

## Resonance 621

### [Chapter 0621: Xu Tianling](#)

When the man strode out wreathed in suppressive resonant power and chilly air, everyone's expressions changed in shock.

This was no outsider.

Xu Tianling was the head of the three ancestors.

The only thing was that he had disappeared for the last few years, and no one had expected him to make his appearance here today.

Yuan Qing gloomily glared at him. Unfortunately, the latter had reached the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage, which was one step higher than him, who was at the Lesser Heavenly Resonance Stage. He had made visible progress in the last few years, and it was clear that he had some sort of lucky encounter..

This brought a little bit of worry to Yuan Qing as he knew that when it came to cultivation, the stages before the Heavenly Resonance Stage were significantly simpler. So long as one possessed sufficient talent, cultivation would come easily. For example, the talented students of the Astral Sage College all easily reached the Heavenly Pearl Stage with just the passage of time. But if one wanted to enter the Heavenly Resonance Stage, it would be an arduous process. Gong Shenjun and the First Princess were top geniuses in the Four Star Hall, and had endless resources accorded to them as members of the royal court, but they were still unable to break into the Heavenly Resonance Stage in their four years of college.

What the Heavenly Resonance Stage required was not talent, but rather accumulation and understanding. And rising to the Greater Heavenly Resonance from the Lesser Heavenly Resonance Stage required even more! Thus, the Heavenly Resonance Stage was the hardest bottleneck that prevented people from even attempting to break into the Duke Stage.

Yuan Qing had been at the Heavenly Resonance Stage for countless years and yet continued to hover around the same point, always unable to take the final step into the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage.

On the other hand, his old competitor, Xu Tianling, had done it.

Faced with Yuan Qing's questions, Xu Tianling gave a wry smile, his gaze flickering to Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e as he clasped his hands in greeting. "Young Lord and Miss Jiang, it has been a while. I hope you've been well since we last met."

"I was wondering what sort of tonic Pei Hao had taken to grow a new pair. It turns out he had the support of a Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage cultivator," Jiang Qing'e dryly commented.

Li Luo also took the opportunity to size up the head ancestor. "It looks like Ancestor Xu also plans to support Pei Hao in tearing House Luolan apart."

Xu Tianling smiled. "Young Lord, your words are simply grating. I have a lot of love for House Luolan, and I naturally would not hope for it to splinter. However, Pei Hao is also the House Lords' disciple in name. The two House Lords made it clear that if one possessed the right identity and were able to garner the

support of two ancestors, that individual would have the right to struggle for the title of House Lord. Pei Hao has achieved both of these requirements and thus he has the right to do so."

"So you're saying that I don't measure up?" Li Luo retorted.

Xu Tianling silently observed Li Luo before emotionally saying, "If the Young Lord had not been restrained by the issue of a blank palace, perhaps the situation would not have devolved thus. Now that the situation has come to a head, there is no longer any chance for us to back off. If anything, we are just mere instruments of fate."

Li Luo was clearly the most suitable individual to inherit the title of House Lord. His claim to the title was even greater than Jiang Qing'e's. If he had not been born with a blank palace, perhaps the entirety of House Luolan would have rallied around to protect him. Unfortunately, it was a pity that even the once loyal individuals had been swayed and Pei Hao had taken advantage of the situation masterfully, resulting in the scene today.

The individuals involved had taken things way too far, and Li Luo had resolved his blank palace issue and demonstrated his potential and talent a little too late. Those who had been snatched away by the jaws of Pei Hao could not simply choose to turn back.

Since they had chosen the path of betrayal, they had to see it through to the end. There was no hope for them otherwise.

They all understood that even if they did change their minds, would Li Luo even forgive him? Would there ever be any sort of trust in them? No one was that naive.

Li Luo shook his head, too lazy to banter over such meaningless words. Those who had a rebellious heart would always find some form of excuse.

"I really pity my parents..." Li Luo sighed with sadness as he swept his gaze over the group before him, a complicated expression on his face.

"They were such extraordinary individuals, but how could their eye for people be so bad? Half of the people in the upper echelons of House Luolan turned out to be such subpar trash. How did they manage to elevate such refuse into a shining pillar of the Xia Kingdom?" Li Luo's words were harsh, directly causing even Xu Tianling's smirk to be wiped off his face, fury evident in his eyes.

"You can't blame the Master and Mistress." Jiang Qing'e shook her head and attentively explained, "They were royalty mingling with the rabble for fun. House Luolan was created on a whim. With their strength, why would they be concerned with what the ants thought about? If something did happen, they'd get crushed with a simple smack. They were supremely confident that if any issues arose, they would resolve it with their overwhelming strength. Thus, they were never concerned with the inner motivations of these people. You should have seen them when the Master and Mistress were around, their loyalty was to die for." Jiang Qing'e's equally sincere reply caused the group's expressions to turn a little distorted, especially when she raised the point about how they had used to act before the House Lords. Complicated emotions surfaced on their faces because they had just remembered. Awe when in their exalted presence. Fear when realizing how insignificant they were. Delight when they had disappeared.

From Jiang Qing'e's response, they were also able to understand how the House Lords viewed them. The lords had never been concerned with them and their paltry schemes. So what if they attempted to betray the lords? Would a lion be concerned about the foxes in its territory?

"The two House Lords were naturally very persuasive. If they were still around, how would I dare to have such thoughts?" Xu Tianling calmly explained, forcefully quashing down all of the rioting emotions in his heart.

"However, Young Lord and Miss Jiang, you need not live in the past. With the House Lords' protection, you were naturally placed on a pedestal, unable to understand our struggles. Reality has changed, and you need to recognize it. Thus, I hope that the Young Lord carefully reconsiders Pei Hao's suggestion," he threatened politely with a sharp glint in his eyes.

Faced with Xu Tianling's coercive gaze, Li Luo smirked brazenly as he slowly pronounced each word for all to hear. "Let me repeat myself once more since it seems like you're deaf. Don't hold back during the Housemeet. Come at me with everything you have. If House Luolan falls to pieces, I couldn't care less."

Xu Tianling's eyes began to twitch as he attempted to rein in the anger boiling within his heart. "How could this young lord be absolutely unconcerned about the future of his house?

"A wastrel! He is a wastrel through and through!"

"It looks like the Young Lord is unable to differentiate his imagination from reality," Xu Tianling darkly said as he took a step forward. His Greater Heavenly Resonance strength directly flooded outwards in all directions, surging towards Li Luo.

Ice resonant power swept over like a tide, turning the entire Spring Lake Villa into a winter wonderland.

"If this is the case, I will represent the two House Lords in educating you on what reality is really like." Xu Tianling's five fingers arched into a claw, causing his ice resonant power to coagulate around it, forming razor-sharp, icy, jade-like talons that exuded extreme cold.

Yuan Qing took a step forward as well, planning to retaliate, but he was held back by Li Luo.

Li Luo gave a smile that was not a smile, faintly whispering, "Is the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage that great?"

Xu Tianling squinted upon hearing those deprecating words, but his expression changed immediately after. At this point, the roof of the Spring Lake Villa was ripped open by a beam of light that seemed to have transcended through time and space to arrive here. In fact, the space that the light passed by seemed to leave behind black traces as it was unable to repair itself quickly enough.

Even the worldly natural energy seemed to disappear in the presence of this light.

"A Duke expert?!" Feeling the immense suppression from the light itself, Xu Tianling was lost for words. At the same time, he could clearly discern a glowing pig-butcher knife within.

Although the object almost seemed comical, it caused his already cold body to feel a chill, and alarm bells started ringing in his head.

"Why is there a Duke expert showing his hand?"

Before he had time to think, the pig-butcher knife rushed directly towards him, wreathed full of fiendish energy that caused him to feel like death itself was descending for him. Xu Tianling roared, and a blood-red talon fist flashed out from under the icy claw. Atop the talon fist was a golden eye, indicating that this was a gold-eye treasured artifact.

With a gold-eye treasured artifact in hand, only then did Xu Tianling dare to clash against that horror-inducing pig-butcher knife.

Pssh!

When the two clashed, there was surprisingly no earth-shaking rumble. This was because the glowing pig-butcher knife had cut through the gold-eye talon fist like a piece of wet tofu before slicing Xu Tianling's palm in half.

Blood sprayed endlessly.

Xu Tianling was sent flying, knocking through countless tables and chairs. His face turned white and full of abject terror.

After the knife severed his palm in half, cold laughter echoed throughout the villa.

"You stray dog! I'd like to see you tell me again. Just who is going to discipline the Young Lord?"

Chapter 0622: Deterrence

When the voice full of murderous intent reverberated around the villa, the entire top floor turned deathly silent. Other than Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e, everyone else was quivering in fright at the area that had been ripped apart by that knife's very presence. A single blow had practically disarmed the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage Xu Tianling.

No one present could've ever imagined that a Duke would choose to interfere.

Furthermore, this Duke was from Li Luo's camp.

When had House Luolan found a Duke as a guardian?

Ancestor Yuan Qing, Lu Qing, Lu Guan, and the rest of the ancestors and Pavilion Masters were all shocked by this development. They were completely unaware of the existence of other Dukes within House Luolan.

The question in everyone's minds was: why had this Duke not shown up previously to scare off all the rats and wolves that eyed the house? Especially when things were in massive turmoil? If a single Duke had stepped up to suppress the rabble, all of these actions today would've been completely unnecessary.

No one could make sense of this situation.

However, Yuan Qing was extremely elated. He might not understand why this Duke had appeared, but since he was protecting the Young Lord, then he was an ally. This was the best thing that could ever happen.

On the other hand, his excitement was not reciprocated in the other camp. Pei Hao, Mo Cheng, and the other Pavilion Masters looked as though they had stepped in a pile of crap. The three Pavilion Masters were shaking in their shoes, staggering backwards in complete fright.

This was a Duke for God's sake!

With a mere thought, they could be turned into fine dust.

Damn it all! How? Why? What? A Duke!

The trio felt like stray dogs that had been abandoned.

Xu Tianling was still clutching what was left of his severed palm, rapidly circulating ice resonant power to staunch the bleeding. Unfortunately, he realized that his actions were futile as there was ferocious resonant power still within the wound, eroding his flesh and blood. As a result, he was unable to administer first aid to himself, forcing himself to bear the excruciating throbbing pain.

He understood that this was the dual resonant power of a Duke. Although he had entered the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage, the chasm between himself and a Duke was as wide as the divide between the heavens and the earth.

Xu Tianling raised his head and stared at the pig-butcher knife floating before Li Luo, hoarsely saying, "So it turns out there was a Duke in House Luolan."

The rest of the Pavilion Masters had no idea who this mysterious individual could be, but Xu Tianling had heard about a hidden Duke before. Even so, he had his doubts, and no one other than the two House Lords had ever seen this enigmatic fellow.

Alas, he had personally experienced the truth today.

Li Luo looked at the floating pig-butcher knife and reached out for it. The knife willingly descended into his grasp. Their circumstances had been reversed, and he cheekily grinned at Xu Tianling. "Do you think you're qualified to teach me a lesson?"

Xu Tianling's expression sank. "So I see that this is the Young Lord's backer. I've heard of the mysterious Duke that is unable to leave House Luolan's headquarters. It's clear that the restriction is real as well since only the weapon is here."

"In that case, why don't we try this again?" Li Luo hefted the pig-butcher knife, and dark red traces began to materialize on the blade, emitting a fiendish aura that would cause anyone's heart to palpitate just from being near it. It was as though this weapon had been forged and quenched within mountains and seas of blood so it could emit such an oppressive aura.

Seeing that the pig butchering knife was being waved around before him like a toy, Xu Tianling's eyes twitched involuntarily. The piercing pain that coursed through him reminded him to remain silent.

"I see that the Young Lord wishes for blood during the Housemeet." Xu Tianling coldly snorted.

"Don't try to shift the blame on us after causing the problem..." Li Luo shook his head. "Cut the crap. I'll await your schemes on the day of the Housemeet, so bring out all the tricks you have then. Whether or

not House Luolan will exist after is of no concern to me. I'd rather torch the fields than leave anything behind for you jackals, even if nothing is left."

With that final declaration, he and Jiang Qing'e turned to leave, with Yuan Qing and the rest of the bodyguards scrambling behind.

Lu Qing and Lu Guan faced each other speechlessly as they came to an agreement. No longer wishing to dawdle, they ran after the entourage that had chosen to leave. The strength that House Luolan had demonstrated today had completely jolted them of their indecision. How could they dare to follow Pei Hao now? Furthermore, if the Young Lord managed to break into the Duke Stage, would they be able to survive the aftermath?

Pei Hao felt fury surging with his heart as he gloomily glared at the duo who had made their choice. His goals today had been left in complete shambles.

He had hoped to borrow Xu Tianling's power to teach Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e a good lesson and hamper their momentum. At the same time, it would frighten the two neutral Pavilion Masters into siding with him. Alas, the Duke within House Luolan had opted to show his knife and everything had been thrown into disarray.

His plan had backfired, and the ones in fear were those from his camp.

Pei Hao glanced at the three Pavilion Masters who were quivering in abject terror and reassured them. "There is no need to worry. The Duke that belongs to House Luolan is unable to leave the headquarters, so the situation is not as bleak as it seems. Furthermore, someone will deal with him during the Housemeet."

"I have to admit that this surpassed my expectations. I had thought that since the individual cannot physically leave the headquarters, they would be unable to do anything. It looks like I have underestimated the methods of a Duke," Xu Tianling dejectedly explained. "On the bright side, his strength cannot be significantly projected out of the area either. Otherwise, that single strike would not have just bisected my arm."

That single strike was intimidating, but Xu Tianling understood that if a Duke had really opted to deal with him, well, he'd be dead before he knew it.

Pei Hao nodded, glumly focusing upon the stairs Li Luo had climbed down. It was not like they had not gained anything either. They now knew for a fact that a Duke did reside within House Luolan. Now they could plan in greater detail.

"Li Luo... you might've been bragging when you said you didn't care about House Luolan. I'd like to see for myself how you'll react when it truly disintegrates in your hands! Will you still act so brazenly then?"

"Young Lord... this Duke expert of yours... Why did he not just get rid of Pei Hao and Xu Tianling in one go? It would've actually solved most of our problems instantly..." Yuan Qing blustered out in curiosity. Li Luo hefted a glance at the pig-butcherling knife by his waist and pouted helplessly. Of course he wanted that as well! Unfortunately, Uncle Biao suffered from a massive restriction that caused his mighty abilities to taper off immensely the moment he left the headquarters' vicinity. It was only through a trick

that the pig-butcher knife could have arrived at this location, and even then, it was weakened significantly.

It's not that he didn't want to, but rather he couldn't!

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e had already known that Pei Hao would have some tricks up his sleeve, thus they had made arrangements with Ox Biaobiao beforehand. It was only after confirming that his attack could land within the vicinity of the Spring Lake Villa that they had so audaciously stepped forward. A smart man would not stand next to a precarious, crumbling wall. There was no need to put themselves in actual danger.

Their lives were worth much more than that white-eyed wolf Pei Hao.

"No rush. We will settle all of this during the Housemeet," Li Luo grandly proclaimed as he glanced momentarily at Jiang Qing'e. The two turned to face their home, the headquarters across the street.

There was a month remaining before the tempest would descend upon them all. All their grievances would be settled then. Cleanly.

Chapter 0623: Thunderbolt Art

House Luolan, Skygold Room

Li Luo was sitting cross-legged in the middle with his eyes tightly shut and his hands clasped together in a hand sign. Worldly natural energy was surging around him, and a strand of earth fiend energy entered his body.

Right before it was able to wreak havoc, an illusory phantom of a dragon appeared before it, directly opening its maw and belching out a blast of dragonbreath that enveloped it.

The earth fiend energy continued to squirm and struggle within the dragonbreath, looking as though it was being submerged in lava. Eventually, its berserk nature was cleanly wiped out by the refinement process.

This entire process took a full hour to complete.

After the dragonbreath dissipated, the earth fiend energy was gone. Instead, there were five black rays of light swimming around the inside of Li Luo's body as though they were sentient black fish. It was an indescribable and inscrutable scene.

"These are abstruse fiend lights?" Li Luo elatedly observed the five black rays of light that had been refined by the Three Revolutions Draconic Breath. He had spent countless days trying, and this was his first success.

The five rays of abstruse fiend light also physically demonstrated the power of a Five Fiends Art.

Li Luo curiously continued to watch one of the rays of abstruse fiend light. With a thought, it directly entered his waterlight resonant palace, tunneling into the manifestation of his resonance, the waterlight spirit lake. It now seemed like a little fish that had found a new home.

He then opened his eyes and stretched out his hand. Resonant power coagulated around his palm, and it turned into a shimmering, rapidly-moving stream of water that possessed frightening penetrative and incisive abilities.

This was the Thousand Watery Knives Art. With another thought, a ray of abstruse fiend light flowed out of his resonant palace, merging with the radiant water blade.

A moment later, Li Luo saw a layer of stygian black light coat the edge of the blade. It seemed to have turned even fiercer and a tad tyrannical.

Flicking his finger, the blade made of flowing water explosively shot outwards, creating ear-grating sonic booms as it sliced through the air, directly hacking at a stone tablet that was constructed for testing resonance arts. Ping!

This stone tablet was fabricated out of a special material that was designed to resist damage. Yet in a flash, a three-finger-deep gash was torn right out of it! What was most fascinating was that the edges of the gash itself were abnormally smooth.

Li Luo walked forward, tentatively using his finger to feel the impact of his attack, a trace of surprise arising in his gaze. He clearly remembered that before he had broken into the Fiend Palace Tier, the Thousand Watery Knives Art would only cause a gash about two fingers deep. With the amplification of his new resonant power, the effect of the art had increased by almost 50%.

Was this the might of abstruse fiend light?

Li Luo sighed in admiration.

This was why others commonly said that the Earth Fiend General Stage was when one truly stepped into the path of resonant power cultivation. The Resonant Master Stage was just the tutorial.

"Abstruse fiend light is amazing stuff," Li Luo said, full of longing. He had only just started cultivating the Three Revolutions Draconic Breath, and even though he had been able to form five rays of abstruse fiend light, it had taken a long time to learn. And his efficiency was not great.

Increasing the efficiency of the refinement would require getting more familiar with the Three Revolutions Draconic Breath and cultivating it to greater success.

After experiencing the might of the abstruse fiend light, Li Luo began to cultivate a new resonance art.

This was the first one he would learn.

A low-grade dragon-general resonance art: Thunderbolt Art.

This was a top-tier body art that focused on increasing one's speed, and it was something that Li Luo had decided upon some time ago. Now that he had a thunder resonance, he was able to cultivate thunder-related resonance arts.

The Thunderbolt Art was something that Li Luo had discovered within House Luolan's library. Now that the conditions were ripe, he could finally start learning it.

Li Luo stood on the spot, his eyes drooping slightly as he channeled resonant power throughout his body, directing most of it to his feet. At this point, thunderbolts could be seen crackling through his soles. What made it mystifying was that these motes of thunder seemed to be moving in a certain pattern through Li Luo's legs, constantly stimulating his flesh, blood, and meridians.

At this moment, thunder resonant power was smoothly flowing through the meridians in his legs.

Gradually, he began to feel an aching and burning pain throughout his flesh and blood as the resonant power continued to flow.

Right at this moment, he snapped to attention, and a flash of lightning could be seen within his pupils. He then raised his foot and took a step.

Bang!

The crackling boom of thunder echoed throughout the skygold room.

Li Luo had moved dozens of meters in a single flash. However, he was not pleased with the result when he saw the state of his legs. Every single pore on his feet seemed to be bleeding, and his skin and flesh were showing signs of being ripped apart.

"The difficulty of learning a dragon-general resonance art indeed significantly surpasses that of a tiger-general resonance art." He sighed.

The Thunderbolt Art had not been cultivated successfully. As a dragon-general resonance art, the highest tier it could reach was the Fifth Flash, which would allow the user to travel almost anywhere within a thousand meters in a flash. Currently, he was not even at the First Flash Tier as he had not cultivated it successfully.

However, Li Luo was not in a rush, as cultivating any resonance art required a significant amount of time. He might be a genius unseen through the ages when it came to comprehending resonance arts, but this art would still require some time investment. Even so, this incomplete version of the art had increased his speed significantly and had shored up some of his weaknesses.

As he pondered over the flow of thunder resonant power throughout his body during the usage of the art, he was simultaneously utilizing his other two resonant powers to quickly heal his body, eliminating the throbbing pain.

After his legs recovered, he left the skygold room and concluded his day of cultivation.

After which, he made his way towards the inner hall, where he saw Jiang Qing'e brandishing her heavy sword. Her lithe body was currently lightly threading through a series of motions whilst the sword in her hand moved as though it possessed a life of its own, slashing in all sorts of profound trajectories.

Li Luo could keenly feel that the sword dance was rousing all of the worldly natural energy around them, pouring it into Qing'e at a frightening rate.

At the same time, her slender and delicate body was like a bottomless abyss, constantly engulfing any and all energy that came her way.

One could not fathom how deep and unmeasurable her actions were.

Li Luo continued to focus upon Jiang Qing'e's body, gradually becoming intoxicated and beguiled at the rousing sight. She was frighteningly beautiful, yet her might was akin to that of a ferocious spirit beast that one should not idly provoke. A wrong move would inevitably lead to a terrifying counterattack.

Weng.

At this very instant, the void before Li Luo seemed to ripple.

The heavy sword had soundlessly cleaved apart the space before him, pausing right before Li Luo's throat.

Raising his arms in surrender, Li Luo did not dare to even let out a squeak.

After which, a hint of amusement surfaced within Jiang Qing'e's emotionless, golden eyes. She sheathed her weapon, and the roiling worldly natural energy seemed to have quietened down.

"Sister Qing'e, are you about to make your breakthrough?" Li Luo curiously asked.

Jiang Qing'e's actions had aroused a sense of danger within him. It was as though there were undercurrents surging beneath a thin layer of ice, ready to erupt like a geyser at any moment, drowning anyone in its vicinity.

Jiang Qing'e did not reply but just gave a wry smile. "It's time to go. I want to head to the college today."

Li Luo nodded and sighed. "Today will be a day that even the heavens will be taken by surprise. History is about to be made at the Astral Sage College."

Why? It was the day where Jiang Qing'e would officially issue a challenge to a member of the Seven Astral Pillars.

If she succeeded, it would be a legendary feat. the Astral Sage College's history would be irreversibly changed.

Destiny was going to be rewritten on this date.

#### Chapter 0624: Records Were Meant To Be Broken

When the two had finally arrived back in college, Li Luo could feel countless gazes falling upon them. Well more specifically, it was on Jiang Qing'e.

A hint of anticipation and shock could be seen within them.

The news of Jiang Qing'e challenging the Seven Astral Pillars had obviously spread throughout the college.

Of course no one found it strange. The moment the Holy Grail Meet had ended, she had made the request to the college that she was intending to break this record. Naturally the college was also exuberant at the news of a possible legend being written, and thus had spread the word.

This caused a flurry of activity to bubble up within the school.

Countless students were in awe at this decision. The Seven Astral Pillars was the highest form of honor anyone could achieve within the college and from another point of view, this was actually more significant than Jiang Qing'e attaining the title of the strongest student in the Three Star Hall.

After all, she was merely competing with peers in her grade during the Holy Grail Meet. This event had her facing off against the unequalled peak elites of the school.

The Seven Astral Pillars also didn't just contain the best students of the Four Star Hall, but also a group of even older students.

In the current batch of representatives, Gong Shenjun and Gong Luanyu had stolen the limelight with their radiance and tyrannical might. However this didn't indicate that these older students were to be scoffed at. They possessed the luxury of time and resources and had even more opportunities to develop themselves.

Thus for the average student, Jiang Qing'e attempting to topple someone from the Seven Astral Pillars was absolutely mindboggling. Success would lead to history being rewritten. No one had achieved this feat before. The shock and implication of this challenge was momentous. As a result, the entire school was focused upon her right now.

"A new legend is about to be born." Li Luo jokingly said to Qing'e as they were faced with the gazes of the inquisitive.

Jiang Qing'e on the other hand remained characteristically calm. "I actually don't hold any interest in the title itself. This battle will allow me to birth vital energy within me."

"Birth vital energy?" Li Luo's expression changed.

"Only by conquering a powerful foe can a breath of invincible vital energy be birthed." Jiang Qing'e calmly explained, a hint of tyranny felt in her very words.

Li Luo was still a little clueless. "Whats the point of this breath of vital energy?"

Jiang Qing'e shot a meaningful glance towards him. "You'll know when the time comes."

"Tsk... why is she putting on such an act?" Li Luo unhappily sulked. However his guess was that this battle was a necessary preparation for the Housemeet. This had definitely been years in the making.

"I'll head back to the dormitory for a bit before coming over to cheer you on!" Li Luo waved goodbye to Jiang Qing'e as he went off in search of mentor Chi Chan. He wanted her to bring him to the college's resonance art library and find the Duke Art that he could finally call his own.

Qing'e nodded her head as the two went their separate ways for now.

After which excitement overtook Li Luo as he sprinted over to his dormitory.

Just as he pushed the doors open, he happened to see a fatigued Bai Mengmeng and Xin Fu staggering up the stairs from the basement. Walking leisurely right behind them was mentor Chi Chan. Clearly she had taken the time to train the two of them well.

"Leader!" Bai Mengmeng cried in happiness as she saw Li Luo, the traces of fatigue being washed away with genuine elation.

"It must have been tough for you..." Li Luo smiled.

Xin Fu glared at the relaxed Li Luo as he was reminded of the high intensity training mentor Chi Chan had subjected him to the past week. Envy flooded his thoughts and he very earnestly spoke his mind. "Leader oh leader! I know you managed to obtain the title of the strongest One Star Hall student in the Holy Grail Meet but don't you feel that you're taking things a little too leisurely? You haven't been to class this entire month! How could you do that! What would you do next? Don't you know that the Two Star Hall's Zhu Xuan has already stepped into the quasi General stage? All of the One Star Hall students under the Violet Vibrance mentors are all pushing themselves to the limit. If you continue this way, you'll be surpassed!"

"Mentor Chi Chan! You can't let Li Luo run astray! He's a wonderful sapling and he definitely needs your sincere guidance!" Xin Fu spoke very honestly towards.

So long as mentor Chi Chan started to supervise Li Luo directly, some of the pressure would be lifted off him and he could finally heave a breath of relief!

Leader oh leader! Don't blame this brother for being honest. Everything was to ensure that you improve yourself!

The fact was that under Xin Fu's earnest and harmless face was a heart full of complicated thoughts.

Faced with Xin Fu's "wonderful intentions", Li Luo gave a slight smile. "Although I have not been around, my cultivation has increased by leaps and bounds. Dear Brother Xin Fu, the gap between us has only widened to become an even larger chasm! That is unacceptable you know. In our squad, Mengmeng is the one in charge of support and is not good at direct combat. Thus the two of us have to step up and ensure that she is well protected. If you don't improve yourself, you won't even be as helpful as Mengmeng!"

Xin Fu listened intently as he replied in disbelief. "Hey, i've already reached the Evolving Resonance tier. We're in the same tier now."

Li Luo waved his hand confidently. "Evolving Resonance tier? I've long surpassed that!"

This response left Xin Fu a little shellshocked. With an incredulous look he blurted out. "You... you've reached the quasi General stage?!" "Quasi General stage?" Li Luo shook his head.

Xin Fu finally let out a sigh of relief. That was good. His leader had not reached the quasi General stage yet. Otherwise that would mean his cultivation speed was unbelievable quick. Even the Two Star Hall Zhu Xuan had spent the majority of his school points to obtain the resources to take that step.

Yet right at this instant, mentor Chi Chan's gaze fell upon Li Luo for a brief moment. The realisation that struck caused her to focus her attention onto him as she strode forward hurriedly. "You.... did you break into the Earth Fiend General stage?" This was met with a toothy grin as Li Luo chortled unrestrainedly. "In order to not let disappoint my mentor, i've forced myself to bitterly cultivate day and night this entire month... Finally on a dark and stormy night, I managed to break through my limits and enter the Fiend Palace tier!"

After which repressive resonant power began to be emitted from him in every direction.

Feeling the suppression of Li Luo's mighty resonant power, Xin Fu's mind went blank as Bai Mengmeng stared agape and in utter surprise.

Li Luo had entered the Fiend Palace tier?

This was unbelievably insane! Even Zhu Xuan only managed to make it to the quasi General stage.

This basically meant that Li Luo had surpassed even the strongest student of the Two Star Hall. Although the college knew that the Two Star Hall was the weakest link, these were still students who were higher by a single grade. Li Luo might have demonstrated might superior to Zhu Xuan during the Holy Grail Meet but Zhu Xuan definitely held the edge when it came to both quality and quantity of resonant power. However in the short span of a month, Li Luo had surpassed the quasi General stage, directly entering the General stage.

This meant that he was now superior in every way compared to Zhu Xuan!

Was this a true genius?

"Leader, Senior Jiang has yet to break the record but here you are handily writing one of your own..." Bai Mengmeng spoke with a tone of adoration as her beautiful eyes flashed brightly.

Mentor Chi Chan continued to inspect the surging resonant power that Li Luo exuded, feeling a tinge of absent mindedness. This was beyond her wildest imagination that Li Luo had managed to achieve this within such a short span of time. Even with the aid of the holy tree marrow crystal, the best she'd expect of him was to reach the quasi General stage as any further was simply too difficult.

As a result the sight before her was shocking.

"A One Star Hall student entering the Fiend Palace tier..." She felt a momentous stirring within her heart as she continued to stare at Li Luo. Undisguised admiration could be seen in her eyes as she praised him. "Li Luo, you've indeed set a new record. Even Jiang Qing'e was unable to accomplish this in the past."

This was something that brought her exceeding amounts of happiness. As a Duke, she was cognizant of the chasm in strength between a resonant master and a general. This accomplishment demonstrated both his talent and potential, comparable to only a handful in the entire history of every sage college on East Divine Continent.

As his mentor, this brought her incomparable pride at being able to guide such a wonderful seedling.

Li Luo smiled as he lightly spoke. "There's no need to overreact people... records were meant to be broken! Lets take things normally and return to our normal lives..."

Xin Fu was convinced. As expected of the leader, this was the only response that was acceptable. The muscles on mentor Chi Chan's face began to twitch, almost as though she wanted to make a smile. Yet she then turned to face Xin Fu and Bai Mengmeng. "The two of you should hurry and go change. A grand occasion is about to occur today and that doesn't come often. Naturally we cannot be absent."

The duo nodded their heads as they remembered the upcoming bout with Jiang Qing'e and a Seven Astral Pillar. Coupled with the fact that Li Luo had managed to break into the Fiend Palace tier, it would undoubtedly incite an uproar of epic proportions.

The pair from House Luolan would become coolest kids on the street.

#### Chapter 0625: Jiang Qing'e's Challenge

As Xin Fu and Bai Mengmeng made their way to change out of their disheveled clothes, Li Luo had been dragged by mentor Chi Chan to the basement as he was subject to a battery of tests. Only after Li Luo had successfully proven his newfound capabilities, the satisfaction in her gaze only grew more intense.

"Not bad. Your resonant power is sufficiently dense and there is no signs of weakness. It seems that you did not utilize some sort of over drafting art to breakthrough." Mentor Chi Chan heaved a sigh of relief.

"Mentor! Where is the trust in me?" Li Luo lamented.

Mentor Chi Chan's initial suspicions were that Li Luo had been shortsighted, utilizing some secret arts to breakthrough at the expense of his future potential, leading to a flawed breakthrough. However how could he do so? These sort of methods would also harm his foundation and once utilized, would prevent any future progress. This was unacceptable to Li Luo as well.

It was no wonder that mentor had sent the duo away. She did not wish for his prestige and adoration to be ruined by the reality of such a situation.

Mentor Chi Chan calmly continued speaking. "Although I trust that you're not foolish enough to do so, you'll never know what one will do in the heat of the moment."

Li Luo understood that what she referred to was the tenuous Housemeet that was ahead of them.

"Mentor please rest assured. As I have long promised, although House Luolan is the culmination of my parents' efforts, I'm sure they'd rather it be destroyed than for us to lose our lives over it. I might work hard but I would never be so foolish as to live and die with the house... Plus I have many backup plans anyways. Even if House Luolan is gone, Sister Qing'e and I are still around. We'll find an opportunity to rebuild it in future." He explained.

Mentor Chi Chan nodded slightly in appreciation. Li Luo had a clear understanding of the situation which was heartening.

"Since you've broken into the Fiend Palace tier and set a new record, I will reach out to vice principal Su Xin and request for a few Fiend Origin Pills." she continued.

"Fiend Origin Pills?!" Li Luo's eyes were like saucers as he couldn't believe his ears. This Fiend Origin Pill was refined specifically for Earth Fiend General stage cultivators. Consuming this pill would allow one to obtain a wisp of earth fiend energy that had been tempered by its medicinal properties. As a result the earth fiend energy was extremely gentle and easy to refine. Thus it was a favorite cultivation resource for Earth Fiend cultivators, allowing them to increase the speed at which they improved.

These Fiend Origin Pills were ones refined by the college and were even better in quality than those found in common markets. Usually only the top students within the Three Star Hall were able to exchange for them as they were few in quantity. The rest could only look on in envy.

"As I understand, there aren't enough Fiend Origin Pills to go around. Not even the average Three Star Hall student can have access to them! Are you sure?" Li Luo asked eagerly.

"You are right. Normally speaking, Three Star Hall students won't even be able to enjoy these pills, but you're different. You have demonstrated your excellence by breaking into the Earth Fiend General stage before the Three Star Hall and the college will reward the two of you as further motivation."

"The two of us?" Mentor Chi Chan seemed to be smiling. "Mmm. As Zhu Xuan has broken into the quasi General stage, he made a request for a Fiend Origin Pill as well. However their supply is limited and probably only one of you will get it."

"Does this mean I still have to fight Zhu Xuan for it?" Li Luo had a sympathetic look on his face. "It looks like things are going to be difficult for Senior Zhu Xuan once again... you know, it really pains my heart to do so!"

Mentor Chi Chan's eyes seemed a little amused at Li Luo's exaggerated act. Zhu Xuan had to be the unluckiest person in the world. He might have originally thought that by breaking into the quasi General stage, he would be able to raise eyebrows and demonstrate his worth. Alas he had the misfortune of meeting Li Luo who had even surpassed him, going directly into the Fiend Palace tier.

When comparing the two, the gap was massive. It looked like Zhu Xuan was about to be roused from his beautiful dreams.

The duo sighed in sympathy for the poor soul. After which they left the basement and met the other duo who had finished changing.

After which they all headed towards the square in the center of the college.

Along the way, a sea of people had gathered and were all ambling in the same direction in various states of excitement, using this opportunity to chat about their predictions for this event. Everyone was bubbling with anticipation.

"If Senior Jiang is able to attain the seat of a Seven Astral Pillar, she might even become more famous than the First Princess!" Bai Mengmeng couldn't help but to comment.

Xin Fu also nodded his head in agreement. Ever since Jiang Qing'e had attained the title of the strongest Three Star Hall student, her already lofty reputation had grown to be on par with the First Princess. With the record, she'd officially be the most outstanding individual in the entire college!

"Leader, do you know who Senior Jiang is planning to challenge?" Bai Mengmeng asked curiously.

At this point, even mentor Chi Chan gave a meaningful look at Li Luo, indicating that even she was interested in this topic.

Li Luo helplessly shook his head. "Nope. She didn't want to tell me."

"If she had to choose an opponent with the highest chances of succeeding, it would likely be either Seven Astral Pillars or Ye Chengying. Amongst the Seven Astral Pillars, other than Gong Shenjun and Gong Luanyu, these are the only two Four Star Hall students. The other three belong to a previous batch of students. Although these three may be a little weaker than the two from the royal court, they should not be underestimated either." Mentor Chi Chan explained.

Bai Mengmeng and Xin Fu nodded as they agreed with this assessment.

Li Luo did not say anything in response. Although in terms of chances of success, Si Tianming and Ye Chengying were the best choices, he knew Qing'e very well. She would never choose to do something just because it was easier.

"Mentor, what are the approximate placements within the Seven Astral Pillars?" Li Luo asked.

"Amongst them, Gong Shenjun is undoubtedly the strongest followed by Gong Luanyu. In third place should be Zhong Taiqiu, fourth Wang Chao and fifth Qiao Yu." Mentor Chi Chan spoke after thinking it through.

Li Luo nodded his head meaningfully.

They continued to chatter on their way over until the square filled with bustling life was finally before them. With a wave of mentor Chi Chan's sleeves, the group was swept off the ground onto a high platform above the square.

At this time, all of the One Star Hall Violet Vibrance mentors had been gathered. Li Luo even saw Qin Zhulu, Lu Qing'er, Yu Lang and the rest of the mentees!

Lu Qing'er immediately noticed Li Luo and beckoned in a friendly manner.

Li Luo returned the gesture with a genuine smile before turning to focus onto the square. Seven stone pillars were erected upon the square, each one engraved with carvings of the heavens and the stars. Mystifying light circulated throughout the engravings, bequeathing an extraordinary appearance to these simple pillars.

Atop each pillar sat a cross-legged silhouette.

These were the current batch of Seven Astral Pillars.

The seven were quietly sitting by with calm expressions, robes rippling with the wind, emitting a suppressive presence demonstrating their uncanny might.

In the square were countless students staring at them with utmost reverence and respect. These were the seven most outstanding students of the sage college. This was a title not obtained through background but wrenched away with their own might.

Atop the high platform, Vice principal Su Xin had finally made her appearance, raising her slender arm lightly to indicate the start of the event.

A beam of light crashed down from the sky, landing in the middle of the square, becoming the center of attention.

She strode out gallantly, her beautiful figure and matchless features inciting overwhelming cheers from the crowd.

"Today, Three Star Hall's Jiang Qing'e will challenge the Seven Astral Pillars." Vice principal Su Xin announced with her heart-warming voice, resounding within every individuals' ears. Yet this only seemed to excite the crowd further with cheers getting increasingly louder.

"Everyone should know the rules of the battle. I will not comment further." Vice principal Su Xin turned to face the enchanting beauty, a look of undisguised satisfaction and appreciation within her eyes.  
"Jiang Qing'e. Declare your opponent."

The square immediately turned silent as the countless gazes focused upon Jiang Qing'e's next words.

This was the moment of truth.

She was a Three Star Hall student and in the Fiend Finisher tier, compared to all of the Seven Astral Pillars who had stepped into Heavenly Pearl stage. The gap between them was significant, even with a ninth-grade light resonance. Thus it was unlikely she could defeat an opponent beyond her stage. These opponents weren't just ordinary individuals either, every single one was an elite with immense potential.

Thus most of the crowd speculated that if she were to try to unseat one, it would be the weakest member such as Si Tianming.

Yet her piercing golden eyes swept across each of the Seven Astral Pillars, finally pausing on one. The next moment, a cold voice resounded calmly throughout the square. "My opponent will be... Zhong Taiqiu."

This declaration of war caused the entire square to burst out in a frenzy.

Chapter 0626: Battling Zhong Taiqiu

When Jiang Qing'e declared her opponent, the entire square erupted. Countless individuals had surprise and confusion scrawled all over their faces, and the noise continued to increase in intensity.

"My God! Did I mishear? Jiang Qing'e wishes to challenge Zhong Taiqiu?"

"Zhong Taiqiu is the third strongest amongst the Seven Astral Pillars! He's just right behind Gong Shenjun and Gong Luanyu."

"He's at the Six-pearl Tier and is extraordinarily strong. His foundation is also extremely sturdy, so why would Jiang Qing'e want to challenge him?"

"This seems a little reckless. Isn't she overestimating herself?"

Everyone burst into chatter in shock, speculating endlessly on the reason why. Jiang Qing'e's choice of opponent had surpassed everyone's wildest expectations.

However, it wasn't just the general public that was surprised, Li Luo was too! Although he had guessed that Jiang Qing'e would not have chosen to fight against the weakest individual, he had never expected her to aim this high.

He had assumed that the furthest she'd go was to challenge Wang Chao or Qiao Yu, the weaker ones of the older students. However, this was beyond his wildest expectations.

This fellow was no pushover—he had once been the strongest student of the Four Star Hall.

When Gong Shenjun and Gong Luanyu had first entered the Four Star Hall, Zhong Taiqiu was the reigning leader amongst the Seven Astral Pillars.

No one would doubt his strength that had been proved through combat.

Li Luo had full confidence in Jiang Qing'e, but even he had to make sure that he hadn't heard that declaration wrongly.

"Is this all to birth vital energy?" Li Luo's gaze flashed. Jiang Qing'e would never do something meaningless. This choice was deliberate, and there had to be a goal.

"Leader, why did Senior Jiang choose such a difficult trial?" Bai Mengmeng asked, slightly flabbergasted by this.

Lu Qing'er paused and also chimed in. "Picking Zhong Taiqiu is truly shocking. Perhaps she might have been too aggressive and gone a little too far? With Senior Jiang's potential, challenging him when she has broken into the Heavenly Pearl Stage would have been the safer move."

Li Luo waved his hands helplessly. "Well, there's no point in telling me all of this. I'm not her!"

The rest also shook their heads forlornly.

"You shouldn't underestimate Jiang Qing'e." Mentor Chi Chan suddenly piped up as she observed the peerless beauty, standing by her lonesome amidst the massive square. "Amongst all the Violet Vibrance mentors, if we had to say who was the most unpredictable student, it would be the one standing over there," she gestured.

"Jiang Qing'e's cultivation technique is a little strange—it's almost certainly some sort of secret art. It constantly suppresses her cultivation speed, much like bottling up an active volcano. Over time, the pressure and magma builds up, eventually erupting forth with terrifying power. Now, judging by the speed at which Jiang Qing'e cultivated during her time in the One and Two Star Halls, it could almost be considered disappointing with her potential and talent. Yet the moment she entered the Three Star Hall, she vaulted through the three major stages of the Earth Fiend General Stage within the short span of a year, entering the peak of the Fiend Finisher Tier. This was completely mind-boggling and unexpected. The way I see it, this is probably because she chose to restrict herself during the earlier part of her cultivation, and this restriction has reached its limit. Thus, this secret art is more than meets the eye... and it was probably given to her by Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan. Personally, I'm extremely curious. If she had chosen not to suppress herself in the past, where would her achievements lie today? Perhaps we aren't too far off from seeing that day now..." At this point, she glanced at Li Luo. Jiang Qing'e choosing to burst forth with her bottled up potential at this point probably indicated that it was all for the Housemeet.

She had been making her preparations for this day.

After listening to mentor Chi Chan's conjecture, Yu Lang, Bai Mengmeng, Lu Qing'er, and the rest seemed a little unsettled. They then turned to face the enchanting beauty who was still standing silently in anticipation of what was to come. No matter how one saw it, Jiang Qing'e was truly amazing and talented. She could be considered to be the most outstanding student of the Astral Sage College in the last few hundred years.

Especially if she succeeded in her challenge today—she would carve out an entirely new legend.

The fervor in the square did not die down, and the audience continued to chatter. Meanwhile, the faces of those atop the seven pillars also showed a hint of surprise.

This was completely unexpected even to them.

"Qing'e." The First Princess' brows were furrowed as she stared at the heroic and alluring silhouette, her heavy sword in hand. She was worried for her. If Qing'e had stepped into the Heavenly Pearl Stage, the choice of opponent couldn't be more appropriate. However, the crux of the matter was that she had not! The undulations coming from her body indicated that she was still in the Fiend Finisher Tier.

Zhong Taiqiu, on the other hand, was a Six-pearl.

This was the titan that monopolized the top position before she and Gong Shenjun had arrived on the scene. This was not a good opponent.

Yet this was the choice Qing'e had made, and the First Princess could only quietly observe, keeping her worries to herself.

Gong Shenjun's gaze flickered as well. "Just what is Qing'e relying on to even dare to challenge Zhong Taiqiu?" He understood that she was not a reckless individual, and thus the only conclusion was that she had a trump card that had not revealed itself.

"Phew." Si Tianming heaved a sigh of relief whilst a bitter smile hung upon his face. He had maintained his position as a Seven Astral Pillar, but he also felt a sour taste in his mouth. Clearly, Jiang Qing'e disregarded him and did not deem him a worthy opponent. "It looks like I really stand no chance anymore." Si Tianming bitterly shook his head.

The rest of the Seven Astral Pillars had varying expressions. They also stared at the beautiful silhouette with a mystifying temperament, a complicated look in their eyes. If she succeeded today, she would undoubtedly become the most intimidating Seven Astral Pillar to ever walk the halls of the college. In the midst of the cacophony, the challenged, Zhong Taiqiu, was also temporarily taken aback. Gradually, he stood up.

Zhong Taiqiu could be best described as ordinary. He possessed two beady eyes and an almost feminine smile, almost unremarkably normal. However, this average-looking fellow was once the strongest Seven Astral Pillar. The old were surpassed by the new, and even more outstanding individuals had appeared! This was expected. As a result, he chose to restrain his former brilliance, quietly enjoying the resources the college imparted upon him. At the end of the year, he would leave for greener pastures.

"I had planned to leave the college with the glorious Seven Astral Pillar title. However, it looks like things were never meant to be so easy." Zhong Taiqiu chuckled.

After he spoke, he took a step forward, resonant power flickering for but an instant. At the next moment, his figure reappeared several dozen meters away from her. All of this happened underneath the watchful eyes of the audience.

"Junior Jiang. You're the most outstanding student in the last few hundred years of the college's history. However, I don't want to leave the college defeated. Thus, I have to add that the decision you made might not have been the smartest choice," he continued lightly.

Jiang Qing'e remained unfazed, waves seemingly rippling within her golden eyes.

She did not bother with any more superfluous words, her eyes focusing on the opponent before her. "Senior Zhong, I seek your guidance."

Zhong Taiqiu chuckled once again before awe-inspiring amounts of mighty resonant power burst out from him in every direction, akin to a tsunami of energy crashing into his surroundings. His resonant power was light green and a pungent, fishy odor could be smelled. Wherever the resonant power permeated through, the air would turn a shade of light green.

This was snake venom!

Amidst the roiling resonant power, the silhouette of a gigantic python gradually took form.

Lower eighth-grade Devil Python resonance.

After which, six heavenly pearls began to manifest behind him, and worldly natural energy rushed towards him madly like a coursing river.

The astonishing amounts of resonant power exuded a pressure upon the entire square, giving even the members of the audience a sense of suffocation.

Zhong Taiqiu's irises turned into slits akin to those of a python, and his feminine features seemed to add a tint of coldness to his expression. His body slowly started to ascend into the air, and he looked down condescendingly at Jiang Qing'e.

"Junior Jiang, take out your trump card. If you're truly in the Fiend Finisher Tier, then I'm afraid I'm not going to lose my seat today."

"One move," Jiang Qing'e replied tartly as she glared at the massive amounts of resonant power that surrounded Zhong Taiqiu, her red lips slightly parted.

"What?" Zhong Taiqiu's gaze shrunk upon hearing it.

"Senior Zhong, if you're able to receive my move, I will naturally concede this challenge," Jiang Qing'e stated neutrally.

Zhong Taiqiu focused upon her and smiled. "Could it be that you only have a single move?" His eyes flashed and he gave a soft snicker. "As a senior, I will naturally not retreat. I really want to see what sort of abilities the strongest student in the Astral Sage College's recent history has to offer!"

As the once-strongest Seven Astral Pillar, he possessed no small amount of pride and self-confidence. If Jiang Qing'e were on a similar level, he would naturally have chosen to avoid this possibly devastating blow. Only a fool would stand there and be sliced at. But Qing'e was only at the Fiend Finisher Tier, while he was a six-pearl!

He had to see her source of confidence for himself..

"Well then, Junior Jiang. Be my guest."

Chapter 0627: Quasi Pearl

Once Zhong Taiqiu made his decision, Jiang Qing'e stabbed her heavy sword right into the stone tiles below. Her fair and beautiful face was like a deep pool, and even the impact of facing off against a mighty six-pearl did not cause any ripples within her.

Before countless eyes, she placed her hands together, and her fingers formed countless profound and cryptic hand seals.

As the hand seals continued to change, the worldly natural energy around Jiang Qing'e started to churn and froth violently. At the same time, an unusually bright, holy light seemed to emit from her body, which caused many of the audience members to shield their eyes.

Some astute observers could sense that the resonant power fluctuations coming from Jiang Qing'e seemed to be climbing and strengthening at a fearsome rate.

Some Four Star Hall students had already reached the Fiend Finisher Tier, and they were stunned to see that the resonant power fluctuations coming from Jiang Qing'e had far surpassed theirs. Could someone at the Fiend Finisher Tier actually attain such a level of strength?

"Huh? Does Jiang Qing'e plan to break through here?" Qin Zhulu exclaimed from atop the One Star Hall's high platform as he keenly felt the wild resonant power undulations coming from her.

Mentor Chi Chan gave a deep sigh. "I think that holding back for so many years was all to attain a position amongst the Seven Astral Pillars. Thus, she is finally letting loose. Alas, it's a little bit of a waste." She continued to observe Jiang Qing'e, and from her current state, it could be said that the resonant power within her had been compressed and stored away to the extreme, such that this volcano that was about to erupt was actually at a critical mass right now!

Was she planning to break through at this critical point?

Li Luo similarly stared at the frightening sight before him, his expression becoming solemn. Jiang Qing'e obviously understood how terrifying Zhong Taiqiu was, and the gap between the two was not so easily bridged. A ninth-grade light resonance at the Fiend Finisher Tier would not be able to challenge him, and thus she had to bring her hidden cards.

As the audience watched the scene before them with great tension, the worldly natural energy around her seemed to have been incited, and it quickly began to converge behind Jiang Qing'e.

At the same time, the resonant power within her also flowed out in tandem, condensing behind her.

In a short span of time, a lustrous ball of light formed behind Jiang Qing'e before everyone's startled eyes. The ball of light seemed to contain frightening amounts of resonant power, all being condensed and restrained within.

The space surrounding it began to warp and tremble in its mere existence.

In a certain way, it looked like a Heavenly Pearl!

Countless individuals were left speechless. Just what was Jiang Qing'e planning to do? Was she trying to break into the Heavenly Pearl Stage?

Li Luo frowned at this development. Did she really plan to release her suppressed potential and breakthrough now? In the middle of a fight? Although doing so was a fortuitous blessing, based on Mentor Chi Chan's words, it seemed a little strange that she'd hold back for so long merely for a Seven Astral Pillar position.

Wouldn't breaking through now also throw her plans into disarray?

However, he trusted her! This crappy Zhong Taiqiu guy wasn't good enough that she'd pull out all the guns.

Thus, everything before him must have been premeditated.

Meanwhile, the entire audience was fixated upon Jiang Qing'e.

The horrifying sight of the Heavenly Pearl made of compressed resonant power gradually stabilized, causing a shockwave to be emitted upon its final consolidation. Remnant resonant power swept out like a billowing wave in every direction, causing even the stone tiles below to crack.

"She broke through?!" The sight was expected, yet it surprised the audience.

Li Luo was also intently observing the Heavenly Pearl Jiang Qing'e had formed. It clearly looked like an actual Heavenly Pearl from the outside. However, compared to Zhong Taiqiu's ones, hers seemed a little illusory.

"It looks like she didn't really break through, only opting to take half a step into the Heavenly Pearl Stage. As her body has already reached its limits in condensing resonant power, she chose to release some of it to form a Quasi Heavenly Pearl, entering the Quasi Heavenly Pearl Stage. It's similar to the Quasi General Stage, where it's not a complete breakthrough. Yet it still provides a qualitative improvement to one's strength," Mentor Chi Chan explained.

"Quasi Pearl Stage?" The rest looked at each other in slight confusion.

"Though... she possesses such bountiful resonant power in the Quasi Pearl Stage... To be frank, this is the first time I've seen something so impressive," Mentor Chi Chan continued with a sigh.

The rest of the Violet Vibrance mentors nodded in agreement. The amount of resonant power in that single Quasi Heavenly Pearl was comparable to an average individual at the Three-pearl Stage.

At the same time, it was unfortunate that they only got the opportunity to see a Quasi Pearl.

Mentor Cao Sheng smiled and commented, "A suppressed volcano would naturally burst forth with destructive strength. I'm genuinely curious to know how far Jiang Qing'e can go. Just what sort of strength will she have when she finally lets herself go?"

Mentor Mi Er heaved a deep sigh. "Perhaps it might be like a sky of fireworks—grandiose but temporary. An ephemeral display of beauty."

"Fireworks that have been brewed over countless years, infused with her painstaking blood, sweat, and tears," Chi Chan mumbled to herself, a hint of wistfulness within her voice.

Despite hearing the exchange between the mentors, Li Luo remained unfazed on the surface. But deep down, he felt a sense of tenderness towards her.

He continued to gaze at the peerlessly elegant and dazzling beauty before him. He simply could not comprehend how much pressure Jiang Qing'e had been under to travel this arduous path.

For the sake of House Luolan and to protect him with his blank palaces, she had chosen to restrain her brilliance and to accumulate her strength, all for this pivotal moment.

She had paid too heavy a price.

Fortunately, he had managed to shed off the trappings of his blank palaces, made his way to Xia City, and was now supporting her as best he could.

"Rest assured, Sister Qing'e. I won't let you shoulder the burdens all alone during the Housemeet. Regardless of how the situation develops, I will always be by your side." Li Luo promised in his heart as he warmly watched her.

"Sister Qing'e, do your best!" he suddenly screamed!

Roused by his mad cheer, countless enthusiastic voices rang out as well. "Senior Jiang! You can do it!"

"Elder Sister, club that fool and write your legend!"

"You are the strongest Three Star Hall student in the Astral Sage College's history!"

Jiang Qing'e already enjoyed a reputation that could be considered second to none in the entire Astral Sage College. Now she had chosen to take on the Seven Astral Pillars challenge whilst still a Three Star Hall student. Naturally, the significance of this act was not lost on the audience, and they enthusiastically wanted to experience history in the making. As a result, overwhelming cheers constantly rung out, bolstering her already astonishing influence.

At this point, she turned to look directly at Li Luo. A faint smile appeared on her fair and delicate cheeks as she gestured victoriously at him.

Alas, dear Li Luo only felt countless furious gazes being directed towards him, like a hail of razor-sharp arrows flying towards him in every direction.

Yet these jealous leers disappeared almost as quickly as they came, focusing on the battle that lay ahead.

Jiang Qing'e was about to make her move.

She simply raised her jade-like palm, and the dazzling pearl of light behind her broke down into countless streams of energy, directly converging in her hand.

In a blink, the Quasi Pearl dissipated and then a saintly lotus of light formed within her hand.

Atop the lotus flower was a white flame that gradually rose into the air, seemingly possessing the power to purify anything and everything.

The sacred lotus began to spin, and the surrounding space seemed to distort at this moment.

Countless pairs of eyes scrutinized the stalk of sacred fire lotus before a more astute individual screamed out his thoughts. "It's a high-grade dragon-general resonance art! The Sacred Flamelight Lotus!"

A high-grade dragon-general resonance art was the strongest type of art below Duke Arts. They were notoriously difficult to cultivate, and Jiang Qing'e's demonstration of this art did not seem to turn too many heads as many were familiar with it. In terms of cultivation difficulty or might, it was known to be at the top when it came to the dragon-general resonance arts that the college possessed.

If one did not consider the Duke Arts that the college had hidden away, the Sacred Flamelight Lotus was undoubtedly the absolute art that no other could compare with!

Jiang Qing'e, befitting her reputation, had unsurprisingly mastered it.

#### Chapter 0628: Pinnacle Showdown

Once the Sacred Flamelight Lotus was formed, it directly shot out like a blazing meteor, countless flaming lights following behind in a trail. There was a sort of transcendental beauty to it, and countless gazes followed it on its journey towards Zhong Taiqiu.

The lotus gradually filled up Zhong Taiqiu's vision as it raced towards him, causing his previous, confident smirk to recede. Bathed in the radiant light of the lotus, he could feel his instincts screaming at the danger before him.

"She's clearly just someone who broke into the Quasi Pearl Stage, so how could it possess such might?" Zhong Taiqiu's mind was in turmoil. He had never underestimated her but the truth was that the difference in resonant power was just too vast! Yet he had never expected that she could burst forth with such might.

This was the strongest Quasi Pearl Stage cultivator he had ever seen.

Zhong Taiqiu sucked in a deep breath and his gaze turned fierce. No matter what sort of abomination Jiang Qing'e was, it wouldn't be so easy to obtain a position within the Seven Astral Pillars.

As the strongest representative at one point, he possessed a natural confidence in himself. He might have been surpassed by his juniors Gong Shenjun and Gong Luanyu, but those were Four Star Hall students at least. Jiang Qing'e was merely at the Three Star Hall, and if he couldn't hold her back, it would be a complete disgrace and humiliation!

Bang!

Sable, green resonant power thunderously poured out from him like a shockwave. From afar, it looked like a green river had taken form with him at the center. Next, he immediately executed a hand sign.

At the same time, countless silver lights began to appear amidst the sable, green resonant power. Upon closer inspection, they seemed to resemble countless snake scales.

Each scale was engraved with countless patterns that seemed to be able to rouse the nearby worldly natural energy, absorbing it in spades.

Countless individuals who were familiar with Zhong Taiqiu lightly cried out upon this sight, "Snake Scale Myriad Transformations!" This was the high grade dragon-general resonance art he was most known for. There were three tiers to this technique. From lowest to highest, they were: Green Scales, Silver Scales, and Gold Scales. He had managed to cultivate it to the Silver Scales Tier, so it possessed intimidating might.

"It looks like Zhong Taiqiu felt the heat and decided to retaliate with his strongest move!"

"Of course! Senior Jiang might have only broken into the Quasi Pearl Stage, but the power she exudes is a little too terrifying... She is probably the strongest Quasi Pearl Stage cultivator the college has ever seen!"

Hiss!

Whilst everyone continued with their frenzied discussion, Zhong Taiqiu made his move. Swatting the air before him, the countless silver snake scales began to amalgamate as they rushed forward like a torrent of water, gradually taking the form of a massive palm hundreds of meters wide. Meanwhile, the middle of the materialized palm tore apart, reminding one of a gaping maw of a snake, full of vigor and ferocity.

Bang!

As the silver- scaled palm struck forth, it ripped apart the fabric of space, causing the worldly natural energy to crash forth with a deafening boom.

The floor beneath him was unable to keep up with the growing pressure, cracking into tiny pieces.

The focus of the audience was now upon the inevitable clash between the Sacred Flamelight Lotus and the Snake Scale Myriad Transformation.

BOOM!

A deafening roar overwhelmed the surroundings, and massive waves of resonant power began to roil in every direction. The square itself was disintegrating from the remnant energy, and just as the audience was about to become collateral damage, the mentors quickly took action, creating barriers that isolated the battlefield.

Ding, ding, ding!

The energy barriers had held fast and remained unshattered, which was a relief to all those who were watching.

Yet this was just an afterthought as all the attention was focused upon the site of the collision.

The two moves were locked in a direct confrontation.

The Sacred Flamelight Lotus was slowly revolving, constantly producing wave after wave of flames that contained the power of light. The waves washed over the silver-scaled palm, gradually turning it transparent, demonstrating its purifying abilities!

Jiang Qing'e had a ninth-grade light resonance, so its purification was even more tyrannical and unyielding. Even with Zhong Taiqiu's Six-pearl Stage power, it was hard for him to resist the encroaching cleansing of the light.

"The resonant power from her ninth-grade light resonance is truly overbearing!" Zhong Taiqiu was acutely aware of the changes occurring to his resonant art. His eyes narrowed at the sight before him. He had a lower eighth-grade Devil Python resonance, and it wasn't weak by any means. Who would have thought that it would be meaningless before Jiang Qing'e? It was fortunate that his cultivation level completely suppressed hers. Thanks to his massive reserves of resonant power, the corrosion caused by the light could be tolerated.

A reflection of the slowly rotating lotus could be seen in his pupils. The previous confrontation had confirmed to him that Jiang Qing'e was no weaker than a four-pearl Heavenly Pearl Stage cultivator. This was completely ludicrous. He had never seen anyone at the Quasi Pearl Stage possess such domineering might.

At the same time, he also knew that this sort of exertion could not be maintained for long. No matter how mighty a ninth-grade light resonance was, the difference could not possibly be this extreme.

"This pretty lotus might be strong, but it's still not enough," Zhong Taiqiu commented as his gaze flickered. He held great confidence in his follow-up moves, and even though Jiang Qing'e had made him sweat quite a bit, they were on different levels. Victory for her would not come so easily.

"In any case, once I resolve this little trick, it should all be over," Zhong Taiqiu thought to himself. No longer hesitating, he roused all of the resonant power within him. The surrounding worldly natural energy seemed to have been agitated, and a harsh hissing sound reverberated around the square.

"Snake Scale Myriad Transformations, Devil Python Devours the Heavens!"

With his thunderous declaration, one could see the gaping maw on the silver-scaled palm expand once again, revealing countless rows of fangs. And now a terrifying and cold poison awakened within it.

The huge palm slammed downwards, completely consuming the Sacred Flamelight Lotus with its abyss-like maw that covered the heavens and the earth.

"Python's Abyssal Suppression!" After swallowing the lotus, Zhong Taiqiu quickly executed a series of hand signs that caused the silver-scaled palm to clench tightly. It was as though five massive pythons had coiled around the lotus, encapsulating the resonant art and emitting a poisonous air that attempted to further erode it.

The Sacred Flamelight Lotus began to fade in brilliance as the boundless snake venom enshrouded it.

The sight of this caused Jiang Qing'e's supporters to feel a sense of unease. Even the legendary ninth-grade light resonance user was having difficulty dealing with Zhong Taiqiu!

Even Li Luo was left on edge at this sight as he watched attentively.

Zhong Taiqiu's move was frightening. Any other Quasi Pearl Stage cultivator might have been swallowed and spat out as a dessicated husk after facing Python's Abyssal Suppression.

"Junior Jiang, do not lose heart. Being able to bring out a move of such power in the Quasi Pearl Stage is worthy of praise. I feel that if you had truly stepped into the Heavenly Pearl Stage, I would not be your opponent. Unfortunately...." Zhong Taiqiu said as he floated in the sky. The silver-scaled palm was still looming above them, leaving Jiang Qing'e in its shadow as he looked down upon her.

"... this move is now useless. And so..."

Just as he uttered that last sentence, Jiang Qing'e stretched out her fair hand towards the massive scaled palm, coolly replying, "Senior Zhong, your Abyssal Suppression isn't bad. However, you are mistaken if you think the Sacred Flamelight Lotus can be dealt with so painlessly."

With that, she clenched her fist violently.

At this instant, the suppressed lotus exploded, releasing monstrous amounts of sword qi. Every single lotus petal had transformed into a divine blade wreathed with holy flames, completely overwhelming the snake venom.

The Python's Abyssal Suppression was torn apart like a piece of tissue.

At the same time, the massive silver-scaled palm began to tremble. Countless cracks spread across its surface, and before Zhong Taiqiu's unbelieving gaze, it exploded into scintillating fragments of light. The sacred sword energy spilled forth like the tide, covering the skies of the square like a sea of stars.

Jiang Qing'e took a step forward, her fingers forming a seal as she directly ascended into the skies. The torrent of sacred sword energy roared as it smashed past every obstacle on the way to Zhong Taiqiu, directly stabbing towards the horrified individual.

Alas, his resonance art had been forcefully shattered and the resonant power within his body was in a state of chaos, ensuring that he was unable to mount a suitable defense. All he could do was idly stare at the dreadful stream of energy that was lancing towards him.

Before the sword energy collided with him, his body was stinging with the countless sword gashes that preceded the attack itself.

He felt frustrated and discontented, unwilling to accept this development. This reversal had occurred quicker than he could comprehend.

Unfortunately, the sword energy was not about to negotiate and cajole him, no matter how unwilling he felt.

In the end, he could only grit his teeth and softly speak out. "Junior Jiang, you've won!" Upon hearing that, Jiang Qing'e executed a new hand seal, causing the previously rabid sword energy to turn gentle. Like a mother's embrace, it warmly wrapped around and passed through Zhong Taiqiu's body, finally dissipating into mere motes of light.

These motes of light then fell to the ground like a rain of light, and the resonant power within Jiang Qing'e rapidly faded. Nodding slightly towards Zhong Taiqiu, her calm and clear voice echoed throughout the square.

"Thank you, Senior Zhong, for letting me win."

## Chapter 0629: A New Seven Astral Pillar, A New Legend

The battle ended the moment the reversal occurred. The floating platforms descended into utter silence for a brief moment, taken aback by the spectacle in front of them. But it was not long before deafening cheers resounded throughout the college.

All of Jiang Qing'e's supporters were in a state of euphoria, completely moved by the series of events.

Even those that were usually calm and collected were hollering as though their lives depended on it. Why? A legend had been created in the long annals of the Astral Sage College's history. This was the first time a Three Star Hall student had attained the position of a Seven Astral Pillar.

Furthermore, it wasn't the lowest ranked position of the pillars!

In terms of strength, Zhong Taiqiu was only weaker than Gong Shenjun and Gong Luanyu. No one doubted his strength and thus, Jiang Qing'e's victory was gold.

Furthermore, the battle had been upfront and direct with no underhanded moves. Both parties had thrown their ultimate arts at each other and the fight was a battle to behold.

"Senior Jiang is the strongest Three Star Hall student in the Astral Sage College's history! No one can surpass her! This victory will be inscribed upon the records of the college!" Some of Jiang Qing'e's most ardent fans were effusing constant praise and idolatry.

Yet in the face of such exaggeration, no one deigned to stop them. Why? The scene before them was unbelievable! The result of the battle had shocked them senseless.

A Quasi Pearl Stage had triumphed over a six-pearl Heavenly Pearl Stage. This was insanity coming to life.

Their horizons had been broadened this day.

"Junior Jiang is amazing." The rest of the Seven Astral Pillars were seated atop a viewing platform, and Wang Chao's voice piped up. "The quality of the students joining the college has only improved each year. Your Royal Highnesses, once Junior Jiang properly steps into the Heavenly Pearl Stage, I'm afraid you will have to give way to her as well." He glanced over at the First Princess and Gong Shenjun.

The First Princess smiled lightly. "Qing'e's potential and talent are evident for all to see. I do believe that the title of the Xia Kingdom's youngest Duke will belong to her in a couple of years."

Gong Shenjun nodded in agreement. "Junior Jiang is the most radiant star amongst those in the Astral Sage College. Still, she might have beaten Zhong Taiqiu, but there seems to have been a little trick behind her win. She must have practiced a secret art that allowed her resonant power to skyrocket temporarily upon entering the Quasi Pearl Stage. This is why her strength faded so quickly. If Zhong Taiqiu had been able to drag the battle a while longer, she would have fallen into a disadvantage very quickly. Additionally, the situation was reversed because Zhong Taiqiu had never expected that another resonance art was hidden within the Sacred Flamelight Lotus. Looking at the power of the ability, it should have been the high-grade dragon-general resonance art Sacred Spirit Sword Art. It's very clear that she has thoroughly studied Zhong Taiqiu's abilities, and the execution of her resonance arts was intended to specifically counter his Python's Abyssal Suppression."

Gong Shenjun's analysis seemed logical, and the rest of the Seven Astral Pillars also nodded in agreement.

"Don't you think that being able to fuse two high-grade dragon-general resonance arts is extraordinary? Even we were unable to discern that the Sacred Flamelight Lotus held the Sacred Spirit Sword Art within." The First Princess smiled.

"Brother, you're sweating the details with your analysis. The gap in cultivation between the two is not small, and for a weaker individual to triumph, certain tricks must be employed to even the gap."

Gong Shenjun beamed generously in response. "I was merely commenting on the battle objectively. Sister Luanyu, could you not unfairly label me so? I am personally exuberant that Junior Jiang has managed to set a new record as we all are." The rest of the pillars laughed at his sheepish response.

As they continued to chat, Li Luo was also awash with relief. He looked towards Jiang Qing'e and happily gave her a thumbs up.

"Senior Jiang is too awesome!" Bai Mengmeng who already idolized her, could not help but to continue sighing.

"Mm. Senior Jiang is the target we have to surpass. I have to continue to cultivate with everything I have so that a small part of her brilliance might rub off on me..." the heroic-looking Bai Doudou commented as she restrained her usual arrogance, a fire burning within her eyes.

After which, she turned to face Li Luo. "Li Luo, you live a charmed life. To think you managed to snag such a wonderful fiance."

"Hey, I'm pretty impressive myself, no?" he retorted.

"You might have some good points, but you still have a long way to go before you're comparable with her," Bai Doudou attentively replied.

Li Luo rolled his eyes.

"Sister, your words aren't very appropriate!" Bai Mengmeng suddenly chimed in. "Do you know what stage Leader is at now?"

Bai Mengmeng seemed a little taken aback. Simultaneously, Qin Zhulu, Wang Hejiu, Duze Beixuan, and the rest all shot a glance over.

"What do you mean?" Bai Doudou had an incredulous look plastered over her face when she heard Bai Mengmeng's words. Had Li Luo improved again in the short span of a month?

"Do you mean you've entered the Quasi General Stage?" she ventured.

"You're off by a little bit," Li Luo coolly replied.

This statement left her dumbfounded for a good two seconds before her pupils widened. "You... you've broken into the Fiend Palace Tier!" Even the usually impassive Qin Zhulu was in disbelief, not to mention the rest, who looked like they'd been struck by a bolt of lightning.

This brat had disappeared for a month and had magically broken into the Fiend Palace Tier? What sort of devilish speed was this?

Everyone had predicted that even with the copious amounts of rewards heaped onto Li Luo as a result of the Holy Grail Meet, it would require him at least half a year's worth of time to break into the Fiend Palace Tier. How had it happened so soon?

What did he do? What sort of insane talent did he have?

Looking at their horrified faces, Li Luo smiled. "Don't worry, everyone. Sister Qing'e might have carved out a new legend for the Three Star Hall, but you have me. I'll carve out a reputation for all of us in the One Star Hall. In fact, I'll continue to work hard!"

Meanwhile, Yu Lang could only look on in absolute envy and a tinge of jealousy. Just when could he develop skills equal to Li Luo's when it came to being smooth and showing off his humbleness? Even Bai Doudou was left speechless at his shamelessness and ambition. However, he had managed to set a new record—no one in the history of the Astral Sage College had managed to reach the Fiend Palace Tier in the One Star Hall.

"House Luolan is going to ascend..." Bai Doudou blurted out in the end.

Now that it was home to two fiendish cultivators, it was likely that two new Dukes would arise in a few years' time.

"Lower your voice. I didn't want to announce it just yet... it's all Mengmeng's fault." Li Luo waved his hands helplessly as he shot Bai Mengmeng a berating gaze. Bai Mengmeng cutely stuck out her tongue at him before she pitifully pleaded, "I'm sorry, Leader..."

Seeing this, Bai Doudou immediately dragged her sister away while fiercely glaring at him. "Don't you dare bully my sister. Even if she hadn't said it, you'd have found a way to announce it in your own shameless fashion!"

"Hey! Do you really think I'm such a superficial person? Only fishing for praise and adoration?" Li Luo painfully refuted.

Of course, this act didn't convince anyone. Everyone conveyed their agreement with Bai Doudou by remaining indifferent.

Seeing the lackluster response, Li Luo was about to explain himself when Vice Principal Su Xin walked out with her usual smile to make the final announcement. "Good day, students of the Astral Sage College. Today, we've witnessed the birth of a new legend in the records of the Astral Sage College's history. Three Star Hall student Jiang Qing'e has reigned victorious over the Seven Astral Pillar Zhong Taiqiu! As the representative of the college, I now declare that Jiang Qing'e is a member of the Seven Astral Pillars!"

With the announcement echoing throughout every students' ears, cheers resounded throughout the square, causing even the ground to tremble.

Amidst all the attention, Jiang Qing'e's resonant power gradually receded and was contained within her once again. The previously soaring and turbulent resonant power had returned to normal. Faced with the announcement, her charming, golden eyes remained calm like a still lake, deep and unmoving.

The result was all within expectations.

She had everything under control the whole time.

She had spent years suppressing her abilities. This battle for the Seven Astral Pillars was just a sideshow. As she turned her head, her delicate and beautiful cheeks were like the face of a goddess, golden eyes penetrating through the crowd and focusing on a single youth within the One Star Hall students. When they made eye contact, he returned a smile and gave a thumbs up.

The sides of her lips were slightly upturned as she vowed to herself, "Li Luo. I'll definitely protect you with everything I have. No matter the cost."

#### Chapter 0630: Application

The grand battle had ended, but the atmosphere had only just started heating up. As the students dispersed, they brought their excitement to every inch of the college.

It was a historical event, one worthy of celebrating.

Even after they left the college, this moment would indelibly be branded into their memories.

Now that the battle for the Seven Astral Pillars had concluded, Li Luo accompanied Mentor Chi Chan as they made their way towards Vice Principal Su Xin. He held deep anticipation in his heart towards the chance of obtaining one of those Fiend Origin Pills that Mentor Chi Chan was planning to apply for.

It would be a boon to his cultivation and he would be able to more quickly refine and temper his other two resonant palaces.

And coincidentally, once Li Luo arrived atop the high platform Vice Principal Su Xin was on, he saw his favorite senior, Zhu Xuan. His heart skipped a beat at this moment as he knew that he was probably here for the same reason.

Zhu Xuan also saw Li Luo, but his face was like water, as smooth as glass. He felt a tinge of fear whenever he saw Li Luo during the Holy Grail Meet, but it was now replaced with utter confidence.

"I heard that Senior Zhu has broken into the Quasi General Stage. Is that true?" Li Luo curiously asked, immediately smiling warmly.

Zhu Xuan gave a mild smirk. "I was afraid that you would have caught up to me if I didn't break through, Junior Li Luo. There was no choice at all... I had to do my best for the sake of the Two Star Hall's honor." He might have tried his best to suppress the arrogance from within his bones, but a look of pride could be seen within his eyes. He had every right to feel like this. Being able to break into the Quasi General Stage was, after all, a great achievement for those in the Two Star Hall. Unfortunately, it also came with significant investment in resources, and he had finally managed to take that step forward.

He had been thoroughly trampled underfoot during the Holy Grail Meet. Amongst the four halls of the college, the Two Star Hall was the heaviest dead weight. As the strongest individual from Astral Sage

College's Two Star Hall, he had managed to garner no achievements, nor had he put on a dazzling performance, constantly being outshined by everyone else.

Comparatively speaking, even he had to admit that the One Star Hall was particularly outstanding...

In the past, the Two Star Hall students could walk around with their chins up as respected seniors. Yet after that meet, the Two Star Hall students felt so shameful that they'd even take the long way around the One Star Hall students! The gap between the two halls was too large!

Conversely, Zhu Xuan had heard rumors that many of his fellow hallmates were venting their grievances in secret. They were saying that he, the representative, wasn't really strong either. Alas, he could only feel depressed in his helplessness. There wasn't any way for him to bridge the gap between his and Li Luo's performances at that point.

It was precisely this humiliation that had spurred him on. He had gritted his teeth and begged for a significant amount of cultivation resources from his father, luckily breaking into the Quasi General Stage thanks to them.

Although it was not a complete breakthrough into the Fiend Palace Tier, he had stepped through the gates at the very least, a far cry from the Resonant Master Stage now. Even during the Holy Grail Meet, the title holder of the Two Star Hall, Ao Bai, was also only at the Quasi General Stage.

Thus, this had allowed him to regain his confidence! He was better than that piddling Resonant Master Li Luo now.

Faced with Zhu Xuan's calm and self assured smile, Li Luo's expression also became even more genial and warm as he nodded. "Senior Zhu is wonderful, this really demonstrates your potential and talent! No wonder you're the young lord of House Jiyan."

When faced with Li Luo's effusive praise, Zhu Xuan felt that something didn't seem right and shot him a suspicious glance for a moment. Shortly after he thought about it, it changed to a sense of relief. It looked as though Li Luo truly understood the disparity between the two of them and would no longer act so presumptuously before him.

Whilst the two entertained sinister thoughts and exchanged words, Mentor Chi Chan had arrived before Vice Principal Su Xin. Seeing that Li Luo was also right behind her, she smiled. "Li Luo, are you planning to claim a Duke Art now? Even if you get your hands on one, you will not be able to cultivate it so easily." Upon hearing these words, Zhu Xuan was utterly shocked. Li Luo was planning to learn a Duke Art? He was truly arrogant! Even the Seven Astral Pillars were unable to cultivate such an art.

Li Luo revealed a wide grin. "There's no harm in trying. What if I succeed?"

This aspect of Li Luo was something that Vice Principal Su Xin appreciated. "It's good to be courageous. I wish you the best of luck, then."

Mentor Chi Chan then chimed in. "Actually, Vice Principal Su Xin, we aren't here for the Duke Art. I had wanted to apply for the remaining Fiend Origin Pill."

Vice Principal Su Xin seemed a little taken aback. "You want to apply for a Fiend Origin Pill?"

At the same time, a lean Violet Vibrance mentor who had been beside Zhu Xuan frowned. "Mentor Chi Chan, you're currently guiding those in the One Star Hall. What does the Fiend Origin Pill have to do with your students? Zhu Xuan has already broken into the Quasi General Stage, and I plan to apply for the Fiend Origin Pill for him." This was naturally Zhu Xuan's mentor speaking.

"On whose behalf are you applying?" Vice Principal Su Xin gaze flickered as she turned to glance at Li Luo. "For Li Luo, perhaps?"

Zhu Xuan's cheeks twitched as he sullenly turned towards Li Luo. "Junior Li Luo, don't you think you're a little too far off from being able to utilize a Fiend Origin Pill? Are you so ambitious and greedy that you have to set your grubby hands on anything that might have value?" He was furious. He had already assumed that the Fiend Origin Pill would belong to him, and it was an object that only benefited those in the Earth Fiend Stage. On what basis would Li Luo deserve to use it? Was he trying to curtail his chances? Or perhaps this brat was deliberately targeting him!

"Young Lord Li Luo, has House Luolan fallen into such a destitute state? Do you want to snatch away anything that you can set your sights on?" Zhu Xuan coldly snorted.

"I have reached the Quasi General Stage, so the Fiend Origin Pill is of use to me. What would a piddly Resonant Master want with one? Do you really feel that your contributions at the Holy Grail Meet would allow you to make such an outrageous request? Do you really think..." Just as Zhu Xuan was about to continue his vicious tirade, any further words were jammed down his throat as he witnessed Li Luo circulating his resonant power. An extremely robust and tyrannical resonant power had exuded from him, suppressing even Zhu Xuan.

Zhu Xuan could feel his stomach lurch, and an ugly expression coupled with consternation took root on his face.

"The Fiend Palace Tier?!" Zhu Xuan's mentor similarly watched in stupefaction as he looked at Li Luo. The dense resonant power that was released was not something a Quasi General Stage cultivator possessed. This only meant one thing: he had broken through completely!

On the other hand, Li Luo did not deign to hide his presence, and even students in the surroundings felt the strength coming from him, glancing in their direction with astonishment.

It was only when they realized that the source of this tyrannical resonant power was Li Luo that they were left in complete disbelief.

"Wait, that's Li Luo?"

"This pressure... could it be that of the Fiend Palace Tier?"

"My God! Li Luo had a breakthrough into the Fiend Palace Tier!"

"What's going on today? Are the two from House Luolan trying to overturn all conventional wisdom?!"

Countless cries of surprise came from the crowd when the magnitude of this achievement struck them. A One Star Hall student in the Fiend Palace Tier... This was something that had never been seen before in the history of the Astral Sage College either!

Gong Shenjun, the First Princess, and the rest of the influential members of the Astral Sage College had gathered atop the high platform. They had originally planned to disperse and leave after their conversation, but the disturbance on the adjacent platform had attracted their attention. When they sensed the powerful undulations coming from Li Luo, even they were slightly moved.

"What? Li Luo has entered the Fiend Palace Tier?" Wang Chao sucked in a cold breath of air. The First Princess' elegant face also slowly shifted into one of astonishment. Half a breath later, she composed herself. "The Holy Grail Meet's reward was a Holy Tree Marrow Crystal. I suppose Li Luo borrowed its power to break through."

Gong Shenjun was silent as he pondered for a moment. "The Holy Tree Marrow Crystal may be mystical, and it does possess the ability to facilitate a breakthrough, but Li Luo is still only in his first year of college. His foundation should not have been sufficient to allow for it."

The First Princess nodded slightly as though agreeing with his conjecture. She had received a Holy Tree Marrow Crystal too, so she knew the extent of its efficacy. Even though Li Luo possessed one, the best he should have been able to do was reach the Quasi General Stage. Reaching the Fiend Palace Tier would naturally require another half a year of time for further accumulation.

"It's likely that his parents left behind some mystical treasures," Duze Honglian explained with a complicated expression.

The rest duly nodded. Only this explanation would make sense.

Regardless, it also demonstrated that Li Luo's cultivation speed had shocked even these talented students.

If he could reach the Fiend Palace Tier whilst in the One Star Hall, wouldn't that mean that when he reached the Two Star Hall, he'd be at a similar level to Jiang Qing'e today? This was a frightening thought.

"House Luolan's budding phoenix and dragon really do possess the style of the previous generation. Given enough time, House Luolan will inevitably become a dual Duke house once again." Wang Chao sighed.

All of these individuals were associated with the highest level powers of the Xia Kingdom. What was left unspoken was the fact that time was what House Luolan lacked the most.

House Luolan's moment of reckoning was one month away. Success or failure would be decided then.