

Resonance 661

Chapter 0661: Duke Art

In the skies above House Luolan.

The two Dukes were waging a catastrophic battle, attracting the attention of all the peak experts within Xia City.

Zhu Qinghuo and Ox Biaobiao had already revealed their Duke world spaces, absorbing the impact of their blows. Otherwise, Xia City's sky would have already been turned into a fragmented and desolate void, the space torn to shreds.

One could see a massive, flaming palm constantly swatting down within the fiery-red clouds, radiating terrifying amounts of heat that caused even the space itself to burn and leaving an acrid smell. Every pattern engraved upon the palm itself was mystifying, condensing the essence of flame itself.

This was the Duke Art that a fourth-grade Duke could bring forth. If such a move were to land unobstructed in the midst of Xia City, half of it would inevitably go up in flames.

Faced with Zhu Qinghuo's Duke Art, Ox Biaobiao immediately returned the favor. Clenching his fist tightly, lines of light began to appear on his sturdily built arm. Flesh and blood shuddered as the moo of an ancient bull resounded.

Duke Art, Demon Bull's Godly Fist!

He struck out with a single fist, and all of the world space before him shattered like fragile glass, with spatial fragments raining onto the ground. A massive fist silhouette roared through the air as it flew towards Zhu Qinghuo, containing a scene of thousands of divine bulls stampeding.

This was pure, unadulterated strength capable of smashing mountains and splitting the ground apart.

Bang!

The two parties' all-out attacks caused the world to rumble intensely despite the attacks occurring in the world space. The worldly natural energy around them was agitated, bubbling intensely in the aftermath.

Everyone could see that things were at a stalemate as neither attack held an edge over the other.

"House Luolan's little girl might have increased her power tremendously, but she had to shatter her Heavenly Pearls as the price. How long can she hold on with such a heavy cost? Expecting her to defend House Luolan is a little idealistic, no?" Zhu Qinghou continued to sow doubt, attempting to erode Ox Biaobiao's willpower to fight.

"Noisy pest." Ox Biaobiao glared ferociously at Zhu Qinghuo before brusquely replying, "A fourth-grade Duke from a godforsaken desolate hellhole dares to wag his tongue at me? Do you think I won't hack you to pieces?"

With that, he swiftly brandished his pig-butcher knife. It suddenly extended, turning into a three-meter-long ghost-beheading blade. On it were dark-red marks that seemed to have been the result of it

being soaked in countless amounts of fresh blood. At the same time, a horrifying, fiendish air emanated from the sanguine blade.

Ox Biaobiao grasped the blade, and a terrifying, dark, crimson blade energy blasted out from him. A boundless, dark-red ocean seemed to have taken form behind him, all formed from this demonic blade energy.

Rumble! Roar!

The sea of blade energy rumbled, and everyone could see a massive demonic god take illusory form, casually standing up from within it. It hefted a massive blade whose very presence seemed to be able to penetrate the skies and the earth.

All of the worldly natural energy around the duo was aroused as it wildly surged towards the illusory demonic god.

Not only Zhu Qinghuo, all the other Dukes in Xia City who were secretly observing had expressions of great shock and were at a loss for words.

"Is that a Soul Ascension-grade Duke Art?" Most of the Dukes of the Xia Kingdom cultivated Communion-grade Duke Arts. Soul Ascension-grade ones were rare, and the Golden Dragon Bank, the royal court, and the Astral Sage College all treated such Duke Arts as highly prized heirlooms. As a result, the vast majority of Dukes were unable to cultivate them.

At the very least, Zhu Qinghuo did not have one to call his own!

Thus, when he saw Ox Biaobiao brandish the Duke Art, his eyelids couldn't stop twitching in anxiety. At the same time, he held unrestrained envy in his heart. Ox Biaobiao, Li Taixuan, and Tan Tailan were from the inner divine continent, a holy land for cultivation. Even a Soul Ascension-grade Duke Art was something he had never even managed to set his eyes on... until today.

"Soul Ascension-grade Duke Arts might be almighty, but your Duke Bergfrieds still have yet to appear. I suppose this means they were shattered at some point? Without the support and foundation of the Duke Bergfrieds, the might of that Duke Art is wasted upon fool like you!" Although he was feeling fear, he wouldn't show it, so he continued to spew harsh words in an attempt to project confidence. Duke Bergfrieds were the foundation that defined a Duke. Ox Biaobiao having not revealed any thus far had to be due to the fact that he couldn't, not that he didn't want to. In this case, he might stand a chance in a direct clash...

"Phew."

Zhu Qinghuo heavily exhaled as he formed a seal with his hands, his expression turning solemn.

Bang!

Copious amounts of crimson resonant power burst out from Zhu Qinghuo, directly ascending into the air whilst the color of the energy continued to transform. By the time it reached the clouds, it had become like colored glass, a tint reddish but relatively transparent. The energy then transformed into a gargantuan, glass-like palm.

All of the flames had turned a similar, transparent-reddish tint.

The gigantic flaming hand remained in the air. It seemed indomitable, able to crush any enemies who attempted to block it.

The Dukes within Xia City nodded slightly. Zhu Qinghuo may not have cultivated a Soul Ascension-grade Duke Art, but his personal Communion-grade Heavenly God of Flame's Palm had reached the state of Perfection.

In terms of sheer might, it should be able to compare with an average Soul Ascension-grade Duke Art.

Ox Biaobiao's gaze was like that of a ferocious beast. Glancing at the giant, transparent palm, he didn't comment much, merely hacking down with the ghost-beheading blade. As his blade fell, so too did the illusory demonic god's blade in tandem.

In that instant, the world seemed to have been cleaved in half with a single blow.

"Soul Ascension-grade Duke Art... Mad God's Blade!"

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As the Dukes' battle intensified, the battle between Pei Hao and Jiang Qing'e within the headquarters had also increased in both savagery and peril.

However, Pei Hao remained on the defensive, looking to drag things out. Another Heavenly Pearl had shattered, unable to withstand the consumption of the Duke Art.

What was once five had turned into two.

Clearly, remaining on even footing with Pei Hao required Jiang Qing'e to pay a hefty price.

"Jiang Qing'e... you're running out of time. The price you've paid has been significant... three Heavenly Pearls... Oh boy, can you imagine how long it will take to cultivate them back?" Pei Hao mocked with a huge grin as he looked at the remaining two Heavenly Pearls behind her.

Jiang Qing'e's beautiful expression remained undaunted as she icily replied, "Although I don't know what you really are, whether it's Pei Hao or some other abomination... I have to duly inform you, you pitiful creature. What you think is hard to accomplish is merely a bed of roses for me."

Pei Hao's smile seemed to shrink a little upon hearing those piercing words.

Jiang Qing'e continued to glare at him dispassionately. "What I really want to know is whether you can still pull off a Duke Art in your strange state."

"Pei Hao" squinted upon hearing those words. It was true that this body wasn't his real body, it was Pei Hao's. He might be able to lend it strength, but it was impossible for him to utilize a Duke Art.

Frankly speaking, cultivating a Duke Art was out of the picture with Pei Hao's talent and resources.

"It looks like that's a no." Jiang Qing'e answered herself with a light nod upon seeing the lack of response.

"What do you mean?" Pei Hao indifferently asked.

"I can't use a Duke Art? You mean to say..." His voice came to an abrupt end as he saw Jiang Qing'e slender, jade hands execute a hand seal. With that, a small cluster of sacred flames condensed on her palm.

The flames did not seem very powerful. However, they radiated holy light in every direction. Wherever the rays of light landed, they would convert the worldly natural energy into light resonant energy.

Thus, Pei Hao could feel a sense of danger coming from the unassuming cluster of flames.

His expression turned gloomy at last.

"You shattered three Heavenly Pearls to build up your resonant power... all as a diversion for this." He forlornly realized what was going on.

Jiang Qing'e did not bother to answer, only lifting up her hand along with the cluster of flames into the air. In a flash, a tempest kicked up, and the flame transformed into a humongous phoenix, one that burned with sacred flames.

The divine phoenix attracted everyone's attention.

Everyone could feel the terrifying destructive capability of this resonance art... Only a Duke Art possessed this much power!

No one had expected to learn that not only had Li Luo cultivated one, but Jiang Qing'e too!

Jiang Qing'e's chest heaved slightly at this point, and her graceful features turned pale for the first time.

She then pointed directly at Pei Hao. The divine phoenix emitted a crystal-clear cry as it spread its massive wings, swooping down whilst leaving a gorgeous trail of flames in its wake.

This was her strongest art.

She had hidden her strength for far too long all for the sake of this day.

Duke Art: Radiant Phoenix Flame.

Chapter 0662: Fiance Tag Team

The divine phoenix flapped its wings and soared into the air before diving towards Pei Hao, leaving a trail of fire in its wake.

Everything it touched seemed to be purified as worldly natural energy churned around it. The energy was purified and then turned into feathers that adorned the phoenix, making it seem even more majestic as it flew through the air.

The strength it contained seemed to surpass even Li Luo's Underworld River's Black Dragon Banner.

On the other hand, the subject of Jiang Qing'e's assault, Pei Hao, seemed a little dismayed, and a somber expression had crept up on his face. This art was truly capable of threatening him!

He had never expected that Jiang Qing'e would not only possess a Duke supportive secret art, but an offensive one as well!

She was only at the Heavenly Pearl Stage and yet she wielded two different Duke Arts. This wasn't a genius, this was a demonic freak of nature!

What was most troublesome was that he only possessed quasi-Duke Stage strength and was unable to bring to bear his Duke Arts. Thus, he was left without any good options to retaliate. After all, a dragon-general resonance art was incomparable to it.

"Her power comes from sacrificing her Heavenly Pearls, and thus she cannot hold on for too long. As long as I can stall for time, she will eventually become powerless," Pei Hao coldly thought as he clasped his hands together to form a series of changing hand seals.

Immediately after, majestic, golden light emanated from his body, completely covering him and quickly forming a massive, golden, unadorned bell. It was engraved with numerous patterns, glowing and revealing its absolute defensive prowess.

This was Pei Hao's strongest defensive art, known as the Golden Bell Art, a high-grade dragon-general resonance art.

Although it was only a high-grade dragon-general resonance art, it possessed terrifying might when utilized by someone at the quasi-Duke Stage.

Dong!

The divine phoenix dive bombed towards him, directly colliding with the golden bell and triggering a shrill ring. Ripples rapidly spread throughout the surface of the bell as the purifying fire continued to burn, dissolving the resonant power that it was made of.

Wave after wave of frightening energy continued to erupt.

The divine phoenix engulfed the golden bell, constantly seeking to purify and assimilate the resonant power it was constituted of.

The golden bell began to show signs of melting down, but the pace at which it happened was relatively slow. This was because Pei Hao was constantly channeling his resonant power to bolster and repair the art, using brute strength to challenge Jiang Qing'e in a war of attrition.

A nervous pair of eyes was focused on the two's struggle.

Anyone could see that Jiang Qing'e's assault was the best she could muster at this point. If this was blocked by Pei Hao, then the odds of the battle falling into his control would significantly increase.

Pei Hao's expression, on the other hand, was gradually becoming more grave. Endless amounts of metal resonance energy was pouring out of his body to alleviate the purifying flames liquefying the Golden Bell Art.

The only thing that made him feel some relief was that the golden bell was able to hold on, not completely destroyed by her technique.

"Jiang Qing'e.... you have brought me many surprises. Alas, the quasi-Duke Stage's strength is not something you can deal with." Pei Hao cackled as he taunted Jiang Qing'e, hoping to demoralize her.

As Pei Hao's voice sounded out, he suddenly seemed to have sensed something behind him. Turning around hastily, he glanced at a corner of the square.

What he saw caused his expression to turn incomparably gloomy.

Not only him, even Jiang Qing'e, Yuan Qing, and the rest had also felt a disturbance.

What they saw shocked them. Li Luo was now emitting monstrous undulations of berserk resonant power. His body was being torn apart, barely able to contain the energy within him as row after row of bloody trails appeared on his skin, causing fresh blood to leak. In a blink, he turned into a person made of blood, looking slightly horrifying.

"He still possesses that much resonant power?" Pei Hao felt like he had been struck by a bolt of lightning, and his gaze turned somber. He had thought that Li Luo had been squeezed dry, and yet he was not emitting such raw power?

"Xu Tianling! Restrain him!" Pei Hao exhorted with all his might.

Looking at Li Luo's chilly gaze directed at him, Pei Hao knew that he was planning to join hands with Jiang Qing'e to strike at his golden bell in tandem. Unfortunately, he was now being bogged down by her and unable to shift his attention to deal with any other distractions, resulting in him having to recruit external aid.

When Xu Tianling heard the summons, he immediately shot towards Li Luo like a bullet.

Yuan Qing attempted to stop him, but Mo Cheng took action, tying him down.

Xu Tianling rapidly approached Li Luo, bursting with ice resonant power. He condensed an icy spear adorned with runes in his hand, thrusting it rapidly at Li Luo's chest.

Li Luo's face was covered in blood, but a scarlet light flashed within his eyes. This power was something he had traded ten drops of blood essence for. This was the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's ultimate strength, squeezed out with every ounce of effort it had.

This power could not be converted by the Heavenly Libation Chant, and thus had to be willingly provided by the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf.

Li Luo shot a furtive look at the scarlet bracelet on his hand and noticed that its radiance had dimmed considerably. He could feel that the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's aura had also weakened significantly, indicating that it had paid a hefty price to ensure that it could transmit its strength to Li Luo.

Still, this was a somewhat equal exchange. Ten drops of Li Luo's blood essence had been offered.

These were not simply drops of blood, but essence that held the power of his bloodline. With the ten drops given away, Li Luo felt an emptiness within him, and restoring it would not be a simple task.

However, this was a problem for future Li Luo... What was most important was getting rid of Pei Hao as soon as he could.

And when he was faced with the prospect of a lunging Xu Tianling? Li Luo didn't really care about such a fly. With a wave, the Golden-Jade Onyx-Elephant Blade appeared in his hand.

He hacked downwards once.

The space before him was immediately cut apart, leaving behind a thin trail as a tyrannical blade light shot forth towards Xu Tianling.

BANG!

At the moment of impact, Xu Tianling was appalled to see his icy spear immediately burst into fragments. Boundless power transmitted through the blade light, shredding his protective resonant power into pieces and gashing him heavily across the chest.

“AH!”

A pitiful scream rang out as Xu Tianling was sent flying with a single strike, his chest bleeding profusely with his flesh and blood exposed. In fact, the wound was so deep one could almost see his beating heart.

"Ah! The strength granted from the exchange of ten drops of blood essence is impressive indeed. Much better than what the crappy Heavenly Libation Chant provided..." Li Luo dryly commented with surprise as he watched Xu Tianling get grievously injured with but a single blow. The Heavenly Libation Chant might be able to forcibly deprive the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf from some of its energy, but at the end of the day, voluntary donations were much more effective!

Only with sufficient consideration would the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf be willing to give him its all. After repelling Xu Tianling, Li Luo knew that he wouldn't have time to properly finish him off, so he turned his attention to Pei Hao.

He was still surrounded by the golden bell, forcibly resisting the purifying flames of the divine phoenix. However, the gaze he held towards Li Luo now seemed to hold a hint of worry and anger.

Li Luo's disturbance had shattered his plans.

A cold smile surfaced on Li Luo's lips. Although he could feel severe pain coming from every inch of his body, it could not dilute the happiness he felt in his heart.

He raised his hands and formed a hand seal. In a blink, the strength provided by the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf quickly weakened, and a black dragon banner appeared in his hands.

"If one Duke Art isn't enough to send you to hell. Hell... why not another one, then! Damned beast! I'll let you have a taste of House Luolan's glorious couple's tag-team strength!"

Li Luo gave a sincere smile as he swiped downwards with the black dragon banner in hand. The space before him was torn apart, exposing the void, and the sound of gushing seawater could be heard. Black seawater flowed out torrentially from the crack, and the shadow of a titanic, black dragon could be seen in the depths.

“Roar!”

As the draconic roar sounded out, the black dragon wrapped in saturnine seawater rushed forward before the countless eyes of the crowd, directly bringing to bear its colossal weight as it bashed the golden bell that surrounded Pei Hao!

Chapter 0663: Pei Hao's True Death

Bang!

The black dragon wrapped by the black sea violently collided with the golden bell before Pei Hao's startled and furious eyes.

Dong!

The bell rang out, and its golden light began to dissipate with increasing speed.

Pei Hao was angry, and he screamed in indignation. No longer holding anything back, he channeled all of the resonant power within him outwards in an attempt to stabilize the golden bell. He knew that this was their final struggle, and if he could hold on long enough, the two would be at his mercy!

Unfortunately, this was easier said than done as the two Duke Arts could not be dealt with so easily.

Additionally, Pei Hao wasn't really a Duke. He had merely borrowed external aid to enter the quasi-Duke Stage.

Thus, no matter how hard he strove to resist, the golden bell still continued to dissipate briskly. Suddenly, a light ka-cha was heard. A single crack had appeared on the golden bell.

Pei Hao's pupils shrank and his heart sank.

With the first thin crack appearing, more and more began to form, and the integrity of the golden bell weakened. In the short span of a few breaths, the golden bell was lined with all sorts of fractures and chinks.

Bang!

It eventually reached its breaking point, and a massive explosion rang out. Everyone within House Luolan's headquarters looked on with surprise as the golden bell's destruction filled the sky with golden, scintillating motes of light.

At this point, the almost sentient divine phoenix and black dragon locked onto Pei Hao's body automatically, rushing right at him with one in front and the other behind, cutting off his route of retreat before hammering him head-on.

The scene was akin to fireworks blooming in mid air.

Pei Hao was ravaged by two terrifying sources of energy, causing him to swiftly disintegrate into ashes. However, his expression was not full of despair, but rather one that was frosty as he glared at the two.

"I never would've guessed that you two would be so strong," he coldly stated.

Li Luo was covered with fresh blood as he beamed radiantly whilst waving goodbye to Pei Hao. "Goodbye, fellow brother. You can rest assured that we will revitalize House Luolan and bring it to greater heights. When the day comes, I'll burn some incense for you too."

"Li Luo... don't be cocky. Don't think that this is over just yet," Pei Hao warned ominously as the brightness within his eyes dissipated, replaced with a lightless gray.

His gray eyes struggled to examine the seemingly foreign body they were in before shifting their focus onto Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e. A complicated gaze arose within them, but in the end, he did not speak. Instead, he sighed faintly and resigned himself to his fate, letting the two turbulent sources of energy within him decompose him into nothingness.

The two stared at the scene before them calmly. They couldn't be bothered with figuring out what his last actions seemed to imply. Perhaps he was filled with utter regret, but that was meaningless. The situation within the house had devolved into utter pandemonium, so nothing could be resolved at this moment. That fellow was the main culprit behind the disaster that was today, so there would be no pity for someone like him.

Perhaps a clean death was the biggest mercy for him.

"Eurrgh!"

Li Luo retched out a mouth of blood. He suddenly became dispirited and lethargic and his complexion turned frighteningly pale.

A whiff of a familiar fragrance wafted over, and Jiang Qing'e was instantly by his side. She hurriedly supported him and channeled light resonant energy into his body. At the same time, her expression fluctuated as she could feel that his internal injuries were significant.

He had paid a tremendous price for that final attack.

"You've tried a little too hard to show off, huh?" Jiang Qing'e grumbled reproachfully.

"Well, the reason I've been working so hard for the past year was for the sake of lightening your burden..." Li Luo grinned before asking proudly, "So, what do you think, Sister Qing'e? Not bad, right?" Jiang Qing'e stretched out her slender palm and helped Li Luo clean the blood off his face. A hint of a smile could be seen within her golden eyes. She nodded lightly and her voice became exceptionally gentle. "Your performance today was even more perfect than I could ever imagine. I am very proud of you, Li Luo."

Li Luo smirked victoriously, but this immediately tore open an existing wound, causing him to grimace in pain and take a few cool breaths to recompose himself.

Jiang Qing'e continued to pour light resonant energy into him to aid his recovery. She could feel that Li Luo was currently like an exhausted lamp. If he were to try to summon any more resonant power, he might very well leave behind long term sequelae.

"Well, I think Pei Hao is truly dead now," Li Luo said.

"Pei Hao himself doesn't mean much. Whether it was you or me, either of us could have ended him without much trouble." Jiang Qing'e's gaze flickered. "However, the Pei Hao we just fought with may not necessarily be the Pei Hao we knew."

Li Luo agreed readily. "When it was Pei Hao himself, no matter what secret art he may have used, it would have been impossible for him to reach the quasi-Duke Stage. Thus, it's likely that a Duke expert personally possessed his body."

"Who do you think it could be?" Jiang Qing'e asked.

Li Luo frowned as he pondered. "The Xia Kingdom is full of Dukes that covet House Luolan. It's hard to determine who is responsible, but based on my intuition... there is one person that stands out in particular."

The two glanced at each other simultaneously and spoke in tandem.

"Shen Jinxiao."

Li Luo smiled. "It looks like you and I do have some chemistry after all. Although my suspicions are placed on Shen Jinxiao, how could he possibly have been the one backing Pei Hao? It all seems a little odd as the two have no reason to work together."

Jiang Qing'e shook her head. "That does seem to be true. Comparatively, the Regent, Duze Yan, Zhu Qinghuo, and the rest are much more likely suspects. Perhaps our guesses were mistaken?"

Li Luo rotated his shoulder in an attempt to loosen up his joints. "Whether or not it's true, once the Housemeet ends, we will report him to the college and get them to conduct an investigation."

Jiang Qing'e agreed with this plan. They disliked him to begin with, so shoving more trouble down his throat would be a wonderful thing after all.

"We've basically completely exhausted ourselves. The rest will be up to Uncle Biao."

Li Luo sighed deeply. He and Jiang Qing'e had managed to stabilize the situation within the house, but things were not over. There were still external forces that had to be dealt with.

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In a dark, secret room.

"Pfffffft!"

Shen Jinxiao spat out a mouth of fresh blood, and he looked frighteningly forlorn. Before him, the quarter of the heart that remained began to wither, quickly decaying and turning into nothingness atop the altar.

Pei Hao had completely died and he no longer had a medium to work with.

"Did I actually lose?!" Shen Jinxiao clenched his fists in frustration, his gaze turning sinister. This result was an affront to him. As a true Duke expert, he had made years of preparations, and all of it had been foiled by Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e.

Thinking of the years that had gone down the drain just like that incited fury within him.

Still, he was a far-sighted individual and was unfathomable in thought. Thus, he took two deep breaths before calming himself down and suppressing any wayward emotions.

"I seem to have underestimated those two brats." Shen Jinxiao's gaze turned abstruse as he spoke to himself coldly. "However, I won't give up so easily."

As soon as he finished his monologue, his expression suddenly changed. With a swish of his robes, the altar before him vanished and his body reappeared by the front door of his lodging. Someone was knocking on it.

Shen Jinxiao expressionlessly opened the door and saw two Violet Vibrance mentors standing outside.

"Yes? How can I help you?" Shen Jinxiao asked indifferently.

The two mentors observed him closely for a moment before smiling. "Mentor Shen Jinxiao, have you truly been here the whole time and not left your lodgings?"

"What do you mean? Wouldn't you have known if I left?" Shen Jinxiao retorted with a frown.

The two mentors smiled and nodded. "Nothing much to it. We just had to ask, as per the Vice Principal's instructions. If you don't have anything else to do right now, could you come over for a cup of tea?"

Shen Jinxiao leisurely nodded. "Sure."

His blunt reply caused the two mentors to feel more at ease, and they nodded with smiles of their own.

Chapter 0664: Another Wave

When the battle on the ground came to a conclusion, the battle in the skies between the Dukes began to show signs of abating.

All matter and energy crumbled before the earth-shattering strike of the blade. Even the glass-like divine fire palm was insufficient to halt it, immediately tearing apart upon contact.

An indescribable, disintegrative blade light continued to sweep past, tearing apart space and revealing the void.

Meanwhile, the massive, glass-like palm had turned into motes in the wind. Zhu Qinghuo's figure stood stiffly within his world space, and he coughed heavily a brief moment later, spitting out rivulets of blood from the side of his mouth. At the same time, a massive, bloody gash suddenly appeared on his body. It started from his palm and then quickly spread across his arm to his entire torso.

The result? A single cut had bisected Zhu Qinghuo.

However, Dukes possessed terrifying vitality. Magma started pouring out of the openings of both halves of his body, sealing up the crevice and preventing his body from splitting apart.

Regardless, this had grievously wounded him.

His expression remained gloomy, and he stared daggers at Ox Biaobiao as he commented hoarsely, "As expected of a Soul Ascension-grade Duke Art."

"It's a pity I'm no longer in peak form. Otherwise, you would have been left a corpse," Ox Biaobiao replied indifferently.

"Still, it looks like you're no longer able to battle any further. Scram. House Luolan doesn't welcome scum like you."

Zhu Qinghuo's expression was frigid as he glanced towards headquarters. He knew that Pei Hao had been destroyed without a trace, and the frustration within his heart brewed. "What is that damned Shen Jinxiao up to? Didn't he have the upper hand? How couldn't he beat two juniors!?"

Their cooperative effort had been blocked soundly.

With all of Xia City's peak experts paying close attention to the developments here, their loss would inevitably invite scorn and mockery.

Regardless, he felt disgruntled. Both he and Shen Jinxiao had played their cards, only to result in utter failure.

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Golden Dragon Bank Discussion Room.

A light mirror was floating in the air. What was happening in House Luolan was being displayed for all present.

All of the Golden Dragon Bank's elders and higher echelons were present and paying close attention to the battle.

When they saw that both Pei Hao and Zhu Qinghuo had met with defeat, they all erupted with surprise and caused a scene. Clearly, this result had surpassed their expectations.

"Hmm... It's unbelievable that House Luolan has been hiding such a mighty Duke. Even a fourth-grade Duke was unable to parry a single blow of his blade."

"Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e are truly eye-catching and impressive. Pei Hao's body had signs of being controlled by a Duke... possessing strength at the quasi-Duke Stage. It was mind-boggling that he could be defeated by the two of them."

"Indeed, they live up to the reputation of being Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's progeny and disciple. They are definitely the most outstanding youths in their generation."

Low murmurs burst out across the entire room as they discussed the situation. Most importantly, the majority of them held nonchalant attitudes towards the result. The Golden Dragon Bank was a neutral faction after all, and whether it was House Jiyan or House Luolan, both were simply clients for their business. Even if one were completely ruined, it had nothing to do with them.

Lu Qing'er finally relaxed her clenched fist, a smile forming on her elegant and attractive face. The knot in her heart had finally resolved itself, and she cheered happily in her heart, "Li Luo! You're amazing!"

Yu Hongxi, meanwhile, continued to observe the situation calmly with a grave look in her eyes as she focused upon Ox Biaobiao.

"This man has hidden himself so deeply. It looks like Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan left behind a backup plan after all."

After which, she swept her gaze towards Vice President Ning Que. He didn't seem to be particularly expressive at this point, almost disinterested even. The only thing was that the frequency of his fingers

drumming against the side of his chair had increased slightly. It seemed as though his heart was not as calm as what one saw on the surface.

"Perhaps he was awaiting the appearance of Elder Han Long..."

She chuckled coldly in her heart. Yu Hongxi then focused upon Li Luo within the light mirror, a trace of satisfaction within her eyes. "This brat has inherited the style of his father. Perhaps when the time comes, he will outshine even his old man.

"Qing'er's had a good eye. The only problematic thing is the arranged marriage between Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e."

A glimmer flashed through Yu Hongxi's eyes. "That is obviously the daughter-in-law whom Tan Tailan wanted for her son."

An unrequited indignance arose within her when she thought of that woman Tan Tailan. "I might have lost to you that year, but when it comes to the next generation, my daughter won't lose!"

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Royal Palace

The regal First Princess was garbed in flowery robes whilst observing a crystal ball that was projecting the scenes happening within House Luolan.

"It looks like I've made the right bet this time." She laughed charmingly with a beauty that could topple countries.

"Was that the final card Jiang Qing'e had kept secret for years? It truly is terrifying. If she had opted to reveal it earlier within the college, neither I nor Gong Shenjun would be her opponent," she mumbled to herself. The strength Jiang Qing'e had demonstrated was something that shocked even her.

Although the cost to do so was not minor, winning was worth the price she had paid.

"That brat Li Luo as well... He's always full of pleasant surprises." The First Princess' eyes flashed with a trace of interest as she observed Li Luo. "Jiang Qing'e hiding a Duke Art was not that unexpected. However, when did Li Luo manage to cultivate one of his own? He was clearly in the Fiend Palace Tier, so a Duke Art should have been beyond his comprehension."

This was another harbinger of miracles for the Astral Sage College.

People had always said that Jiang Qing'e was the pillar which House Luolan rested upon, but no one had ever imagined that the underlooked Young Lord would shine with a brilliance that did not lose to her. He would definitely become an elite amongst the experts of the Xia Kingdom in the future.

The thought caused her to chuckle lightly, and she felt immense satisfaction from making the right investment.

However... Although the problem of Pei Hao and Zhu Qinghuo had been resolved, would the situation today end just like this?

The First Princess' smile gradually receded. Chief Steward Qin had not appeared outside House Luolan, which implied that he had been held back by someone. Someone who could accurately predict and control her influence and also dispatch an appropriate individual to counteract her moves would not be someone unfamiliar to her. In fact, she already could guess who it was.

Still, this was not too surprising. As the First Princess of the royal court, she had long come to a conclusion.

If that person truly coveted House Luolan, then he would not simply let things be.

Zhu Qinghuo and Pei Hao were merely the appetizers.

Once he took action, it would be swift and aggressive.

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At the top of the Regent's lodging

The atmosphere was a little depressing as the Regent stood forlornly, hands behind his back, wallowing in the silence.

On the other hand, the dual-pupil youth was chortling to himself. "What a pity. You actually lost!"

"This is inconceivable. I thought that between Zhu Qinghuo and Shen Jinxiao, one of them would have succeeded," the Regent stated callously.

"What now? Do we give up? Perhaps you need my help? As your best friend, I would be more than happy to do so." The youth gave a slight smile.

The Regent shook his head. "Once you're revealed, I will inevitably turn into a target of public criticism. I'm afraid I would lose all rights to the coronation ceremony.

"Forget it. Now that we're already at this point, there's no need to act covertly anymore. I will take what I need from House Luolan. Even if it doesn't adhere to the rules, it will all be for my grand plan." The Regent sighed, but his expression became exceptionally cold. With that, he took a step forward, vanishing into the void.

Chapter 0665: The Black Hand Reveals Himself!

With Zhu Qinghuo being dreadfully injured by Ox Biaobiao with a single strike, cheers resounded throughout House Luolan. Those that remained loyal to Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e felt exceptionally moved. Pei Hao was dead, Xu Tianling was on the verge of death, the opposing Duke was heinously wounded and had been forced to retreat... House Luolan had survived its cataclysmic trial of life and death, and a new chapter awaited them!

From now on, Li Luo would become the House Lord of House Luolan!

The internal strife had finally come to an end.

Yuan Qing, Lei Zhang, and the rest on Li Luo's side were euphoric. Meanwhile, those who had supported Pei Hao were pale with fright, losing all motivation to do battle. They were basically paralyzed, leaving themselves open for capture.

The facts had left them in complete despair.

"We won!" Cai Wei's beautiful face was emotional as she tightly clutched Yan Lingqing's arm, causing a bruise in her excitement.

Yan Lingqing did not resist as she was extremely moved by the result too.

She continued to stare wistfully towards Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e, almost in a trance. As Jiang Qing'e's close friend, she was made clear of House Luolan's precarious situation, filled with internal troubles and external parties coveting them. Any other faction in this position would undoubtedly have been powerless when faced with such issues. Additionally, although Jiang Qing'e was full of potential, she was no Duke. Therefore, she did not possess the power to overturn the situation herself.

Instead, she had continued to accumulate burdens, preparing for this very day.

At the same time, Yan Lingqing understood why Jiang Qing'e would go so far.

"Li Luo, that brat. Everyone underestimated him," Yan Lingqing said seriously.

The reason why House Luolan was able to stabilize the situation was in part due to Jiang Qing'e's radiant performance. At the same time, Li Luo's contributions could not be neglected. Jiang Qing'e would not have managed to turn the tide on her own.

Cai Wei nodded slightly as she smiled. "All I can say is that those two are a great fit for each other. Qing'e dazzled the world with her peerless talent and attracted everyone's attention. As a result, she overshadowed the Young Lord, who took the opportunity to develop himself."

"Hmm, the world might originally have thought that Li Luo was unbecoming of Qing'e... but I'm afraid that after today, no one will dare to say that ever again." Yan Lingqing sized up the duo as she grinned. "I formally announce that I'm fully supportive of their engagement!"

Cai Wei smiled as well.

As everyone continued to cheer in celebration, Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e did not reveal any strong expressions on their faces. Somehow... something felt off. Today's situation was unlikely to resolve itself so easily.

Whether it was Pei Hao or Zhu Qinghuo, neither had been the true hand behind the curtain.

Why? Someone able to orchestrate a scheme to send Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan to the Nobles' Battlefield would have to be significantly more influential than Zhu Qinghuo.

Thus, if the mastermind coveted the treasures of House Luolan, they would not idly sit by, as years of effort would be put to waste.

As a result, the two of them waited. Not too long later, they saw the heavily weakened ward flicker in the skies above House Luolan. Terrifying undulations of resonant power descended when someone ripped a hole in the ward.

When the gap appeared, four beams of light descended, surrounding Ox Biaobao.

Four silhouettes could be seen, and a wave of powerful suppression swept across everyone.

It was actually four Dukes!

Although the four were not as strong as Zhu Qinghuo individually, they were all second-grade. Still, four Dukes appearing simultaneously was a sight that shocked everyone, immediately cutting off any cheers of excitement.

Ox Biaobiao's reaction was equally quick. The moment the Dukes appeared, his gaze turned ferocious and he unsheathed his blade, unleashing terrifying sword strikes that were akin to a frenzied tempest, attempting to reap the lives of the newcomers.

"Duke Formation, Four Saints Grand Formation!"

However, the intruders were also equally prepared, directly forming countless hand seals in response. Countless rays of light burst forth from within their bodies, each one containing endless numbers of runes and exuding extraordinary auras.

Eventually, the rays of light transformed into countless halos of light that layered heavily upon each other, densely covering the world space. Although the daunting sword strikes were able to shatter numerous halos, even more new ones seemed to replace them instantly. It had turned into a unique sort of prison, one which confined Ox Biaobiao. If he were to take a single step forward, he would be drowned by the sheer number of halos.

This sudden change caused the individuals within the headquarters of House Luolan to fall silent. Even the experts of Xia City were left speechless at this sight.

"Is that the Four Saints Grand Formation? Then it must be the royal court's doing!"

"Those four Dukes are from the royal court... they're all underlings of the Regent!"

"Why did he take action?!" Numerous Duke experts were discussing this in hushed whispers. This was the first time the identity of the perpetrator was made clear.

What they saw next absolutely dumbfounded them. An awe-inspiring figure appeared in the sky above House Luolan. He glanced at the heavily damaged defensive ward and passed through it with a single step.

He possessed an aura even more fearsome than Zhu Qinghuo's, and the whole world seemed to bow before his regal presence, which blanketed all with a suppressive might that caused even the people of House Luolan to be unable to breathe.

A single man was the focus of all the fear-stricken individuals that cowered before him.

"This... This is...,"

"The royal court's Regent! Why did he act himself? What is he trying to do?" Numerous individuals were lost for words.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e's expressions had turned frigid. When the Regent appeared, they finally understood that he was the mastermind behind Pei Hao, Zhu Qinghuo, and the rest!

This was not completely out of their expectations. Only someone at the very top of the Xia Kingdom's power hierarchy could direct Zhu Qinghuo. There were few other than the Regent who possessed such influence.

Only the Regent possessed the political will and might to deal with Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan.

With his appearance, he glanced across all below him before pausing over Ox Biaobiao, followed by Li Luo and then Jiang Qing'e. He seemed completely indifferent before he boomed out with a heroic voice, "I have spent countless years investigating House Luolan. I know that Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan had plans to subvert my royal court. This is a crime of the highest degree that cannot be pardoned. I thus decree that House Luolan be struck from the registers of the five Great Houses! All of House Luolan's possessions will be confiscated."

With that declaration, he stretched out his palm and made a slashing gesture all of a sudden.

After which, a gigantic chasm opened up violently within the square of House Luolan's headquarters. With that, the underground palace became visible for all to see.

Inside it was a stone statue of a dragon and phoenix that were intertwined. Atop it were two flickering flames.

They were Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's natal flames.

When the Regent saw the flickering flames, his gaze turned gloomy. The duo had obviously not died in the Nobles' Battlefield... How tenacious of them!

However, they would be injured if he were to extinguish them here. In a location where danger was rife around every corner, it would possibly ruin them.

The Regent stretched out his hand, and a massive palm that blotted out the sun viciously swatted towards the dragon-phoenix statue.

As Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e witnessed this scene, they did not take action to stop it. They were clear of the difference in strength between them and the Regent—trying to stop it was like a mantis trying to stop a cart. Futile.

Instead, they burned the image of the Regent's face into their minds with gazes full of palpitable, cold, murderous intent.

At this point, they had already decided that it was time to abandon House Luolan.

The opponent was simply too strong. There was no way to resist, and they knew their limits. Thus, it was time to go.

So long as they lived, even the Regent would find it hard to rest easy.

The massive palm that covered the skies smashed down brutally.

"Roar!"

Yet right at this instant, everyone felt as though they could hear the furious roar of a dragon. The draconic roar felt both boundless and endlessly tyrannical, like one could not defile its majesty.

Before the intimidating roar had subsided, the crisp cry of a peng followed. It sounded even more arrogant than the previous roar, its clear cry carrying a terrifying pressure that even suppressed the draconic roar. In the next instant, a radiant, golden light spilled from within the underground palace.

The golden light seemed to have transformed into a massive, golden-winged peng. With a single flap of its wings, the Regent's summoned palm was shredded into motes of light. After which, a cold shout from a lady resounded like thunder throughout the entirety of Xia City.

"Li Taixuan! Get out of my way! This damned beast Gong Yuan dares to harm my children? He's just a piece of trash, and yet he dares to plot against them? I'll send him to meet his ancestors right now!"

As her furious shouts echoed out, Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e violently trembled as they stared at the light that had burst out from the underground palace in a daze. Uncontrollable excitement could be seen in their eyes and emotions surged within their hearts.

"Mom?"

"Mistress?"

Chapter 0666: Tan Tailan's Move

When the woman's cold shout arose from the depths of the underground palace, every single observer felt thunderstruck. The image of a certain, elegant House Lord who was adept at convincing people came to mind: Misty Duke, Tan Tailan.

All of Xia City's experts had a very deep impression of Tan Tailan. People often said that Li Taixuan was breathtakingly extraordinary, but those who had the opportunity to meet the couple knew who wore the pants in the relationship.

This was mostly because Li Taixuan was a loving husband who wanted to ensure her needs were well taken care of, but Tan Tailan's strength and talent were also important factors.

However, this was not the important thing on their minds. Instead, they were more concerned as to how the duo had appeared here.

Were their true bodies descending or were these mere projections?

Regardless, everyone knew that the couple had left behind countermeasures at their disposal.

They all focused their gazes upon House Luolan's Headquarters.

The two natal flames in the underground palace flared up and ascended into the sky, forming two silhouettes. One was of a man and the other of a woman.

The man was tall and slender, with sharp facial features that made him incredibly handsome. His face had a warm and gentle smile with an unruffled disposition that gave him an unusual bearing.

The woman was beautiful beyond compare, her body thin and willowy with a head of long hair that was pinned up. She had a graceful temperament, but her expression was icy, naturally giving off a sense of heroism and might.

Everyone in House Luolan's headquarters, even those from Li Luo or Pei Hao's faction, was dumbstruck. All they could do was idly stare at the two silhouettes. For a moment, they felt extremely touched.

Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng, the two ancestors, were so taken aback that they stumbled backwards, falling upon their butts.

Above the headquarters, the Regent stared at the two silhouettes, momentarily losing himself in his thoughts. This was the last defense Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan had left behind. It looked as though it was just an illusory projection and not their main bodies... Plus, they couldn't possibly have left the Nobles' Battlefield and arrived here in person.

However... even though it was merely an illusory projection, the Regent felt his heart sink as he indeed was fearful of these two.

"The two of you-" The Regent was about to speak.

"You ignorant fool. You might be the Regent to the others, but in my eyes... you're just a prancing clown. The two of us voluntarily opted to go to the Nobles' Battlefield for our own reasons... Did you REALLY think that your pathetic, underhanded moves could force us to do something we didn't want to? HMPH! You dared to bully my kids as soon as we left! I think it's time for you to die here. Today!"

Before the Regent could even speak, Tan Tailan fell into a furious tirade, completely disinterested in speaking with the Regent. She immediately raised her slender hand and swatted the air before her. Bright, golden light swept out immediately.

The light pierced through the void and was extremely pure. Golden wings seemed to be fluttering with it, which looked incomparably mysterious to the naked eye.

"Divine Golden Wing Light!" The golden light bathed the area with light, and all of the worldly natural energy that it shone upon seemed to have been assimilated by it.

The divine light then swept past the Regent.

Seeing this, his eyes shrank as the Divine Golden Wing Light was something he was familiar with... It was Tan Tailan's special move.

However, her words had touched a raw nerve, and fury blazed within his eyes. Ever since he had taken control of the Xia Kingdom, no one had ever dared to go against his will. Yet the words she had bluntly shouted out were so demeaning that he couldn't take it.

"Hmph! You're just a projection and you dare to act so rampantly?!" The Regent's face was gloomy. When Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan had left for the Noble's Battlefield, they were simply fourth-grade Dukes, whereas he was a fifth-grade! Plus, this was merely a projection that could not muster the original's full strength. On what basis did she dare to act so presumptuously?

Thus, he did not bother to hide when directly faced with the golden divine light. Instead, he formed a hand seal with just one hand. The skies were instantly covered, and a wisp of violet energy rose into the air. Within it was a violet seal. The bottom of the seal itself was inscribed with an ancient word that was able to suppress the world.

"Duke Art, Nation Subduing Violet Seal!" The seal began to tremble, wrapped in waves of violet energy before directly resisting the golden light.

At the moment of collision, the Regent's eyes shrunk once again as he could feel that he was in a perilous situation. Why? He realized that during that brief moment of contact, the Divine Golden Wing Light had actually assimilated the violet energy of the Nation Subduing Violet Seal! As the light continued to flash past, part of the seal had turned into nothingness.

"It can't be!" The Regent's expression warped. His Duke Art held on for a mere two breaths of time before Tan Tailan's art disintegrated it into nothingness.

In his moment of panic, the Divine Golden Wing Light continued to pierce through the void and swept across him from head to toe.

At this very moment, the world space of the Regent appeared behind him. His five Duke Bergfrieds within trembled for all to see, instantly exuding vast amounts of resonant power like a sea in an attempt to resist the Divine Golden Wing Light.

Swish! Swish!

The Divine Golden Wing Light continued to sweep past in a stream. Massive volumes of resonant power began to dissipate at a pace visible to the naked eye. Ten breaths later, the Regent noticed that his arms had begun to shrink and the blood essence within his limbs was gradually dissolving as the Divine Golden Wing Light brushed past.

He felt both consternation and indignation at this sight. "Tan Tailan is clearly just a projection, but why is the art so frightening?"

His thoughts in a flurry, he no longer hesitated and quickly retreated out of House Luolan's headquarters.

With that swift retreat, the Divine Golden Wing Light no longer chased him, instead transforming into a golden mist that was then swallowed by Tan Tailan.

The two's exchange had been extraordinarily quick, ending in a flash. When the observers came to their senses after being awed by their battle, they saw that the Regent was hurriedly escaping. This sight horrified Xia City's numerous experts as they could see that the Regent had been beaten soundly during the ensuing battle!

One had to know that the Regent was a fifth-grade Duke!

This meant that he stood amongst the best of the best in the entire Xia Kingdom!

How could he have been chased away by Tan Tailan?

"Why are you running? Weren't you acting rampantly just a moment ago?" Tan Tailan icily glared at the Regent as she smiled coldly.

The Regent looked absolutely disheartened, as if someone had poured cold water all over his plan. Glaring at Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's projections, he could feel that the situation was not as it seemed. A normal projection would never be able to showcase such prowess.

"Wow! My wife is the best!" Li Taixuan praised as he gave Tan Tailan a thumbs up before turning to look in Ox Biaobiao's direction. He was still being contained by the four Dukes. With a grin, Li Taixuan struck out with a single fist.

Roar!

One could see a majestic dragon manifestation roaring out, shaking the world. It was wrapped with an exceptionally domineering aura, its mere presence causing the void to tremble. With a single strike, it shattered the ward formed by the four Dukes.

The Dukes' expressions changed and they hastily retreated, not daring to face off against Li Taixuan directly.

"If those who do not belong to House Luolan do not leave now... don't blame us when we start a massacre," Li Taixuan indifferently mentioned.

Hearing that declaration, the four Dukes turned tail and ran away without a word. The Regent had already escaped, so there wasn't any point in them remaining.

They could also tell that the moment Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan had appeared, the situation had spun out of their control.

Even the Regent was powerless before them.

In fact, all of the fighting taking place in Xia City had ceased immediately with their arrival.

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On a certain street.

Duze Yan immediately put down his arms as he glanced towards House Luolan. When he saw the duo's projections, his eyelids involuntarily twitched before he emotionlessly stared at Si Qing.

Si Qing, on the other hand, was extremely unsettled, his expression ugly with panic.

"House Lord Si Qing... are you feeling it now? Fear? I've already told you. Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan are extremely hardy and tough to kill. Even though they were sent to the perilous Nobles' Battlefield, no one can keep them there," Duze Yan diffidently commented.

Si Qing replied slightly hoarsely, "Don't you think you're speaking a little too soon? We'll wait for them to truly return before we talk."

"Well, you are going to have a headache at that time, House Lord Si Qing. Still, don't you think I deserve some thanks? If I had not kept you here and those two knew that you were causing trouble in their home... I'm afraid you would be in deep trouble," Duze Yan said sarcastically.

Si Qing's mouth twitched. "Well, I know someone who's got an even larger headache. By the time they're back, it won't be my turn to face the music."

Despite saying those seemingly apathetic words, he was feeling pretty terrible inside. He had no mood to banter with Duze Yan, so he quickly turned to leave with a gloomy expression.

With their appearance and their successful rebuff of the Regent, he already understood that the plan formed over countless years had gone up in smoke.

The two had long made sufficient preparations, and as a result, they were now laughingstock. As the rest of the rabble within House Luolan left, Li Taixuan formed a hand seal with both hands, and a stream of runes made of light shot out of them. They directly fused with the defensive ward above House Luolan's headquarters, and the previously weakened ward began to shine with renewed radiance in a flash. Eventually, the light scattered and the ward covered the entirety of the headquarters once again.

As it gradually dissipated into the background, suppressive pressure was felt within the area once again.

The previously weakened ward had now been strengthened by the hands of Li Taixuan.

The headquarters was once again a forbidden area for Dukes.

When that was complete, he raised his head and observed the Regent standing outside the headquarters with a smirk on his handsome face.

"Gong Yuan, you can't bear to leave? Don't worry, once the two of us are back, we'll definitely come and find you for a little chat. Until then, you should ensure that your affairs are put in order." Li Taixuan grinned.

The Regent glared at Li Taixuan before turning to leave without saying much.

With his departure, everyone understood that House Luolan's catastrophe was finally over.

Chapter 0667: Housemeet's End

The much anticipated Housemeet had ended rather unexpectedly.

With the Regent's appearance, everyone had felt that it would have been difficult for House Luolan to avoid a catastrophe. No one ever expected a miraculous reversal to occur.

House Luolan's two House Lords had used their natal flames to create projections of themselves.

Furthermore, the projections possessed the ability to even repel a fifth-grade Duke and force him to retreat miserably.

In terms of strength, this was considered to be the strongest within Xia City.

At this moment, everyone felt a sense of awe towards the couple who were still in the Nobles' Battlefield.

The two of them had not only survived within the dangerous grounds of the Nobles' Battlefield, but also seemed to have increased in strength! Otherwise, it wouldn't have made sense that they could have repelled the Regent. As a result, it was no longer an impossibility that they would return.

At that point, House Luolan would very likely be a force on par with the Golden Dragon Bank or the Astral Sage College!

Now that people knew that the duo were healthy and yet to perish, anyone who coveted House Luolan would have to think twice. If they truly returned, there would be hell to pay.

Thus, the heavily buffeted House Luolan had now regained a sense of strength and foundation.

Additionally, the battles within Xia City abated quietly.

Conversely, things were not silent within the respective factions.

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Golden Dragon Bank, Discussion Hall.

There was silence within the discussion hall. All of the elders held heavy expressions as they watched the scene on the light mirror. Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's projections had shocked them, and their hearts were left uneasy.

Yu Hongxi similarly had a complicated expression as she stared at the two familiar figures. Despite the passage of multiple years, the duo were still as elegant as before, their confidence and radiance unaffected by the Nobles' Battlefield, which brought dread to numerous Dukes.

Additionally, it seemed as though the battlefield was a baptism for them, further increasing their strength.

"Li Taixuan..." After which, she turned her attention to the youth below. His features were very much similar to Li Taixuan's, but time had yet to take its toll on him. Li Taixuan had always been a calm and profound individual. Who knew how many maidens had been smitten by him when he arrived at the Xia Kingdom.

She was one of many.

However, this was a thing of the past. She was now a different Yu Hongxi, and those were memories of a past life.

"Is that House Lord Tan Tailan? She has impressive methods at her disposal! Even the Regent was sent scurrying in fear." Lu Qing'er suddenly piped up when she observed the graceful but mighty Tan Tailan. "Cough!" Yu Hongxi couldn't help but cough upon hearing those words, and she stared at her daughter in annoyance. How could that brat actually praise that woman in front of her? Did she not know that this was her mother's greatest enemy?

It was unknown how many times the two had clashed over the years.

In fact, it was in Tan Tailan's hands that the haughty Yu Hongxi first experienced the taste of defeat.

"That woman... is the worst!"

However, this was not the time for recollection. She swept her gaze over everyone in attendance before glancing at Vice President Ning Que, who had an unnatural expression on his face.

"House Luolan's situation has concluded. Everyone can see that Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan have not fallen within the Nobles' Battlefield. There is a high likelihood that they will return in the future, so I hope that none of you will attempt to target House Luolan in the dark. Otherwise, if we have to mediate when the duo show up in person, I will not protect any of you. At all," she indifferently declared.

Numerous high-level elders turned to face each other and nodded in agreement.

Yu Hongxi then stood up, her red dress revealing her elegant figure as she announced, "I hereby conclude this meeting."

Now that House Luolan's Housemeet had ended, there was no need to continue with this.

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Royal palace.

The First Princess' gorgeous eyes stared at the crystal ball as she remained in a state of stupor. Half a moment later, she finally roused herself and focused upon Tan Tailan's figure, enviously saying to herself, "Only the peerless Misty Duke could raise such an exceptional lady like Jiang Qing'e."

After which, she could no longer hold back her joy. Her gentle laughter rang out, coupled with a blissful smile.

This time, she, Gong Luanyu, had turned out to be the biggest winner.

She had staked everything on supporting House Luolan and believed that Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e would accept her good intentions. In the future, they would draw closer in their relationship and become staunch allies. She had previously only been interested in their future potential, but with the descent of Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's projections, she knew that House Luolan had regained their robust foundation.

It had announced to the world that the two House Lords had not fallen!

Whoever wanted to target House Luolan would have to reconsider the possibility of their vengeance in time to come.

Thus, House Luolan's internal affairs would stabilize.

A red shadow appeared behind the First Princess. Chief Steward Qin stepped out and respectfully said, "Your Highness, you have great foresight. You have greatly taken care of House Luolan's two seedlings."

She returned with a slight smile. "Thank you, Chief Steward Qin. Tonight must have been difficult for you."

"Governor Zhong didn't really want to fight either, so we simply confronted each other calmly." Chief Steward Qin grinned as he shook his head.

The First Princess nodded slightly and then stowed away the crystal ball, raised her head slightly, and stared at the bright moon in the sky.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e had finally overcome their predicament. In three days' time, it would be her turn to face a similar trial.

Hopefully, she would be able to triumph as well and survive the situation that would determine the fate of the Xia Kingdom.

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After the other parties retreated, the atmosphere within House Luolan's headquarters was boiling with anticipation that no one could calm down.

The two House Lords' appearance had stimulated everyone.

Unfortunately, after Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan had chased away the Regent and his cronies, they did not leave the vicinity of the underground palace, only observing the crowd. "My old friends, it has been many years. It must have been tough on all of you. However, now is not the time to reminisce. You will have to await the day where the two of us return from the Nobles' Battlefield before we can properly express our thanks for protecting the house."

With that, Li Taixuan waved his palm, and the massive chasm created by the Regent began to seal up.

At the same time, Jiang Qing'e and Li Luo heard the voices of their parents as the underground palace was being covered up.

"Little Luo and Qing'e, come to the underground palace."

The two glanced at each other briefly before hurriedly rushing over, ignoring the chaos that enveloped the headquarters. Before the crack completely sealed up, they hopped in and entered the palace directly.

Chapter 0668: Family Reunion

When Li Luo and Qing'e entered the underground palace, they saw two familiar figures standing above the natal flames, staring at them with beaming smiles.

When Li Luo saw them, he felt a tingling in his nose as he sadly exclaimed, "Dad! Mom! You're finally back. I want to peacefully and happily live my life as a rich young master. I don't want to strive hard any longer!"

"Look at how useless you are. Jiang Qing'e hasn't even said a thing! Work harder." Tan Tailan rebuked her son and rolled her eyes before descending towards Jiang Qing'e with her arms outstretched and a smile. "My precious daughter... How tough have these years been? You had to manage House Luolan and even had to take care of a burdensome child."

Jiang Qing'e's usual calm and serene expression seemed to have given way to a hint of shyness as she walked forward and hugged Tan Tailan's projection.

"Mistress, I've missed you," Jiang Qing'e lightly replied.

Tan Tailan warmly patted Jiang Qing'e's back as she smiled. "We have always been thinking of you. Especially you, with that headstrong personality. In our eyes, House Luolan is not even worth a hair on your head. Even Old Li and I knew that you would inevitably strive to protect House Luolan. It must have been tiring all these years."

Jiang Qing'e gave a wry smile. "Actually, Li Luo has helped shoulder a significant part of the burden. His efforts this year were no less than mine. "

Tan Tailan's eyebrows lifted slightly as she suspiciously stared at the aggrieved Li Luo. "This smelly brat has that sort of awareness?"

With a tired heart, Li Luo turned to the smiling Li Taixuan, whose arms were folded. "Old man, did you pick me up from the trash?"

"Ah, Little Luo... it turns out you've found out about the truth. I won't hide it from you any longer. It was a cold, freezing, winter night... I was strolling on the streets when I heard a cry coming from a bin at the side of the road..." Li Taixuan said with a complicated expression. But before he could finish, Li Luo waved his hand.

"Agh! Forget it! Just dissipate your projections and go back to whence you came. I don't want to talk to you guys anymore! Pfft!"

"Pfft!" Jiang Qing'e finally couldn't hold on any longer and burst out into laughter. Breaking free from Tan Tailan's grasp, she turned to say, "Master and Mistress, you shouldn't tease Li Luo any longer. He's devoted his heart and soul into cultivating for the entire year and managed to enter the Fiend Palace Tier from a single blank palace! His cultivation speed has exceeded even mine. The fact that House Luolan's situation could be stabilized was more so because of his efforts than mine!"

Li Taixuan smiled as he raised his hand and ruffled his son's grayish-white hair, laughing refreshingly. "Haha! Of course we know about that. Little Luo already has three resonances, and his future potential is unlimited."

He looked into Li Luo's eyes appreciatively. Honestly speaking, the moment he had set his eyes on his son, he already knew that Li Luo had struggled with all his might this year. The path Li Luo had taken to attain acquired resonances was one that he had set his son upon. Naturally, he knew of the perils and the costs it involved.

Li Luo rolled his eyes in response. He finally understood what favoritism was! It was obvious just by looking at Jiang Qing'e's trumps cards and methods. That Duke Secret Art had to have been left behind by his parents, but he hadn't even received a single toy from them! He had to strive with all his might, and even his final method was something he had to sell his body for! This was what it meant to be pitiful!

Of course, he understood that he didn't have any strength at that point in time. He had nothing but blank palaces when Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan had left, and although they had left him a path of cultivation, they didn't know for sure if he would be able to follow it. Thus, it made more sense to entrust Jiang Qing'e instead.

Still, even though it was logical, the difference in treatment caused Li Luo to complain bitterly in his heart.

Tan Tailan beamed as she walked over, reaching out to pinch Li Luo's cheeks. "My good boy... you've done well."

Li Luo pouted as he grumbled, "Wasn't it all your fault? Leaving everything in shambles before heading off. Couldn't you have tidied things up before you left? In the end, we had to deal with so much trouble."

"Well, it was all a test. Look at who the two of you are now, an obedient son and an obedient disciple. How could these prancing clowns stand in your way when you're working together?" Tan Tailan answered.

Li Taixuan nodded in agreement. "We already knew of Pei Hao's personality. Still, he was quite the pitiful thing. When House Luolan was first established, he contributed immensely, and we wanted to make it up to him before we left. Thus, we took him in as an in-name disciple. We hoped that he would turn away from the precipice and help you maintain control of House Luolan. If not... Well, it's as your mom said. If he wanted to cause havoc, we'd leave it up to you two to deal with him. It would be a great test after all."

Li Luo was left speechless. He couldn't help but feel a tinge of pity for Pei Hao. After all, he had spent all his effort scheming for years... only to end up as a simple test for him and Jiang Qing'e.

Even he felt sympathy for his hated enemy.

Moving on, Li Luo asked a question that had always stumped him. "When you drew the lots of the death lottery and were obliged to enter the Nobles' Battlefield, was it sabotage? Was it because of the Regent?"

"Hmph! You think someone like him can plot against us?" Tan Tailan snorted coldly.

Li Taixuan nodded. "Gong Yuan has a wild heart, and he secretly tried to win us over in the past. Unsurprisingly, we rejected him, and he must have resented us since then. Thus, he borrowed the death lottery to get rid of us. However, the reason we went was because we chose to. It wasn't because we were forced by him, but rather we had something exceptionally important to accomplish and thus we did so. If we had not opted to do so willingly, what could that crappy Gong Yuan do to us? Who does he think he is?" Li Taixuan indifferently commented. Inadvertently, an undisguised, tyrannical pressure exuded from him. It seemed that the most influential and mightiest individual in the Xia Kingdom was held in complete disdain before Li Taixuan.

"What important matters do you have in the Nobles' Battlefield, Master and Mistress?" Jiang Qing'e suddenly asked.

Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan did not directly answer. "Telling you about this is unnecessary. It would only affect your heart. However, you can rest assured that the two of us are doing very well here."

Seeing how evasive the two were, Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e did not continue to probe, merely nodding as they glanced at each other.

"Now that the Housemeet is over, House Luolan will stabilize. Additionally, since the rest of the Dukes know that we are still alive, even the Regent will not dare to challenge you directly. There wouldn't be any point in doing so. However, you cannot relax too much. Gong Yuan and the city hold deep secrets, and significant ambition exists in all of them. It also seems like there is external influence muddying the waters. You have to remain careful, and if the situation seems not right, give up House Luolan," Li Taixuan exhorted.

The two attentively nodded.

Li Taixuan then turned to Li Luo and sized him up with a grin. "So, how does having three resonances feel?"

"Not bad." Li Luo did feel quite satisfied with his triple resonances after all.

An enigmatic smile formed on Li Taixuan's face. "I'll give you some good news and bad news. The good news is, once you enter the Duke Stage, you'll open up yet another resonant palace! In fact, it will be a blank palace as well!"

Li Taixuan was jubilant. Blank palaces were great! This way, he could continue to craft perfect acquired resonances with primary and secondary resonances. This was much better than natural ones!

However, after hearing that, he felt like something didn't sound right, so he apprehensively asked, "So what's the bad news?"

Li Taixuan clapped.

"The bad news is that Duke Stage resonant palaces don't work with the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art! And unfortunately, I don't have anything for you either."

Upon hearing this, Li Luo seemed to black out for a moment.

Without the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art, he would naturally be unable to forge more acquired resonances. Then his blank palace would be useless!

Wasn't this a scam?! He was finished!

Chapter 0669: Greater Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art

Li Luo felt his life going dark before him. If the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art had nothing after it, would he only be able to stare at his blank palace once he entered the Duke Stage?

Even though he had triple resonances, who would resent having more of them? The more, the merrier, right?

Tan Tailan rolled her eyes at Li Taixuan before saying, "Enough. Stop tormenting Little Luo."

"It's true that your blank palace cannot be filled up with the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art after you reach the Duke Stage. You will need to rely on an even more mystical art! It is the advanced version of it, the Greater Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art."

"Greater Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art?" Li Luo paused momentarily in a daze before hurriedly asking, "Where is it!? Where can I get it?"

"The Acquired Resonance Art and its greater version are esoteric arts passed down from ancient times, from a superpower known as the Sacred Void Resonance Sect. If there is anywhere in the world that contains the Greater Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art, it would be within its remnants," Tan Tailan explained.

When she mentioned the words "Sacred Void Resonance Sect," a trace of regret could be seen in her eyes.

Li Taixuan then supplemented it with more information. "The Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art was also obtained from an ancient remnant."

Li Luo felt a little taken aback by this revelation as everything his mom had mentioned seemed a little far away.

Sacred Void Resonance Sect? Ancient ruins? Was that a location a tiny Fiend Palace Tier cultivator could venture to?

"Are the remnants of the Sacred Void Resonance Sect found in the inner divine continent?" Although he was a little confused, Li Luo continued to ask these questions with great sincerity for the sake of his cultivation journey.

"Mhm. The place you'll want to go to is the Heavenly Origin Divine Continent, the largest amongst the four." Li Taixuan sighed before smirking at Li Luo. "I suppose you must have heard something about this by now. It's true... your mom and I are from the Heavenly Origin Divine Continent. If you ever have the opportunity to do so, you should head over there. The Greater Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art can only be found there, so there's no avoiding it."

Li Luo shrugged. "We'll see. I'm still a long way away from the Duke Stage."

He held great desire for the Greater Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Art, but getting one was not an urgent task. It was a problem for much later, when he reached the Duke Stage. Currently, he was only at the Fiend Palace Tier, and he had a deadline of four years to reach the Duke Stage. The art didn't matter if he was dead.

Thus, he shelved the thoughts of the Sacred Void Resonance Sect into the depths of his memory for now.

Li Luo then changed the subject to something he had always wanted to know. "Old man, what is the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li? What's up with that? Can you explain it to me?"

Li Taixuan smirked. "Wow, Little Luo, you've even heard of that! What do you think? Don't you think that it was wonderful to realize what an awesome super second generation you've been born into?"

Tan Tailan coldly snorted. "What's so great about it? It's just a clan of brats sheltered by some rotting and obstinate elders."

Li Luo felt a little taken aback. Clearly, his mom did not have positive feelings towards the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li. There had to be a story behind that.

Li Taixuan smiled awkwardly. "As the name suggests, it's the bloodline of our ancestor, a Heavenly Emperor pinnacle expert. The world's mightiest people are his descendants. The inheritance of his bloodline has allowed us to prosper for a thousand years. Those of the bloodline are also a peak faction on the Heavenly Origin Divine Continent. If you have the chance to do so, you can choose to recognize your ancestors and return to the sect. Regardless of your choice, you will always possess a blood tie to them."

"It sounds really impressive, being so mighty and all, but I think that House Luolan holds a dearer place in my heart," Li Luo replied.

Even though those with the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li were a supreme power, which the Xia Kingdom's royal court and the Astral Sage College were incomparable to, Li Luo had spent his youth in House Luolan. Thus, no matter how impressive a background the bloodline had, it was inconsequential to him. Home was where the heart truly was... and for him, it would always be House Luolan.

Tan Tailan was elated upon hearing those words, and she happily ruffled his head. "See! Little Luo knows what's best. There's nothing impressive about the crappy Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li. Little Luo will reach the Heavenly Emperor Stage by his own merit. He won't need those decrepit old men's assistance."

"Mom, why are you so opinionated about this?" Li Luo asked curiously.

Tan Tailan pouted lightly but did not respond, clearly uninterested in dredging up the issues of the past.

"Little Luo, you need to be clear that there is a lot of murkiness and the situation is complex in these sorts of massive clans. Naturally, some people will be unhappy with your decision. Of course, for every hated individual, there will be a close family member that supports you. Thus, there is no need to be too concerned with what others think," Li Taixuan sincerely answered.

Li Luo nodded and smiled. "I understand, old man."

"Your mother and I used the natal flames to create these projections, but this will be the last time. The next time we meet will be when we return from the Nobles' Battlefield. But we don't know when that will be, so the two of you will have to rely on each other moving forward," Li Taixuan explained with an appreciative look.

Tan Tailan continued to tenderly look at Li Luo, especially that head of grayish-white hair. "You have only four more years of time, but I believe that you'll be able to break into the Duke Stage before then, and break those shackles."

Li Luo nodded heavily, "Old man, mom, you can rest assured that I won't let you send me off to the underworld before I see you in person."

Tan Tailan acknowledged his reply happily before turning to face Jiang Qing'e whilst tugging at her hand. "Qing'e, you're much more reliable, so I leave the disciplining of Little Luo to you. If he does anything bad, there's no need to be courteous. Just lay the beatdown."

Jiang Qing'e listened to those words and briefly flitted an eye at Li Luo. At that very moment, Li Luo noticed a strange color within her eyes that caused him to feel a chill in his heart. After which, he heard Jiang Qing'e reply in a low voice, "Master, Mistress, Li Luo told me that he wanted to cancel our engagement."

At that moment, Li Luo felt his scalp tingling. "Sister Qing'e! How could you do this to me!? You aren't supposed to be a tattletale!"

At that moment, piercing gazes from both Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan shot over.

Tan Tailan faintly said, "Old Li, what do we do with such an unfilial and unappreciative brat? He does not know what's good for him. Should we get rid of him?"

Li Taixuan solemnly nodded in response. "Forget about it. We no longer need this one. Let's make a new one!"

Li Luo didn't know whether to laugh or to cry, only helplessly pleading his case. "Mom! Dad! This is the affair of a young man. Could I ask that you not meddle with them? I'll settle it myself!"

Tan Tailan coldly snorted as she warned Li Luo with her eyes. "Qing'e, there's no need to spoil him. Just beat him whenever he deserves it."

Jiang Qing'e nodded accordingly with a shallow smile.

With that brief interruption, the atmosphere lightened up. Unfortunately, Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's projections gradually became more illusory. The two of them then looked towards the duo. "We originally wanted to talk about a lot of other things, but it seems that time is running out. We have full faith in the two of you. Just remember that if anything happens, your lives are the most important thing. Thus, you can let go of anything, even if it's House Luolan or our divine matter."

"Await our return!" With that last line, the natal flames flickered and their projections vanished into thin air.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e remained rooted in place, focused on their disappearing figures. Not a word was said.

Chapter 0670: The Conclusion to the Battle!

When Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e walked out of the underground palace, House Luolan's headquarters was in a state of fervor. Under Cai Wei's instructions, countless people were cleaning up the destroyed structures, but they stood at attention when they saw the two emerge.

"We greet the House Lord!" Listening to that new title being proclaimed caused Li Luo to feel a little lost.

Jiang Qing'e smiled as she explained, "You beat Pei Hao in the Housemeet, so you are the true House Lord of House Luolan in name."

Li Luo grinned as well. The title of House Lord didn't matter to him. Strictly speaking, it was no different from being the Young Lord.

He surveyed his surroundings carefully. Although there had been a massive battle the previous night and the headquarters was in a state of chaos, House Luolan's members all seemed to be high-spirited and excited. Both trust and confidence could be seen on their faces now.

Li Luo knew that this sort of self-confidence wasn't really borne because of him.

It was due to Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's appearance.

The two Dukes were the true pillars of House Luolan's previous brilliance.

They had disappeared for countless years without a trace, and there were rumors they had already fallen in the battlefield. Thus, even the members of House Luolan had their trust gradually eroded over time. Otherwise, Pei Hao's machinations could not possibly have corrupted the hearts of so many.

Now that their projections had appeared for all to see, it shattered all notions of their death. Although it didn't necessarily mean that they would be able to leave the Nobles' Battlefield alive, it had definitely reassured them and seeded doubt into their enemies.

Especially with Tan Tailan's domineering display of prowess, chasing away the almighty Regent with just a projection. Her sheer might left people overwhelmed with emotions.

Although Li Luo's performance had shocked everyone, truly raising his influence in the hearts of the members would require him to reach the Duke Stage.

Still, Li Luo's mood had improved quite considerably, so he was now more at ease. No matter what, Pei Hao was gone without a trace and the appearance of his parents had stabilized the situation completely. Even though the Regent still coveted House Luolan's treasures, he would have to steal them more subtly, no longer acting brazenly. At the very least, he now knew for a fact that his parents were alive and the Regent would not make a move any time soon.

"It looks like I can finally cultivate in peace." Li Luo sighed. He could now fully focus on the important things on hand. Plus, he only had four years left, so he could not slack off.

At this point, a figure floated down, landing before Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e.

The hulking figure with a meaty face was naturally Ox Biaobiao.

Li Luo hurriedly moved over as he asked worriedly, "Uncle Biao, are you alright?"

Ox Biaobiao smiled and shook his head whilst glancing in the direction of the underground palace. "Have they left?"

Jiang Qing'e replied, "Uncle Biao, you should have gone over to greet the Master and Mistress."

"Hmph! It's them who dare not greet me! They knew that the moment we met, I would give them a piece of my mind and flood them with a torrent of abuse! Those two brats actually scurried away to gallivant carefree whilst leaving me behind to babysit! Is that even humane?!" Ox Biaobiao grumbled.

The two of them grinned.

Now that they thought about it, Ox Biaobiao should have known about their parents' projection. The underground palace was something he had been guarding all this time, and their means would not have been hidden from him.

"Uncle Biao, if you long knew of this backup plan, why did you not tell us!? We were fraught with countless sleepless nights as a result!" Li Luo griped unsatisfactorily.

Only the heavens knew how many stressful and hair-wrenching moments Li Luo had to undergo during the past year.

"They didn't allow me to speak about it. Plus, it was a great trial for the two of you. It helped refine your mental states." Ox Biaobiao grinned.

Li Luo opened his mouth but could not find the words to retort. Indeed, if not for Pei Hao as the motivating factor pushing them forward, perhaps Qing'e and him would not have acted so urgently for the past year. Pei Hao's chaos had caused significant amounts of trouble, but it had also similarly allowed House Luolan to rid itself of an insidious poison. Purging this problem would now allow for House Luolan to become more united and improve its situation.

Sometimes, Li Luo even wondered if this disaster had been orchestrated by his parents.

If that were true, Pei Hao was the most pitiful individual ever. Being used by everyone.

At this point Cai Wei, Yan Lingqing, and Yuan Qing quickly rushed over.

"Congratulations, Young Lord, for ascending to the position of House Lord." Cai Wei laughed before continuing seriously, "However, a problem has arisen which requires the two House Lords' input. What do we do with the people who supported Pei Hao? They have all been captured, including Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng. Additionally, we also have the two neutral Pavilion Masters. How do we deal with all of them?"

They constituted half of House Luolan's upper echelons, and if they were dealt with immediately, House Luolan's comprehensive power would rapidly weaken within a short period of time.

Li Luo also understood this well, so he fell into deep thought before glancing at Jiang Qing'e.

"You make the decision." Jiang Qing'e shook her head, forcing him to make the decision.

Li Luo spent quite a bit of time pondering a solution before finally answering, "Xu Tianling and Mo Cheng have committed unpardonable sins. There is no need to be merciful towards them because of their strength. Directly deal with the treasonous individuals as per the rules of the house. For the Pavilion Masters who supported Pei Hao, remove them from their positions for a year and observe them closely. If they contribute immensely, they can regain their prior positions. For the neutral ones, admonish them and demote them to the position of Vice Pavilion Masters. If their performance is great, we will restore them to their rightful positions."

Jiang Qing'e nodded in agreement. "That works."

Cai Wei solemnly accepted the order. Li Luo's words sentenced the two Heavenly Resonance Stage cultivators to death, and if his words were spread, it would undoubtedly cause tremors throughout the house. However, this would also increase his own prestige and influence, and it was a good solution.

"After this, I will have to trouble you to recruit new members, Sister Cai Wei," Li Luo continued. House Luolan's strength would decline after this great purge, but from another point of view, it could now grow immensely once again. Thus, they had to use this opportunity to revitalize the ranks with new blood.

"With the two old House Lords' mighty support, that will not be hard to accomplish." Cai Wei beamed coquettishly.

Li Luo nodded. House Luolan had overcome its tribulation, and he believed that once news spread, its name would spread to every corner of the Xia Kingdom. All the factions would re-examine their relationship with the house and it would usher in new life and glory.

...

As the situation in House Luolan calmed down, deep within the southwest mountains a distance away from Xia City. Terrifying amounts of resonant power blasted out like a storm and collided with each other in the mountainous forest, tearing out huge ravines and uprooting entire forests from the aftermath.

Numerous assassins from House Lanling were standing by in the shadows, idly watching, unwilling to take any action. Their fearful eyes continued to watch the showdown as two figures clashed cataclysmically within the depths of the mountains.

One was their House Lord and the other was once a violet vibrance mentor of the Astral Sage College.

Unsurprisingly, it was Chi Chan.

She had suddenly barged into House Lanling's headquarters and started to tear apart their gate without saying a word. The huge covert operation that they had been planning had been halted. If not for the House Lord's intervention, even their entrance would have been smashed to pieces by this seemingly elegant and beautiful female mentor.

The battle between the two continued to rage for a significant amount of time.

All of a sudden, House Lanling's lord stopped.

He was garbed in black and his entire being seemed to meld into the shadows. At this point, it seemed as though he had received the news from Xia City which that even caused him to feel shock.

"Mentor Chi Chan, there is no need to act any longer. House Luolan's Housemeet has concluded," the black-robed House lord huskily announced.

Mentor Chi Chan listened, but her gaze shrunk, her heart trembling.

"Now that things have concluded... Li Luo... did he succeed? Or fail?"

Behind her, the azure resonant power that manifested as the sea stopped undulating. The massive, blue tiger that was standing defiantly atop the sea also similarly began to sink into the depths. It was as the House Lord had said, regardless of the result, there was no need to continue the fight.

"Mentor Chi Chan, you're just the brat's teacher. I can't understand why you would choose to break the college's rules," House Lanling's House Lord said.

"I am no longer a mentor of the college," Chi Chan indifferently replied.

"Then that makes even less sense. You and Li Luo merely have the relationship of a teacher and disciple. Why would you go to such an extent?" House Lanling's House Lord probed.

"It's just the pure intention of a mentor wanting to protect her talented student. I'm unwilling to see him die just like that."

"You're too emotional." House Lanling's House Lord shook his head. As a cold-blooded killer, this was something that made no sense to him.

Mentor Chi Chan was uninterested in speaking further, only turning to leave.

Seeing her departing figure, House Lanling's House Lord spoke out a last time. "Mentor Chi Chan, Li Luo was victorious. House Luolan will not be in any danger as Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan descended with their projections. They have yet to die."

Mentor Chi Chan paused. It could be seen that her tense body had relaxed slightly at this point. House Lanling's House Lord's news had calmed her racing heart.

"Thank you." With that, she turned into a flash, disappearing into the distance.