

Resonance 581

Chapter 0581: Defeating the Demon Together

When the hulking silhouette behind Lan Lan bowed, there was a clear moment when everyone could feel the flow of worldly natural energy bend with it. The prestige of a King was something that no one, not even nature itself, could deny. The power to shape life and death itself.

Although it was only a shadow of a King and not a King itself, a kowtow still held great power.

And now there was a disturbance in the flow... that the Bloodtailed Other had to resolve.

BANG!

The void around the Bloodtailed Other warped against it, shearing away at its very being. The Other twisted and jerked against the attack.

“Eek!”

Again it giggled, but this time out of reflex. In its eyes was a deep-seated fear for its life.

How could these Heavenly Pearl Stage humans cause it so much harm?

The Bloodtailed Other no longer dared to hold back. It had expended considerable energy facing them up till now as well. Along with the cleansing barrier's suppression, it was currently weaker than it had ever been before.

The tail started moving again, spraying crimson droplets that turned into red talismans.

On each one was the moving portrait of a ghostly face, wailing in misery.

The worldly natural energy had gathered for the attack, and yet there was a vacuum around the Bloodtailed Other where no worldly natural energy could enter.

As a result, the worldly natural energy formed beautiful balls of energy that hovered all around the edge of the vacuum, caging the Bloodtailed Other in.

It was a sight of splendor, and even the First Princess' breath caught in her throat. Lan Lan's Duke Art was the ultimate trump card that all of them feared, and he had yet to reveal it in its true glory before now. With this reveal, any doubts that they might have about its power were completely erased.

The power in those energy balls had even them shivering.

Like a swarm of angry hornets, they buzzed around the vacuum, seeking a way in. There was no way that any of them could have defended against it alone.

Boom!

Each energy ball morphed into a streak of light that blazed inwards like a comet, smashing painfully into the Bloodtailed Other.

The sound of the meteor-like balls smashing through was music to the students' ears.

Boom! Rumble!

They first blasted through the blood talismans, smashing the ghostly faces into shreds.

As the blood talismans fell apart, the Bloodtailed Other looked more and more desperate. It continued to swing its tail furiously, sending out ever more droplets of blood energy to defend against the worldly natural energy balls.

Clearly, it was being tired out at speed.

Most obvious of all was the tail, which had shrunk to half of its original thirty-meter length.

"If only Senior Lan Lan was just a bit stronger. If he had the second kowtow, the Greater Heavenly Disaster Class Other could probably be wiped out here and now," Jing Taixu said hopefully.

"It's already amazing that he can force a Heavenly Resonance Stage Greater Heavenly Disaster Class to this state while at the Heavenly Pearl Stage himself," Lu Ming said.

"His Duke Art is much stronger than mine for sure," Sun Dasheng said begrudgingly. "No wonder he's the strongest Four Star Hall student."

Li Luo was inclined to agree. Lan Lan's fighting power was indeed the strongest out of all the Heavenly Pearl Stage cultivators that he had seen. The First Princess and Gong Shenjun were definitely weaker than him.

"Duke Art... something special indeed."

Li Luo's eyes were shining as he gazed upon the kingly figure. This level of resonance art was one that he aspired to acquire as well, but it was just too difficult to think of mastering while only at the Resonant Master Stage himself. Perhaps if he made it to the Earth Fiend Tier.

After all, he would have the power of triple resonances then. "Let's keep it up! The Bloodtailed Other is all but spent. Let's see who can last till the end!" the First Princess exhorted, her own face gray from exhaustion.

The other leaders were equally spent, but they knew that this was where the decider was going to be. Every blow now might well be the straw that broke the camel's back.

As a result, each of them continued to keep up the attacks, digging deep into their resonant palaces for their last dregs of power.

Their attacks were getting further as well now as the Bloodtailed Other was busy dealing with the energy balls. It activated the weakened pool of blood defense around it again, sending out tendrils of blood that blocked the new wave of attacks.

Boom, boom, boom!

The great battle raged on between two tired sides.

Li Luo and the others watched on in fearful awe. The Greater Heavenly Disaster Class Other had clearly been worn down by many different attacks, and yet it was still defending well against the elite squad leaders.

"Oh? Is senior Jiang going to make her move?!" Lu Ming suddenly exclaimed.

Li Luo and the others looked to see Jiang Qing'e appear outside of the battle area, charging up her light resonant energy.

"She might have a ninth-grade light resonance, but she's still only a Fiend Finisher Tier Earth Fiend. Surely she can't be of much help in an actual power fight, right?" Jing Taixu said doubtfully.

"Maybe she can," Li Luo said. "I mean, the difference between a quasi ninth-grade and a true ninth-grade is huge. Seriously huge. Like, what the hell is even quasi? Just call it eighth-grade, right?"

Jing Taixu scowled, his face darkening.

High in the sky, Jiang Qing'e had summoned her ninth-grade light spirit avatar. In a battle where ordinary Fiend Finisher cultivators would not dare to interrupt, she dared. The fighters were already weakened, and she had strength beyond that of an ordinary Fiend Finisher cultivator, perhaps even on par with some Heavenly Pearl Stage cultivators.

Besides, her light resonant energy was a natural counter to the Others. As a result, her attacks were probably not much weaker compared to what the other squad leaders could currently produce.

Jiang Qing'e raised her hand, charging her sword until the lines of power glowed golden. Behind her, the ninth-grade light spirit avatar opened its mouth and produced a lump of what looked like white gold, which she placed on her sword.

"High grade dragon-general resonance art, Holy Spirit Sword Technique, Heavenly Filet!"

Another brilliant light soared out towards the Bloodtailed Other, twisting carefully through the pool of blood and landing squarely on its brow.

[Chapter 0582: Crimson Knight-General Appears](#)

Swoosh!

The fileting sword attack bore a hole through the Bloodtailed Other's forehead in an instant, a clean, well-placed, and decently powerful attack from an unexpected direction. Any ordinary person would have died instantly from such a wound, but the Bloodtailed Other demonstrated incredible resilience and vitality. It screamed, still alive.

Still, it was undeniably a heavy wound, inflicted with high technical skill and shifting the balance of the fight.

The Bloodtailed Other's tail shrank rapidly again, and the corruptive aura around it was diminished further as well.

"Qing'e, well done!" the First Princess cried out happily. This attack had been the most effective shot landed on the Bloodtailed Other so far.

Boom!

The remaining balls of light from Lan Lan's attack continued to streak in mercilessly, intent on taking down their injured opponent. A few managed to connect successfully, further injuring the Bloodtailed Other.

It was driven backwards again and again, tanking a series of wounds in quick succession. Soon, even its illusion of human beauty started fading, revealing the horrific, pulpy flesh below.

Lan Lan's face was pale, sweating pouring off his brow. He desperately stared at the Bloodtailed Other, even as the kingly figure behind him started to wane.

He was at his limit too.

The resonant power within him was dry as a desert.

Still, he had done what he needed to do. Although Jiang Qing'e had been the one to land the crucial blow, everyone present understood that if not for his Three Kowtows of the Enlightened Sage burning through its defenses, no Fiend Finisher cultivator would have ever managed to hurt the Bloodtailed Other for real.

Lan Lan was the real MVP here.

"We won!" Lu Ming threw her hands up in the air happily.

Sun Dasheng and Jing Taixu pumped their fists excitedly as well.

Finally, a glimmer of hope in this fight.

Li Luo, on the other hand, was rather worried. There was still no trace of the crimson knight-general up until now.

The crimson knight-general was the puppet master behind what had happened at the Red Clay Province, and he was of unknown strength. If he had truly run away, then all was well and good, and they could end the mixed-level competition with no other problems. But what if he was still here, waiting for his chance?

"We can't dawdle anymore," he muttered to himself. "The Bloodtailed Other needs to be finished off quickly."

Lan Lan was of the same mind. "Everyone, use all that you've got. Kill it quickly, allow no turnarounds!" His voice was hoarse from fatigue.

The other squad leaders tiredly nodded in approval, digging deep one last time to deliver the final blow to the grievously injured Bloodtailed Other.

"Eek!"

The Bloodtailed Other squealed, sensing its life being threatened. The bushy, red tail was thrashing in a panicked fashion as it desperately tried to outlast the tired squad leaders' attacks.

Boom!

Just then, there was a huge explosion from underneath the city, and a crater appeared.

A black structure started rising up from the yawning hole, slowly and silently.

Li Luo looked at it with dread. So the worst had happened.

"It's that crimson knight-general!" he shouted desperately to warn the squad leaders.

Lan Lan and the others turned in dismay at his shout.

They had, of course, heard the information regarding the crimson knight-general, but there had been more urgent and deadly concerns up till now... like the Bloodtailed Other.

If the crimson knight-general truly had Heavenly Resonance Stage strength as well, there was no way that they could take on both of them at once.

And since the crimson knight-general had been quiet all this while, they had hoped against hope that he had long since fled. But now they knew that it had all been a trap. The crimson knight-general had been waiting for them to wear themselves out against the Bloodtailed Other.

Rumble! Roar!

As the black altar rose out of the ground, black, runic chains appeared and wrapped around the Bloodtailed Other, securing all four of its limbs as well as its tail.

The Bloodtailed Other struggled, but it was unable to break free.

"What's going on?! Aren't they allies?" the seriously wounded Qin Yue spluttered.

The First Princess did not like the situation one bit. "Something's fishy!" she shouted. "The crimson knight-general wants to seize the Bloodtailed Other! I don't know why, but we must deny him!"

Lan Lan agreed. "Everyone, attack! Kill the Bloodtailed Other!"

All the squad leaders were elites of the Academic Federation. They did not know why it was being done, but they knew that not letting their enemy get away was basic common sense.

All of them attacked again.

It was fruitless. A figure clad in red armor from the black altar rose, and he sent out a single palm attack that blasted all of their attacks into nothingness.

"It's really the crimson knight-general!"

"And he's so damned strong... he's really at the Heavenly Resonance Stage!"

"Hello, ladies and gentlemen." A laughing, muffled voice came from behind his visor. "You want to get rid of the Bloodtailed Other. Consider your job done. Leave it to me now. If you back away, I can allow you to leave unharmed."

They stared at him.

So he was trying to swoop in and take away their prize.

This guy was extremely cunning, of that they were sure.

But if the Bloodtailed Other was not destroyed, would the mixed-level competition even end?

All of them stood frozen, undecided.

Seeing the situation, the crimson knight-general sighed, and his killing intent rose.

"Since you don't know what's good for you, then I'll just have to wipe out an entire generation of elite students in the East Divine Continent."

[Chapter 0583: Jiang Qing'e's Move](#)

"Damn, I can't believe the crimson knight-general's still skulking around!" Lu Ming swore angrily.

"We're in trouble now. That's another Heavenly Resonance Stage enemy to take down. Whether he's at the lesser or greater stage, the squad leaders are all exhausted. How can they fight another one?" Jing Taixu said dispiritedly.

"Son of a bitch!" Sun Dasheng swore.

Li Luo was not happy about the situation either, but he was too busy thinking of a plan to waste time getting angry. He had foreseen such a possibility before, but there was no other way to get around it. The Bloodtailed Other had to be taken down, a nonnegotiable part of the process.

As for the crimson knight-general, he represented the forces that had brought about the Other Disaster that had been the ruin of the Blackwind Empire. They shared a complicated relationship with the Others, but they were equally untrustworthy.

Which meant that their situation was truly shitty.

If the Bloodtailed Other was whisked away a moment away from death, then all they had worked hard for would have been for nothing.

Li Luo stared at the crimson knight-general in the sky, and cold fury crept into his eyes. He looked down at the dark-red bracelet on his wrist. A Heavenly Resonance Stage expert was hard to overcome, but he was not without his own ways of putting up a fight.

The Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf had Greater Heavenly Resonance power, and its strength could be considered elite even at that level. It had been aiming to reach Duke back in the Umbra Cave, and even the grinning demon had been swallowed whole by the wolf. As far as Li Luo could tell, neither the Bloodtailed Other nor the crimson knight-general were comparable in strength.

Which meant that if he were to use this, he would stand a good chance of defeating the crimson knight-general.

Li Luo's eyes flickered. If push came to shove, he would use it, unwilling as he was. He would rather keep this trump card for the Housemeet.

Above him, the First Princess, Lan Lan, and the others were seething quietly. Nobody would appreciate their hard-won fight being claimed by another.

Still, there was nothing else they could do. All eight of them were thoroughly exhausted. The chances of winning against a Heavenly Resonance Stage expert were slim.

"What are we going to do?"

Lan Lan looked down. He had already revealed his Enlightened Sage Scripture and it had wiped him clean of resonant power. He was completely out of this one.

If forced, he might be able to pull out a second Three Kowtows of the Enlightened Sage, but the price to pay would be too terrible to bear.

"I'll give it a try," a quiet voice said.

They all looked to see Jiang Qing'e take a step into the air.

"Qing'e..." the First Princess said, astonished. Although she had a ninth-grade light resonance, she was still only a Fiend Finisher. The gap to the Heavenly Dipper General Stage was too huge, surely.

How was she to face the crimson knight-general, who wasn't even an Other that was weak against light resonance?

The other squad leaders were equally surprised, but this was not the time for naysaying. They had no better idea anyway, and if Jiang Qing'e was stepping forward, then perhaps she had something up her sleeve.

Jiang Qing'e ignored their doubtful looks, clasping her hands together to form a gesture. The ninth-grade light spirit avatar obediently moved back within her body, settling as a glow of light around her torso.

The brilliance of that light resonant energy made even the squad leaders gasp.

Such robust energy... she was indeed stronger than some Heavenly Pearl Stage cultivators they knew!

"Is a ninth-grade light resonance really that unfair?" Qin Yue said in disbelief. The difference between an Earth Fiend and a Heavenly Dipper General was one that they had all experienced firsthand, and they understood best how hard it was to overcome.

And now the Fiend Finisher Tier Jiang Qing'e was delivering power outputs equivalent to the Heavenly Pearl Stage.

Even the First Princess let her surprise and joy show. "Oh, Qing'e, you're such a dear. Who knew you had this hidden!"

Jiang Qing'e's movements were, of course, being watched closely by the crimson knight-general as well. "Ah, a ninth-grade light resonance. I see. No wonder you are so strong. But as I see it, you've only reinforced your resonant power temporarily. How long can you last in that state? One hit? Two?"

"Come find out," she offered calmly.

She extended a hand, then curled two fingers.

Weng!

The thick light resonant energy bunched into threads that weaved themselves into a halo that burned bright and hot, causing a heat blur in the air around it.

Jiang Qing'e attacked decisively, sending the light bunch flying out without hesitation.

The crimson knight-general blinked once. A ninth-grade light resonance was truly a miracle of this world, and not to be underestimated.

His plan had gone perfectly smoothly up to this point. He could not let it fall apart now.

Thinking thus, his armor began to glow red in response, and his crimson resonant power flared out.

Heavenly Resonance Stage!

Finally, his power was officially confirmed to all the witnesses.

Only those at the Heavenly Resonance Stage could ignite the worldly natural energy around them and use it as their own power.

Could Jiang Qing'e's attack really cause harm to the crimson knight-general?

A fiery fist from the crimson knight-general roared out, creating a column of fire that reached the skies. It connected with the light bunch attack from Jiang Qing'e.

But the expected explosion did not happen. Instead, the light vanished at the first moment, winking out completely and suddenly.

The crimson knight-general was stunned.

Was his opponent that weak?

"No!" Reacting too late, he whirled around and saw a stealthy light attack aimed for the Bloodtailed Other!

"Tricked!" So Jiang Qing'e's true intent had been to kill the Bloodtailed Other!

The attack aimed at him had only been a feint!

He was too late to intervene, and again she scored another punishing hit on the Bloodtailed Other.

The students cheered.

"All those with strength left, help her! If we kill the Bloodtailed Other, we can all break our spirit mirrors and leave!" Lan Lan shouted.

Gong Shenjun stepped forward with a suffering smile. "In that case, let me force the impossible and try to help what I can."

He took a deep breath and then spat out a jet of silver light from his mouth. It flew out in the form of a scaled-dragon.

Roar!

The roar of a scaled-dragon could be heard as it flew out beside Jiang Qing'e's attack, clipping on the injured tail of the Bloodtailed Other.

Chapter 0584: Gong Shenjun's Plan

Jiang Qing'e and Gong Shenjun's attacks landed on the already heavily injured Bloodtailed Other, pushing it to the brink of death.

A scream rang out shrilly as the attacks plumed like fireworks of energy.

"How DARE YOU!"

The crimson knight-general was in an absolute rage now. He was outraged that they had pulled a fast one over him. The Bloodtailed Other was the crux of his plan. If Jiang Qing'e really killed it off, then all of this would have been wasted.

In a flash, he was beside the Bloodtailed Other, smothering out the remnants of the attack.

All the students prayed that it would just die, as then they would have succeeded. Unfortunately, it continued to stubbornly cling on to life.

The combined attack from Jiang Qing'e and Gong Shenjun still had not managed to finish it off!

The students' hearts sank again.

"So close!" Lu Ming said in a distressed voice.

If that sneak attack had succeeded, all of them could just break their spirit mirrors and leave the field. But the Bloodtailed Other just refused to die.

"Seems like we're screwed now," Sun Dasheng said, shaking his head.

Even Jing Taixu had given up hope.

Li Luo found it uncanny. Jiang Qing'e's attack had been well-placed. Given how brilliant her calculations usually were, it seemed impossible that she had succeeded in her attack and yet not succeeded in her objective.

There had to be some sort of problem.

But what problem?

She even had the assistance of Gong Shenjun.

"Gong Shenjun?" A cold jolt of fear ran through Li Luo. But surely not... there was no reason for Gong Shenjun to do such a thing.

High in the air, Jiang Qing'e frowned. Her attack had clearly landed on the Bloodtailed Other, and with the light resonant energy countering it, the attack should have been able to wipe it out.

Had she miscalculated?

Her eyes widened, then they went flat with cold fury as she looked at Gong Shenjun.

But in the end, she remained silent.

She had come to the same conclusion as Li Luo, but no one was going to believe them without proof.

Gong Shenjun was all too aware of Jiang Qing'e's suspicion, but he maintained an innocent face, keeping his own eyes firmly on the Bloodtailed Other.

His thoughts drifted back to the eve of the Holy Grail Meet.

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In his father's study.

"Father King, am I hearing this right?" The unshakable Gong Shenjun could not believe the words coming out of the Regent's mouth.

The Regent sat at his study, idly leafing through the pages of his book. He did not even look up. "You heard me right. I'm telling you not to go for the win at the Holy Grail Meet... In fact, if the other Astral Sage College squad seems like they are going to win, run interruption."

Gong Shenjun frowned. "Why is that? I wanted to win this. I think I have the power to win."

"And what is the point of winning it?"

Gong Shenjun frowned. "Well, fame across the East Divine Continent, and the favor of the Astral Sage College."

"And the favor of Astral Sage College. How valuable do you think that is?"

Gong Shenjun was about to speak, but the Regent waved impatiently to cut him off. "If the Astral Sage College wins the Holy Grail Meet, then they will also gain the Dragon Bone Holy Grail, which means that Principal Pang can return from the Umbra Cave. The whole Xia Kingdom will be under his control and power. A King, someone that has power over any king that we put on the throne. Do you know how badly that would spoil the plans that I've painstakingly constructed for years?"

"Even if Principal Pang has no inclination to rule, are we really the rulers with him around? His Majesty is too young to be a threat, but with Principal Pang around, he'll have a powerful backer."

"For our royal rule to continue, the only good Principal Pang is one who forever guards the Umbra Cave, one who never shows his face to the light of day. We never want to see Principal Pang."

"Shenjun," the Regent said slowly, finally looking up at him over his book. "You are a clever child. You understand this, yes?"

Gong Shenjun was silent for a moment. "Have you spoken to Luanyu about this?" he finally asked.

The Regent laughed. "That wench is too naive. She still distrusts me. She has been gathering power against me for all these years, even courting the favor of the school. She is one of our strongest opponents who will do anything to protect her brother. There's no chance I would tell her this. She would not only not support us, she would even turn around and sell us out to the Astral Sage College."

"Hmph, she should think about who has been ruling the Xia Kingdom for all these years. We are the true power here! Not the worthless Astral Sage College. She is blinded by the light of the talent that goes to the Astral Sage College. If that keeps up, the school will become the power of the Xia Kingdom, not us!"

That is why the Astral Sage College must not get the Dragon Bone Holy Grail," the Regent said with utter seriousness.

Gong Shenjun was quiet for a moment, then he slowly nodded.

The Regent's sternness eased up at seeing Gong Shenjun's willingness to cooperate. "But remember, you have to run interference in the most delicate and clever of ways. They must have nothing to pin on you. I don't intend to fall out with the school just yet. You must do this perfectly, and with your talent, I think it can be done."

Gong Shenjun bowed.

"I understand, Father King."

Indeed, Gong Shenjun truly had nullified the attack from Jiang Qing'e and allowed the Bloodtailed Other to live.

Still, he had pulled it off so subtly that no one could detect it, surely.

His mission was accomplished. The Bloodtailed Other lived, and there were no winners for the mixed-level competition.

Chapter 0585: The Crimson Knight-General's Plan

The students groaned when they saw the Bloodtailed Other still alive, but the crimson knight-general heaved a huge sigh of relief.

He turned towards Jiang Qing'e angrily, but he did not strike out. He could sense that the Bloodtailed Other's vitality was fading fast. He could not afford to linger here.

Therefore, he kept his temper in check and relocated to the top of his black altar.

Immediately after, columns of energy started to rise around the altar, glimmering with dark power.

Rumble! Roar!

The Bloodtailed Other thrashed against its chains as it was dragged to the top of the altar, where the columns of power crashed down on it, covering it with mystic runes that began to burn with a pale fire as they touched its skin. It spread like sparks landing on cotton.

"Eek!"

The Bloodtailed Other squealed again.

The crimson knight-general's desire shone brightly in his eyes. "I've brought you up just for this day. Oh, I've waited so long!"

Back when he had first come to the Red Clay Province, the Bloodtailed Other was not this strong yet. In fact, there were stronger Others. But with the help of the crimson knight-general, it had managed to eat the millions of people in Russet Rock City and become as powerful as it was today.

Still, the crimson knight-general had not helped it out of the goodness of his heart. Farmers don't feed their pigs because they don't want them to go hungry.

Today was bacon time.

As the pale flames built up in strength, the crimson knight-general walked into the inferno, letting the flames lap away at him. He stretched out a greedy hand towards the Bloodtailed Other, as if he were the suicidal lover ready to die with his beloved.

Many of the students stared, mouth agape.

"Is he crazy?" Qin Yue asked in a trembling voice.

Was he trying to cuddle with a freaking monster?!

"He must be plotting something! There's something odd about that altar!" the First Princess shouted.

"Stop him at all costs!" Lan Lan shouted.

Jiang Qing'e was the first to act. Perhaps only her power was well-preserved at this stage of the battle. Heavy sword in hand, she leaped fearlessly towards the smoking, black altar.

The crimson knight-general was well-prepared for her attack, sending out an energy barrier that completely stopped her.

The other squad leaders joined in, trying to break down the barrier with their meager reserves of energy, but it was not working.

Finally, they gave up and hopelessly watched the scene unfolding on the altar, weapons hanging tiredly by their sides.

"What is he doing?" Lu Ming asked, watching with sick fascination.

This time, even Li Luo could only look at them and shrug. The crimson knight-general did not seem like he was going to save the Bloodtailed Other, but was rather killing it in a different way?

Wasn't that... rather unnecessary?

"He's bonkers," Sun Dasheng said flatly. "If he just wants to kill the Bloodtailed Other, he might as well have let us do it!"

"Surely not..." Li Luo watched the black altar closely. "There must be something else that we're missing. It's not going to be good news for us."

They were quite spent of energy, so they had chosen to watch passively to see what would unfold, gathering their strength for a time when they knew better how to act.

Li Luo spotted a dark, sticky sludge being separated from the Bloodtailed Other as the fire burned away at it.

The crimson knight-general seemed extremely excited to see this process happen. In a trice, he shed his crimson armor and reached out eagerly to scoop the black substance up with his hands. He then applied it on his skin.

The moment it touched his face, the black slime came to life, wriggling as though it were a mass of worms. It burrowed its way deep into the crimson knight-general's skin.

Soon, his body was a trypophobic mass of bloody holes, his face a twisted expression of agony and pleasure.

"Come! Come! Come into my body and let us be one!" he cackled dementedly.

More and more of the black slime continued to enter his body.

The students looked on in horror. Who would be crazy enough to welcome the corruption into their body? The power source of the Others was born of pure evil, and once it entered one's body, it would corrupt everything within like a plague. They had spent their whole lives avoiding even a speck of this corruption—why would he now lap it up like a drug?

Did this guy even want to live anymore?

Even the most elite and worldly of students such as the First Princess and Lan Lan were completely agast at this development.

While they reeled in horror and shock, the crimson knight-general began to mutate. His body started to engorge rapidly and his eyes turned red.

A human face appeared in the middle of his chest, the exact replica of the Bloodtailed Other's own human face from before.

Bone burst through flesh like a seedling through topsoil, turning from a deathly white to glossy black.

The crimson knight-general was gradually losing his humanity.

But in return, he was being granted a dark power that they could sense within him, growing at an accelerating rate.

"Is he trying to merge with it and absorb its power?" Lu Ming wondered.

Jing Taixu frowned. "I've never even heard of such a blasphemous thing! Would he even be human? Or Other?"

"He would be insane," Sun Dasheng told him.

Li Luo was starting to sweat. They were in real trouble now. He could sense it.

Boom!

Black power continued to roil around the crimson knight-general, blooming out of him and being absorbed back in. The sky turned dark around him, as though light was being leached away.

The crimson knight-general's voice growled out from within the receding light. "Good and evil cease as one. True form, arise!"

Chapter 0586: The Demonic Crimson Knight-General

"Good and evil cease as one. True form, arise."

As the crimson knight-general's voice rang out, the smoke and darkness sharpened into the form of an enormous demon.

"Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage!"

The First Princess and the others gasped. From the energy waves coming out of the crimson knight-general's body, they could tell that he had reached the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage, while he was only at the lesser stage before.

He had managed to ascend in this short time. Moreover, the power resonating off him was far stronger than that of an average Greater Heavenly Resonance cultivator.

"Retreat!" Lan Lan commanded immediately.

The crimson knight-general had successfully merged with the Bloodtailed Other. They might have been able to put up a fight against a Lesser Heavenly Resonance enemy, but they stood no chance against a Greater Heavenly Resonance one. This was the strongest possible tier below Duke. Even at their best, they would have not been able to win.

This was the most sensible choice at the moment.

When Lan Lan shouted, almost everyone made the same move—reach for their spirit mirrors.

Li Luo lifted his eyes one last time to the crimson knight-general, now covered with spiky, black bones sticking out of his skin. He was a truly grotesque monster, leering down at them with malice.

He was no longer human.

Li Luo did not really understand why the crimson knight-general would give up his humanity so easily. "Greater Heavenly Resonance, huh..." Li Luo pursed his lips thoughtfully, then looked down at his bracelet again. He was itching to give it a go, but then again, he would rather keep his cards close to his chest and unplayed until he was forced to.

Now that the Bloodtailed Other was eliminated, they could probably back out of the mixed-level competition and finish things.

No need to hog the spotlight.

Li Luo immediately snapped his spirit mirror without hesitation.

Time to get out of here. This place was too rich for his blood, and the schools were really mean for sending these poor, innocent young kids here.

The clean snapping of their spirit mirrors was followed by a general sense of relief.

They were safe now.

Li Luo relaxed for a few moments before he started to tense right back up. Something was wrong. He was still at the ruins of Russet Rock City, and no transportation light was coming to pick him up.

Beside him, Lu Ming, Jing Taixu, and Sun Dasheng were equally flustered.

"What's going on? Why aren't the spirit mirrors working?" Lu Ming asked worriedly.

Li Luo looked up to the sky. Lan Lan, the First Princess, and the others were stuck here as well.

"Hey, little brats, where do you think you're going?" A maniacal cackle sounded from above them.

The crimson knight-general had already discarded his armor, although now it was his skin that shone with scarlet gloss, except for the jet-black bone spikes sticking out of his shoulder blades.

His hair had turned completely red as well, and it was slick with fresh blood.

"Trying to get back to school? The bell hasn't rung yet..." he said with spiteful glee. "And... do you see what you've just snapped?"

Li Luo and the others looked down and blinked in surprise. Somehow, they were not holding spirit mirrors, but fragments of bone instead.

"An illusion!" Lu Ming hissed.

Li Luo was shocked. Was the crimson knight-general strong enough to apply an illusion on all of them?

"Today, I am reborn. How could I allow my guests to leave during such a grand occasion? Witness quietly," he sneered. He opened his mouth and a spray of blood fountained in the sky, trickling down as a veil that blanketed across all of them.

"You won't find your real spirit mirrors here. None of you can leave," the crimson knight-general said with an imperious flick of his hand.

All of them opened their pocket spheres, checking their possessions.

Every single one of their possessions had turned into spirit mirrors.

"What an illusion. This is even stronger than what the Bloodtailed Other was capable of," Lu Ming said in a low tone.

Jing Taixu was looking ill. They were like children when facing a Greater Heavenly Resonance expert.

Li Luo had to suck back the breath that he had huffed out in relief. Damn, it was emergency time.

The crimson knight-general was far stronger than the Bloodtailed Other had been, and none of them could deal with him.

"We're all gonna dieeeeeeeeeeee here, aren't we? It's too soon! There's so many more things in life to beat up!" Sun Dasheng whined mournfully.

"Shut your mouth!" Lu Ming snapped at him. Her anger only showed when she was nervous. The entire situation was slipping out of their control.

Li Luo ignored them. Instead, he turned his attention to the red marking on his wrist. It was heating up strangely at this time, and Li Luo could hear a wolf's howl ringing in his ears.

"Slip into a bad dream, children. And in your nightmare, death will embrace you."

A rain of blood fell down over all of their eyes. An eerie silence fell across the whole battlefield.

Lan Lan, the First Princess, Gong Shenjun—all of them had their eyes covered with bloody blindfolds that suppressed their consciousness.

All of them had slipped into a dream world, and their bodies were no longer theirs to control.

The crimson knight-general laughed to himself in the silence, and this time, the face on his chest laughed alongside him.

"Bunch of kids. You will know what hell on earth is."

...

When the blood landed on Li Luo's eyes, he started to feel his own mind shutting down. There was a power making him forget everything.

"Roar!"

Just before he went under, a powerful roar shook him to his senses.

Li Luo looked up... but there was no more up. He was in complete darkness on all sides.

His eyes narrowed.

In front of him was an ancient wolf, staring back at him with its eyes bright. Three tails swished Behind it.

Li Luo gave it his best smile.

"Long time no see, Brother Wolf."

Chapter 0587: Talking to the Wolf

"Long time no see, Brother Wolf."

The Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf roared with pure rage as it faced the grinning youth, its killing intent overflowing.

It had not forgotten the day.

The day that it had waited in the mountains and was lured away by this kid to fight a strong Other. And then the feared King expert had somehow come to capture it, sealing it away in yet another prison.

All of that was because of this little human before it right now!

Its power surged to the fore as it bared its claws, swiping out towards Li Luo.

It would tear the kid to shreds!

"Roar!"

A meter before it reached Li Luo, there was a loud clanging of chains, stopping it short and tripping it back to the ground.

As if triggered by the movements, the chains suddenly grew heavy, pinning the wolf down to the ground.

"Roar!"

Muscles bunching underneath, the wolf strained as hard as it could against the chains, but they would not budge even an inch.

That was because the chains were being reinforced with the power of triple resonances. The power of a King, far beyond the ability of a beast trying to reach the Duke Stage.

"Phew."

Li Luo breathed out, wiping cold sweat off his brow. Looked like principal Pang knew what he was doing after all. The seal was still holding strong, and Li Luo remained outside of the wolf's belly.

"Come now, Brother Wolf, don't be so angry. Can't we talk about this peacefully?" He grinned.

His answer was a muzzled roar and a face full of bloody saliva.

Li Luo wiped it away and continued to smile, although he was not so certain about showing his teeth off again. Did this mean he had just shared an indirect kiss with the wolf? "If you don't mind," he said casually, "perhaps we can work together. You see, I'm on the verge of death right now, and I need to borrow your strength.

"I don't blame you for not knowing, old boy, since you're stuck here and all, but there's a nasty meanie out there who doesn't respect your strength, Brother Wolf."

The Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf subsided back down, glaring at Li Luo. It extended one claw towards its chains, indicating that he should let it free to help him.

Li Luo chuckled dryly. "That's very insincere of you, Brother Wolf. We both know that the moment I do that, you'll swallow me whole."

Li Luo thumped his own chest. "Look, I'm just a puny, little Resonant Master, there's no need to be afraid of me. But one day I'll reach the Duke Stage for sure, and maybe faster than you. At that time, I won't forget you, Brother. I'll definitely find a way to help you get there too."

The wolf ignored his bragging.

"If you don't believe it, I'll even swear it to you," Li Luo offered. "If I don't reach the Duke Stage in four years, I swear that the heavens will strike me down, and my cultivation won't move forward another inch."

Actually, he only had four years left to live anyway, so he would actually die if he didn't reach the Duke Stage before then. He didn't really care if the heavens struck down his corpse. Maybe the lightning would even resuscitate him.

The wolf was a little surprised by the little human's conviction. Where in the world did he get such confidence from? Duke in four years?

The Duke Stage was a monumental bottleneck that required not only supernatural talent, but also an abundance of resources and luck to back up that process.

A Duke was an asset to any place.

What made this kid this crazy?

But the wolf remained silent. Ultimately, this kid's journey and breakthroughs would not make one whit of difference to its situation.

Li Luo stared at the unresponsive wolf. The beast clearly did not like him much, which Li Luo fully understood. After all, it was he who had gotten it into this state in the first place.

His first plan had been to establish a friendly connection, and then perhaps he could use the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's power with its cooperation. That had been naive. Of course a Greater Heavenly Resonance creature like the wolf would not care at all about a puny Resonant Master.

Perhaps that attitude would change when he got a little stronger.

"Brother Wolf, whether you consent or otherwise, I WILL have your power today," Li Luo said sternly.

He pressed his palms together and allowed blood to flow from his fingertips, then he mixed it with his resonant power to form a powerful rune.

"Heavenly Libation Chant!"

The Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf did not resist. It knew it could not resist, and so it just continued to look at Li Luo disdainfully, taunting him.

Use its power? Was a puny, little Resonant Master really capable of handling such power?

Fine, then! Take it!

Take all of it!

It could sense how strong the enemy outside was. Definitely a Greater Heavenly Resonance in strength. Li Luo would have to borrow more than just a little of its power.

And the more power Li Luo took, the more it would be able to take over his mind, until he was utterly consumed by its own presence. Li Luo would become a mindless wolf-slave.

At that time, it could easily control him and make him its puppet.

A lolling wolf smile spread across its face as it felt the Heavenly Libation Chant draw upon its power.

Whoosh!

The transfer was swift, and soon Li Luo himself was bottled with its power.

The blood vessels in Li Luo's eyes thickened and a feral look crept into them.

Chapter 0588: One Slash

In the dead skies of Russet Rock City.

The crimson knight-general looked around at all the hollow-eyed students. "Which should I kill first?" he mused to himself happily.

It pleased him greatly to see all these annoying gnats now standing around like docile lambs waiting for the slaughter.

Finally, his gaze stopped on Lan Lan. The strongest of them, the one who had the Duke Art that had wounded the Bloodtailed Other. Even he had been shocked by that level of power. Pre-merge with the Bloodtailed Other, that attack would have wounded him seriously as well.

"Finishing a Duke Art while still at the Heavenly Pearl Stage is really extraordinary," he chuckled. It was easy to be generous to the walking dead. He stuck out a finger with a drop of blood energy on it.

"Too bad for you. Killing geniuses is my favorite thing to do," he stated, eyes alive with pleasure.

But his finger froze before he struck. He sensed a sudden surge of threatening energy nearby.

Within the city, a column of crimson energy shot up into the sky, 30 meters high.

The entire city shook with an explosion of power that spread to its outer walls.

The crimson knight-general whirled around in alarm to see a figure rising up through the column.

He frowned. "Wasn't that guy a Resonant Master? He should have no more power than a puff of gunpowder. How has he become this strong?"

He now looked to have Greater Heavenly Resonance power as well. Within the crimson pillar of power, Li Luo was struggling to contain his newfound power. His body was breaking down before his very eyes, with new wounds appearing all across his torso, power spilling out of his body.

And this was only the physical wounding.

More dangerous was the overwhelming lust to kill, a craving for violence that grew within him like an urgent hunger. His handsome features were turning more feral by the moment, and it was clearest in his eyes.

Besides the fact that he lacked some bones sticking out of his shoulders, Li Luo was actually looking pretty similar to the crimson knight-general right now.

Li Luo held on desperately to his last sliver of clarity, battling furiously to stay conscious. If he lost his reason here, he would not only be unable to take down the crimson knight-general, but also make things worse.

Li Luo clenched his fist, a white pearl within it.

That was the Seraph's Pearl that he had taken from the Golden Dragon Dao Fields. Although it was only an upper white-eye treasured artifact, it helped him keep his mind intact and control his emotions.

He put the pearl in his mouth and felt a cool, calming wave spread through his entire body, clearing the violent thoughts in his mind. The redness in his eyes faded away a little.

He looked up and locked on to the crimson knight-general.

"You surprised me. So small, to have such a big trump card..." the crimson knight-general said lightly.

"You're a batshit, insane lunatic. You could have been human." Li Luo's voice was ragged, torn apart by the new power within him.

Each word was painful to speak.

"Kid, you're too naive. All you know is good and evil. You don't know anything about the reality of the world. Others feed off the negative emotions of humans. As long as humans exist, Others will not disappear.

"Killing Others is the stupidest thing ever. There is only one way to truly destroy the Others: combine humans with them. When good and evil return to being one, there will no longer be Others, and we will gain even more power. What is there to dislike?

"Only this method can truly save the masses from evil," the crimson knight-general said. Even in his bloodthirsty state, Li Luo was shaking his head in disgust throughout the speech.

"You're insane. If humans merged with Others, then the world would be full of abominations like you!"

The crimson knight-general laughed. He stuck out his chest, revealing the alluring demon face. "And what is wrong with me? Again, naive. This is the true me. You are blinded by the incomplete form that humans love so much. When you experience the power of this body, you will understand that the true form is everything." The crimson knight-general paused here. "Your power, it's external. I see how quickly it corrupts you. You won't be able to hold out for long. You might be strong, but not so much stronger than me that you can turn things around. More naivety."

His drivel had also been calculated to buy him time to sense out Li Luo's power.

Li Luo did not reply. The crimson knight-general was correct. With only the first half of the Heavenly Libation Chant, his power transfer was incomplete. He was only at the early stage of Greater Heavenly Resonance power, so he was evenly matched with his foe.

Just as the crimson knight-general had said, Li Luo was too weak to keep this up for long. He would be completely reduced to dust before he could inflict any serious injury to the crimson knight-general.

But he had actually seen through his opponent's delaying tactic. He had welcomed the additional time.

Li Luo slowly raised his hand, summoning his weathered sword.

The Golden-Jade Onyx-Elephant Blade.

When Li Luo's energy first surged, he had discovered a golden symbol that suddenly appeared on his weapon's body.

The symbol was majestic.

A Kingmark.

Left on the Golden-Jade Onyx-Elephant Blade by its last owner, Pang Qianyuan!

"No wonder Gong Shenjun wanted this sword so much—it even has a Kingmark on it." Li Luo had not been able to discover this before because he had not been strong enough. Only a user at the Heavenly Resonance Stage could activate it.

And with this mark, the Golden-Jade Onyx-Elephant Blade grew much stronger.

It was a superpowered killing weapon right now.

Li Luo wrapped his fingers around the hilt and took a deep breath.

He would have only one chance.

But with the Golden-Jade Onyx-Elephant Blade's Kingmark, one chance was all he would need.

Li Luo hesitated no longer. Summoning all his energy, he put it into the Onyx-Elephant Blade until it hummed with enough power to warp the void around the blade.

He weaved his sword in a swift pattern, creating a sword wheel that hissed and whispered in the air before him.

"Thousand Watery Knives Wheel."

He slashed out.

The Kingmark on the sword glowed, and a golden light flowed into the sword wheel.

Swish!

The blood-red sword wheel blasted out, thundering across the space between Li Luo and his foe.

Hundreds of meters long, it tore through the rubble of Russet Rock City.

The sword wheel was reflected in the eyes of the crimson knight-general, open wide in terror. He could sense that this attack had enough power to kill him.

This kid was supposed to be equal to him in strength. How had he managed such an attack?!

Chapter 0589: Sword Wheel wins Crimson Armor

The huge, crimson sword wheel barreled through the city, smashing through everything in its way.

The crimson knight-general's face changed.

He could feel the lethality of that attack, even for him.

What had the kid done?

The crimson knight-general did not dare disrespect the attack. Opening his mouth, he pulled out a rose-silver stopwatch from within himself. With each chime of the piece, a ruby sonic wave pulsed out.

The rose-silver stopwatch had runes on it that absorbed worldly natural energy, causing it to pulse even more strongly.

There was also a golden eye mark on the back of the piece, marking it as a gold-eye treasured artifact.

The rose-silver stopwatch rose in the air to meet the crimson sword wheel from Li Luo.

SWOOSH!

The collision shook the entire city. Dusty walls brittle with neglect crashed down into dust, raising a cloud all across the city that hung like fog.

The aftershocks were awesome and terrible to behold.

Li Luo was duly impressed by himself. When would he have such power for real, he wondered. At the same time, he was closely watching the clash of attacks.

The crimson sword wheel spun at great speed, producing a fearsome cutting power that the rose-silver stopwatch did its best to defend against.

Li Luo could sense that the defenses of the rose-silver stopwatch were failing. The cycle of swords had no end, and the slashes were relentless. The stopwatch would soon fail.

"What a powerful Kingmark!"

With the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's power alone, he would only have been level with the crimson knight-general, barring his acquisition of the Heavenly Libation Chant's second half that would unlock the full power of a Greater Heavenly Resonance cultivator.

But he was winning this battle hands down all because of the Kingmark that was inscribed on the Golden-Jade Onyx-Elephant Blade.

The additional layer of golden power that had turned his crimson sword wheel from good to epic.

Clang, clang, clang!

The urgent smashing of knives against the rose-silver stopwatch continued, and a satisfying crack rang out a moment later.

The crimson knight-general paled. His eyes widened and then narrowed in realization.

He had spotted the golden aura around the attack.

"That's... King qi?!" he screamed shrilly in disbelief.

King qi was, as the name implied, produced by Kings. "How could a mere Resonant Master have such power?! Is this kid the progeny of a King or something?! No wonder he is so strong!"

The crimson knight-general turned to flee now. This was no place for him to linger. He had thought about killing off all of the students after creating his true form, but now it seemed like the last part of his plan had gone awry. There was a big, bad wolf hiding among the students!

"I just need to get out. Now that I have my true form, I just need to return to Thunderpeal Mountain and devour the Thunderpeal Tree, and I might well make it to Duke in the future!"

The temptation of reaching the Duke Stage in the future incentivized him to let the Red Clay Province go. Now that all the schools had their attention on it, it was time for him to flee anyway.

Li Luo was taken aback by the crimson knight-general's choice to flee, and he inhaled sharply, his killing intent still rising within him.

He had paid such a heavy price to activate the power of the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf and even the Kingmark on his weapon. If his foe got away, wouldn't that be a loss?

Li Luo's face was already badly ravaged by the corruptive power of the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf, but he continued to dig deep and take more power, sacrificing the flesh of two fingers so that they became nothing but white bone.

Beads of cold sweat dripped down his forehead from the exertion.

Swoosh!

Forcing more power into the attack, it finally broke through the rose-silver stopwatch, which fell from the air.

Li Luo reached out to pluck it from its fall, then he stuffed it into his pocket sphere.

Hey, a gold-eye treasured artifact was quite valuable. The young lord of House Luolan had to watch his finances properly.

With the blocking artifact out of the way, Li Luo's attack continued on its forward path, and it caught up to the crimson knight-general in a trice.

The crimson knight-general swore. If he had known such a danger awaited him, he would have escaped after merging with the Bloodtailed Other.

Still, no point in crying over spilled milk.

He knew what he had to do. He reached down into his chest and pulled the face right off his flesh.

The demonic face struggled and screamed in pain.

He hurled the Bloodtailed Other's essence out behind him with a vengeance. All these years of plotting to merge with it, and now he had to sacrifice it.

The demonic face was thrown directly into the path of the sword wheel.

"EEEK!"

The painful screams of the Bloodtailed Other, now reduced to a passive face, rang out loudly and miserably as it was cut to pieces by Li Luo's attack, although the attack was stopped as well.

Finally, the attack had been defended against, although the price had been almost too high to bear for the crimson knight-general.

He could not care about it at this time. Removing the Bloodtailed Other from his body had scrambled his own internal flow of power, and the remaining vestiges of corruption were wreaking havoc within him.

He had to flee.

He cursed Li Luo all the while. He would remember him well. After he left the Red Clay Province, he would report this up and get more information on the kid. The little bastard would pay in the future!

Li Luo would have loved to finish off the crimson knight-general and tie things up, but he was already losing control of his body. If not for the Thunderpeal Avatar, he would have already been reduced to a skeleton.

He could also feel that the wolf's power was overtaking him, and the animalistic instinct was starting to rule his body.

He wanted to kill. Had to kill.

His eyes turned red.

He tried to close them. He could pay no more attention to the crimson knight-general.

As his eyelids drooped down over the crimson knight-general, he saw a brilliant flash of light in the air. Nails of light and fire, blazing down to smash into the crimson knight-general. BOOM!

A howl of misery from the enemy.

"Demonbane Nails... Qing'e's recovered!"

Li Luo relaxed and let himself fall.

He did not land. Inches from the ground, he was caught in a tender and fragrant embrace.

"Don't... don't touch me."

Through the remnants of his blurred vision, he knew who had come for him. He was afraid that he would hurt her in his madness, and reached out weakly to push her away from him.

The person did not leave, and he saw a blurry face lean over his own.

A cool sensation near his lips.

And then a wondrous burst of energy flooded into his mouth and then the rest of his body.

Chapter 0590: Final Score

Li Luo was unconscious for some time.

In his fevered sleep, his spirit succumbed to the red haze of violence invading his mind, and his own consciousness faded to a whisper of what it had been. The killing intent surged again and again within him. Luckily, Li Luo was resilient, and he managed to hold on to a sliver of consciousness.

Just when he was about to fully fail, a burst of holy energy flooded into his mind and body. It was radiant and wonderful, and the demented thoughts fell away like bats scattering from the midday sun.

Li Luo's consciousness quickly seized control of his body again.

His eyelids slowly fluttered open.

Before him was the wreckage of the city, and some new bones among the old.

"Awake?" A familiar voice murmured beside his ear. The voice was clear and calm, but he knew it well enough to detect poignant worry in it.

Li Luo turned his head to see a beautiful figure sitting in the lotus position. She was as beautiful as he remembered, perfection from every angle.

For him, the most stunning aspect of her beauty were those golden eyes. They held strength to match her beauty.

Li Luo's gaze dipped a little to her lips, and he was startled to see that there were bite marks on them.

With a jolt of realization, he recalled a vague memory from when he was semi-conscious.

The warm feeling on his face, and the infusion of light resonant energy.

Could it be...

Li Luo closed his eyes, letting his body crumple and fold as he moaned.

"Qing'e, I need more light resonant energy healing!"

"Seems like you've been corrupted. Let me ease your pain and send you along to your death," she said. There was steel in her voice as she reached for her sword.

Li Luo unfolded himself faster than a squashed spring. "Ah, what a terrible corruption this is," he moaned, "but I have managed to overcome it with great difficulty."

"Tell me if you feel yourself succumbing," she urged him strongly. "I will ease your pain."

Li Luo sulked. "Qing'e, that's too cruel."

"Weren't you the one who started this charade first?"

Li Luo laughed nervously, then he snuck another look at her pretty, little mouth. "So... it was you who saved me just now?" he asked innocently, already knowing the answer.

She inclined her head. "The violent energy within your body was too strong. I had to use light resonant energy to nullify it, as well as treat your injuries. It took almost all the resonant power I had."

"Qing'e, thank you," Li Luo said gratefully.

She smiled and shook her head.

"Qing'e," Li Luo asked with a very cheeky grin, "how exactly did you transfer that light resonant energy to me?"

She lifted up her heavy sword and pointed it at him. Li Luo took a look and cringed. The skewered head of the Bloodtailed Other was on the tip of her sword, although the face was now bloated and lifeless.

"I pressed its lips against you and then transmitted light resonant energy down the sword," she said.

Li Luo's eyes widened, and he felt suddenly nauseous. "Er, surely not?"

He looked at her face, but it was too emotionless for him to tell if she was joking. "Come on, tell me the truth. This one's not very funny."

She retracted her sword and then gestured towards a nearby wall. Li Luo looked to see another corpse, and he gasped.

It was the crimson knight-general!

Dead as a doornail.

"Speaking of the truth, who was it that injured the crimson knight-general so severely?" Her look pierced him, and Li Luo squirmed uneasily.

"Well, I, uh, can't recall. I think I saw an old grandfather descend out of the skies and smash the crimson knight-general to a pulp without saying a word. Maybe someone from the Academic Federation? Must be divine intervention or something? I mean, the crimson knight-general committed so many unspeakable sins. He definitely offended somebody. Somebodies. You know?" He did not want to tell Jiang Qing'e about the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf. Not because he did not trust her, but because he did not want her to worry about how dangerous the power was.

She just stared at him. Clearly, the lie had failed badly. "There were some savage wounds on the body. It almost feels like... the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf we met in the Umbra Cave? Did Principal Pang help you seal it away?"

She pointed to the crimson bracelet on his wrist. "He sealed it away for you, and you used it against the crimson knight-general."

Li Luo rolled his eyes. This was ridiculous. No way she had just guessed it like that! "You're a demon! Plump swan demon!"

"Back when Principal Pang gave you that mark, I had already guessed," she said primly.

Li Luo gave her an abashed smile.

"Principal Pang is really reckless. Why would he grant the power of a Greater Heavenly Resonance beast, bordering on the Duke Stage, to a Resonant Master? If you used it too much, you'd be utterly corrupted. That would be the real tragedy!" She burst out unhappily.

"Qing'e, I just wanted to help relieve some of the burden from your shoulders," Li Luo said grumpily.

"The Housemeet is near, and given my current strength, there's not much I can do for you if I keep up this rate of cultivation. I had to gamble a little. But don't worry, I won't use this power recklessly."

Her eyes softened. How could she not know the risks that he had taken? But even while he longed to share her burden, her heart hurt every time he was injured.

"Well, be careful in the future." She let the topic drop. Since Li Luo had made the decision, she would, of course, support him. She had faith in his ability and strength of mind.

Li Luo nodded. "I will. And will you help keep the secret of the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf?" He pointed to the crimson knight-general's corpse. "I had nothing to do with its death."

She nodded with understanding. "I can say I killed it. A ninth-grade light resonance is always an exception. Others will find the story curious, but they won't pin it on you. But this way, the credit will come to me."

"Hey, credit and two skygold can buy a bun worth two skygold. We're in the same squad anyway. Surely the rewards will come my way too."

He decided things were safe enough to push the situation a little. He grinned. "Besides, what can compare to the reward I just received?" He caressed his lips deliberately.

She turned away from him. "Even her side profile is beautiful," he thought to himself.

"Hey, check your spirit mirror," she said.

He pulled it out and looked at the scoreboard, then he sucked in a deep breath.

Their squad was still in first place.

But the points had changed.

1.2 million points!!