bidders was bad news for one person in particular.

Auction Master Hu Bao coughed awkwardly and blinked his weary eyes several times in indignation, "Is there no one else? Anyone?"

The auction hall was silent but everyone's attention was on the two Spirit Emperors facing off.

Chen Wentian stared at the back of Mao Tongxiao's hooded head with great interest. He wasn't that interested in a woman who was so stingy that she didn't show a single body part. Rather, he was interested in her cultivation art, something that utilized a dual-attribute constitution and the ability to wield both ice and fire.

The feeling of her combined spiritual aura left a strong impression. It reminded him of Summer and Winter's Eternal Sutra, the combined Dao left behind by the ancestors of Glacier Palace and Divine Blazing Mountain. He wondered if they were somehow related to Frostfire Nation.

The Eastern Sanmu Subcontinent was a subsidiary subcontinent to the Martial Brilliance Continent. There were no other continent-level lands around. If there was some kind of special secret art, nine times out of ten, it probably originated from a higher power. This was the so-called trickle-down effect in the cultivation world where secret arts from higher realms would inevitably leak down to the lower realms in various bastardized or simplified forms.

As far as he could find, the history of Glacier Palace and Divine Blazing Mountain were tied together. They were both founded around a thousand years ago and before that, there was no record whatsoever of their origins. It was likely that perhaps a pair of disciples from Frostfire Nation escaped from the main continent and established a home in the subcontinent. However, it was difficult to believe that they could have evaded attention for so long.

There was also the issue of the ice and fire dual-attribute constitution. This was the first time he had heard of another faction having this special power. He wondered how the disciples of Frostfire Nation compared to his own disciples.

How the ice sisters developed their dual-attribute constitutions was still a mystery. Chen Wentian wasn't a doctor and he didn't have a great understanding of how spiritual energy, certain secret arts, and medicinal effects could change a person's body and their cultivation base. But as far as he could tell, their constitution had no side effects. All five of them could perfectly utilize the entirety of Summer and Winter's Eternal Sutra. If anything, their constitution seemed to get better ever so slightly every time he slept with them!

He had to hold back a chuckle. The mysteries of the myriad Daos were too profound. A continent was still just a continent. His blue dragon legacy came from a holy world of divine dragons. Who knew what other kinds of powerful effects his dragon physique had.

The staredown between the two Spirit Emperors was finally when Mao Tongxiao let out a melodic laugh, "Grandpa Hu, nobody else is going to bid so how about you just give me this Frostfire Flower for one kilogram of yellow spiritual crystal?"

"Hmph, it's only over when I say it's over! Xiaoxiao, when did you get so daring, you even want to haggle with this old man?" Hu Bao grumbled.

"Hehehe, come on, you know that my price is good. This Frostfire Flower is good but its value is still only at the Spirit Lord Realm. Just like you said, this item can be useful in the right hands but worthless in others."

"You... who knows what kind of tricks your Frostfire Sect has. You say its effectiveness is at the Spirit Lord Realm, who can know for sure? My name is Golden Basin, I still have the reputation of the Golden Basin Auction House to uphold!" The obstinate old man declared loudly.

At this, Mao Tongxiao stood up from her seat. She walked up to the platform before Hu Bao and then bowed deeply, her torso becoming parallel to the floor. Many were stunned by this display of respect. Even though Hu Bao was more senior, their cultivations were the same. Thus, it wasn't often that one immortal from a different faction showed such deference to another.

"Golden Emperor Hu, if you will sell me this Frostfire Flower, the Frostfire Nation as a whole will owe the Golden Basin Auction House a deep debt of gratitude. I have already said that I have been looking for this flower for a hundred years. You don't need to know anymore to understand the implications. This flower is very important to my people. My previous offer was indeed a little lacking and I apologize. I will offer you five kilograms of yellow spiritual crystal."

Hu Bao laughed merrily, his mood suddenly swinging back, "Hahaha! Good, I accept!"

He hurriedly helped Mao Tongxiao up and handed her the flower within its case. The pair of Spirit Emperors, the most powerful individuals present shared another laugh, uncaring about the lesser beings around them.

"This debt of gratitude from the Frostfire Nation is probably too heavy for me to fully accept. However, I haven't met that old dog Frostfire Inferno in a few centuries. Perhaps I can visit sometime. I've been thinking about him recently, how is he doing?"

Mao Tongxiao bowed her head slightly, "Honored husband is doing excellently. He often brings up your name as well. You may visit us anytime you wish!"

"Good, good! Hahaha, I haven't been this happy in years. Alright, the auction is adjourned for lunch. Xiaoxiao, come, I've prepared some special delicacies that I know you'll like!"

With that, the two Spirit Emperors flew up and disappeared into an upper balcony that overlooked the auction hall. Groups of immortals also left to attend various banquets prepared for them.

Chen Wentian remained in his seat and pondered the previous scene with great interest. This friendly exchange between Hu Bao and Mao Tongxiao had deeper implications than just a future visit. The Frostfire Nation was part of the Seven Potentates. The Golden Basin Auction House was a wholly separate power that existed on a relatively equal footing. For Mao Tongxiao to act like this, it represented a shift in the relationship between Frostfire Nation and the Golden Basin Auction House.

Perhaps the auction house and the Seven Potentates were going to much closer from now on. Or, perhaps just the Frostfire Nation acting independently, thus creating a rift within the alliance of the Seven Potentates. Either way, it seemed that a great storm was on the horizon which might upend the power structure of the southern regions.

Chen Wentian was skilled at causing such storms of chaos. He was skilled at taking advantage of existing and underlying conflicts and blowing them out of proportion. And he was also skilled at obtaining the most benefits possible from the ensuing mayhem.

Chapter 457: Familiar or Unfamiliar (I)

After leisurely lunch, Mao Tongxiao did not return. The other Spirit Emperors also left. They all came to get a glimpse of her and enjoy a banquet together. Outside of that, there was nothing else here that could hold the interest of venerable cultivators in their realm.

The afternoon session of the Grand Annual Auction started with great energy and enthusiasm. The bids came in fast and the prices rose even faster. Many people had been holding back in the morning. The auction house also held back some of the best items. These two factors combined to increase the ferocity of competition.

Those members of the Seven Potentates of Jiannan seemed to be in a particularly bad mood. It probably had something to do with Mao Tongxiao's actions but they were out to bully everyone and anyone. They tried to win every item and raised the price to ridiculous levels against people they disliked.

The entire faction brought out their combined wealth. Perhaps feeling a little insecure, they were declaring their strength to the world. Those without deep backgrounds that tried to fight back were quickly put in their place.

Chen Wentian naturally suffered as a result. He had wanted to buy another big-ticket item around the price of five kilograms of orange spiritual crystal but found himself frustrated at every turn. After getting outbid three times in a row, he simply started bidding on every single random item for the hell of it.

Yang Gehu and the other idiots of the Seven Potentates were suspicious of his actions but they bid anyway. It didn't help that each item was rare and valuable. There was someone who desperately wanted it. Even if the Seven Potentates did not end up winning an item, it went to other unnamed powers and factions that were present.

By the end, Chen Wentian was only able to buy one more item, an insignificant dance choreography at the lesser realms. It was probably only worth a few million taels of gold but he had to pay ten times that amount just to maintain his act.

"Alright! That's it!" Auction Master Hu Bao laughed in a way that only a businessman could, "The last item of the Grand Annual Auction has been sold. This brings this grand event to a close. A gracious thank you to each and every honored guest to participated today. I hope you all have obtained what you wish for, I hope it will aid your Sacred Daughters in their paths towards the immortal realms!"

There was a round of polite applause. Some of the attendees were satisfied with the results. Many weren't. Lots of people blamed the Seven Potentates and secretly cursed their entire family line. But there was nothing they could do.

A fight using money was one of the most straightforward and fair fights. Whoever had the most money won and the Seven Potentates, as an alliance, had the most money by far. They also supported a lot of Sacred Daughters so all the items they overpaid for wouldn't even go to waste.

Hu Bao swished his horsetail whisk and continued, "This auction has come to a close but the Golden Citadel is still open for business! There are many specialty stores that may hold items of interest. They may even hold some items that may be useful for your Sacred Daughters. Please don't immediately. Feel free to look around. Hahaha!"

With that, he ascended from the center platform and disappeared into an upper room. The guest began to disperse, leaving through the various doors that led out of the circular auction hall. Chen Wentian got up leisurely with an ambivalent expression. He wasn't really disappointed as the auction had largely gone the way he had expected. Even if it hadn't, he had already prepared contingencies.

He strolled out of the auction hall and before he could go anywhere else, a rude voice stopped him in his tracks.

"Chen Wentian, wait!"

He turned around and was met with several spiritual auras. Among them was none other than Yang Gehu but the other two, he did not recognize.

"Immortal Bamboo Wave Yang Gehu... and two respected lords that I do not recognize, do you need anything?" Chen Wentian asked evenly.

"Immortal Cascading Serpent Zhu Zhi, the Beast Mountain Alliance!" The man to the left of Yang Gehu declared loudly.

He was a huge specimen of a human being. Yang Gehu was already taller than Chen Wentian but this Zhu Zhi was even taller. He had a rugged face with a strong jaw, messy hair, and a thick, well-built body.

"Immortal Soaring Star Wei Wuyan, the Starry Wei Clan!" The one to the right said with a smooth voice, waving a wooden fan about in front of his chest with the utmost style and refinement.

He was a stark contrast to the other one. His build was average, similar to Chen Wentian, but his features were soft and elegant, like a sheltered prince. His skin was smooth, his eyes were sharp. His hair was tied up in an intricate headpiece and not a single strand was out of place. He was undeniably

handsome to the point that he could be described as beautiful. From a distance, he might have been mistaken for a woman.

Chen Wentian coughed awkwardly, "Well met, well met. Apologies for my lack of knowledge about the Seven Potentates but I am unfamiliar with you three. Do you have any business with me?"

A loud scoff came from Zhu Zhi. Wei Yuyan didn't say anything but studied Chen Wentian with a curious, discerning eye.

"You may not know much about us but we all know about you." Yang Gehu sneered, "We know you are the acolyte of one Long Yifei. We also know that you are not worthy of a woman like her. If this auction was any evidence, you won't be able to support her all and will completely waste her talent!"

Chen Wentian remained calm and cocked his head to one side quizzically, "How much do you really know about me to say such things? Just from a single auction?" He smiled mysteriously and waved his hand, "Thank you for your concern on my behalf but how I provide for my woman is not the concern of outsiders!"

The large Zhu Zhi laughed harshly, "Who says we are outsiders? We said we know about you and Long Yifei, there is no room for you to doubt our words! What do you have to say for yourself, only being able to buy two measly items? And you're still standing here trying to act cocky. Do you even understand anything? Do you want to get humiliated at the Gift Giving Ceremony? Do you want Long Yifei to lose face in front of the whole Order?"

"Oh, really?" Chen Wentian said with sudden interest, his mind turning quickly. A few ideas quickly popped into his mind and they seemed like the most likely explanation, "Immortal Zhu, you wouldn't happen to be related to Immortal Adoring Poet Zhu Yao'er?"

Chapter 458: Familiar or Unfamiliar (II)

This was the only possibility Chen Wentian could think of. He always had a bad impression of that catty woman. She had also mentioned a talented brother. It could have been a real brother, a cousin, or perhaps a martial brother. Some immortal families also tended to be quite large, especially if they had an amorous immortal who lived for hundreds of years and took in countless concubines.

At his words, Zhu Zhi's eyes widened and he shot his two companions a look.

This caused Wei Wuyan to chuckle as he waved his fan, "Brother Zhu, didn't I tell you, Immortal Chen is smarter than you expected."

While Zhu Zhi wasn't totally unremarkable aside from his large stature, this Wei Wuyan was still an enigma. He gave off the impression of someone who spoke not a single word of truth to outsiders, someone who kept their true thoughts so deep inside that perhaps not even their parents or wives knew who they truly were. Compared to the two idiots of Yang Gehu and Zhu Shi, this type of person was the most troublesome.

Chen Wentian turned toward Wei Wuyan. Having one suspicion confirmed, the other suspicion was probably correct as well, "And you, Immortal Wei, although I have heard of your Starry Wei Clan, I am unfamiliar with any immortals surnamed Wei. However, my Sacred Daughter has made a few acquaintances at the school. What is your relation to the first-year Sacred Daughter named Wei Shuangshuang?"

Wei Wuyan closed his fan with a snap and bowed his head ever-so-slightly, "You guessed well, Immortal Chen. This one here is the elder brother of Zhu Yao'er who assisted you and Long Yifei in the past. Whereas Wei Shuangshuang is a talented youngster of my Starry Wei Clan. I am naturally well versed in matters related to her, especially those within her circle of friends."

Chen Wentian cupped his hands together in a more respectful salute, "I see, I see. It seems that the Virtuous Order is quite a close-knit community. I didn't expect to meet people with such connections to my Sacred Daughter so quickly."

His words were courteous but inside, his mind was in a bit of turmoil. He wasn't worried about Wei Wuyan but about Zhu Zhi. He was the brother of Zhu Yao'er, the prioress who had visited Ten Thousand Flower Valley, who knew about Long Yifei's talent as a divine daughter.

It was difficult to guess how much Zhu Zhi knew exactly. The abbesses had promised that Long Yifei's secret would be kept for as long as possible. Zhu Yao'er had even taken a spiritual oath. It didn't benefit the Order at all for Long Yifei to fall into the hands of the Seven Potentates. But since Zhu Yao'er came from the Beast Mountain Alliance, it was natural to assume that her loyalty was split. Perhaps she was already starting to leak hints to her people...

Chen Wentian turned to the large man, "Immortal Zhu, may I ask, you must be close with your sister Prioress Zhu? With such close relations within the Order's hierarchy, the Beast Mountain Alliance is more amazing than I expected. As such, although we are unfamiliar, it can still be considered that we are familiar with each other!"

"Hahaha, I guess you can say that!" Zhu Zhi answered disarmingly.

Chen Wentian joined in the laughter, "I hope Prioress Zhu has said good things about Long Yifei. My Sacred Daughter is just a weak lass that came from the subcontinents but I hope that she can do well."

"That's right! Yao'er has told me that your girl's talent is excellent! We wouldn't bother paying attention to her unless this was true!" Zhu Zhi answered.

So... that slut Zhu Yao'er had really blabbed her mouth. After she returned home, she probably couldn't wait to find every possible way to evade the restrictions of the spiritual oath. This order of supposedly virtuous women was really a pit of snakes.

But before Chen Wentian could pry any further, Wei Wuyan tapped the larger man's chest with his fan as a warning. He then smiled at Chen Wentian and said, "Please excuse my brother's words. He was merely a bit overexcited by the mention of his sister who he is extremely proud of."

"Ah, understandable." Chen Wentian responded with the fakest of smiles, "What about you, Immortal Wei? Why are you interested in my Fei'er? Although she is my precious pearl, she can't compare to ladies of the continent such as Wei Shuangshuang."

He followed with a dramatic sigh, "My only wish is for her to finish four years of schooling smoothly. I don't want her to be bullied or for her to run into trouble. Then I will take her back to the Eastern Sanmu Subcontinent and live out a peaceful life!"

"Heh, Immortal Chen certainly has a way with words. Do you not have any faith in your Sacred Daughter? She could really thrive in the Order if she received adequate support." Wei Wuyan said.

His words were probing but Chen Wentian refused to play his game. "No, no. It would be a waste! You all must be mistaken. Her talent is merely average. She is incompetent. We are not destined to stay in the main continent."

"Enough! Enough of this pointless blabbering!" Yang Gehu shouted, finally running out of patience. He ignored Wei Wuyan and continued, "I will get straight to the point. We don't care about you. We don't care how incompetent you are; we knew that. But Long Yifei is a rare gem, she deserves to be cultivated. She deserves the best resources; she deserves a man who can support her future progress as she steps into the immortal realms!"

He leaned forward and pointed a finger at Chen Wentian, "You should know how useless you are? You could only buy two worthless items today. They can't even be considered gifts. I am telling you right now, if you don't have any confidence, then step aside, the Seven Potentates will take her in and support her. It is the only way she will grow into the woman she was meant to be!"

And there it was, the ultimatum. Chen Wentian had expected it but it still sounded supremely insulting in person. He glanced at Yang Gehu, then at Zhu Zhi, then came to a rest at Wei Yuyan.

"Immortal Wei, is this what you think as well?" Chen Wentian asked.

Wei Wuyan unfurled his fan and held it against his face, perhaps hiding a smile, "Immortal Chen, although Brother Yang's words are a bit coarse, he speaks the truth. Long Yifei indeed has splendid talent and her future should not be limited to a mere four years of basic schooling at the Order. We are willing to support her and of course, we are willing to provide adequate compensation for your troubles."

Chen Wentian didn't answer immediately. He put on a troubled expression, pretending to consider the offer seriously. "This... this is a serious matter..."

Wei Wuyan let a satisfied chuckle, "Take some time to think about it. Think about what is best for you and what is best for her. I promise, our compensation to you will not be light."

He cupped his hands together and nodded his head in parting.

"Immortal Chen." He said and turned to leave.

The oversized Zhu Zhi followed. Yang Gehu shot one last arrogant glare at Chen Wentian and went after them.

Chen Wentian watched the three stooges disappear into the crowd of immortals leaving the auction hall. They probably felt that their combination of threats and offer of compensation had a satisfactory effect on him. They couldn't be further from the truth.

He knew that he couldn't fight the Seven Potentates of Jiannan head-on but that didn't mean he couldn't fight using other methods. If anything, seeing the faces of these people reminded him of the past when he had been bullied by rich princes and insufferable young masters. It only made him want to destroy them even more.

He scoffed to himself and left the busy hallway. He headed towards a set of stairs leading to the upper floors and the Spirit Lord that stood guard beside it.

Chen Wentian greeted the man and retrieved the badge that he had recently received and presented it.

Upon seeing the special badge, the immortal let him through with a nod and a discrete smile, "Immortal Blue Dragon Chen Wentian, please head up to the fourth floor. The Auction Master is waiting for you."

Chapter 459: Chen Wentian's Play (I)

It had to be said that Chen Wentian's badge was special and entirely different from the ones given to the other auction attendees. Not everyone could get an audience with the Auction Master, a venerable Spirit Emperor, especially not a random Spirit Lord. But he was able to because he already had a unique status in the Golden Basin Auction House. It was all due to an incident that took place two weeks ago...

Chen Wentian stood in an underground chamber, dug out of the earth, just one meter below the surface. He was utilizing the soul and body of Red Sun Captain Wang Landi, a senior member of the Red Sun Gang. He was currently participating in an ambush. It was part of a plan he had concocted as soon as he had stepped foot onto the Martial Brilliance Continent.

The Red Sun Gang was a rogue entity, an immortal gang that roamed the land without regard laws of the land or human decency. They robbed, pillaged, and raped everywhere they went. They were led by the two bald fiends known as Immortal Red Dusk Wang Yipo and Immortal Red Dawn Wang Yibo.

These two had insatiable greed for women and wealth. It was this greed that Chen Wentian took advantage of to encourage them to commit to a risky ambush. Their target was an agent of the Golden Basin Auction House while that person was out in the provinces conducting business. Since the Grand Annual Auction was just around the corner, that agent was bound to be carrying a sizable amount of loot that would soon be sold.

Thus, the two immortals of Red Sun Gang and twenty of their strongest mortal fighters were currently hiding underground around a certain local immortal sect that the agent was scheduled to visit.

While Chen Wentian was minding his business, waiting for the time to pass by, an immortal aura swept over him.

"Wang Landi, is it time yet?" Immortal Red Dawn Wang Yibo said. "I'm bored out of my mind. I knew I should have brought a few women here."

This earned him a slap across the back of the head from his brother.

"Idiot, who's going to look after them when we get into a fight." Immortal Red Dusk Wang Yipo said, "Can't you keep it in your pants for a few hours? You should learn from your older brother; you can savor a woman's beauty without ruining them immediately. Let them serve you wine, dance for you, and build some intimacy with them first. Then, when you finally pluck their fruit, it will taste many times better."

"Haha, don't spout excuses just because you have difficulty getting it up. What bullshit. The best way to savor a beauty is by spreading their legs! And, when did you become my older brother?"

"You! I was born one minute before you!"

"Says who!"

"Mama told me before she passed!"

"Liar! She said that to me!"

Chen Wentian coughed lightly. The underground hiding hole was already small. It wouldn't be able to withstand two immortals brawling.

"What?"

"What!"

Both immortals turned to Chen Wentian with fire in their eyes.

"My lords," Chen Wentian said, unfazed by their pressure, "I received a signal from my spy within the sect, the agent has arrived. Give it a few more minutes and we should get into position."

The immortal sect the auction house agent was visiting was known as the Mount Brilliance School. It was located at the foot of a stratovolcano that was its namesake. This lonely volcanic mountain jutted out from the surrounding countryside like a sore thumb. Its peak stood tall amongst the clouds, clad in thick glaciers year-round.

The school had no specific specialty. Some practiced flame arts and some practiced sword arts. Others focused on ice arts or even the cultivation of herbs and flowers. There was nothing here that would draw an agent from such a prestigious power as the Golden Basin Auction House, except for a rare and heavenly treasure. f(r)eewebn(o)vel.com

Chen Wentian had discovered this bit of information by accident. Wang Landi, the living soul he had taken over, was a trickster and spy by trade. He had already been working on infiltrating the Golden Basin Auction House when Chen Wentian took over which had saved him a lot of time and effort.

With Chen Wentian's abilities and Wang Landi's established contacts, aliases, and assets, it was possible to intercept a small number of messages between various departments of the auction house. This led him to the Mount Brilliance School which had requested an audience with an agent to sell a wildly

expensive and also particularly sensitive item. This item also could not be easily transported which is why the agent had to come in person to take a look.

And since Chen Wentian was now involved, it was relatively easy for him to take over another living soul within the school who was a senior disciple...

Chen Wentian looked up at the sky as a gentle wave of immortal energy swept down.

"Master, our honored guest has finally arrived."

He was within the living soul of Huang Ducai, an unremarkable man in his late forties. His master was Immortal Bleeding Fist Luo Ye, the sect master of the Mount Brilliance School, who was already over two hundred years old.

"Hoh... finally." The elderly sect master beside him answered, his voice wispy like the wind. "Our Mount Brilliance School will finally have a chance to shine across the continent!"

A few moments later, a figure in ostentatious golden robes landed before them with a small gust of wind. The immortal was relatively youthful, with a face that was around the same age Huang Ducai. Yet one was a powerful immortal agent of the Golden Basin Auction House while the other was a useless disciple of an insignificant sect.

"Welcome to the Mount Brilliance School, I am Immortal Bleeding Fist Luo Ye." The elder immortal said with a bow. His lips quivered slightly and his eyes wavered, not daring to look up. The difference between the two immortals was far beyond their comparable cultivation.

"Lord Luo is too courteous. How can I as a junior receive such a bow from a senior such as yourself?" The other immortal said with a chuckle and helped Luo Ye up, "I am Immortal Soaring Mist Xu Kaicheng, buying agent for the Golden Basin Auction House."

"Well met. Well met." Luo Ye mumbled. He gestured to the people behind him, "These are my senior disciples."

"Greetings, Lord Xu!"

"Greetings, Lord Xu!"

Xu Kaicheng barely glanced at them, still focused on Luo Ye with an air of anticipation.

Luo Ye led his guest inside the sect building and into a secluded sitting room. They fumbled through some more formalities and barely got through pouring the tea before Xu Kaicheng finally lost his patience.

"Senior Luo, how about we get to business first? If what you having is truly amazing as you claim, there will be plenty of time for tea and banquets after, I promise."

"Hoh... an energetic youth, alright. Where to begin..." Luo Ye mumbled as he retold the tale.

The Mount Brilliance School was situated at the foot of their namesake, Mount Brilliance. It was an immortal mountain that contained several profound and immortal sources of spiritual energy. The magma chamber of the volcano was a source of fire-attribute spiritual energy. The thick arctic glaciers that covered most of the peak were a source of ice-attribute spiritual energy. As a result, the land around it was teeming with life and an excellent place for ordinary cultivators.

Although it was an immortal mountain, nothing remarkable happened in the one-hundred-year history of the Mount Brilliance School. Immortal Bleeding Fist Luo Ye had high hopes for the place when he first arrived but he found nothing of interest around the mountain. Mount Brilliance was supposed to be a volcano but it never erupted once in all the times he had resided next to it.

That all changed a few months ago. The mountain rumbled for several days straight and spewed out black smoke. There was no catastrophic eruption but the disciples had found something. A crack had formed in the glacier, leading them down into the bowls of the mountain for the first time. There, they found a small shrub with a solitary flower bulb that was beginning to bloom.

"What?" Xu Kaicheng shouted, leaping to his feet.

Spiritual energy billowed from his body in great waves. His eyes flashed with excitement.

"A flower! Was it pink? How many petals did it have? Has it bloomed already?" He blurted.

Luo Ye was taken aback for a second but quickly recovered, "Yes, it was pink, with seven petals. It still has not fully bloomed though it is getting close. It is about the size of my palm. Lord Xu, do you happen to know of this flower?"

Xu Kaicheng breathed heavily for a while before bursting out in laughter, "Hahaha! It's a Frostfire Flower! A Frostfire Flower, I'm sure of it! It only grows in areas with a perfect harmony of ice and fire spiritual energies. I thought all wild Frostfire Flowers had been eradicated by the Frostfire Nation but it seems they actually missed one! Hahaha! Lord Luo, you and I are going to be very rich people soon!"

"Really..."

Boom! Boom!

A series of explosions struck without warning.

"We're under attack!"

"Help!"

Screams rang out all over the sect.

Chapter 460: Chen Wentian's Play (II)

The two immortals, Immortal Bleeding Fist Luo Ye and Immortal Soaring Mist Xu Kaicheng, flew out of the room and into the air. From this vantage point, they could see a force of two enemy Spirit Lords and a gaggle of lower realm fighters attacking the entrance of the sect. They were making quick work of

various boobytraps and defenses as well as members of the sect that were brave and dumb enough to confront them.

Luo Ye turned around and hurried towards the sect's highest point, the rooftop of a nearby pagoda. Once there, he immediately activated the sect-wide defensive array. With a deep thrum of spiritual energy, a white, translucent shield erupted from the roof, arcing down to the inner walls of the sect.

The sound of explosions ceased and a momentary calm fell upon the Mount Brilliance School.

Xu Kaicheng flew up next to the elder immortal, "Lord Luo, are you alright?"

He only asked this because Luo Ye seemed to be visibly struggling. Defensive arrays that protected entire sects were not all created equal. Some relied on vast stores of spiritual crystals, others on the innate advantage of their environment. The Mount Brilliance School seemed to be neither and relied mostly on the spiritual energy of the sect master.

"I can manage..." Luo Ye wheezed, "The attackers are only two Spirit Lords bandits. I can hold for a day at least. Don't worry!"

"Alright, stay put, I will see what they want."

"Okay."

Xu Kaicheng flew to the edge of the protective shell of spiritual energy. On the other side, the outer court of the sect was already in ruins. The disciples there were either dead or captured, they had no time to react. And as outer court disciples, they were intended as cannon fodder for situations like this from the beginning.

"Who are you two?" Xu Kaicheng shouted, "Do you know that it is a crime punishable by death to attack an immortal sect? The Immortal Association will take your heads!"

A pair of roaring laughs met his challenge. Immortal Red Dusk Wang Yipo and Immortal Red Dawn Wang Yibo emerged from the billowing smoke and burning buildings. They were bare-chested, their fists clad in red flames, like two avatars of destruction.

"The Immortal Association has tried for many years and yet we are still alive and well!" Wang Yipo said.

"That's right! Hahaha!" Wang Yibo added.

Xu Kaicheng's eyes narrowed, "I know you two... The Bald-headed Rapist Twins. Your bounties are worth five kilograms of orange spiritual crystal each. I've already sent for help and they will arrive quickly. If you don't want to donate your heads to me, I suggested you leave now."

"Did you hear him, what arrogance!" Wang Yibo answered.

Wang Yipo chuckled and shook his head, "People of the Golden Basin Auction House have certainly grown arrogant in recent years."

"You know who I am?" Xu Kaicheng demanded.

"Hahaha, I know exactly who you are. You are exactly the person we want. Why else would we attack a useless immortal sect like this?"

"You..."

"Alright, enough talk. Resume the attack!"

A roar rose among the bandits. The two immortal bandit lords flew around the defensive array, smashing their fists against various areas and blasting other places with searing flames.

The twenty or so Spirit Initiate Realm bandits also brought out a large pile of metallic orbs and started chucking them at the shield. These were infused with flame spiritual energy from the twins and could explode with tremendous destructive power.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

An incessant firestorm ravaged the surroundings of the Mount Brilliance School. Explosions shook the ground one after another. The protective array groaned under the strain of the combined attack and occasionally even flickered dangerously.

The sect master, Luo Ye, seemed to hold up to the attack but it was a great struggle. The protective array would have had no problem against a single immortal. Two immortals were troublesome but not impossible. But with the addition of such destructive firebombs, it already surpassed what the array was originally designed for.

Xu Kaicheng could only sit there and watch. Staying inside the array was a better choice compared to going out there and facing the ugly twins one versus two. He hoped the Luo Ye would be able to withstand it for another hour until help arrived.

Nobody realized that this incident was wholly Chen Wentian's play. Four immortals and countless mortal disciples were all within his grasp. Their lives were being played by him, the puppet master. Although his main body was not yet present, he had enough souls here to control the situation and guide it in his favor.

He held no idle thoughts about whether any of this was right or wrong. This was merely his Dao, his way of doing things, his play. The Mount Brilliance School was innocent in all of this, he had no quarrel with them. They were simply unlucky. And in this vast world of cultivation, a certain amount of luck was required to survive.

The continued for many tense minutes. While the immortals faced off, so did the mortals. The attacking bandits still had plenty of firebombs. The defending core disciples weren't idle either as they supplied spiritual crystals to replenish the spiritual energy their master and the protective array were continuously expending.

The two living souls under Chen Wentian's control participated on both sides. Red Sun Captain Wang Landi directed the bandits. Senior disciple Huang Ducai organized the disciples. Two souls worked against each other but also together for the prime soul.

The play couldn't work without Wang Landi leading the bandits here. It also couldn't work without Huang Ducai who had perhaps the most important role.

As a senior disciple, Huang Ducai was responsible for one of the anchor points of the protective array. Faced with such a heavy attack, the red spiritual crystals that powered the anchor had to be swapped out rapidly. This was his task which he had to perform without fail or else the entire array would be in jeopardy.

And because he was a senior disciple, he held the utmost trust in the sect. Nobody came by to actually check that he was replenishing the spiritual crystals. Nobody felt the need to, not even the sect master.

"Alright, it's here!" Chen Wentian, in Wang Landi's body, shouted, "This is the weak point."

He and five other bandits arrived in front of an unremarkable section of the inner wall. They carried leather bags full of firebombs.

"Captain Wang, how do you know it's here?" One person asked.

"Shut up and do as I say! Get ready, on three!" Chen Wentian said and raised two bombs in each hand, "One... two... THREE!"

A volley of firebombs infused with immortal flame energy smashed against the protected array.

Boom! Boom!

The spiritual energy shield flickered heavily and then started to crack. This was the exact location of the anchor that Huang Ducai had been responsible for, the one that had already been depleted of spiritual energy!

Ka! Cha!

The protective array started to fail. A great number of jagged fissures appeared, starting from the ground and radiating upward. This was followed by a surge of spiritual energy that swept over the battle as the pale-white dome blinked out of existence.

Atop the central pagoda, the feedback of chaotic energy as the array failed crashed into Luo Ye's body. It happened too quickly for him to react. He couldn't believe that the array had fallen so quickly.

"Gahh!" He let out a gasping cry.

A fountain of fresh blood sprayed out of his mouth as he fell limply from the roof.