

Resonance 651

Chapter 0651: Li Luo's Climatic Battle with Pei Hao

The golden eagle made of golden sword energy covered half the sky, and formidable might descended upon the individuals below, causing the people of House Luolan to turn pale with fright.

Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage!

No one had expected that Pei Hao's abilities would rise to such a degree.

Although everyone knew that this was temporary power lent to Pei Hao, such semantics no longer mattered during this critical situation.

Pei Hao's expression was apathetic and frosty. Now that he had revealed his card, there was no need to hesitate any longer. He pointed forward, and the eagle manifestation shrieked. All of the energy around it rushed towards Li Luo's position like a tsunami of death.

Wherever the sword energy moved past, the void around it seemed to be sliced apart, leaving behind countless ripples that would gradually dissipate.

Li Luo's expression became grave at this sight. He could feel the overbearing might of the sword energy as it approached him rapidly. It was going to crash right into him in a flash.

The speedy assault caused the audience to feel a sense of tension within their hearts.

Cai Wei couldn't help but to shout, "Young Lord, be careful!"

Bang!

The rumble of thunder could be heard just as the torrent of sword energy was about to collide with Li Luo, potentially turning him into a porcupine, but his body turned slightly illusory. In a blink, he moved tens of meters away!

The low grade dragon-general resonance art, Thunderbolt Art.

"Ah?" Pei Hao seemed a little surprised, and his expression changed. Had Li Luo just demonstrated a thunder resonant art?

The agility he had demonstrated was greater than that of his sword energy!

However, Pei Hao did not think too much about it. He immediately formed a hand seal and executed a sword chant!

"Middle grade dragon-general resonance art, Soul Extinguishing Sword Energy!"

With a thought, the golden resonant power within Pei Hao soared into the sky before quickly coalescing into a several-meter-long grayish sword right atop his head.

This sword energy didn't look very impressive, being dull in color, but all who set their eyes upon it could instinctively feel the danger it possessed on a spiritual level.

This was because it could not harm the flesh, but one's mind would immediately be obliterated upon being struck. It was a particularly tyrannical art.

Clearly, Pei Hao was no longer holding anything back, bringing to bear all his means to directly extinguish Li Luo's little life.

Weng!

The Soul Extinguishing Sword Energy trembled and vanished into thin air.

Li Luo, on the other hand, could feel the precarious situation he was in as a threatening aura locked onto him. As the sense of peril reached a crescendo, he could feel the hairs on his body standing on end. That was how frightening Pei Hao's attack was.

This caused him to sigh helplessly.

He had originally thought that the Lesser Heavenly Resonance mode would have been sufficient to dispose of Pei Hao, but it seemed that things had once again exceeded his own expectations.

Since that was the case, he couldn't hold back anything in reserve either.

The fact was that the Lesser Heavenly Resonance mode was something he could endure safely. If he were to activate the Greater Heavenly Resonance mode, his body and spirit would undoubtedly be corroded by the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's demonic strength. If not for Jiang Qing'e's timely intervention during the Holy Grail Meet, he might very possibly have been left unconscious for an indeterminate amount of time after using it!

Now that he had entered the Fiend Palace Tier and had roped in the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's willing cooperation, the aftereffects would likely be more mild.

His mind raced through countless thoughts before he sighed deeply. He also brought his full strength to bear as he willed the Heavenly Libation Chant within his heart.

"Greater Heavenly Resonance Mode!" With a thought, the scarlet bracelet on his wrist began to resonate with blood-red light, and even greater amounts of majestic and violent energy surged into Li Luo's body. At this moment, he could distinctly feel the pain of his body being unable to bear this energy, slowly tearing apart both flesh and blood.

On the surface, traces of blood began to appear as the vessel himself was unable to accommodate the power that had rushed into him.

Li Luo's eyes had similarly turned scarlet-red and his expression turned sinister.

Tightly grasping the Onyx-Elephant Blade, he hacked down savagely.

Similarly, water resonant power flooded out like a tide, forming a rapidly moving barrier around the blade itself, improving its cutting abilities.

"Thousand Watery Knives Wheel!" The appearance of the wheel caused a shrill, ear-piercing sound to echo through the square. Li Luo lashed out towards the void on his right, and at that very moment, the gray sword energy was knocked out of the void, directly colliding against his strike.

BANG!

Copious amounts of rampaging resonant power burst out from the point of impact, and the bluestone tile square continued to fragment further. The entire audience started to churn in their seats upon seeing this clash, some hurriedly struggling to bolster their own resonant power defenses to stave off the aftermath.

The most startling thing to them was actually Li Luo's conspicuous figure.

Everyone suddenly seemed to realize that the resonant power undulations given off by him had also reached the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage!

House Luolan's strongest ancestor, Xu Tianling, also gloomily stared at Li Luo's silhouette. He had reached a similar stage, but there was an undeniable sense of danger being exuded from him.

He had originally thought the most troublesome factor would be Jiang Qing'e. Alas, who would have expected that this originally harmless Li Luo would turn out to be the biggest block to their plan.

On the square, Pei Hao grasped his longsword as he stared daggers at Li Luo, his eyes twitching slightly.

"It looks like you're shocked." Li Luo commented. "You might have realized that your vaunted trump card and backer might not provide you the devastating victory you so wished."

Pei Hao darkly retorted in turn, "Your strength is indeed unanticipated. However, you're merely at the Fiend Palace Tier whilst possessing Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage strength. As per your own words, the price you paid must have been significant, no? However, I'm different. I'm already in the Heavenly Pearl Stage, and my body has undergone strenuous tempering in the Fiend Body Tier. Thus, I can resist for a much longer time. But you? Are you capable?"

Li Luo grinned but did not bother to deny it. After all, his own fleshly body was beginning to split apart at its seams, and his situation was a lot worse than Pei Hao's on the surface. Simply put, his body could not withstand the might of the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage as of now.

On the bright side, since he had the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's agreement, it had restrained the fiendish energy within the power it lent. Thus, when Li Luo borrowed its power, the savagery and corruption that afflicted him was lessened.

With the addition of his Thunderpeal Avatar, he could improve his body's durability for a short span of time, further compensating for the stress his body was placed under.

"Thunderpeal Avatar!" Li Luo willed within his heart. The lightning forge crackled to life inside him, releasing thunderous booms throughout his body. Wherever the thunder passed over, the resilience of his body would skyrocket.

Li Luo's face blazed with crimson light as a sinister look appeared in his eyes. He took a step forward, his body vanishing as he moved with extreme speed like a lightning bolt. He was heading straight towards Pei Hao.

Pei Hao's expression was frosty as the resonant power within him fluctuated intensely too. He slashed out with his sword, and tens of thousands of illusory golden swords formed, blanketing out the sky before diving towards Li Luo in a concerted strike.

The frightening display of sword energy sucked the breath out of the pavilion masters as they watched this clash of titans, their faces full of horror.

SWOOSH! SWOOSH!

Li Luo, on the other hand, retaliated with the Golden-Jade Onyx-Elephant Blade in hand, a deadly flourish of blade light left behind in a flurry of attacks, completely shattering the deluge of golden sword energy.

The duo continued to exchange blows like two bolts of lightning colliding. Violent explosions of resonant power were seen with every clash, resulting in deafening booms. In a short span of time, both parties had struck several hundred times, each attack vicious and aimed to kill.

This cruel and brutal fight left the audience dumbstruck, the tense atmosphere leaving all breathless.

No one had ever expected such an intense battle during the Housemeet.

.....

In a pavilion outside House Luolan's Headquarters...

A man with a head of fiery red hair, Zhu Qinghuo, was currently watching the battle rage on expressionlessly. After which, he turned to observe several other locations within Xia City which had frightening amounts of resonant power.

The sheer fluctuations of power and the pressure that were emitted had surpassed that of Li Luo and Pei Hao's battle by countless times.

"Duze Yan actually took action to restrict Si Qing..." Zhu Qinghuo's gaze wavered slightly. This was surprising to him as House Duze hated House Luolan as much as House Jiyan.

However, he didn't really care. Those two being tied down would not change the grand scheme of things.

Right now, he just had to wait for the right moment to strike.

Turning to face House Luolan's Headquarters once again, he lightly rapped the table before him. "Shen Jinxiao... this should be enough, right?"

.....

In a secret basement room...

Shen Jinxiao was staring indifferently at the half-heart floating above the altar before him. With the aid of a special connection, he was able to observe the critical battle within House Luolan.

"Li Luo truly surprises people. It's no wonder he was able to create so many miracles."

Shen Jinxiao's gaze flickered. Although he was able to use the half-heart as a catalyst to lend power to Pei Hao, the limit was the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage. On the other hand, Li Luo had managed to ascend to the same stage with his own methods, forcing the battle into a stalemate.

In order to disrupt the situation, he would have to deal an even more vicious hand.

At this point, he lightly swiped across the half-heart with his thumb.

The half-heart was cleanly sliced into two, a quarter-heart dropping down into his palm. Shen Jinxiao rubbed the palm of his hand, then the quarter of the heart liquified into a black substance. With the black liquid staining his fingers, he casually swiped, and a new rune was created from it, directly landing upon the remaining quarter of the floating heart.

"It's such a pity, Li Luo. Your enthralling show is about to come to an end. Personally killing a young, prized genius does leave a slightly bitter taste in my mouth though..."

In the dark, dank environment, Shen Jinxiao revealed a devious grin.

Chapter 0652: Heavenly Sword Formation

As soon as Shen Jinxiao crushed a quarter of the heart into black paste, Pei Hao's body violently shuddered during his battle with Li Luo. He immediately retreated and howled in agony, cold sweat beading on his forehead.

He clutched at his heart and his eyes turned a little hazy.

He could clearly feel that a portion of his heart had been lost.

This was an eternal loss, one that would leave behind permanent damage. Perhaps even his very foundation had been harmed.

However, Pei Hao knew that his backer had lost patience with him. This was his way of inciting a swift end to the current stalemate.

Thus, Pei Hao was completely helpless. Even with his astronomical rise to the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage with the assistance of his backer, it was not enough to defeat Li Luo. His opponent had kept tricks up his sleeve that were no worse than his.

In truth, this discovery brought Pei Hao a lot of frustration and anger. One had to remember that during their encounter a year ago in the old manor, Li Luo was merely a worthless young lord with a blank palace. He was a mere figurehead with no real power or influence. Pei Hao had completely disregarded him in his view.

Without Jiang Qing'e's protection, Pei Hao would long have gotten the crippled young lord murdered.

Who would have expected that Li Luo would be reborn anew in the short span of a year, possessing power and methods that equalled his own!

If only he knew that this would happen. He would have steeled his heart sooner and completely cut off the cancer at its roots.

Otherwise, he would never have to pay such a horrific price.

Pei Hao venomously glared at Li Luo, a vein throbbing on his forehead, showing how his inner emotions were in complete turmoil.

However, even though he had lost a quarter of his heart, Pei Hao could unmistakably feel terrifying amounts of power pouring into him.

Although this power could not touch that of someone at the Duke Stage, he would be able to suppress anyone at the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage.

This was definitely more than enough to turn Li Luo into a corpse

Thinking of this caused the killing intent within his heart to rise.

"Li Luo! Since I've had to pay such a grievous price, I'll take your life as compensation!" Pei Hao raged internally.

Just as his eyes filled up with even more poisonous intent, Li Luo keenly sensed the dangerous situation he was in. He frowned as he observed Pei Hao closely, clenching the Onyx-Elephant Blade even more tightly.

Both parties had made ample preparations for the fight today. In order to ensure victory, Li Luo also had to formulate a plan to deal with Pei Hao's backer.

Jiang Qing'e continued to monitor Pei Hao with rapt attention from outside the square. Her beautiful body was ramrod straight and her slender, jade-like fingers were lightly clenched into a fist, a thin layer of light resonant energy flowing around her.

She had detected Pei Hao's sudden rise in strength once again.

Before the nervous gazes of the audience, Pei Hao cackled, revealing his rows of pearly-white teeth. In the next instant, countless strands of golden light rose into the sky from behind him. The sheer sight of these strands of light was piercing to the eye, revealing an incomparably sharp air to them.

Those like Yuan Qing in the Lesser Heavenly Resonance Stage were a little shell shocked when they saw the strands of flowing golden light, and their expressions turned grim.

Their instincts told them that the golden light was unfathomably dangerous. Even a single strand of it could penetrate through their defenses, much less when it was gathered in such large numbers. Was this what overbearing strength looked like?

This let them understand that Pei Hao was clearly preparing his final killing move, to end the battle of the Housemeet.

Could the young lord even resist such an alarming attack?

Xu Tianling also quietly observed this sight, a slight smile hanging on his face. Even he could not block Pei Hao's current attack. The battle was going to come to an end soon enough.

Pei Hao slowly began to float upwards. It was as though his legs were wreathed in countless strands of flowing, gold light, forming a golden cloud that covered the sky over House Luolan.

When his imposing demeanor and sword energy had risen to a peak, he clutched his sword and began to execute the art, his expression turning cold in the process.

With a voice dripping with killing intent, he indifferently said, "Young Lord, it's time for you to have a taste of my strongest resonance art. High-grade dragon-general resonance art, Heavenly Sword Formation!"

Bang!

As soon as he finished speaking, the nearby worldly natural energy churned vigorously. The golden clouds that had formed behind him seemed to be torn apart at this very moment, and before the shocked eyes of the audience, a golden sword manifestation that was several hundred meters long surfaced, directly pointed towards Li Luo.

Continuous sword chants could be heard throughout the sky upon the sword's emergence.

It was as though the air itself had been transformed by the sword energy. Anyone who breathed could feel a piercing pain within their lungs.

Yet these were just collateral effects of the art itself. It was difficult to imagine how Li Luo himself was feeling, considering that he was bearing the brunt of the pressure exuded by it.

Li Luo had raised his head at this point, directly gazing at the golden sword manifestation. Pei Hao's soaring resonant power coupled with the high-grade dragon-general resonance art created quite the terrifying prospect he had to face off against.

The vast majority of Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage cultivators would undoubtedly end up being slaughtered by this single move.

Li Luo's expression became more and more solemn, but his eyes held no trace of fear. He had never looked down upon Pei Hao, but if this was the final killing move to end the Housemeet battle, then this would be the first time.

He had made countless plans and preparations for today. If compared to Pei Hao, it would only be more, not less.

In the sky above, the massive, golden sword manifestation cleaved downwards. Even before it impacted, the ground was torn asunder, the cracks smooth as a mirror due to the sheer sharpness of the sword's aura.

Outside the square, everyone began to channel defensive barriers to prevent the cataclysmic assault from completely devastating House Luolan's headquarters.

Yuan Qing, Cai Wei, and the rest held expressions of deep concern for Li Luo.

They did not know how Li Luo was going to react against Pei Hao's daunting methods.

"Miss Jiang, it looks like we can't hold on any longer. You have to take action," Yuan Qing couldn't help but say in worry.

Pei Hao's strike might be exceptionally intimidating, but Yuan Qing had a strange faith and belief in Jiang Qing'e. Perhaps it was because she had shattered all expectations of her repeatedly, bringing about pleasant surprises.

Jiang Qing'e, on the other hand, continued to watch as the gigantic, golden sword manifestation slowly descended, merely shaking her head.

"Let's wait a while more." Her golden eyes were focused on the lanky and tall individual. Li Luo held no trace of fear, and she had been witness to his exponential development over this past year. He had prepared himself no less than her.

Thus, she believed in him.

Although Pei Hao had utilized indeterminate means to bolster his strength, he was incomparable to Li Luo.

Listening to Jiang Qing'e's words, Yuan Qing sighed deeply in his heart and continued to watch the proceedings.

In the square, Li Luo finally began to take action. He formed a hand seal with all of his fingers. At this point, all of the berserk energy within him surged out like a tide and his own complexion turned alabaster at a frightening speed.

"What terrifying consumption..." Feeling the ocean of resonant power within himself run dry, the thought struck Li Luo. This was an extraordinary resonance art for a reason.

Additionally, all of the worldly natural energy seemed to be driven by some sort of mystical force when this particular resonance art was used, and a massive energy vortex was created with his body as the core.

In just a blink, Li Luo heavily sucked in a deep breath, and his entire complexion was devoid of any redness.

At this point, he separated his hands, and his fingers on each hand were outstretched. Everyone saw that an illusory black dragon banner had appeared between them.

The moment it appeared, a mysterious pressure descended upon the entire square, spreading from him as the source.

Chapter 0653: Underworld River's Black Dragon Banner's Might!

When the illusory black dragon banner appeared between Li Luo's hands, the experts who had reached the Heavenly Pearl Stage in the audience felt their hearts trembling in fear. They could feel an inexplicable terror radiating from that banner's very existence.

Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng's pupils constricted as well.

However, before anyone could react, Li Luo nonchalantly and abruptly brandished the black dragon banner before him.

With that single action, the void was torn asunder, leaving an ebony streak across the space before him. After which, the sound of rushing water could be heard coming from the crack. In a blink, copious amounts of black seawater spilled forth from the sundered space, forming a massive, black sea that suspended itself in the sky above.

The black seawater churned with humongous waves, akin to a stormy sea. It was then that a loud draconic roar reverberated around the field.

This instantly astounded the audience.

They could see with their own two eyes the titanic figure of a dragon emerging from the depths. It was a gargantuan beast, clad from head to tail in saturnine scales that rivaled even the most precious of metals in brilliance, reflecting a glittering luster under the setting sun.

At the same time, everyone was drowned by the mysterious pressure exerted by its very existence. Even the space around it seemed to be crumbling.

Everyone in the square stared at the black dragon that had manifested, flabbergasted. It seemed to be sentient as well, with lifelike movements and liveliness in its eyes as it judged all. One might even have thought that Li Luo had managed to summon an actual dragon! However, they knew that this was no living creature. The fluctuations it gave off indicated that this was a resonance art.

Just what sort of resonance art could mimic reality to such an extent?

A single thought flickered through everyone's hearts. At the same time, they were reluctant to believe that this was what they were seeing.

A resonance art of this caliber could not possibly have been cultivated by Li Luo at the Fiend Palace Tier... could it?

"This is..." Even Mo Cheng's lips had turned dry as he stared at the black dragon in a daze.

"This... Is it a Duke Art?!" The corners of Xu Tianling's eyes were twitching uncontrollably. He was no longer in the mood to reassure Mo Cheng as his mind was in complete turmoil! What could possess such domineering might and spirituality other than a Duke Art?

Yet the thing was, even he could not successfully cultivate such a resonance art!

How had Li Luo learned it?

This was a Duke Art! An art reserved for only those in that esteemed realm.

If the two ancestors felt crestfallen, the pavilion masters who had supported Pei Hao were even worse off. Their complexions were ashen and pasty, their bodies trembling uncontrollably under the immense pressure exuded upon them. Luckily, they managed to compose themselves slightly. Otherwise, they might very well have been frothing at the mouth whilst rolling on the ground.

The Young Lord was simply too terrifying!

Whilst the other side was completely taken aback, Yuan Qing and the rest on Li Luo's side were exuberant and pleasantly surprised.

Yuan Qing excitedly arose as he frantically declared, "A Duke Art! It's a Duke Art! The Young Lord managed to cultivate it! He's truly a genius amongst the younger generation! House Luolan's revitalization is at dawn!"

Lei Zhang and the other pavilion masters nodded in agreement. Duke Arts were well renowned to be both exceptionally difficult to cultivate and legendary in power. Thus, they were absolutely convinced that with Li Luo's Fiend Palace Tier cultivation, it was indeed a miracle for him to achieve this!

Cai Wei, on the other hand, did not have a similarly deep understanding of the implications of a Duke Art. However, just by observing the excitement on Yuan Qing and the group's faces, she could vaguely sense how startling of an achievement this was. She gently patted her chest, and her previously tense body was now slightly more at ease.

"This is ridiculous!" Yan Lingqing sighed with a look of admiration.

Amongst the group, only Jiang Qing'e remained calm. She had already known in advance that Li Luo had spent copious amounts of time cultivating a Duke Art at the college. As Li Luo never mentioned the final result, she had not probed further. Clearly, he had succeeded.

Her lips faintly curled up into a smile. "This brat is pretty impressive after all."

Li Luo, on the other hand, was not concerned with the reactions to his strength. Once the black dragon appeared, he had seemingly lost all control of his body and all of the strength borrowed from the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf had vanished without a trace, completely absorbed by the activation of the Duke Art.

The potency of a Duke Art was terrifying to behold. Even the resonant power consumption was exceptional.

Still, it was all worth it.

Li Luo raised his head, and at this very moment, the giant, golden sword manifestation was to strike down upon him. Yet there was no trepidation in his eyes. Instead, he lightly reached out with a finger.

Roar!

An ear-piercing roar echoed out, rumbling through the heavens and the earth.

The black seawater devastated the void and the black dragon rushed forward, wreathed by the sea itself, ascending into the sky and directly clashing with the giant sword.

Pssh!

There was no thundering explosion upon collision. Instead, the black dragon and sea water completely caused the sword energy to dissipate into nothingness. The exquisitely sharp sword energy was as soft as tofu before its might.

In the air, Pei Hao was left completely stupefied before erupting into fury and surprise.

The black dragon ascended through the skies, piercing the heavens and in a blink. It dissolved Pei Hao's strongest golden sword manifestation as it swept by.

The Duke Art's might was nothing to scoff at. Its true majesty had been revealed.

When the golden sword manifestation was disintegrated, the black dragon did not dissipate. Instead, its draconic eyes gazed upon Pei Hao as though it possessed a life of its own, continuing to draw upon worldly natural energy to sustain its very existence.

This was the superiority of a Duke Art compared to a conventional resonance art.

It flicked its tail, dashing towards Pei Hao like a missile and devastating space in its path.

Staring at the rampaging dragon before him, Pei Hao felt a deep chill run down his spine. The dragon's power was unparalleled, and if he let it approach, he would find it difficult to hold on. As a result, he retreated explosively.

It was at this instant that Pei Hao thought he was seeing things. The glint in the dragon's eyes seemed to be mocking his pitiful attempts to flee.

It opened its jaw and revealed rows of razor-sharp teeth before furiously belching out a black dragonbreath.

The dragonbreath directly dissolved space, exposing the void beneath it before turning into countless streams of black light that struck so swiftly that one had no chance to hide. Before he knew it, Pei Hao suddenly felt piercing pain all over his body.

It was then that he heard audible gasps coming from the audience.

With great difficulty, he lowered his head to see what had happened, and what he saw frightened him. Numerous black holes had penetrated his body, running through all his vital organs. At the same time, there was black residue eroding his flesh into dust.

Pei Hao's mind seemed to freeze at this very moment as he took stock of his tragic state.

He could clearly feel his soul departing his body.

"Did... did I lose?" He turned to face the tall and lanky youth on the opposite side of the square, who was now quietly watching him.

"How... I... I've prepared for so long... Could it be that I was never as good as him?"

"Damn it... damn it...! It's so unfair! I will not... cannot... accept thi-"

The glint in Pei Hao's eyes dimmed and his body dropped from the sky before the audience, crashing heavily onto the shattered ground.

House Luolan's headquarters turned eerily silent. A single deep and dull thud reverberated throughout the square.

Dong!

Chapter 0654: Escalation

The sight of Pei Hao's body crumpling to the ground left everyone in utter shock. Everyone within House Luolan's Headquarters seemed to be frozen in time as they watched the scene in a trance.

This result was something no one had ever expected in their wildest imaginations. Except for Jiang Qing'e, of course.

The Heavenly Pearl Stage Pei Hao had been thoroughly trounced by the Fiend Palace Tier Li Luo.

What was most mind boggling was that Li Luo had merely a blank palace a year ago, yet to begin on the path of cultivating resonant power!

Had the chasm between the two been bridged and even surpassed in the short span of a year?

Was this a true genius?

At this point, regardless of whether it was those who supported Li Luo or Pei Hao, all were paralyzed silent by this revelation.

"The Young Lord has won!" However the silence was short lived as the ones who supported Li Luo began to cheer in excitement. Thunderous cheers resounded throughout the headquarters.

Yuan Qing, Cai Wei, Yan Lingqing, and the rest also revealed radiant and relieved smiles.

Pei Hao's faction was desolately silent in comparison.

The cheers startled Xu Tianling, Mo Cheng, and the rest out of their stupor, a gloominess spreading over their expressions.

Pei Hao had failed!

Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng quickly glanced at each other before a glint of viciousness could be seen in their eyes.

Pei Hao's failure indicated that their struggle for the position of House Lord had ended in defeat. If things proceeded this way, wouldn't that mean that they would have to blankly stare at Li Luo ascending to his rightful position?

Impossible!

Today's situation was the product of countless schemes. Although Pei Hao's part was a significant aspect of it, his failure did not herald the end of the plan. Conversely, it only meant that things would truly begin now!

Xu Tianling icily glared at Li Luo. Now that he had demonstrated his ability to wield a Duke Art, the fluctuations of resonant power coming off him were sluggish and his complexion was ashen. Clearly, it had taken a toll on him, leading to intense exhaustion.

So long as the winner of the battle died too, House Luolan would fall into chaos!

Thus, Li Luo had to die now!

Li Luo had already shown the world his limitless talent and potential, which caused him to feel a chill in his heart. He was no different from the second coming of Li Taixuan. With sufficient time, Li Luo would inevitably reach the Duke Stage, and at that point in time, he would be cleanly disposed of.

Thinking of the grim future that lay ahead, Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng exchanged looks. Their eyes turned ruthless as they knew what had to be done.

Bang!

Massive undulations of resonant power exploded forth from the duo and their figures flickered, striking out. The berserk resonant power that shrouded them shattered the space all around as they shot towards Li Luo like rays of light, intent to claim his life.

Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng's sudden outburst was completely out of everyone's expectations. No one was able to predict the actions of these maddened, cornered beasts. They were openly flouting the rules!

"Xu Tianling, Mo Cheng! You dare?!" Yuan Qing howled in anger. Similarly, he burst out with all his strength, intent to block the duo.

However, Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng were no weaker than him. As he reacted just a moment later, the duo had already arrived before Li Luo.

"Young Lord! You've killed Pei Hao, so now we'll send you on your way with him!" Xu Tianling's face was malevolent and he spoke coldly.

Li Luo stood in his original spot, unfazed. On the other hand, he merely stared icily at the two murderous ancestors. These no-good elders had decided to strike when he was weakened.

Despite being out of resonant power, Li Luo did not seem to show any fear or lack of composure.

As the two vicious fists fuelled with surging resonant power smashed through space and were about to approach him, a dazzling ray of light descended from the sky. A mirror made of light resonant energy positioned itself right before Li Luo.

Bang!

The two fists heavily struck the reflective surface, and the light mirror began to fragment, eventually shattering into glimmers of light.

The two strikes had been completely negated.

Staring at the flickering and divine light resonant energy, Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng's pupils shrunk. They naturally knew who had chosen to intervene, but they didn't understand how she had managed to block both of their full-force attacks with a single art.

Was she not at the Quasi Pearl Stage?

The two hurriedly turned to glance at Jiang Qing'e.

Their eyes shrunk at the sight that befell them.

Jiang Qing'e was now on her feet, her heavy sword in hand. Boundless light resonant energy poured out from her body like a waterfall. At the same time, the originally illusory Heavenly Pearl was quickly solidifying before their very eyes.

Worldly natural energy gushed into the single Heavenly Pearl that devoured it ravenously, constantly being converted into resonant power within Jiang Qing'e.

The quasi-pearl had now transformed into a bonafide Heavenly Pearl!

Jiang Qing'e had finally taken that last step into the Heavenly Pearl Stage.

If it were merely just a normal Heavenly Pearl Stage cultivator, Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng would not find such an opponent troubling. However, the explosive diffusion of light resonant energy coming from Jiang Qing'e far surpassed any average Heavenly Pearl Stage cultivator.

Jiang Qing'e's absolute beauty bloomed with jade-like luster, contrasting gorgeously with her crystal-clear skin. A mystical rune that seemed to be gradually fading had appeared between her brows.

At the same time, what gave everyone a shock was that Heavenly Pearls were condensing right behind her, one after another!

"How does she possess such ridiculous resonant power?" Mo Cheng had an ugly expression on his face.

"She has been suppressing herself for countless years. I suspect she cultivated some sort of incredible secret art, all in anticipation for today!" Xu Tianling replied despondently.

"Hmph! I don't believe that there is a secret art that would allow one to ascend to the skies with a single step in the Heavenly Pearl Stage!" Mo Cheng gritted his teeth as he consoled himself.

In that brief moment that the two conversed, Qing'e was callously glaring at the duo. Now that they had bared their fangs towards Li Luo, she felt an incomparable intent to slaughter them.

"Li Luo's show is over. If you want to fight, it's my turn!" Jiang Qing'e declared with a bone-chilling voice. She took a step forward, and her heavy sword ignited with sacred flames. Casually waving her sword once, a several-hundred-meter-long manifestation of sword energy was produced, sweeping towards the two ancestors.

The sword energy emitted sacred flames that radiated into the skies, purifying anything they passed through.

Thus, as the sword energy swept across the square, it was as though the entire area was being sanctified!

Staring at the space-rending sacred sword light, Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng's expressions turned grim. They could distinctly feel that this resonance art was dangerous even to them. Her strength had far surpassed that of anyone at a similar cultivation stage.

Xu Tianling no longer dared to tarry—he hurriedly raised his hand. Immediately, frosty ice resonant energy emitted from his body like a white blizzard as he formed a hand sign and uttered in a low voice, "High-grade dragon-general resonance art, Cold Tortoise's Mysterious Shield!"

Freezing ice resonance energy coalesced before him into a turtle shield that was sparkling and translucent, and numerous mysterious runes appeared on its surface.

Mo Cheng similarly channeled his resonant power, forming a massive resonant power barrier.

Pssh!

The blazing sword light swept past, directly penetrating the Cold Tortoise's Mysterious Shield and the resonant power barrier.

At the moment of contact, Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng had horrified expressions as they realized that the light resonant energy was more tyrannical than they had ever imagined. Its majesty would not be restrained by their pitiful resonance arts.

Xu Tianling's Cold Tortoise's Mysterious Shield held on for a brief moment before it went up in flames.

Being quick-witted, he took pains to retreat as far as possible with the time bought by the shield.

Unfortunately, Mo Cheng was not as lucky, and he was significantly weaker than Xu Tianling. His resonant power barrier was devastated in mere moments, and before he could retreat, the sword light manifestation slashed across his shoulders vertically.

“EEEK!”

A shrill scream erupted from Mo Cheng's mouth.

One of his arms was chopped off at the shoulder, blood spewing in every direction.

The entire square looked on in horror at this grisly scene.

No one had expected that a single merciless move from Jiang Qing'e would have resulted in one ancestor retreating and another grievously injured.

The pair of House Lords possessed a grandeur that was unmatched, shining brilliantly like a resplendent rainbow.

Chapter 0655: Zhu Qinghuo's Methods

Jiang Qing'e's strike was lightning quick and ferocious.

When the audience came to their senses, Xu Tianling had retreated and Mo Cheng was already disarmed, the facts jolting them.

Looks of consternation were thrown at the radiant Jiang Qing'e. Wielding her golden heavy sword, she was an alluring war goddess that possessed a demeanor that was as icy as the coldest winter wind, her golden eyes abstruse and full of mysterious light. The most terrifying part of her was not her actions, but the copious amount of energy that was condensing behind her. In just a few moments, she had already manifested three Heavenly Pearls!

Her strength continued to climb rapidly.

The worst part was that this was not a temporary powerup—she truly was breaking through the stages at breakneck speed!

Jiang Qing'e was like a suppressed volcano that had finally erupted, revealing her extraordinary potential.

Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng had faces full of fright. Jiang Qing'e was just too strange. She had just broken into the Heavenly Pearl Stage, but the resonant power she commanded far surpassed that of anyone they had ever known.

In fact, it was comparable to the energy emitted by a Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage cultivator!

"Xu Tianling, you dare to break the sacred rules of the Housemeet? Are you planning to rebel?" Yuan Qing thundered after making sure that Li Luo was unharmed. "Pavilion Master Lei Zhang!"

Listening to Yuan Qing's exhortations, Lei Zhang hurriedly stood up and waved his hand. With that signal, all of the men within House Luolan's headquarters stood up as well, brandishing their coldly glinting weapons whilst channeling their resonant power before dashing towards the people on Pei Hao's side.

They were all incomparably furious. Coupled with Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng's underhanded blows, they had completely thrown out any pretense of obeying the rules of the Housemeet.

If the opponent did not plan to adhere to the rules, then there was no need to maintain this farce!

The atmosphere instantly escalated into a state of mutual hostility with daggers drawn.

Li Luo apathetically glanced at the two ancestors. "I gave you two multiple chances. Why? I just didn't want House Luolan to devolve into a situation of complete infighting. However, it seems I have been too naive."

This was met with Xu Tianling's sarcastic reply. "There's no need to mince words. You were just worried that once House Luolan descended into complete chaos, it would harm the house's overall strength, affecting the mysterious defensive ward that guards the place."

"It looks like you know quite a few secrets after all." Li Luo squinted at him.

Xu Tianling coldly laughed. "Young Lord... do you really think that this battle is over? No! It has only just started!"

Li Luo's gaze was cold. He always knew that merely defeating Pei Hao would just be the precursor to the next stage of events. Pei Hao was but a single pawn. In truth, without the black hand behind the curtains, the white-eyed wolf was not even a threat.

The forces that coveted House Luolan had supported Pei Hao so he could inherit the title of House Lord. Once he took over, they could achieve their objective. After all, if he succeeded, he could simply weaken the defensive ward. Once that was done, the Dukes could make their move.

This was their final aim.

Now that Pei Hao had failed, what would they do next?

He glanced at Jiang Qing'e, and the two locked eyes momentarily, caution evident in each other's gazes.

.....

"Impressive. Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's two brats have surpassed all expectations," Zhu Qinghuo dryly praised as he observed the situation from outside the headquarters from atop a pavilion.

Compared to these two, his somewhat decent son seemed like trash.

It seems when it came to heirs, Zhu Qinghuo felt envy towards Li Taixuan.

"As expected, relying on Pei Hao wasn't effective. Shen Jinxiao, you've played your hand, but it turned out to be worthless." Zhu Qinghuo smiled indifferently as he shook his head. "In that case, I'll have to go with my original plan."

He continued to watch House Luolan's headquarters. Thanks to his vantage point, he was able to see something that ordinary people could not. It was a massive formation that blanketed the house. Countless wondrous rays of light interweaved in layers to create the defensive ward that protected House Luolan's headquarters. It emanated a strong, suppressive pressure that he could feel intently. Even he had to be cautious of the ward's effects.

"Li Taixuan... the arrogant son of the heavens. Such a person should never have appeared in the Xia Kingdom. In fact, you should never have revealed the existence of that treasure... In such a barren environment, it would naturally give rise to envious folk that would covet it... Your ward borrows the might of House Luolan to power it, and it specifically targets those at the Duke Stage. It might be incomparably powerful, but I've been probing it over these years. In fact, I'd even dare to say that I've understood some of the principles that give rise to its existence. Thus, I know that it's not truly invincible. An opportunity to exploit it will arise as it will gradually weaken in this situation.

"House Luolan has 98 strongholds and branches across the Xia Kingdom. It seems to be a little odd, but therein lies the secret. Your wondrous ward has its nodes hidden within those locations, and I've personally visited each and every one of them, even reaping some rewards from them." Zhu Qinghuo smirked and raised his hand. A crystal ball appeared, floating above it.

Countless moving images could be seen within the crystal ball. Each and everyone of these images depicted a building going up in massive flames. People could be faintly seen fighting and engaging in slaughter in the vicinity. However, most importantly, each of these buildings and pavilions had a burning flag with the word "Luo" on it.

These were the strongholds of House Luolan. More importantly, they each possibly held a node of the defensive ward within.

Even if some of these weren't actually critical nodes of the ward, it didn't matter. It was better to destroy them erroneously than to let a single opportunity go.

Zhu Qinghuo raised his head after inspecting the crystal ball, continuing to observe the defensive ward of House Luolan as he muttered to himself, "Now we'll see if the preparations I've made throughout the years will bear fruit."

.....

Within the headquarters.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e remained on alert for a while longer. but nothing seemed to have changed. Li Luo sighed in relief before he opened his mouth to speak. "Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng have broken the sacred laws of the Housemeet. From now on, as per the rules, the two will be discharged from the house and are no longer ancestors of House Luolan."

These words raised a commotion as the status of ancestor was exceedingly high. In the past, it was only second to the two House Lords, and even the pavilion masters had to greet them politely.

In a normal situation, kicking them out of the house would have required a lengthy process. Currently, the duo had broken the Housemeet's rules and crossed House Luolan's bottom line. Thus, there was more than enough justification to act this way.

The three pavilion masters who had supported Pei Hao had stony expressions. Now that control of the house had fallen into Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e's grasp, along with the fact that Pei Hao and the ancestors' support was uncertain, they plainly saw that they were out of luck.

Their thoughts were in panic for a moment, not knowing how to proceed.

Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng remained expressionless, nonchalant towards Li Luo's declaration.

"The two of you, are you going to sit there quietly and be captured? Or will you resist to the very end?" Li Luo icily glared at the duo.

Xu Tianling's eyes looked exceedingly forlorn as he screamed internally. Jiang Qing'e was only growing in strength as time passed, and at this rate, he would not be her opponent even if he tried to act!

Why hadn't the people behind him moved?

Li Luo did not plan to give Xu Tianling time to slowly contemplate the decision he wished to take. He waved his hand, preparing to give the command to kill.

But right at this moment, his hand froze in mid air as both Jiang Qing'e and his expressions warped.

They raised their heads instinctively to see that a vast energy fluctuation had just been triggered in the skies above House Luolan. An exquisite ward had gradually appeared in the previously clear skies above.

Jiang Qing'e and Li Luo's pupils shrank.

Why did the defensive ward come to life?

In fact, the two felt a sinking feeling in their hearts. They could distinctly sense that the defensive ward's strength was gradually weakening.

Was someone destroying the ward?

Chapter 0656: The Show Begins!

Suddenly, the defensive ward of House Luolan materialized in the sky, directly attracting the attention of everyone within. Yuan Qing and the rest were at a loss for words as they didn't know the specifics about it, but they were able to vaguely guess its function.

With the ward showing changes, they knew that it probably did not herald something positive.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e frowned and focused their attention on it.

On the other hand, Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng revealed looks of joy. Their backers had finally decided to act.

"Li Luo, Jiang Qing'e! It looks like it's not your turn to celebrate just yet!" Xu Tianling coldly sneered with a chilly look in his eye.

At the same time, he glanced at the nervous pavilion masters and troops. "There is no need to worry. This is our plan. The victor of the Housemeet has yet to be decided! If you pledge your loyalty to us, you will obtain whatever your heart desires!"

Listening to Xu Tianling's consoling words at this critical moment reassured some of those on Pei Hao's side.

Qing'e did not bother with this prancing clown. Instead, she quickly moved as quick as a flash to Li Luo's side. His situation wasn't great, and he would require her personal protection.

"It looks like the big boys are coming out to play..." Li Luo dryly commented.

The curtain had been drawn and House Luolan's internal struggle had merely just begun. Some of the pawns had been defeated, but the true hands behind the shadows could no longer hide themselves. They would finally have to take action themselves.

Jiang Qing'e slightly nodded as she turned towards Li Luo, smiling gently. "You can rest now. You're in safe hands. If House Luolan can't be protected, we'll just roam the world instead. Once we reach the Duke Stage, we'll have a clean accounting of things."

Li Luo grinned as well. "These blockheads really do lust for the treasures my old man left behind. However, the way I see it, the true treasure is not that, but you, Sister Qing'e!" His fawning words were greeted with a radiant smile.

As the two continued to chat, the ward protecting House Luolan seemed to ripple with greater intensity. Everyone could distinctly feel that its stalwart protection was weakening with rapid speed.

Suddenly, the disturbance stopped.

The ward itself also seemed to have become much more illusory in nature.

Whoosh!

At this moment, worldly natural energy surged into the sky. Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e pupils shrank at what they saw. Descending right from the sky was a massive, black meteor, directly colliding with the defensive ward.

Boom!

Resonant power swept in every direction as a result of the massive explosion. A deafening bang reverberated around Xia City, drawing fearful glances in its direction.

Crack!

Faced with this horrifying assault, the mysterious ward seemed to have shattered slightly, revealing a gap. At that very moment, black flames poured through the crack, and a figure condensed in mid-air within the black flames.

The figure cackled, and his voice echoed throughout the area. "Hehe. House Luolan's headquarters is truly a pain to enter."

The duo stared at the familiar figure, not at all surprised.

His mane of fiery-red hair reminded one of a furious lion, grandly looking down upon all who dared to stand before the king of beasts.

It was House Jiyan's house lord, Zhu Qinghuo!

With his appearance, a spectacularly intimidating presence exuded from him, instilling raw fear into everyone within the headquarters. They felt as though a mountain was pressing down upon them, and even their resonant power was completely suppressed.

This was the ineffable might of a Duke's prestige!

In fact, countless individuals were trembling in their socks from the pressure.

Even Yuan Qing with his Lesser Heavenly Resonance strength was shivering in complete terror.

Of course, this excluded Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e, the two merely staring blankly at him.

"It looks like you're not shocked at all," Zhu Qinghuo commented as he glanced at the duo, a smile forming on his boorish face.

"House Lord Zhu, my parents invited you as a guest to our headquarters when they were still around, but you never accepted!" Li Luo replied.

Zhu Qinghuo smiled. "Of course I wouldn't have dared. The temper of your parents is legendary and well known. Why would I provoke them?"

"Well, sit tight and wait for them to return. I'm afraid you will have a pretty terrible time after that. After all, you understand their temperament." Li Luo smirked.

Zhu Qinghuo nodded. "Well, I have to agree with you on that point... However, that's if they can really get out of the Nobles' Battlefield. Even the mightiest of Dukes have fallen in that desolate location."

At the same time, he shook his head almost pitifully. "Alas, Li Luo, there is no need for such threatening words. Do you think that this scheme that has been in construction for countless years will stop because of a few intimidating words? If I truly was afraid of Li Taixuan and House Luolan, I wouldn't be here right now."

Li Luo lightly sighed. "Then I would like to respectfully wish you a long journey on the road of death, House Lord Zhu."

Zhu Qinghuo sneered. "To be honest, I really do envy Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan. Their son is not of common ilk, and in time, you're bound to exceed them."

When he finished speaking, the look in his eyes changed. They were filled with cruel killing intent now.

How could he not know of Jiang Qing'e and Li Luo's might? If he truly wanted to wreck House Luolan, he would have to get rid of these pests properly. Otherwise, he would no longer be able to rest easy at night.

With a thought, he stretched out his hand.

The temperature in the air explosively soared, and black flames poured forth from the void, directly manifesting a massive, black fist of flames. It was heading straight towards the duo.

Wherever the flaming fist passed through, the void warped and distorted from its sheer might.

The ground itself was melting under the sweltering heat.

Yuan Qing and the rest looked aghast and turned pale at this sight. "Young Lord and Mistress! Hurry! Run!"

The discrepancy between the duo couldn't be greater when pitted against a veteran Duke expert. Any efforts to resist would be like a mantis attempting to stop a horse cart. Thus, desperation bloomed in their hearts upon seeing this.

Conversely, Xu Tianling, Mo Cheng, and the rest had looks of glee and excitement.

If the duo died, House Luolan would inevitably fragment into pieces.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e, on the other hand, continued standing where they were, only staring at the distressing fist made of flames which had sealed off the space in front of them with incomparable calmness.

Weng!

The fist roared as it rushed towards them, but when it was a few meters away from the duo, the sound of a blade unsheathing rang out.

It was piercing to hear, and an inexplicable fiendish energy seemed to have flooded the space.

A certain dark-red knife flashed through the void, tearing apart anything in its way and throwing the worldly natural energy into chaos.

The blade was so swift that it left images of light in its trail as it arched past the fist of flames. The fist paused in midair and suddenly began to break down, turning into mere embers of inky flames, eventually fragmenting into nothingness in mere breaths of time. It was as though it had been shattered at the source.

This sudden change caused everyone to stare dumbstruck.

"You damn bastard. I've known that you were stealthily spying on the headquarters of House Luolan for years! Even then, you only dared to reveal a clone. You've finally deigned to show your face in person?" Sarcastic laughter resounded, and the crowd turned to face a figure that had suddenly appeared atop a roof in the courtyard. It was a bald man holding a pig butchering knife in one hand and garbed in the clothes of a chef. At the same time, his pudgy face was glaring at Zhu Qinghuo.

Although he was standing quite a distance away, waves of frightening fiendish energy pulsed from him like a tempest, as though he had waded through countless mountains of blood and flesh to get to where he was today.

Cai Wei, Yan Lingqing, and the rest were so stunned that their jaws were agape.

They had never imagined that the often smiley and genial head chef, the maestro of countless delicacies, would be standing there with such a demonic and grand aura.

At the same time, they finally understood.

This was House Luolan's hidden protector in the dark.

Chapter 0657: Duke's Clash

With Ox Biaobiao's appearance, Yuan Qing and the rest felt the terrifying suppression on their bodies vanish into thin air. Surprise and joy flooded them as they gazed at the silhouette emitting a fiendish presence, emotions stirring within their desperate hearts.

When the opponent's Duke appeared, one on their side had turned up as well, lifting them from the depths of despair.

"The two House Lords have left behind a helper," Yuan Qing said emotionally. Although he had already guessed it to be true, the feeling of seeing it in reality was completely different from that of speculation.

In the skies of House Luolan, the airborne Zhu Qinghuo rushed towards Ox Biaobiao at the first instance. His expression was grim as he felt the ominous aura coming from the other Duke. This was not some sort of illusionary technique, but one forged from clambering through countless mountains of flesh and blood. Thus, he could guess that the man before him was no stranger to reaping lives like grain.

"I would never have expected that such a distinguished individual like you, one who has gone through so much, would deign to spend so many years undercover as a mere chef," Zhu Qinghuo said indifferently.

Ox Biaobiao brandished the gleaming pig butchering knife before him, his weapon glinting with a cold light. He was a little different compared to the friendly and affable head chef everyone knew. His pupils were scarlet red and a demonic air exuded from him, as though this was a ferocious, berserk spirit beast corrupted by an evil influence.

At the same time, those on Li Luo's side were feeling slightly apprehensive. Unlike Zhu Qinghuo, Ox Biaobiao's appearance could be easily associated with that of a typical villain...

"Since you dare to barge into House Luolan's headquarters, you will naturally pay the price." Ox Biaobiao's voice was insipid. At the same time, the entire atmosphere seemed to be tainted with the smell of blood as his presence expanded.

Zhu Qinghuo remained unfazed. "Your Majesty, you must be an esteemed individual from lands afar. Although I do not know why you have chosen to sequester yourself within House Luolan, Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan are now deep within the depths of the Nobles' Battlefield. It's very likely that they will never have the opportunity to escape. Thus, if you are willing to side with us, kind sir, we will naturally share with you any benefits that we obtain from House Luolan's treasures."

Zhu Qinghuo was clearly a treacherous and sly individual, willing to use any means to deal with Ox Biaobiao.

Yuan Qing and the rest similarly heard those enticing words, only daring to berate Zhu Qinghuo in their hearts. At the same time, the seed of worry was planted within them. They had not interacted with Ox

Biaobiao much, and who knew if this Duke who had hidden himself away for so many years would not be tempted by his honeyed tongue.

However, Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e were completely unaffected. Ox Biaobiao wasn't some stranger they had just met, he was a senior who had taken care of them since they were young. Although they might not know of the history between him and Li Luo's parents, their interactions throughout the years had allowed them to sincerely understand what sort of individual Ox Biaobiao was. Thus, they knew that Zhu Qinghuo's underhanded means were basically meaningless.

"If you are willing to turn and leave now, I will pretend as though you were never here. Otherwise... this knife of mine will cull yet another fourth-grade Duke," Ox Biaobiao grimly replied.

Zhu Qinghuo's eyelids twitched momentarily and laughed callously. "Perhaps you might really be telling the truth... but you must also know that was in the past. You are no longer at your peak. You've spent years cooped up within House Luolan's headquarters without taking a single step out—isn't it obvious that your strength has declined? Perhaps you might have suffered some sort of grievous wound in the past, hmm?"

Ox Biaobiao similarly smirked at him, revealing rows of pearly-white teeth. "Why don't you give it a try? Then you'll know for yourself."

As the two glared at each other, worldly natural energy was roused violently by both parties, swelling into the skies and clashing formlessly against each other. The result was a thunderous boom that echoed throughout all of Xia City.

Zhu Qinghuo took a step forward, and a world space opened up behind him. One could see four massive Duke Bergfrieds within it. Each one stood forlorn as they rejected and looked down upon the heavens with their existence. They were all engraved with countless runes, each one intricately carved with Zhu Qinghuo's knowledge for all to see. [1]

The moment the four Bergfrieds appeared, the surrounding area seemed to shudder in their very presence.

If dual resonant power was the mark of a Duke's power, the Duke Bergfrieds were manifestations of their foundations.

It was said that to enter the Duke Stage, one would have to condense and compress their resonant power to the extreme. Only then could they construct a Duke Bergfried with it. When this was completed, one's body would once again undergo an unimaginable quantitative change. Duke Bergfrieds did not only demonstrate the depth of their foundation, they were also one of their strongest abilities at their disposal.

The fact that Zhu Qinghuo had revealed his four Bergfrieds right off the bat was testament to how dangerous he felt Ox Biaobiao was.

With that, he raised a finger and gently pointed at Ox Biaobiao.

Boom!

The heavens and the earth rumbled as the four Bergfrieds began to spew out boundless streams of blackfire. If one were to examine them more closely, countless stone fragments could be seen moving within the blackfire, rapidly transforming. As the two fused, they formed a domineering stygian magma instead.

As Zhu Qinghuo possessed a fire resonance and a stone resonance, the combination of the two allowed his offensive abilities to rise by an entire grade.

The stygian magma transformed into tens of thousands of currents that covered the skies, causing the temperature to skyrocket and the void to warp before arcing towards Ox Biaobiao. This frightening attack caused the scalps of all the individuals in the square to turn numb. A Duke's methods were not easily fathomed nor defended against.

As the magma spilled forth from the world space, Ox Biaobiao gave a cold smile. He did not retaliate with his knife, but clenched his empty fist. Two phantasmal manifestations came to life behind him.

One was a massive, four-horned, azure bull.

The other, a blue-eyed golden-furred bear.

Four Horned Godly Bull resonance.

Blue-eyed Golden Bear resonance.

The sight caused Li Luo to grin. Uncle Biao actually possessed two strength based beast resonances! It was the ultimate expression of violence!

Ox Biaobiao responded with a single punch. It seemed ordinary and unassuming, but as it swept past, everyone could see that the void was being smashed apart by a ghastly force, directly colliding against the magma.

Bang!

Upon contact, it was as though a natural disaster had unfolded before their very eyes. The magma was bashed away, dispersed in every direction before eventually being absorbed by House Luolan's defensive ward.

The intimidating punch demonstrated Uncle Biao's unwavering valor. Zhu Qinghuo's face turned chilly. Just the wind from the punch howling past had caused his skin to feel piercing pain. Even he was taken aback by the sheer ferocity of the strike. This boorish and demonic meathead had cultivated his physical body to an alarmingly mighty state.

Was this the physical prowess that two strength-focused beast resonances could attain?

However, despite his shock, stopping Zhu Qinghuo would take much more than one move.

With a thought, the four Duke Bergfrieds behind Zhu Qinghuo started to tremble within the world space. The vibration passed through into the world itself, and suddenly, all four Bergfrieds tore upon the void and descended into the sky above House Luolan's headquarters.

Every single Bergfried was like an indomitable mountain. With four suspended in the skies above, it brought a renewed sense of suppression on everyone below.

Worldly natural energy continued to churn as it was constantly being sucked into the Bergfrieds.

Zhu Qinghuo looked on indifferently as a moment later, all four of his Duke Bergfrieds directly suppressed the space Ox Biaobiao was in.

Once the Bergfrieds were set upon Ox Biaobiao, Zhu Qinghuo's gaze swept past a certain Pei Hao's mangled corpse. His gaze flickered and he cursed in his heart. "Shen Jinxiao... I've done my part and held up Ox Biaobiao. The rest is up to you."

.....

At the same time, within a certain secret, dark room...

Shen Jinxiao's eyes narrowed slightly. Everything that had happened within House Luolan's headquarters had been directly transmitted into his mind.

"House Luolan's Headquarters actually had a Duke in hiding. He even possesses quite the ominous aura..."

An apathetic smile formed on his face. The Duke was currently being held back by Zhu Qinghuo, so now it was his time to shine. So long as Li Luo died and he could set his hands upon Jiang Qing'e, all of his plans would be beautifully completed.

Shen Jinxiao's gaze fell upon the quarter of a heart that was beating fainter and fainter with every passing moment. Pei Hao was fatally injured, and he would pass away soon.

A sly grin formed on his face before he started to speak in a devilish voice, one full of enticement. "Pei Hao... you've squandered your last chance. However... if you give me the other half of your heart... I'll accomplish what your heart desires..."

Chapter 0658: Mutation

Zhu Qinghuo and Ox Biaobiao's vicious duel was currently attracting the attention of everyone in House Luolan's Headquarters. With the two taking action, every response literally shook the heavens and the earth as their boundless resonant power imbued with worldly natural energy clashed, leaving behind countless aftershocks.

This exchange between experts luckily had not resulted in collateral damage that brought harm to those below and the outer world itself, partially due to the aid of the defensive ward. The truth was that the clash between the duo had mainly occurred within the Duke's world space. It existed as an independent spatial dimension, capable of resisting and absorbing their world-ending techniques. [1]

This was why everything around them had yet to turn into a ruined calamity.

Of course, Zhu Qinghuo similarly did not want to cause wanton destruction either. It wasn't because he wanted to protect House Luolan, but if the fighting became too fierce, accidentally destroying House Luolan's treasures wouldn't be to his benefit.

.....

The Regent's Palace.

The Regent was currently standing in a pavilion with his hands behind his back. His gaze was focused in the direction of House Luolan, as though it could pierce through the void itself, taking in all of the sights.

"House Luolan's Duke is truly extraordinary. Zhu Qinghuo is a fourth-grade Duke and can be considered to be amongst the top in the Xia Kingdom. However, he doesn't seem to have any advantage over his opponent." The Regent observed dryly.

"This Ox Biaobiao person isn't some simple individual. Why would someone like him be willing to sequester himself away as a mere chef? Does Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan hold such sway over him?"

"The duo are quite the charismatic bunch. After all, how else could they have convinced Duzhe Yan to stick his neck out during such a critical moment for them? You are right to say that Ox Biaobiao is not a straightforward man. It's clear that in his prime, even you would not have been his opponent." A male figure strode out from the shadows behind the Regent. He was dressed immaculately and his skin was as smooth as that of an infant. He looked extremely young, but the profundity and indifference in his gaze betrayed the number of years he had gone through.

However, what was most striking about him was that he was born with two pupils in each eye. The pupils overlapped each other, one gold and one silver. He bore a simple and unadorned dark-red ring on his finger. Upon closer inspection, the surface of the ring was inscribed with an eerie eye with black eye-whites and a white pupil.

The Regent turned to glance at the figure. "Hmm... Ox Biaobiao has yet to reveal his Duke Bergfrieds. Perhaps they have been shattered by someone?"

"Very insightful of you," the young man complimented with a laugh.

The Regent continued, "Having shattered Duke Bergfrieds means Ox Biaobiao must have suffered from a serious injury that might very well have caused him to perish... the fact that he still managed to struggle on only demonstrates how impressive he is."

"Well, it's more than enough to deal with Zhu Qinghuo," the male continued.

"Zhu Qinghuo is just a decoy. It's time for Shen Jinxiao to play his cards. So long as Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e are dealt with, Ox Biaobiao will naturally restrain himself, and the battle for House Luolan will be over. At the same time, I can finally obtain what I want," the Regent explained.

"What if Shen Jinxiao fails? He's unable to personally act and is only able to borrow Pei Hao's body as a medium. He can't contribute with his true power," the young man said with a smile.

"Although he can't act at his full strength, a Duke's methods should be more than sufficient to tidy up a few bratty pests," the Regent indifferently replied.

The young male only continued to play devil's advocate. "Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e aren't common brats. The amount of mysteries hidden within them seem to be quite considerable..."

Despite that, the Regent was not annoyed, continuing to speak with his eyes slightly drooping. "Regardless of what happens, House Luolan's doom is nigh. I've waited so many years, and now I will get what I want."

The dual-pupil youth grinned. "The Little Emperor's coronation ceremony is in a few days. From what I hear, Pang Qianyuan has already borrowed the Dragon Bone Holy Grail to suppress the Ichythian King. If he succeeds, the cracks of the Umbra Cave will be filled up... and he will definitely rush over for the coronation ceremony. It would be as he promised the old Emperor, huh? If he turns up, your bitter efforts will unravel and collapse before your very eyes... After all, he is unparalleled in the Xia Kingdom."

The Regent emotionlessly stared back at the youth. "Well, isn't that why you're here? I don't believe you'll let Pang Qianyuan escape from the Umbra Cave so easily after so many years. In any case, once I control the Kingdom Protecting Formation, even Pang Qianyuan will not be able to deal with me."

"If you want to control the Kingdom Protecting Formation, you're still missing a few more pieces of the puzzle. I believe you require the assistance of House Luolan's treasures, right?"

The youth chuckled. The Regent nodded slightly as he continued to observe the fight over House Luolan. "Thus, I will take the first step of my plan today! How can I possibly afford to fail here?"

.....

Bang!

Berserk resonant power rumbled and tossed across the skies above House Luolan.

Countless massive, burning rocks began to descend from the sky, akin to a destructive meteor shower that rained down upon Ox Biaobiao.

It was a sight to behold, and countless individuals raised their head to watch, only feeling abject terror instead of amazement.

If this apocalyptic display of prowess weren't taking place inside the Duke world space, perhaps half of Xia City might already have been devastated.

Weng!

However, just as the flaming boulders were about to strike, the piercing howl of a knife rang out. In a blink, the tyrannical knife soared through the void, directly slicing them apart and leaving behind distortions in space.

As the knife slashed past the rocks, they fragmented into mere grains of sand before continuing to disintegrate into dust.

The impassive Zhu Qinghuo had a frosty expression as he glared at Ox Biaobiao's pig-butcher knife. For the first time, a tinge of fear could be seen within his eyes. The knife was not some common tool found off the streets... No, it was definitely a violet-eye treasured artifact as the blade energy contained a hint of disintegrative force. If he were to be struck directly, it would affect him like a plague, seeking to decompose him into nothingness.

In all of the previous offensives, none of his attacks had achieved even the slightest of results. This was in part due to Ox Biaobiao's terrifying physique, but also the fiendish pig-butcher knife.

Although the other party had never revealed his own Duke Bergfrieds, he was more than capable of achieving a stalemate.

It seemed that normal methods were insufficient.

Zhu Qinghuo's gaze turned cold and he clasped his hands together, forming a rapid series of hand seals. At this moment, fiery-red clouds began to condense in the sky, turning it crimson.

A moment later, they were torn apart by a thousand-meter-wide crimson palm that crushed downwards.

"Duke Art, Heavenly God of Flame's Palm!"

As Zhu Qinghuo demonstrated his Duke Art, Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e were inevitably captivated by it. This was a Duke exerting the full might of a Duke Art. It was invincible, capable of rending both the heavens and the earth!

But as they immersed themselves in the majesty of the Duke Art, they suddenly felt a dangerous presence attacking in their direction.

Jiang Qing'e reacted the quickest, directly swatting Li Luo away and slamming a palm strike in retaliation. Immediately after, copious amounts of light resonant energy poured out from her like a tide, directly forming layer upon layer of light mirrors.

Crack!

But the mirrors made of light were only able to hold on for a brief moment before fragmenting.

A blast of exceptionally mighty and daunting resonant power then surged towards her, directly clashing with Jiang Qing'e's own resonant power.

Bang!

The explosion caused a shockwave, blasting the ground apart and sending Jiang Qing'e backwards countless steps, her blood churning.

Li Luo was a little shell shocked from being knocked to the side as he shouted, "Sister Qing'e!"

She waved her hand, indicating that she was fine. Instead, she focused intently in the direction the attack had come from.

Their expressions warped upon seeing who the attacker was.

Not too far away, they saw the previously pale and heavily injured Pei Hao stiffly stand up, his face still streaked with bloody holes. Immediately after, he dashed right towards Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e with a deathly smile.

"Did you really think things were over just like that? Huh?"

Chapter 0659: The Returned "Pei Hao"

Pei Hao's sudden transformation had attracted the attention of everyone around. Yuan Qing and the rest were looking at him in complete disbelief. He was clearly full of bloody holes, and any normal individual with these injuries would be deadlier than a doornail. It was mind-boggling that he had jumped back to life!

Additionally, everyone could clearly feel that the resonant power emanating from Pei Hao's body was even stronger than before. It had reached yet another, more terrifying level of strength!

He had surpassed the peak of the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage!

Still... how was this possible?

He had been left mortally wounded with half a breath of life left in him. Yet in a blink, he was hopping around with all the vigor of a young child. Furthermore, he seemed to have become even stronger than before?

Li Luo's expression had turned slightly gloomy as he glared at Pei Hao. "Can you really be considered to be Pei Hao?"

"Hmm? Who else could I be?" Pei Hao cackled as his eyes gave off a strange, despondent look.

Li Luo frowned. Although the Pei Hao before him didn't seem to have changed in personality, he had an odd feeling that this was not the person he had battled. Something had fundamentally changed in his body, and even Pei Hao himself did not understand it.

Additionally, Pei Hao was simply too strong now.

It felt oppressive merely standing before him, as though he was facing off against a Duke.

"Protect the Young Lord!" Yuan Qing, Lei Zhang and the rest immediately rushed over in a human wave. Yuan Qing even took the opportunity to let loose a few barbs. "Pei Hao! You've lost the Housemeet's battle. You have no right to struggle for the candidacy of House Lord anymore!"

"House Lord?" Pei Hao sniggered. "Why would I be concerned over such trifling titles? Furthermore, House Luolan might cease to exist soon enough." He then waved his hand, and Xu Tianling led his faction to intercept the crowd on Yuan Qing's side.

After dealing with the harassment from these ants, Pei Hao's gaze turned upon Jiang Qing'e, and he smiled. "So what tricks do you have left up your sleeve? Li Luo has already overdrafted himself and no longer possesses any combat capability. So will it be all up to you now?"

Jiang Qing'e's eyes were emotionless and frigid as she replied, "You're not Pei Hao. You must be the black hand manipulating him. It looks like Pei Hao truly was very pitiful. Even though he was merely a pawn, death was no release."

Pei Hao didn't deny her exhortations. "So long as there is a happy ending... the details don't matter at all. So, Jiang Qing'e... I have always wanted to try something."

He stretched out a finger, pointing at Li Luo as a malicious smile formed on his face. "I wonder how you would feel if I killed Li Luo right before your very eyes!"

Bang!

At the very moment he finished speaking, immeasurable and potent amounts of resonant power exploded forth from her body. She hacked down viciously with her heavy sword wreathed with sacred sword energy, targeting Pei Hao's forehead.

Faced with Jiang Qing'e's furious assault, Pei Hao did not move an inch. Majestic amounts of resonant power poured forth from within his body, taking the shape of an indestructible, golden shield. The sword light that was produced from the sword strike glanced off upon hitting it, dissipating into motes of light.

Pei Hao grinned with a ghastly expression as he stared at the flickering motes of light in the sky. "Such pure and sacred light resonant energy. You should probably be the one with the most pristine resonant power in the entire Xia Kingdom... Still, if this is all you have, then you will not be able to protect Li Luo... Jiang Qing'e, you've used a secret art to restrain yourself all these years, and I will be a little disappointed if you can't show me more."

Jiang Qing'e's absolutely enchanting face froze over upon hearing these belittling comments, a hint of killing intent flickering within her eyes. However, she was uninterested in idle banter. Instead, a mysterious rune that had faded significantly resurfaced between her smooth brows.

With a thought, the rune directly shattered.

Bang!

Countless looks were thrown in her direction, and everyone could feel the resonant power within her churn. All of a sudden, it started to rise with terrifying speed.

The explosive growth was even greater than when she had faced off against Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng!

With the berserk increase in the quantity of resonant power within her body, her previously pinned-up hair was shaken loose, gracefully falling like a waterfall across her back before reaching down to her slender waist and swaying gently with the wind. Coupled with her radiant, crystal-clear skin akin to jade, she was overflowing with beauty. At the same time, mystical and abstruse patterns of light appeared on her unblemished skin. Her previously clear, golden eyes seemed to have been purified as well, causing her to exude a unique and enigmatic charm.

Behind her were five Heavenly Pearls that were constantly absorbing worldly natural energy, but the energy that she gave off far surpassed that of any ordinary cultivator of a similar base.

At this point, Jiang Qing'e had completely gotten rid of everything that had been keeping her suppressed.

With the full release of her strength, Jiang Qing'e was at the Fifth Heavenly Pearl. With the aid of the previously suppressive secret art, she was now able to demonstrate strength far beyond that of her peers for a short span of time.

Everyone seemed thunderstruck by the frightening undulations coming off of her. Only Pei Hao continued to smirk as he commented, "Wow! That was truly an impressive outburst. I'm afraid no one in the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage would be your match. It's such a pity that I don't fall in that

category. I'm not a Duke, but I am comparable with one. Perhaps you might even think of me being at the quasi-Duke Stage."

As he spoke, Pei Hao raised his palm and lightly clenched it. The odious sense of oppression coming from Jiang Qing'e had suddenly vanished in a blink.

With an indifferent smile on his face, he glanced at the girl radiating scintillating light. Thanks to Pei Hao's sacrifice of the remaining half of his heart, he was able to control the body and lend some of his own strength to it. However, there were certain limitations as Pei Hao's body could not completely tolerate the strain of his resonant power.

The good thing was that the quasi-Duke Stage should be sufficient for his goals.

He might not be able to utilize his Duke Bergfrieds, but just the usage of his resonant power would be enough to deal with Jiang Qing'e.

On the square, Cai Wei, Yan Lingqing, and the rest looked on with worry. Although Jiang Qing'e's meteoric rise in strength was shocking, Pei Hao possessed mysterious strength that may be no weaker.

In the skies of the headquarters, Ox Biaobiao sensed the disturbance below and slashed out with his knife. A draconic beam of blade light rushed out, intending to decapitate Pei Hao coolly.

However, just as the blade light was about to cleave him into two, a lotus created by blackfire bloomed within the void, blocking the attack.

"My good sir, your opponent is me. Why worry about what's happening elsewhere? As I've previously said, someone clinging to his life before the gates of hell cannot protect House Luolan. Although I can't deal with you, I can at least ensure that you watch powerlessly as these two brats are murdered before your very eyes." Zhu Qinghuo smiled inspidly.

"Once the two brats die, there will be no need to guard House Luolan anymore, right?"

Ox Biaobiao merely glanced mockingly at Zhu Qinghuo.

"I feel that the one that will die... won't be them."

At this very moment, Jiang Qing'e suddenly closed her eyes. Her slender fingers formed a hand seal, a clear voice ringing out in her heart.

"Duke Art, Heaven Hibernating, Sacred Change Art."

One of the Heavenly Pearls behind Jiang Qing'e shattered at that instant. At the same time, the void trembled and the resonant power that radiated from her underwent another titanic transformation.

The grin on Pei Hao's face finally receded.

Chapter 0660: Heaven Hibernating, Sacred Change Art

When one of the Heavenly Pearls behind Jiang Qing'e shattered, her resonant power underwent yet another unimaginable boost.

All this time, boundless amounts of sacred light resonant energy flooded out of her, shrouding her with holy light. From afar, she looked like a holy goddess descending upon the mortal realm. Worldly natural energy churned around her, but it was purified under the influence of the sacred light resonant energy.

"Your secret art isn't common. This should be a Duke-tier secret art. You truly are blessed, chosen by the heavens even. A Duke Art-level secret art is even harder to cultivate than a normal Duke Art! It seems it wasn't any trouble for you." Pei Hao icily focused upon Jiang Qing'e as he sputtered out those words.

Jiang Qing'e's resonant power had increased by a terrifying amount. Although her strength was incredibly difficult to match amongst her peers, there was still a significant gap between her and the opponent before her.

The quasi-Duke Stage was not for show.

However, Jiang Qing'e had used a Duke-level secret art, so her current state was sufficient to let him feel a sense of danger.

Clearly, a normal secret art could not attain such a result... and she had suppressed herself over countless years.

"Although your secret art is impressive, reaching a stage where you can threaten me means that you have paid a significant price... Your shattered Heavenly Pearl is the biggest proof. I suppose you'd have to pay the price of your stage going down each time. Hehe... this isn't a small price... You're currently at five Heavenly Pearls... No, wait, it's four now... Just how long can you sustain this?" Pei Hao taunted.

Despite his attempts to sow doubt into Qing'e's heart, she completely ignored him as she observed him with impassive golden eyes. She then raised a slender finger, and a single halo of light started to rise behind her head.

Bang!

A bright torrent of light akin to a massive laser cannon fired from the ring of light, shooting across the sky. The dazzling light it emitted caused the somewhat dim sky to momentarily turn as bright as day.

The raw power of the attack would cause even a Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage cultivator to be disintegrated without a trace.

However, Pei Hao remained unfazed. He also raised his hand, and a golden light shot out from his fingertip, turning into a golden sword manifestation. As the sword manifestation soared against the wind, it expanded in size to over a hundred meters in a flash, filling the entire area with sharp sword energy.

Weng!

The sword manifestation clashed directly with the beam of light, causing a massive blast. Alarming amounts of resonant power broke out in every direction as a result, destroying the entire square and leaving it in ruins whilst the crowd ran for their lives, screaming in fear.

The first strike might have been unsuccessful, but Jiang Qing'e did not relent. The golden heavy sword in her hand floated into the air, absorbing endless amounts of worldly natural energy. The outline of a golden eye could be seen on the blade of the sword as sacred light energy condensed atop the tip.

At the next moment, profound patterns appeared over the golden heavy sword before it flew forward, tunneling through the void. In a blink, tens of thousands of sword manifestations appeared, all attempting to impale Pei Hao.

The tiny, golden sword that hung by Pei Hao's ear unattached itself and formed countless golden sword manifestations in response. The only difference was that his sword manifestations seemed to be sharper than those created by Jiang Qing'e by multiple times.

Two colossal waves of sword manifestations clashed in the sky above, creating a sight to behold.

Their exchange had turned heated in a mere instant.

At this time, the vicinity of House Luolan's Headquarters was completely devastated. The skies above were occupied by two mighty Dukes clashing with world-ending arts that no one else was qualified to approach.

On the ground was Jiang Qing'e and Pei Hao's intense battle, both striking with the intent to kill, unwilling to pull punches.

The rest of the space was occupied by the two factions' forces engaging in mutual slaughter.

Li Luo stood in the ruined corner of the square as he observed the situation. He frowned when he looked in Jiang Qing'e's direction.

Although he did not know how Pei Hao had obtained his ghastly strength, he had to admit that he was extremely strong. He had already surpassed the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage... Although Jiang Qing'e had gained a gargantuan boost to her power with the assistance of the Duke secret art, her attacks were unable to penetrate Pei Hao's defenses.

Clearly, Pei Hao was also stalling for time.

His intention was obvious. Jiang Qing'e's strength was drawn out from the sacrifice of one of her Heavenly Pearls. She had consumed yet another and only had three remaining. In just a short span of time, she had to shatter yet another Heavenly Pearl.

Li Luo was not sure if the breaking of these Heavenly Pearls left behind any sort of residual damage, but a drop in cultivation level would have to be regained over a significant period of cultivation. Thus, it would inevitably stall her progress.

Jiang Qing'e had made ample preparations for the sake of today's Housemeet.

However, the situation was still sticky.

How could they fend off Pei Hao once she consumed the remaining three Heavenly Pearls?

Judging by Pei Hao's turtling tactics, he was biding his time and waiting for the right time to strike.

"Phew."

Li Luo exhaled deeply. All of his bitter cultivation had been done to lessen Jiang Qing'e's burden during the Housemeet. Who would have thought that in the end, it would all rest upon her shoulders anyway?

His gaze turned gloomy. Alas, his body was a depleted spring, all his strength consumed when he defeated Pei Hao the first time. Even his body was injured, and he didn't have any means to assist Jiang Qing'e.

Additionally, Pei Hao had now entered the quasi-Duke Stage, so ordinary attacks would fail to harm him.

As Li Luo fell into deep thought, he could feel a tremor coming from his wrist. Looking down, it had come from the scarlet-red bracelet. A low, deep roar transmitted into his ear.

"The Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf?"

Feeling the intentions conveyed by the roar, Li Luo's gaze came to life as he asked in shock with a low voice, "What did you say? You can help me?" He did have some reservations as the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf was only at the peak of the Greater Heavenly Resonance Stage. It might have the qualifications to attempt to break into the Duke Stage, but it had failed before, no?

As though it could sense Li Luo's doubt, the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf expressed his fury with yet another roar.

Li Luo's gaze flickered. It didn't really matter if the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's words were true or not. If there was a chance, he would not give it up. However, was the relationship between them so close that it was willing to assist him? They might have had an agreement, but Li Luo wasn't so naive to believe that a verbal exchange was sufficient to turn the wolf into a trusted companion.

Li Luo paused before asking directly, "What is your goal, then?"

Yet another growl came from the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf.

Li Luo could distinctly understand the roar's intentions. However, his expression became a little complicated.

The price was simple.

"I want... ten drops... of your blood essence!"