

Resonance 691

Chapter 0691: Uproar within the College

Shen Jinxiao looked at the youth who had made his way onto the shore of the lake and seemed to be in a daze for a moment. After which he sighed slightly. "You still came in the end."

Shen Jinxiao stashed away the fishing rod in his hand as he stood up, glancing around the peaceful and idyllic college landscape. Not too far away were even some young and dashing students who were currently joyfully engaged in chatter as they walked past. These youthful figures gave off the feeling of an infinitely wonderful place they were in, bringing back pleasant nostalgic memories.

"Truly a pity." Shen Jinxiao sighed.

The youth with gold and silver dual pupils laughed. "Your crocodile tears are just too funny. How about I give you a chance to be a good guy then. Do you want to back out now?"

Shen Jinxiao grinned in response. "My lord, your offer of mercy doesn't seem very believable."

The youth nodded his head. "This is what I like about you. You're much more ruthless compared to me. After being in Astral Sage College for so long, if you were a normal person, you'd naturally have developed emotions for the people and things here. However it looks like you will still act without hesitation."

Shen Jinxiao did not agree nor disagree. "Everyone has their own aims and for the sake of my goals, no matter how beautiful the scenery is along the way, these are just fleeting. I will keep these memories in mind and there is no need to be shaken. What I truly want is to embark on the path of a King. Astral Sage College cannot provide me with this so I will naturally have to seek another path."

"Your objectives are in line with ours as well." The youth grinned satisfactorily.

"You can rest relaxed, our plans far exceed your greatest imagination and if you are able to join us, you will definitely get what you want in future."

Shen Jinxiao nodded his head as he added. "I would like to request that Jiang Qing'e's ninth-grade light resonance heart be given to me."

The youth replied nonchalantly. "When things are in full swing, no one will be able to block us. House Luolan's defensive ward will similarly be helpless and will lose its protectiveness. At that point in time, you can easily deal with those brats as you wish. Let's go. Now that we have finished our long years of preparations, its time to move." Shen Jinxiao turned to lead the way. The location?

The Tree of Resonant Power.

The youth followed beside Shen Jinxiao and as he sauntered over, he sized up his surroundings with interest.

Along the way they even met some students who greeted Shen Jinxiao respectfully before giving some curious stares at the youth beside him. They wondered who this mysterious stranger could be but in light of their respect for Shen Jinxiao, they didn't give it further thought.

With Shen Jinxiao's guidance, the youth finally reached the centre of the college where the majestic Tree of Resonant Power quietly stood upright, its lush branches and leaves spread out like a massive umbrella sheltering the entire college.

The high grade Tree of Resonant Power was also the foundation of a sage college.

The entire college's basis was closely associated with it. As per the Academic Federation's rules, once a sage college lost their Tree of Resonant Power, the college would also be stripped of its title as a sage college and become a normal college. At the same time, they would also lose the support and resources provided by the Academic Federation.

"The Academic Federation has utilized some special methods to cultivate this tree. Alas it is one of their most tightly guarded secrets as to nurture such a tree would require a sea of resources." The youth sighed as he observed the gigantic tree.

After which he smiled and the next few words which came from him were chilling. "Wasting such a treasure is truly a pity."

When the two appeared before the Tree of Resonant Power, it had also attracted some attention as the Violet Vibrance mentor guarding the Tree of Resonant Power descended from the sky, landing before them. This mentor frowned as he glanced at Shen Jinxiao before turning towards the mysterious youth.

"Mentor Shen Jinxiao, who might this be? This is a core location of the college and based on the rules, you are not allowed to bring anyone here. Did you obtain Vice principal's permission to do so?" The mentor asked with suspicion.

The youth revealed a warm smile. "It was Vice principal Su Xin who allowed me to come here."

"Do you have her plaque?" The Violet Vibrance mentor asked as per accordance with the rules.

"Yes." The youth's smiled even more kindly as he raised his hand and the Violet Vibrance mentor looked at it. Simultaneously a profound light shone from the youth's eyes and within that light, ice and fire seemed to roil within, seemingly fusing elements of extreme heat and cold together, creating a certain magical charm which would assimilate anything that fell into it.

The mysterious icefire light had struck too quickly and the Violet Vibrance mentor only had a brief moment to form a thin protective barrier. However the resonant power he had summoned was completely unable to halt this strange light as it began to directly circle around the mentor.

Shock was seen within the Violet Vibrance mentor's eyes and before he could even utter a sound, his entire body had been disintegrated into a pool of blood.

Shen Jinxiao quietly watched this scene as his eyes squinted. This lord's strength was terrifying. Although the Violet Vibrance mentor was a first-grade Duke and was caught off guard, being able to kill someone without them able to resist was shocking.

Additionally, this was still a Duke! If he were to be placed anywhere else, he too would be a powerhouse in his own right.

The pungent pool of blood seeped into the ground and it was at that point where some of the students in the Tree of Resonant Power's vicinity suddenly noticed the disturbance. Unfortunately they were

quite panicky as some had even personally witnessed their mentor being melted down into a pool of blood!

However they were able to regain their composure in a small amount of time. It was not that they were slow witted but they would never have expected that someone would barge into a sage college brazenly and commit murder! Much less murder a Violet Vibrance mentor!

The youth then glanced at the students who were standing in a daze as he gave another warm smile. "Children, stop watching idly. Hurry and run! Astral Sage College is about to be no more."

Ah!

Some of the students managed to snap out of their daze as certain horrified female students began to scream.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The disturbance attracted the attention of other guarding Violet Vibrance mentors. Worldly natural energy began to tremble as several beams of light pierced through the air and several figures floated in the air. They looked at the Shen Jinxiao and the youth with suspicion.

"Shen Jinxiao what are you doing?!" A red headed female exhorted. It was Jiang Qing'e's mentor Huo Xu.

"Mentor! Mentor! They've killed Mentor Zhao!" Some students fearfully cried out as they trembled.

Mentor Huo Xu saw the pool of blood as her expression turned steely and her gaze blazed with fury towards the youth. "You are truly courageous. You actually dare to barge into our Astral Sage College and commit wanton murder? Since the founding of this college, I have never seen someone act as rampantly as you!"

The youth replied nonchalantly. "Well since there weren't any in the past, then congratulations, you have seen one now."

He then tilted his head slightly as he glanced at Mentor Huo Xu with a sweet smile. "Still, there might no longer be an Astral Sage College within the Xia Kingdom after today."

"You mad man!" Mentor Huo Xu was so aggravated that her fiery red hair seemed to ignite into flames. In her entire life, she had never seen such a crazy and violent individual. He actually dared to make the ridiculous claim that Astral Sage College would be wiped off the map?

"Capture him. If he resists, kill him!" Mentor Huo Xu commanded.

The countless Violet Vibrance mentors similarly surrounded the youth with unfriendly expressions as strong waves of resonant power burst out from their bodies, causing the void to tremble. At the same time, one after another summoned duke bergfrieds which manifested behind their bodies.

Even when encircled by countless Dukes, the youth only grinned, seemingly unconcerned.

He joined his hands together as his ten fingers formed a strange handseal.

At the same time his mouth moved very slightly, as though he was whispering some sort of magic spell, making a series of disturbing noises.

Once the sounds rang out, some of the surrounding Violet Vibrance mentors felt their bodies freeze as their faces showed pained expressions. It looked as though something was trying to drill out from the depths of their flesh, squirming within their bodies.

A moment later, something crawled into the depths of their eyeballs.

These Violet Vibrance mentor's eyes gradually turned pale white before a weird black fish that gave off a frigid aura seemed to take shape within their eyes, swimming gaily within.

With the appearance of the black fish, these Violet Vibrance mentor seemed to have lost their sense of self and will. At the same time they blazed with resonant power and before the countless terrified eyes of the students watching, began to unreservedly attack the mentors next to them.

Bang!

Utter chaos unfolded.

Chapter 0692: The Source of Corruption

Bang!

The sudden loss of control of certain Violet Vibrance mentors was clearly beyond expectations. The other mentors who had not been corrupted were completely unable to react in time and were struck by the attacks of their colleagues.

Psssssh!

A few Violet Vibrance mentors spat out blood as they were knocked down into the ground, leaving behind several deep indents. Looking at their bloodied bodies, it seemed as though the injuries they suffered were not light.

This sudden change had occurred before the students as terror overcame them. They were all scared stiff and stared at this scene in horror, not knowing how to react.

This was something that had never happened in the history of the college.

Mentor Huo Xu had not been affected but the anger rising within her eyes was gradually being taken over by sheer fear. As she looked at her fellow colleagues who now had twisted and distorted expressions with pale white eyes. Their entire bodies seemed to be covered with a frightening aura of corruption.

This was not foreign to her.

It was the sign of being corrupted by the Others.

Still, how could an Other actually corrupt Duke stage experts?

As she had this question in mind, she noticed a strange black fish swimming within the corrupted Violet Vibrance mentor's eyes. The revelation that struck her caused a chill to run through her body.

This was the Umbra Cave's Ichythian King...?

Wasn't this Other King being held back by the principal? When had it corrupted these Violet Vibrance mentors?

How could the seeds of corruption have been planted without anyone noticing it after significant and rigorous screening and testings?

This made no sense at all.

Even if it was an Other King that was comparable to a King stage expert, it would not be easy to pull off such a task without the principal noticing.

"It looks like your heart is full of suspicion and questions." The youth grinned as he stared at the furious and surprised Huo Xu.

"Ah, how did we do it? Well we have to thank Shen Jinxiao. None of you could have ever imagined that within the college, there was a Violet Vibrance mentor who had willingly chosen to form a contract with the Ichythian King. With him as the medium, year after year of time caused corruption to gradually seep in. You naturally would never have noticed that such a seed of corruption would have taken root within these mentors. Even if Pang Qianyuan possesses earthshaking abilities, he still cannot read a person's heart." Listening to the words of the youth caused Huo Xu to feel so enraged her entire body was trembling as she rushed at Shen Jinxiao whilst bellowing.

"Shen Jinxiao! You will not die a good death!" She had never expected that Shen Jinxiao had long established a contract with the Ichythian King. This scumbag had a heart full of evil intent and after being lured in by the Ichythian King, was even willing to become his medium and spread the seeds of corruption. This was a truly hateful man.

Seeing Huo Xu's incensed gaze, Shen Jinxiao helplessly smiled. "My lord, why'd you have to expose me and pull the carpet from under me? Do you really think that I have any other choice at this point?"

The youth smiled. "Of course not. I simply wanted her to understand. You don't have to care in any case. After today, Astral Sage College will cease to exist and all their resentment and anger is meaningless."

With that the youth waved his hand and the corrupted Violet Vibrance mentor released feral grunts and roars before pouncing towards the other Violet Vibrance mentors, intent on taking their lives. One after another awe inspiring duke bergfried's took form and descended into the world.

"All of the Violet Vibrance mentors of the college, halt your cultivation and hurry over to defend the college!"

"Gold Gleam and Silver Spark mentors, quickly escort the students away!"

"Inform the Vice principal!"

Seeing the chaotic development of the situation, Mentor Huo Xu hurriedly issued a series of commands as she felt a sense of coldness within her body.

She knew that Astral Sage College was very possibly facing an existential crisis, one the likes of which had never been seen before.

...

BOOM!

In the white jade square, the blade shrouded with the Triple Resonance Saintly Ring had hacked down and left behind a massive gash across the void. It then directly struck down upon the five storey golden pagoda that had now engulfed the Regent.

An unimaginably titanic energy tempest exploded outwards upon collision as the thick clouds in the sky were shredded apart brutally by sheer force. This energy tempest almost raged across the entirety of Xia City's sky, bringing about countless thunderous booms. If Li Luo and the Regent had not purposely chosen to settle their conflict in an area outside the city, this confrontation could have destroyed the entire Xia City as collateral damage.

Everyone was focused upon the point of the collision.

Crack!

A light sound rang out before cracks quickly appeared all over the golden pagoda. The pulsing triple resonance power seemed to be the world's most fearsome form of energy.

Even with the Regent using a sacrificial ignition on a violet-eye treasured artifact, it was insufficient to stop this attack.

In the end, the blade light's vicious strike completely decimated the golden pagoda.

At the same time, the Regent quickly manifested numerous afterimages in the void which then began to retreat swiftly in every direction.

Unfortunately as the blade light continued to descend, the countless fleeing afterimages were crushed by the imposing strike and shortly after, the remaining afterimages began to condense back into a single body as the Regent reappeared several hundreds of meters away in mid air.

The current him had the gloomiest expression known to mankind and a bloody streak could be seen on his chest. Although the five storey golden pagoda had managed to block a significant portion of the triple resonance power, just the remainder was sufficient to penetrate his own resonant power defenses and leave behind an injury.

"The reputation of triple resonances are well-deserved." The Regent forlornly commented. The triple resonance power that Li Luo had managed to control with the aid of Pang Qianyuan's assistance was rudimentary but even so, it was able to suppress the Regent and his dual resonances was powerless in the face of superior might.

They were fundamentally on different levels.

Perhaps when Dukes faced off against a King, it was no different from a Heavenly Dipper General challenging a Duke. The former could only look up at the latter.

"Wow! You're a hardy one." Li Luo saw that the Regent had managed to survive his blow and was not surprised. Gong Yuan was impressive. He was ultimately still a fifth-grade Duke and yet under the might of triple resonance power, he only suffered a wound that was neither heavy nor light and that was testament to his abilities.

"Since one blade only shattered a single violet-eye treasured artifact, what about another two?"

Li Luo's smile turned chilly. Although he was using principal Pang's transmitted power to intimidate someone, being able to torment a Duke did give him some degree of satisfaction.

He tightly grasped the Onyx-Elephant Blade and began to activate his triple resonances.

At the same time, frighteningly powerful energy began to transmit from his blade.

However just before Li Luo was about to continue hitting the Regent who was already down, he felt a commotion behind him which was accompanied by the aura of corruption which erupted at that very moment.

"Other?!" This aura of corruption was also something familiar to Li Luo. His heart trembled as he hurriedly turned towards the source of it. The sight caused his eyes to shrink as he saw mentor Chi Chan clutching her cheek. Thick amounts of corruption like a black fog was rising from her body.

It looked as though the corruption within her body was flaring up.

This change caused everyone's expression to change.

As they glanced at mentor Chi Chan, they were completely appalled and at a loss for words. "Other corruption?" The Regent on the other hand began to bellow virtuously. "Li Luo! So it looks like you have been collaborating with the Others! Chi Chan is a person of House Luolan. Now that she has been corrupted by the Others, the House lord himself will also have to bear the blame!"

The expressions of the individuals within the viewing area also became solemn.

If Chi Chan had been corrupted by the Others, she would definitely have to be dealt with today. If House Luolan was found to have collaborated with them, it would undoubtedly give rise to public criticism. The Others were known to be humanity's greatest enemy and any human who fraternized with them would be considered to have committed the gravest of sin. One that was unpardonable.

Chapter 0693: Suppressing the Ichthyic Curse

The Regent's venomous words caused numerous glances to be shot towards Li Luo. Chi Chan and Li Luo had a close and complicated relationship after all. One had to remember that during the House Luolan Housemeet, she had resigned as a mentor to assist them, which demonstrated the special relationship between them.

Now that Chi Chan was showing signs of corruption, everyone had to wonder if it had anything to do with House Luolan.

This did raise the suspicion of some.

The sudden change had also broken Li Luo's single-minded focus in exterminating the Regent. Mentor Chi Chan's situation was definitely one that warranted greater attention, so Li Luo flashed away and appeared before House Luolan's area.

He made his way to Jiang Qing'e's side. She was also wearing a frown as she stared at Mentor Chi Chan. Her veil had long fallen off, and her pretty face that exuded intellectual elegance was now filled with the countenance of pain. One hand was clutching half of her face, and her body was trembling in agony.

Li Luo knew that the half of the face she was clutching was where the Ichthyic curse was situated. It was said that the Ichthyian King sealed at the bottom of the Umbra Cave was the one that had left this mark on her. The last time it had a flare up was when Mentor Chi Chan had assisted Li Luo with the Acquired Resonance Godly Forging Wheel. Was the curse about to completely erupt this time?

The thick corruption that was wafting from her was a sight that alarmed the people all around.

Jiang Qing'e was constantly forming hand seals and channeling the light resonant energy from within her to purify it. Her energy turned into bright runes that contained immense purificative powers which then landed upon Chi Chan's body, slightly alleviating the effect of the corruption.

Clearly, Jiang Qing'e's ninth-grade light resonance possessed enough purification prowess to have some effect.

It was a pity that she was only at the Heavenly Pearl Stage. Even someone like Mentor Chi Chan was unable to suppress the effects of the corruption herself, so her efforts were like using a cup of water to put out a burning cart.

After a moment, Jiang Qing'e sighed. "I can't suppress it."

"I recommend that we act together to quell this disaster, to prevent the corruption from further erupting and causing even greater damage." Zhu Qinghuo's icy voice rang out as he stared like a tiger watching his prey.

He definitely did not have any good intentions. Now that Chi Chan had joined House Luolan, getting rid of her would severely hamper House Luolan's influence.

This suggestion incited several agreements from the crowd. The disturbance unsettled the crowd, and they had a deep fear of the Others.

"This is a matter of House Luolan. There is no need for your involvement." Li Luo coldly stared at Zhu Qinghuo.

Being subject to Li Luo's defiant gaze frustrated Zhu Qinghuo. "This piddly Fiend Palace Tier brat is just borrowing Pang Qianyu's strength! Where did he gain the right to make such a decision? He is young and merely borrowing the might of the tiger!"

"If Chi Chan's corruption leaks out, it will no longer just be House Luolan's issue. Are you willing to bear the consequences?" Zhu Qinghuo gave a chilly smile.

Whilst the two confronted each other with barbs, Vice Principal Su Xin hurriedly made her way over with a solemn expression and said to all of the leaders that were present, "Mentor Chi Chan's corruption is the sequelae of a purging mission conducted within the Umbra Cave in the past. She was injured by the Ichthyian King and was hit with his curse. Thus, the situation here does not have anything to do with House Luolan. I'd advise everyone to not make wild assumptions on this matter. Suppressing the Others within the Umbra Cave is done for the sake of the Xia Kingdom's peace. All of you can be considered to

have benefited from this. Although it is the responsibility of the Astral Sage College, I hope that the people here can treat the people injured within the Umbra Cave with more kindness. Do not deem them as Others without reason, give them a chance to survive. In any case, they have not been fully corrupted and turned into Others."

Zhu Qinghuo's expression turned rigid upon hearing Vice Principal Su Xin's blunt words, which were clearly intended for him. At the end of the day, he was still fearful of the Astral Sage College and Su Xin and thus did not say any more, only laughing dryly.

The rest of the leaders similarly felt a little embarrassed, but they thickened their skins as they worriedly asked, "In this case, do you have a solution, Vice Principal Su Xin?"

Su Xin glanced at Chi Chan and frowned. She did not understand why Chi Chan's curse had suddenly flared up either.

After pondering over a solution briefly, Su Xin said, "Li Luo, I will need to rely on you. It's fortunate that you possess the Principal's might. I wish to use that to suppress the Ichthyian curse. Only a King with triple resonances can do so."

After which, she paused, supplementing her words. "However, if you do this, you will exhaust the strength the Principal has provided to you." Then she shot a glance towards the Regent. The two already possessed irreconcilable differences, and if things continued on this course, it was possible that Li Luo might accomplish his goal of dealing with him. Unfortunately, Chi Chan's issue had put a stop to Li Luo's plans.

If Li Luo were to assist Chi Chan in suppressing the Ichthyic curse, it would provide the Regent with a significant amount of breathing room.

Li Luo casually replied, "There's no rush. Let him catch a breath of two. Once we've settled this problem, I'll get rid of him."

Although dealing with the Regent was important, Chi Chan had assisted Li Luo with so much more. If he disregarded her life and instead focused on finishing off the Regent, it would simply be too coldhearted, and it was something he was unwilling to do.

Vice Principal Su Xin did not show it on her face, but her heart approved of Li Luo's decision. The brat had a good personality and knew how to repay gratitude. Otherwise, her decision in letting Chi Chan provide assistance would have been in vain.

A white-eyed wolf who did not know how to repay grace and didn't treasure relationships was not worth nurturing nor protecting, no matter how much talent they possessed.

Vice Principal Su Xin then turned towards the Regent. "Regent, my college does not wish to interfere in the affairs of the royal court. However, the situation is that Chi Chan's corruption outburst requires Li Luo's assistance in suppressing. Thus, I beseech you to not act blindly without thinking. Once this corruption has been dealt with, you can continue with what you wish to do."

The Regent frowned. "Vice Principal Su Xin, Chi Chan has already left your college. There is no reason for you to protect her."

If Li Luo took the opportunity to assist Chi Chan, it would be a great opportunity for the Regent to strike. However, as Vice Principal Su Xin had said, he was advised to not take advantage of it to create any trouble.

"Regent, the corruption's eruption will affect the wellbeing of the entire city. This would not be beneficial for anyone, not even you. Thus, this matter should not be delayed. However, if you do have a way of suppressing the Ichthyic curse, please do go ahead. Otherwise, quietly sit by and wait for Li Luo to finish dealing with it," Yu Hongxi suddenly said from the Golden Dragon Bank's side.

Her opinion was met with a flurry of activity. The Golden Dragon Bank was also a super power of the Xia Kingdom, one no weaker than the school or the royal court. If even Yu Hongxi agreed with Vice Principal Su Xin's intention, then the Regent could only sit by idly.

"Does the Golden Dragon Bank want to end their neutral stance?" the Regent gloomily asked.

This was met with Yu Hongxi's placid answer. "The Golden Dragon Bank's neutrality is something that will never change. However, if the corruption were to spread, how could we do business? In our eyes, resolving this issue is a priority. Whoever wants to interfere will be infringing upon our interests." Her words were logical and reasonable. Whether it was the Regent or the First Princess, whoever took power didn't really matter to them. At the end of the day, they could still do business with them. Alas, it would not be as simple if the corruption spread and the Others took over. How could they deal with them?

The Regent's eyelids twitched slightly as Yu Hongxi's reason was truly airtight. In the end, he could only snort coldly.

Li Luo, on the other hand, had completely ignored the Regent, quickly rushing to Chi Chan's side and grasping her tender, jade-like hand with one hand whilst the other held on to the Onyx-Elephant Blade.

A moment later, he roused the mighty energy emitted from the blade.

The Triple Resonance Saintly Ring appeared on his forearm with mystical radiance before being directed into Chi Chan's body.

The Triple Resonance Saintly Ring continued to revolve, emitting a suction effect that sucked the corruption out of Chi Chan's body. It was directly being absorbed into the ring itself.

Once assimilated within, the corruption was directly disintegrated with no trace left behind.

It was indeed as Su Xin had said. Triple resonances were capable of suppressing the Ichthyic curse.

As time passed, the corruption coming from Chi Chan's body began to reduce. Once the last trace was purified by the Triple Resonance Saintly Ring, the ring turned into a beam of light and imprinted itself onto Chi Chan's eye, forming a tri-colored circle that surrounded a small, black fish.

In the end, the black fish stopped struggling and gradually turned illusory before once again becoming a tattoo on her cheek.

When Vice Principal Su Xin and the rest saw this, they let out sighs of relief.

On the other hand, a hint of clarity resurfaced within Chi Chan's eyes as she awoke. The first thing she did was hurriedly say, "Vice Principal! There is a disturbance within the college. Someone triggered the Ichythian curse on purpose, and their aim is to destroy the Tree of Resonant Power!" During that brief moment where she was overcome with corruption, she had seen visions of what was happening within the college through a strange connection.

Her distressing words were like a thunderclap ringing in everyone's ears.

Even Vice Principal Su Xin, Yu Hongxi, and the rest went pale at the implication of those words.

Chapter 0694: Gathering Strength

Her words had caused everyone's expressions to change.

No one had expected that someone would have the gall to do something as insane as destroying the Astral Sage College's Tree of Resonant Power!

Just who would be so despicable and mad?

"The college's Tree of Resonant Power suppresses the Umbra Cave. Once the tree is destroyed, the Umbra Cave will be unsealed. Although the Principal is holding down the depths of the Umbra Cave, he has similarly been kept at bay by the Ichythian King for all these years. Someone choosing to act now is definitely plotting an even larger conspiracy!" Vice Principal Su Xin's expression turned icy, and fury could be seen within her usually genial gaze.

"Whoever dares to carry out such a plot must definitely be a power beyond our imagination that is targeting the Xia Kingdom! Everyone, once the Umbra Cave unseals, it will cause an Other Disaster. At that point in time, countless Others will flood our lands and the entire Xia Kingdom will never again have a day of peace!" This stark warning caused solemn expressions to form on the people present. The pressure of the Others was frightening, and they were very clear of the consequences. Other Disasters occasionally erupted in the East Divine Continent, and even a flourishing and mighty kingdom could be reduced into a barren wasteland in a short span of time.

This was the most frightening calamity that could descend upon the land, more so than any natural one.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e looked at each other with a frown. They had just returned from the Blackwind Empire during the Holy Grail Meet. The horrific scenes were still fresh in their minds, and they didn't want to imagine the consequences if the same were to happen to the Xia Kingdom.

The Xia Kingdom was their homeland, and they held deep feelings and memories for it. Thus, they were unwilling to see the bustling and flourishing Xia Kingdom turn into hell on earth.

"Everyone, I hope you will put down your weapons and set aside your struggles to assist the Astral Sage College wholeheartedly." Vice Principal Su Xin swept her gaze across the crowd, giving an extra look towards the Regent and the First Princess. "This includes today's coronation ceremony. I would suggest postponing it to a future date."

A power that was not afraid to plot against the Astral Sage College would not have come from the Xia Kingdom. The powers within the Xia Kingdom that could compare with them, the royal court and the

Golden Dragon Bank, didn't have such overbearing might and had no reason to destroy the Tree of Resonant Power to unseal the Umbra Cave.

Once the Others came spilling out, every single power within the Xia Kingdom would be affected as those creatures blindly rushed at them.

As a result, there was only one possibility: it was a power from outside the Xia Kingdom.

Additionally, the strength possessed by this power had to be terrifying. This sudden chain of events must have definitely been planned for quite some time, and the college hadn't even caught wind of the situation at all. This spoke volumes about their strength, able to conceal information even at this crucial point in time.

Vice Principal Su Xin could already imagine that a massive black hand already held the entire college in its grasp.

This was a chilling thought.

Unfortunately, she did not have much confidence in warding off this hand in the shadows alone. The Astral Sage College was one of the most mighty factions in the kingdom, and they were in trouble despite their deep foundation. Thus, she had to rely on the assistance of the other powers in the Xia Kingdom.

The First Princess paused for a moment before nodding in agreement. "The Tree of Resonant Power's protection is of utmost importance. I'm willing to accede to the Vice Principal's suggestion."

The coronation ceremony was important, but the Umbra Cave was even more so.

No matter how bitter the struggle between she and Gong Yuan was, the royal court was still surnamed Gong. If the Others were let to run rampant and an Other Disaster struck the Xia Kingdom, then both the Gong family and the kingdom would be left in ashes. At that point in time, she would be too ashamed to face her ancestors if she died.

The Regent's expression remained unchanged, but his heart was not as calm. The others may not know who the culprits were, but he definitely knew.

His allies had clearly taken action.

However, this was also out of his expectations as he never expected them to act against the Tree of Resonant Power.

The Regent's heart was shaken. He knew that the dual pupil youth was backed by an unimaginably powerful faction. At the same time, the youth had given his word that Pang Qianyuan would not be able to be present at the coronation ceremony. Even if Pang Qianyuan had other means to interfere, they would ensure that he would be stopped.

Could it be that their plan to restrain him was to completely remove the Tree of Resonant Power from existence? If that was the case, what about the Umbra Cave?

If the Others were to pour out, then the resulting calamity would be hard to fathom. Countless prosperous and thriving kingdoms throughout the East Divine Continent had been ravaged by Others in recent years, leaving their populace in a terrible state.

"What are they trying to do?" the Regent asked himself. The current situation seemed to be out of his control, but he couldn't let Vice Principal Su Xin know about the gold and silver pupil youth. Once it was known that they were of the same faction, they would all rally against him and he would no longer have any standing amongst the group. "What Vice Principal Su Xin says is right. We need to be able to differentiate what's important, and the Xia Kingdom's very existence is related to the Umbra Cave's stability. No matter who is behind this, they will become an enemy of the Xia Kingdom!" The Regent declared his stance as Su Xin continued to stare at him. If he did not agree at this point, it would naturally arouse suspicion.

Yu Hongxi looked at Vice Principal Su Xin as she said, "We of the Golden Dragon Bank will do our best to assist."

"Thank you, President Yu," Vice Principal Su Xin said sincerely.

The Golden Dragon Bank was equally mighty, and their assistance would bolster their forces immensely.

The rest of the powers similarly declared their intention to assist.

"Li Luo, you currently have a connection with the Principal. I need you to relay the information regarding the situation here to him," Vice Principal Su Xin sternly said to Li Luo.

The current predicament was on a scale unlike anything ever seen before. The opponent had come well prepared, and even if she gathered half of the Xia Kingdom's strongest forces, she would be confident that they would succeed. Thus, she definitely had to reach out to the Principal.

"I don't think there's a need to do so," Li Luo replied as he hefted the Onyx-Elephant Blade in his hand. Everyone could see that the Triple Resonance Saintly Ring had already quietly dissipated and that the frightening energy that intimidated even Dukes had receded.

Clearly, Principal Pang had retracted his power on his own.

Looking at the situation, he must have known that something had happened in the outside world and was determined to deal with the problem on his end wholeheartedly, possibly to return quickly.

Vice Principal Su Xin pursed her lips when she saw this. She felt a sense of heaviness deep within her heart. Today's events were simply too massive, and even someone as resilient as her could feel a pressing sense of foreboding pressure.

The Astral Sage College was now in a time of crisis.

"Everyone, let us go. No matter who it is, whoever wishes to open the Umbra Cave will face our wrath!" Vice Principal Su Xin's visage was frosty like the deep of winter as a baleful look appeared in her eyes, her tone full of murderous intent.

As her voice resounded throughout the crowd, mighty resonant power burst out from her body before she flashed away like a beam of light, directly headed towards the Astral Sage College.

The rest of the Dukes similarly took action and turned into beams of light that arced across the sky in close pursuit.

"Li Luo, thank you for what you've done." Mentor Chi Chan was one of the last to leave, and she expressed her gratitude to Li Luo.

"Mentor, there's no need to be so polite. You've helped me out of so many predicaments, while all I've ever done was borrow the Principal's power." Li Luo hurriedly explained.

She faintly touched her pristine, white cheek, which now showed the Ichthyic curse mark being surrounded by a ring of tri-colored light, her expression a little dismayed. The Ichythian King's curse was frightening. Ever since she had been afflicted by it, it was like gangrene that had infected the bone, bringing about endless torture.

If not for Li Luo being able to wield triple resonance power, it would have been very hard to suppress the outbreak of the Ichthyic curse. The likely result would have been her death at the hands of Vice Principal Su Xin, all to prevent the corruption from leaking any further.

"Mentor, can't you get rid of it?" Li Luo asked. He knew that the Ichthyic curse had also become a blight upon her soul.

"This is the Ichythian King's Origin Fate Curse. Cleansing it completely would require the assistance of a King Stage expert. Principal Pang is the only one in the Xia Kingdom who could do it. Alas, the Principal has spent all these years in the depths of the Umbra Cave, and there was no opportunity to dispel it." Chi Chan bitterly smiled.

Li Luo sighed, not knowing how to console her.

"Do you want to go to the college to take a look?" Mentor Chi Chan no longer harped on that topic, changing it to something else. Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e faced each other momentarily and then nodded. The situation with the Umbra Cave was critical and would determine the survival of the Xia Kingdom. Thus, even though they knew that they would not be very helpful, they would still like to be kept abreast of any developments. This was why they made the decision to go there.

"I'll bring you over, then." Chi Chan stretched out her hands and grabbed both their wrists before zooming into the sky like a beam of light.

As they dashed through the sky, Li Luo looked down upon the now tiny-looking Xia City with complicated thoughts. Similarly, the people of Xia City were looking into the sky whilst remaining in the dark about what was happening. The city continued to bustle with activity as though nothing was wrong. Li Luo simply didn't know if this wondrous city of memories would continue to remain as peaceful and prosperous as it was today.

Everything that had happened was completely beyond anyone's wildest expectations.

Chapter 0695: College Disaster

Astral Sage College

The usually auspicious and harmonious atmosphere had turned into one that was chaotic and fear-inducing.

The Gold Gleam and Silver Spark mentors were anxious and frightened, constantly directing students to evacuate from the college. Terrifying fluctuations of energy could be felt from the direction of the Tree of Resonant Power as the experts clashed. A battle of this level was like a calamity come to life. Even though they were a distance away, they could feel a suffocating sense of oppression by merely being in that direction.

It was the Violet Vibrance mentors who were now attempting to intercept the mysterious invaders.

The Astral Sage College's students were the Xia Kingdom's most talented cream of the crop. They were chosen through rigorous selections and assessments before being able to enter the best college in the Xia Kingdom. After a few years, the youths would shed their immaturity and then become independent elites when released into the greater world.

Unfortunately, the developments of today were not something they had the right or the strength to interfere in.

Even the Gold Gleam mentors were relegated to the periphery, only to maintain order.

In the outskirts of the college, Yu Lang, Bai Mengmeng, Bai Mengmeng, Zhao Kuo, and the rest of the One Star Hall students had gathered as they watched the changing situation. Even the usually thick-skinned Yu Lang seemed a little panicked.

"Mentor, who would actually dare to assault the Astral Sage College?" Bai Doudou tightly clutched her prized spear as she blurted out the question.

Even till now, she was in complete disbelief. There were individuals crazy enough to cause chaos within the Astral Sage College? One had to know that this was the location with the greatest number of Duke experts in the kingdom. No power within the Xia Kingdom would dare to idly set foot on their grounds. The Bai family she was part of was also considered a lineage with a deep-rooted foundation, but what that meant was that she had an even better understanding of the monolith known as the Astral Sage College.

"I don't know. All of the Violet Vibrance mentors have rushed over, and Vice Principal Su Xin and the rest are participating in the royal coronation ceremony. I believe they have received the news already and are on their way back. The situation is very dangerous and the enemy is terrifyingly strong. If you're caught up in the aftermath, you will likely be fatally injured, so you must retreat to a safer area," one of the Gold Gleam mentors escorting them stated anxiously. He himself was shocked, but for the sake of consoling the students, he had to maintain a strong front and suppress his true emotions.

He, too, felt that the situation was ludicrous.

This was the first time something like this had happened in the Astral Sage College's history.

At the same time, he understood that the faction leading this invasion had to be unfathomably strong. Otherwise, the support of the countless Violet Vibrance mentors would have stabilized the situation and he would have gotten a message stating that everything was clear... Alas, no such message had come.

This meant that the situation had likely gotten even worse.

What sort of existence could be so domineering that even countless Violet Vibrance mentors were unable to resist?

The Gold Gleam mentor's eyes seemed a little overcast. Someone who dared to strike at the college would not merely be an individual, there had to be a terrifying power supporting him...

"However, we still have Principal Pang, and all of these enemies will definitely be crushed if he comes!" The Gold Gleam mentor was reminded of the college's supporting pillar, and some hope reignited within his heart as he continued to guide the students to a safer location.

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Astral Sage College, Tree of Resonant Power's Vicinity

The youth with dual pupils surveyed his surroundings. Countless beams of light exuding indomitable presences descended from the sky, attempting to launch an offensive on him, but they were quickly repelled by the corrupted Violet Vibrance mentors.

The two sides clashed and fought bitterly.

"Looking at the countless sage colleges in the East Divine Continent, the Astral Sage College's foundation isn't bad at all. If not for your assistance in insidiously laying these seeds of corruption, the sheer number of Violet Vibrance mentors alone would have caused me quite a bit of suffering and perhaps even taught me a lesson." The youth shook his head slightly as he praised the defenders.

Shen Jinxiao gave a slight smile. "My Lord, you're too humble. With the Origin Reversion Institute's strength, extinguishing a sage college would be as easy as flipping over one's hand."

The youth sighed. "Secretly subverting things is the way we do it. Doing things directly and blatantly is simply too crude and lacks aesthetic sense."

Shen Jinxiao grinned as he nodded in agreement.

"However, I think that Vice Principal Su Xin is about to return. And I'm sure she has rallied many allies to her cause," Shen Jinxiao reminded him.

The youth cackled. "Just a group of miscreants. We have plotted for so many years, so how could they possibly resist it so easily? The Astral Sage College is definitely doomed today."

"What about Pang Qianyuan?" Shen Jinxiao curiously asked.

When it came to absolute strength, no one in the Xia Kingdom was of concern except for Principal Pang. That man possessed enough power to turn the tides.

The youth smiled indifferently as he replied with utter self-confidence, "The Xia Kingdom is an important aspect of our plan. Perhaps even Pang Qianyuan would never have expected this. He will not be able to resist either."

He no longer explained any more details to Shen Jinxiao, only continuing to walk towards the majestic Tree of Resonant Power.

With each step he took, the Tree of Resonant Power seemed to become more alive, feeling an intense premonition of danger. A moment later, sparkling, translucent, green light poured out of it, converging into a massive stream that seemed to form a dark-green talisman almost a hundred meters tall.

This ancient and cryptic talisman then began to radiate endless rays of light. At the same time, the worldly natural energy surrounding it started to be endlessly absorbed.

It gave off an absolute sense of suppression, causing even the void itself to begin to shatter.

Shen Jinxiao was forced to a halt as he glanced at the dark-green talisman with a heavy expression. "I once heard that the Tree of Resonant Power possesses a protective talisman that was passed down by the Academic Federation. Now that I've seen it in the flesh, my horizons have been broadened."

Even he could feel a foreboding sense of danger emanating from the talisman, and he understood that it could exert a force that he would be unable to defend against.

"This is the final protective measure the Academic Federation has bestowed upon this high-grade Tree of Resonant Power. Its power is so extraordinary that even I would not dare to touch it," the youth said as he nodded in agreement.

But at the same time, he raised his palm, and the pocket sphere on his wrist flashed. A black jade bottle appeared atop his palm.

The bottle's surface was engraved with an endless number of complicated runic patterns, almost as though it was sealing something within. Shen Jinxiao could feel that the temperature around him had soared at this very moment as well.

The youth formed a hand seal, and corresponding streaks of runic patterns shot forth, landing atop the bottle's surface and causing the existing patterns to glow brilliantly. In the end, all of the runic patterns began to shift and condense at the neck of the bottle, slowly unraveling the thin film of black light that kept the bottle sealed.

The moment the bottle was unsealed, a single wisp of black flame slowly floated into the air.

The wisp rose with the wind and then quickly transformed into a rotating lotus made of black flames. It emanated a fiendish air, and wriggling lines could be seen atop every flaming petal. If one were to peer more closely, it even seemed to resemble innumerable tormented faces of pain, screaming in endless suffering.

Shen Jinxiao's eyes shrunk and he inadvertently took half a step back. The black fire lotus was extremely weird, and he felt uneasy merely being in its presence. It possessed a deathly aura that even a Duke would not dare to carelessly make contact with.

"This is the Karmic Sinflame Lotus. It is the agglomeration of the world's evil thoughts given physical form. Just brief contact with it would lead to it adhering to you, like gangrene attached to the bone. Even if you were to abandon your physical body, you would find it difficult to get rid of its purgatory flames. I've invested a lot into this for the sake of today."

The youth gave a slight smile as he waved his hand slightly, causing the Karmic Sinflame Lotus to float up and directly touch the dark-green talisman.

Pssh!

At the moment of contact, space itself seemed to melt. Although the talisman exerted boundless power, all of its energy was restrained by the lotus. And as the flames fluttered in the wind, everything was burnt into ashes. In the short span of a few minutes, the fear-inducing talisman that had left Shen Jinxiao horrified had been disintegrated by the black lotus.

Yet the lotus still remained after that. It then proceeded to fly towards the gigantic tree that upheld the efforts of countless students and mentors of the Astral Sage College.

The youth grinned as he said to himself, "Burn and perish."

Shen Jinxiao sighed as he stared at the Tree of Resonant Power. It was truly lamentable. This was the Astral Sage College's strength and foundation. Who knew how many students and mentors had spent time cultivating here throughout the years before entering the Umbra Cave to do their part.

Perhaps it was for the best. After this, the Astral Sage College's students would no longer need to sacrifice themselves in the Umbra Cave.

After all, the college would become a part of history.

The Karmic Sinflame Lotus shot forth, colliding with the Tree of Resonant Power. But a furious roar resounded at this very moment. "Stop your hand!"

Shen Jinxiao turned to look at the streams of light that were headed in his direction. It seemed as though Vice Principal Su Xin and her reinforcements had finally arrived.

Chapter 0696: Duke's Worldspace Domain

Bang!

As Vice Principal Su Xin's stern voice resounded, multiple heaven-shaking resonance arts were launched, each and every one containing frightening might. All of the Dukes behind her had launched their attacks the moment they stepped into the vicinity of the college, and they were all aimed at the youth with dual pupils.

These were merciless strikes.

Countless Duke Arts descended upon the world like heavenly retribution, all targeting the youth.

At the same time, Vice Principal Su Xin suddenly noticed the black fire lotus that was floating towards the Tree of Resonant Power, and rarely-seen fury blazed within her eyes. "This cretin is truly sick in the mind. Do they truly want to burn down the Tree of Resonant Power?"

The massive, high-grade Tree of Resonant Power was the foundation of the college. Once it was destroyed, the Umbra Cave would be unsealed and the Astral Sage College would lose its position as a sage college, along with all of the glory and history it possessed.

Vice Principal Su Xin had devoted her whole life to the college, especially during Principal Pang's absence. Every single matter of the college, both major and minor, had her hand in it. Thus, the existence of the college itself was even more important to her than her life.

And this scum wanted to destroy it all!

One Duke Art after another roared past like a meteor shower. Shen Jinxiao took a step back, neatly placing the youth between him and the barrage of attacks.

The rage of countless Dukes was something he could not deal with.

On the other hand, the youth remained unfazed, simply lifting his hand and casually forming a hand seal.

A series of spirit lights gradually floated into the air before expanding and forming an indescribable domain several dozen meters wide. At the same time, the space within the domain seemed to have become a little distorted and blurry.

It was as though the little domain was an independent space that had been layered upon the world itself.

Boom!

At this moment, the barrage of domineering Duke Arts rained down upon them and directly collided with the domain. It shuddered under this apocalyptic rain of attacks, but for some reason, every Duke Art that entered the domain disappeared.

They were completely unable to harm the youth.

This unbelievable scene caused the Dukes to be taken aback.

"Duke Worldspace Domain?!" Vice Principal Su Xin had turned ugly as she gritted her teeth and enunciated every word.

Yu Hongxi's expression similarly became solemn as she gravely said, "This is an upper-grade Duke."

"Upper-grade Duke?" The rest of the Dukes felt like they had been struck by lightning.

The Duke Stage had nine grades. They were split into three divisions, and "upper-grade Duke" referred to Dukes who had entered the seventh-grade and above!

This was to say that the youth was at least a seventh-grade Duke.

Dukes who had reached that stage of power possessed a mystical strength that had been termed the Duke's Worldspace Domain.

The term "Duke" was coined with the secular title of a traditional duke in mind. In the secular world, the highest ranked dukes were able to receive territory in the border regions of the king they served. Simply speaking, they were allocated a domain to rule over, and it was territory they controlled.

In the cultivation world, when one reached the upper Duke Stage, they were able to open up a domain in the world around them, which was known as the Duke's Worldspace Domain.

The difference was that this territory was not physical land, but a world within one's own body. This world possessed miraculous properties that could protect one's body while projecting mystical might. The Duke's Worldspace Domain was ultimately the mark of one who had entered the upper-grade Duke Stage.

The domain the youth had projected was undoubtedly the Duke's Worldspace Domain. As a result, he had easily resisted the furious assault of all the Dukes.

Vice Principal Su Xin angrily glared at the youth as she icily asked, "Just who are you? Why do you wish to destroy my college's Tree of Resonant Power? You're declaring war on the entire Xia Kingdom with your actions! Releasing the Others into the world is something that goes against all of humanity!"

The youth grinned as his hands formed a greeting before his chest and his eyes drooped. "The genesis of light and dark are one, good and evil cease as one."

These words caused Vice Principal Su Xin and Yu Hongxi's eyes to shrink abruptly.

"You're with the Origin Reversion Institute!" As the college's vice principal and the Golden Dragon Bank's president, both of them were privy to secrets that many others would never have heard of. This included the Origin Reversion Institute.

It was one of the superpowers of the world.

Its hidden foundations were not inferior to the Academic Federation nor the Golden Dragon Bank's headquarters.

They also knew that that titanic power had been the cause of countless disasters. The edicts they believed and followed were ones that were incompatible with humanity, and they were looked upon with vigilance and hostility by the rest of the powers even in the inner divine continent.

But even despite all of this, the Origin Reversion Institute had demonstrated terrifying and strange powers that allowed them to become extremely resilient. Even after being targeted for numerous years, they continued to exist and continued with their activities unabated.

However, the activities of the Origin Reversion Institute had often only occurred within the inner divine continent. It was a flourishing and vibrant land when compared to the desolate wasteland known as the outer divine continents. With that in mind, why would they be interested in it now?

Still, this very action heralded their arrival.

Perhaps the Astral Sage College wasn't even the first one.

Vice Principal Su Xin thought back to the Holy Grail Meet, where the colleges' elders were having a discussion. The Blackwind Empire's destruction had traces of the Origin Reversion Institute's involvement. Now that the Blackwind Empire had been vanquished, had they turned their sights to the Xia Kingdom?

Was the Xia Kingdom about to turn out just like the Blackwind Empire?

"Everyone, the Others are born from the evil thoughts of humanity. They are merely just another facet of humanity. Blindly separating them is not the solution. Only by releasing them and assimilating as one will they truly disappear. At the same time, the human race will also usher in a new era of transformation and evolution," the youth preached as he explained the Origin Reversion Institute's ideals.

"Lunatic!" some of the Dukes exclaimed with both shock and anger. Were these truly words coming from a fellow human? The Others were terrifying existences that sought to annihilate everything. These individuals wanted to release them voluntarily? Were there not enough people who had died already?

It was not like they had never encountered an Other Disaster either. Some had seen it in the flesh, and it was hell on earth.

Thus, the youth's words seemed to be the ravings of a madman.

"Vice Principal, it was Shen Jinxiao who led them in. He has betrayed the college and turned into a medium for the Ichythian King. He has been secretly planting seeds of corruption in the college for years and corrupted countless Violet Vibrance mentors!" a battling Violet Vibrance mentor roared.

Vice Principal Su Xin's gaze was like daggers as she glared at Shen Jinxiao upon hearing those accusatory words. Her entire body was trembling with animosity and fury towards him. "Shen Jinxiao! The college has never mistreated you. Why did you do such a thing!?"

Facing the embodiment of fury, Shen Jinxiao fell silent before helplessly smiling. "Vice Principal, this is just a choice of mine. There is no need to ask why. What I want, the college is unable to provide. Thus, I had to choose the Ichythian King! If you like, you can say that the Ichythian King exploited a desire within my heart and I was unable to resist it."

Vice Principal Su Xin continued to give him the death stare. Still, he remained unconcerned, simply reminding her, "Vice Principal Su Xin, instead of worrying about me, you should be turning your attention to the Tree of Resonant Power."

"I don't need your reminder." Vice Principal Su Xin snorted coldly, murderous intent overflowing from her body.

Swoosh!

A stream of light flashed out from Vice Principal Su Xin's body, transforming into a small, green umbrella that appeared atop the Tree of Resonant Power. It quickly opened up, releasing glittering, green light that took the shape of a mysterious veil. It was now guarding the Tree of Resonant Power.

When the black lotus came into contact with the veil of light, the latter ignited and began to burn, but green light continued to fall upon the flames, reducing the rate at which they burned the veil.

"Everyone, lend me a hand and kill this beast!"

Seeing that the Karmic Sinflame Lotus had been temporarily held back, Vice Principal Su Xin no longer tarried, issuing a quick command as she pointed at the youth. The green muslin umbrella was her top-grade violet-eye treasured artifact, and despite doing her best, it was unable to completely stop the black lotus. Thus, it was more prudent to get rid of the youth first.

Yu Hongxi and the rest of the Dukes agreed and burst forth with all their might. Resonance arts were released unrestrainedly at the youth in a magnificent torrent.

This awe-inspiring display of power caused the entire world to shudder.

Despite their numbers, traces of worry could be seen in the depths of Vice Principal Su Xin's eyes. She understood the gravity of the situation. The Origin Reversion Institute was a behemoth, and if they dared to take action, they would naturally have sufficient means to ensure their success.

It seemed that if they wished to avert this catastrophe, merely relying on the strength of their Dukes would not be enough.

Unless... Vice Principal Su Xin glanced at the Tree of Resonant Power.

"Principal! Just what is happening on your end?"

Chapter 0697: Umbra Cave's Unforeseen Event

In the depths of the Umbra Cave.

Pang Qianyuan was emitting innumerable rays of light from atop his golden lotus. The resplendent light was able to part even the primal chaos as he stood confidently within the void, exuding a sense of sublime power that even caused the worldly natural energy to quiver in subservience before him.

The Astral Sage College's innumerable Dukes might be able to devastate the world itself, but in this location, every single stray undulation of energy was more than sufficient to wipe out all of their attacks.

Pang Qianyuan gloomily stared at the massive void tear. The black river water continued to flow inside it, releasing an intense sense of coldness.

"Ichthyian King, I'm truly surprised that you have managed to confound even my senses after all these years and laid down so many traps in my college." Pang Qianyuan's voice reverberated throughout the void and into the other world, tunneling through the void tear and into the gigantic, black river.

"Heh." The inky river water continued to toss and turn. Then a gigantic silhouette appeared, causing the river to part. A titanic, black fish had appeared on the surface. Atop its head was a single blood-red scale that was surrounded by rings of blood light. One could see the figure of an individual appear within the blood light.

They were garbed in blood-red robes with abnormally large sleeves. Atop the robes was a black fish that seemed to have a life of its own. It was swimming freely through the surface of the robes.

The figure raised their head. He had the visage of a young man with a certain sort of feminine beauty. Additionally, his eyes were unique—they resembled the grayish-white eyes of a fish. At first glance, one would be mesmerized by them. And if one were to focus upon them, they would discover that they possessed a terrifying enchanting power that would cause one to lose themselves.

Between this figure's eyebrows was a blood red scale that glinted with a strange light. This was the Ichthyian King's human form. In a way, it had left behind the horrifying physique that the Others possessed, almost becoming indistinguishable from a human in certain ways.

The Ichthyian King's grayish-white fish eyes pierced through the void tear, focusing upon Pang Qianyuan. A smile formed on his face as he steadily enunciated every word robotically. "Pang Qianyuan, subversion is our specialty. Many individuals from your college have entered the Umbra Cave, so finding an

opportunity was not too difficult. Some of the Violet Vibrance mentors in your college have very ambitious hearts, ones that surpass others. Perhaps it's not so much that I have bewitched them, but rather they reached out to me! After all, they see greater potential with me."

Pang Qianyuan remained emotionless. Shen Jinxiao's betrayal had been quite unexpected. Even though the Ichythian King was a King Stage powerhouse, he would not be able to penetrate a Duke's heart so easily. Shen Jinxiao had hidden his thoughts very deeply, and he had never discovered the apathy and reckless ambition that was within him.

"Gong Yuan and you also have a relationship, it seems? The seamless cooperation between the two of you during this coronation ceremony has been unparalleled."

Pang Qianyuan continued, seemingly answering himself, "No, Gong Yuan does not have the ability to do that. It must have been the person behind him. Being able to keep such a massive conspiracy under wraps and completely sealing this information off from even my senses must mean that this is the case... Looking at the situation, it seems like the end goal is the Astral Sage College after all. Are you trying to destroy the Tree of Resonant Power to unseal the Umbra Cave? These actions seem pretty familiar. I suppose it must be the lunatics from the Origin Reversion Institute. Who would have expected that even their tendrils would have extended to the desolate East Divine Continent? Could it be that they are unable to influence any more matters within the inner divine continent?"

When faced with Pang Qianyuan's monologue, the Ichythian King only continued to grin without a word.

Pang Qianyuan lightly sighed. Although his expression remained emotionless, his heart sank quite considerably. "The Origin Reversion Institute... that group of madmen..."

As a King, although he lived in the outer divine continent, he was very aware of the unfathomable Origin Reversion Institute. Even after countless years, the behemoth known as the Academic Federation was unable to gain any sort of meaningful advantage over them. He was well aware of their superiority in forces and the terrifying might they had at their disposal.

The fact that they had extended their tendrils towards the Xia Kingdom heralded terrible news for them.

"The Origin Reversion Institute seems to have become more active in the East Divine Continent in recent years. What are they trying to do?" Pang Qianyuan frowned as he pondered over this question.

Still, there was no answer to be found for now. The current situation didn't allow for it either.

The college was at a crossroads of survival. He could not afford to remain here.

Pang Qianyuan's gaze was a little regretful as he continued to watch his Dragon Elephant Formation continue to work its magic. The void tear had already shown signs of mending, and if he had more time, he truly could have managed to seal up the crack. If that became a reality, the problem known as the Umbra Cave would be resolved, no longer requiring the college's suppression.

It was a pity he didn't have the time.

Continuing to face off against the Ichythian King in a stalemate would result in the Tree of Resonant Power getting incinerated. Without its suppression, the Umbra Cave would be left unsealed.

Retreating now would also mean that he had gained nothing after being cooped up for all these years. However, there was no other option—he had to make a hard decision immediately.

Su Xin's side simply could not stave off the Origin Reversion Institute.

With such a thought, Pang Qianyuan waved his hands, and the Dragon Elephant Formation slowly dissipated. Trumpeting roars echoed throughout the void.

"Pang Qianyuan, are you planning to leave?" The Ichythian King smiled when he saw this.

The Principal remained unaffected, completely ignoring the Ichythian King as the golden lotus below him began to radiate with wondrous light, zooming away with him on top.

"Unfortunately, I don't want you to leave." The Ichythian King smiled and then opened his mouth. Stygian water gushed out of his mouth like a torrent. It then transformed into countless pitch-black fish scales that penetrated the void, eventually forming a gigantic hand that tried to grab Pang Qianyuan.

Pang Qianyuan lifted his hand in response, and the Dragon Bone Holy Grail appeared. Light swirled around the mouth of the cup before it emitted a suction force that devoured the entire gigantic hand whole.

"Ichythian King, I might not be able to kill you, but trying to restrain me is a fool's dream," Pang Qianyuan coldly replied.

The Ichythian King continued to smirk as he raised his hands. One could see the river of evil beneath him churn violently like a gigantic dragon boat. It cruised through the void tear, surging towards the Umbra Cave.

Upon seeing this, Pang Qianyuan immediately threw the Dragon Bone Holy Grail in its direction. The grail swelled into the size of a huge mountain, asserting a coercive aura that directly blocked the void tear, preventing the river of evil from spreading into the Umbra Cave.

"There is no rush. We'll continue our struggle once I deal with the matters outside. Then we can have a proper battle," Pang Qianyuan coolly replied.

The Dragon Bone Holy Grail could restrain the Ichythian King even when he wasn't here in person, and escaping would be no easy task.

"Hehe."

The Ichythian King gurgled with laughter before he faintly taunted, "Pang Qianyuan, do you really think that after plotting for so long, we'd let you go so easily to disrupt our plans? Huh?"

Pang Qianyuan's eyes shrank and a sense of unrest arose within his heart. He continued retreating as quickly as he could without missing a beat.

At the very moment he did so, a grayish-white energy appeared atop the black river. It brought along with it an acrid smell of decay. In the end, countless corpse hands sprouted from the river, appearing underneath the Dragon Bone Holy Grail and forcibly heaving it away from its location.

This caused Pang Qianyuan to feel a noticeable sense of shock and unrest.

He then stopped as a wall of corpses suddenly manifested behind him, blocking off the entire world and sealing off his path of retreat.

As he studied the corpses, he sucked in a deep breath and his voice became a little raspy.

"Is this the Cadaverous King?" As the grayish-white energy continued to seep through the world, it suddenly stopped and condensed in a single location. A white-robed figure, countless meters tall, took form atop the river of evil.

His entire body was made of bones, and a single hand grasped a dilapidated soul-calling flag^[1]. The grayish-white energy filled the void right behind him, and there seemed to be countless corpses struggling and moaning from within the fog.

When Pang Qianyuan saw the figure, an indescribably ugly expression appeared on his face and the feeling of anxiety within him reached a peak.

"The tiny Xia Kingdom actually attracted two of the Four Pestilence Kings who are the subordinates of the Saturnine Hydra Emperor?"

"Just what are you guys plotting?"

Chapter 0698: Cadaverous King

When the white, bony hand grasping the soul-calling flag appeared, even the King Stage expert Pang Qianyuan felt a sense of shock in his heart.

The individual was not some unknown nobody.

The Cadaverous King, similar to the Ichythian King, was one of the Four Pestilence Kings.

How could the Umbra Cave beneath the Astral Sage College actually attract the attention of two Other Kings?

This was completely abnormal.

Others, especially those that had reached the Other King Stage, were extremely territorial. Whatever territory the Ichythian King controlled, the remaining Other Kings would take heed to avoid the area completely, to prevent any conflict between them.

And yet a second Other King had appeared.

Additionally, neither of them seemed to be in conflict with each other. This meant that there was some sort of unspoken agreement. For what reason could they choose to let go of their differences and cooperate?

Unless this was an order from an even mightier existence?

Other Kings like the Ichythian King and the Cadaverous King could be considered peak existences in the shadow world. However, there were existences that surpassed them. But this was normal—even though Pang Qianyuan was considered one of the greatest experts of mankind, there were still numerous individuals stronger than him.

The shadow world was similar.

From what he had heard, the Ichythian and Cadaverous Kings were subordinate to an even more terrifying existence.

"The Saturnine Hydra Emperor..." Pang Qianyuan squinted. This title elicited a sense of fear that had long been forgotten in the depths of his heart. It possessed a fearsome reputation amongst the upper echelons of humanity's strongest warriors.

Why? This was an Other that possessed Heavenly Emperor Stage strength! Legend had it that one hundred years ago, the Saturnine Hydra Emperor descended upon one of the Nobles' Battlefields in the inner divine continent with his Four Pestilence Kings. It then initiated a heaven-shaking war that caused tremors throughout the entire continent. No one knew how many Dukes were sacrificed, but in the end, one of humanity's Heavenly Emperor experts took to the field and eventually managed to repel the Saturnine Hydra Emperor.

From what he had heard from other Kings, Pang Qianyuan knew that the Saturnine Hydra Emperor was a despotic and almighty tyrant that reigned from within the shadow world.

The Ichythian and Cadaverous Kings' sudden cooperation must have been a command from above. And that command had to have come from the Saturnine Hydra Emperor.

Pang Qianyuan's heart continued to sink.

He could not understand why such a lofty existence would take an interest in a simple void tear that was suppressed by a mere sage college. Normally speaking, their focus would be fixated upon the Nobles' Battlefields. Being concerned over this seemingly insignificant area would almost be a waste of effort and face.

"What are you plotting? Is there something here that you covet?" Pang Qianyuan curiously asked.

The Ichythian King tilted his head slightly as he continued to emotionlessly stare at Pang Qianyuan.

"Pang Qianyuan, there's no need to ask so many questions. Now that things have reached this stage, if you have any inkling of intelligence, you will choose to protect yourself and quickly leave the Xia Kingdom. If you try to block us, then I'm afraid the Xia Kingdom's only King will perish today. This land will soon be covered by my river of evil."

Pang Qianyuan gloomily glared at the murky and pitch-black river of evil beneath the Ichythian King.

"You wish to let this river of evil enter the outer world?"

The river of evil was the condensation of mankind's evil and malevolence, allowing it to give birth to Others. If it truly was allowed to flow unimpeded throughout the Xia Kingdom, the very soil would be corrupted beyond salvation and the Other Disaster that would unfold would be even more frightening than usual.

Especially because the river of evil would continue to expand. If left to its own devices, it wouldn't stop at the Xia Kingdom—the surrounding kingdoms would similarly be affected by the same uncontrollable plague.

The Ichythian King laughed.

"Ichythian King, you're speaking too much." At this point, the Cadaverous King raised his deathly eyes to look upon Pang Qianyuan and then waved the flag.

"I'll restrict him. You control your river of evil and let it descend upon the Xia Kingdom."

With a wave of the Cadaverous King's hand, endless amounts of grayish-white death energy roiled out from him. There seemed to be an endless amount of illusory phantoms screaming in torture in the fog of death energy. They sounded much like the wails of banshees, exuding a fearful aura of decay.

If this death energy were to enter one's body, even a living creature would inevitably transform into a corpse creature that was a slave to the Cadaverous King.

When Pang Qianyuan saw this, his expression turned chilly. The situation was spiraling out of his control. The appearance of two Other Kings was something rarely seen in the outer divine continent, and even though he currently did not know their aim, he knew that the river of evil could not be allowed to run rampant in the outside world.

He took a deep breath and shelved the thought of assisting the college. If there was only the Ichythian King, he could have used the Dragon Bone Holy Grail to temporarily suppress and restrict it. Unfortunately, he would have to stay behind because the Cadaverous King had come to assist. If he allowed the river of evil to spread throughout the Xia Kingdom, preventing the destruction of the Tree of Resonant Power wouldn't mean much.

Of course, Pang Qianyuan understood that he had been forced between a rock and a hard place.

Bang!

Boundless amounts of resonant power poured out of Pang Qianyuan's body like a tsunami, and the entire void rumbled in his presence. Then a bright halo thousands of meters long manifested behind him, radiating an enigmatic charm.

This was the true Triple Resonance Saintly Ring.

Fuelled with all of the glory of his triple resonances.

Comparing the one Li Luo had wielded during the coronation ceremony with this one was like comparing a firefly to the bright moon!

Weng!

The Triple Resonance Saintly Ring resplendently shone with endless beams of light that descended like heavenly flames, scorching through the death energy and causing it to dissipate.

At the same time, Pang Qianyuan clenched his fist, and a gigantic blade tens of thousands of meters long manifested in the void. The world seemed to tear apart the moment it appeared, and the strength of the blade energy it released caused the entire Umbra Cave to tremble.

Pang Qianyuan impassively swung down on the Cadaverous King.

The Cadaverous King was forced to a halt, and his bony face gave rise to a solemn expression. He continued to wave the soul-calling flag in his hand, causing the death energy to condense and transform into a gigantic figure also tens of thousands of meters tall before him.

This figure looked to be stitched together from hundreds of millions of corpses. It was wearing ragged robes and gave off a monstrous aura of death.

The abomination raised its massive palm, which was wreathed with almost tangible amounts of death energy, to directly block the blade manifestation's strike!

Bang!!!

A cataclysmic explosion of energy blasted out in every direction, shredding space and the void with that single clash. In fact, some of the strongholds and purification towers that were constructed closer to the battlefield were completely destroyed by the aftershock.

Two King Stage powerhouses were launching full scale attacks at each other without any hesitation.

The Ichythian King observed the earth-shattering battle with interest. There was no need to doubt Pang Qianyuan's strength, as the two had clashed countless times in the past. This was simply an appreciation of his opponent's might, and he would not underestimate him. Unfortunately, the Cadaverous King had just experienced the feeling of kicking a steel plate.

He relished seeing the Cadaverous King suffer a little. They weren't on great terms after all.

"Hehe. Pang Qianyuan, we've clashed so many times over these years, but it looks like you will finally fail!" The Ichythian King's human body began to vanish, then he transformed into a monstrously huge, black fish. He then began to agitate the river of evil, causing the eerie body of liquid to pass through the void tear and enter the Umbra Cave.

Their plan was something Pang Qianyuan could never have expected. Now that the Umbra Cave had fallen into their control, his stubborn resistance could no longer change anything.

Bang! Bang!

The aftermath of their battle continued to roil the depths of the Umbra Cave.

The Cadaverous King's gigantic abomination was repeatedly dissected into pieces by Pang Qianyuan's awe-inspiring blade light. His triple resonances were incomparably valiant, suppressing the Cadaverous King immensely.

Still, the Cadaverous King remained as immobile as a rock. Pang Qianyuan might be stronger than he had expected, but breaking through his blockade would not be a simple task.

He continued to wave the soul-calling flag, rousing all of the death energy from all around him. He then condensed it into a massive skeleton hand, which then attempted to grasp at Pang Qianyuan.

"Pang Qianyuan, your heart is a mess," the Cadaverous King rasped. Even though Pang Qianyuan held a slight advantage, the one that managed to regain his composure first was actually him.

Right at this moment, regardless of who it was, they all raised their heads.

The entire Umbra Cave was shuddering violently.

Although it was all the way on the other side of the cave, they could see a ray of light shine from outside.

The Umbra Cave was shattering.

At the same time, the temperature of the cave began to gradually rise.

Pang Qianyuan was a little taken aback, but a bitter realization took root within him. His gaze seemed to penetrate through the layers of rock to view what was occurring in the college.

The majestic Tree of Resonant Power had been set alight by the tiny, black lotus!

Chapter 0699: Burning Tree of Resonant Power

The Tree of Resonant Power was burning.

The seemingly insignificant black flame lotus had set the entire Tree of Resonant Power ablaze, a sight that similarly incinerated the hopes of the mentors and students who were present.

Every single branch and leaf of the gigantic tree was burning, and the flames could even be seen clearly from Xia City.

It was as though the entire sky had been set aflame.

This sight was burned into the eyes of everyone watching.

The entire college seemed to have gone silent, whether it was the Violet Vibrance mentors led by Vice Principal Su Xin or the countless retreating students. This scene had left them in an unbelievable daze.

The ancient Tree of Resonant Power had marked the history of the Astral Sage College. Generation after generation of students would cultivate atop its numerous leaves, and batch after batch of students would undergo purging missions to purify the cave.

It was the physical embodiment of the Astral Sage College's mentors and students' memories and emotions.

Thus, the sight of it burning caused some of the younger students to cry out in sadness.

At the same time, the Tree of Resonant Power's body seemed to faintly shake as it released a gentle and calming cry, seemingly to console all the grieving students.

This unexpected action caused even some of the mentors' eyes to turn red and glisten with tears.

On the outskirts of the battlefield, Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e were shocked senseless. A trace of fury glinted in their eyes. The Astral Sage College was a place that held many close memories for them. When House Luolan was in a state of unrest and Jiang Qing'e had single-handedly taken the reins, she had exhibited her incomparable talent and potential to the entire world here. This fact was sufficient for House Jiyan and their enemies to pay close attention to her.

It was at that time that Jiang Qing'e borrowed the Astral Sage College's reputation to protect herself, deterring enemies like House Jiyan from silently sending someone to assassinate her whilst she was still developing.

After which, Li Luo had similarly entered the college and grown immensely in the short span of a year. Most of his progress had to do with the college's assistance.

In the end, during House Luolan's Housemeet, the college may have seemingly maintained its stance of neutrality, but they had surreptitiously provided assistance to them and even a way out if things turned out badly.

Thus, the Astral Sage College had truly taken special care of both of them.

Although it was also partly due to their strength and potential, this favor was something that both of them remembered deep in their hearts.

Thus, the sight of the Tree of Resonant Power burning caused them to feel incensed.

"Shen Jinxiao, that bastard!" Mentor Chi Chan's frigid voice could be heard at the side. Her gaze was like daggers as she glared at Shen Jinxiao, who was still hiding behind the youth. The two of them might not have been on cordial terms, but she had never expected him to go so far as to betray the college.

The youth had clearly been led in by Shen Jinxiao.

The corrupted Violet Vibrance mentors should have been Shen Jinxiao's doing. Only he had the time and opportunity throughout all these years to insidiously lay the foundation for today's attack. He must have done it during their daily interactions, gradually leaving behind the seeds of corruption.

It was a task that required immense amounts of time and planning. In other words, Shen Jinxiao had long planned to betray the college.

Mentor Chi Chan faintly touched her cheek beneath the veil, and killing intent flooded her gaze. She now suspected that the reason she had been afflicted with the Ichthyic curse might very possibly have been part of Shen Jinxiao's plot! Fortunately, she was not inside the college when the curse acted up, and Li Luo had managed to borrow the power of Principal Pang's triple resonances to suppress it. Otherwise, she might very well have become a corrupted puppet like some of the other Violet Vibrance mentors.

"He is a scourge on the earth." Li Luo sighed. It was a pity he was not strong enough; otherwise, he would have found a way to dispose of that man-shaped beast much earlier.

Jiang Qing'e fell into pensive thought for a moment. "The Astral Sage College is probably facing an unprecedented catastrophe."

"It's not only the Astral Sage College..." Li Luo shook his head, and his voice became much more somber.

"With the destruction of the Tree of Resonant Power, the Umbra Cave will likely be unsealed and copious amounts of corruption will spill forth. That will result in a truly frightening Other Disaster."

"Impossible. The Principal is still guarding the depths of the cave. With him around, nothing bad can happen," Mentor Chi Chan rebuked.

Li Luo gave a bitter smile. "Mentor, the Tree of Resonant Power has been set aflame by someone, and yet Principal Pang has not appeared... It's clear that it's not because he doesn't want to, but rather he has been tied down. In the worst case scenario, the Principal might even be having trouble protecting his own life."

Jiang Qing'e's delicate but dignified expression similarly turned forlorn. "This entire conspiracy has exceeded the limits of everyone's imagination. This can only mean that the Origin Reversion Institute's black hand has already tightened around the entire Xia Kingdom."

Mentor Chi Chan was left in silence. She already knew that Principal Pang's absence indicated an issue with the situation. Still, she held on to a faint trace of hope. The Principal was the sole King Stage expert of the Xia Kingdom, and only he had the power to suppress everything and anything, resolving the situation.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e's both felt quite dismal at the situation. As the saying went, if the nest is upset, no eggs within would be left intact. If the Astral Sage College fell today, the Xia Kingdom would not be left peaceful. The Holy Grail Meet had allowed them to experience firsthand the extent of the Blackwind Empire's destruction. No one would ever accept the Xia Kingdom ending up in a similar state.

Alas, with such monumental developments, their strength was insufficient to effect any change.

This battle was not one that they could participate in. In fact, not even an average Duke could change anything.

The Origin Reversion Institute was simply too terrifying.

At this point, Li Luo was reminded of the crimson knight-general whom he had met in the Blackwind Empire... There was a mysterious power backing him. Could it be that the one who had ruined the Blackwind Empire was the same one who was coveting the Xia Kingdom?

In the sky, the Dukes who were assisting were also observing the changing situation. They had already brought to bear all of their considerable strength, but the youth remained unfazed, blocking all of their attacks. His methods were truly terrifying to see.

The Origin Reversion Institute's reputation was not misplaced as a strange superpower that everyone remained cautious and afraid of.

"Vice Principal Su Xin?" Yu Hongxi glanced at Su Xin as she realized that Su Xin's body was trembling from head to toe, seemingly a little out of control.

"I'm going to MURDER YOU!" Vice Principal Su Xin's eyes were bloodshot and full of desire for revenge as she glared at the youth. Immediately after, the void shattered as her four Duke Bergfrieds descended and began to suck in gigantic amounts of worldly natural energy. They then smashed down violently towards the youth without restraint.

The four Duke Bergfrieds were inscribed with countless runes, and space collapsed wherever they passed through.

The youth merely shook his head and casually waved. A beam of mysterious light shot forth. It transformed into a gigantic, dark-yellow ruler. The ruler slapped downwards with enough force to move

mountains, suppressing the descending Duke Bergfrieds. In a blink, the ruler swatted away the attacking Duke Bergfrieds with such force that cracks appeared upon them!

"Eurrgh!"

Vice Principal Su Xin spat out a mouth of fresh blood, and the resonant power within her shook violently. However, she continued to stare at the youth unblinkingly.

"Vice Principal Su Xin, you need to calm down." The youth smiled warmly. "This is just the beginning. We have not reached the point of absolute despair yet."

At the same time, he cupped one of his ears with his head stuck out, taking on an exaggerated posture that he was trying to hear something. "Can you hear it?"

All of the Dukes frowned, unsure of what he was referring to. But a split second later, their expressions warped. Everyone turned their attention towards the area beneath the burning Tree of Resonant Power, noticing the frigid and gloomy energy wafting from it.

At the same time, they heard countless inexplicable whispers coming from it!

It was the corruption that was sealed within the Umbra Cave.

With the Tree of Resonant Power burning, its suppressive might upon the Umbra Cave had lessened, eventually revealing a gap.

Chapter 0700: Seal

Bang!

As corruption began to leak from beneath the burning Tree of Resonant Power, the ground collapsed and a massive, black hole revealed itself. If one were to look into it, they would see that the space within was distorted and fragmented.

The corruption had leaked from this separate space!

The space that contained the Umbra Cave!

The Umbra Cave had always been suppressed beneath the Tree of Resonant Power, and it was considered a separate world space that connected the real world and the shadow world. At the same time, it was due to the void tear that it had even formed!

When the Umbra Cave world space appeared, it attracted the attention of everyone present. Immediately after, a horrifying wave of energy flooded from the depths of the Umbra Cave, causing even the Dukes to have a change of expression. Just a single wave was sufficient to completely eradicate them from existence.

As they peered into the depths of the cave, they could see that the source of the energy wave was the collateral aftershocks emitted by two figures exchanging blows.

"It's the Principal!" one of the Dukes shouted in surprise.

Indeed, one of them was Pang Qianyuan, whilst the other figure was emitting a terrifying amount of corruption. A simple wave of his hand caused an explosion of formidable might, the entire void trembling before him.

"Is Principal Pang facing off against the Ichythian King?" one of the Violet Vibrance mentors asked.

"Wait, that's not the Ichythian King!" one of the more astute Violet Vibrance mentors shouted out as his expression turned glum. "It's another Other King!"

This revelation caused everyone to feel a sense of overwhelming shock. Even Vice Principal Su Xin and Yu Hongxi were taken aback. Another Other King had appeared within the Umbra Cave?

All of their horrified gazes shot over towards the scuffling duo to observe for themselves. The Other King that was challenging Pang Qianyuan was ghastly white with a bony figure. He wielded a tattered soul-calling flag that leaked copious amounts of corruption into his surroundings, completely different to how the Ichythian King fought.

Everyone's heads quaked in fear and despair arose from the depths of their hearts. It was no surprise now why Principal Pang had not appeared earlier. He was actually being held back by two Other Kings in the depths of the Umbra Cave!

At this moment, a hollow and piercing laugh resounded from the depths of the cave. "Heh. Pang Qianyuan, your Tree of Resonant Power is burning to ashes and the Umbra Cave is no longer sealed. All of your long years of effort have been for naught."

A chill overtook all of the college's Violet Vibrance mentors, and their eyes shrunk upon hearing that voice.

This was a voice they were familiar with. Whenever they entered the depths of the Umbra Cave for purging missions, they would have a chance to meet the old nemesis of the Principal.

The Ichythian King!

The rushing sound of a flowing river could be heard coming from the Umbra Cave. Countless cries and screams were mixed into the rustling of moving liquid, which made this particularly spine-tingling.

A moment later, black water appeared before them. It surged out of the depths of the Umbra Cave like a titanic, black serpent, swallowing everything before it.

"The river of evil?!" Their expressions of fear contorted into ones of absolute terror. The river of evil was the condensation of humankind's depravity and sins. It was rumored that the Others were born from it. Was the Ichythian King planning to spread his cursed waters throughout the real world?

The moment the river of evil was let loose upon the world, it would lead to an inconceivable amount of corruption spreading like a plague.

In other words, the appearance of the river of evil in the real world would transform the environment greatly, turning it into a nest for Others.

At that point in time, not only would the Xia Kingdom be ruined, nothing within tens of thousands of li would be left alive!

In the middle of the air, the Regent took in everything with an unsettled gaze. He couldn't help but turn his attention towards the youth. He had not been informed of any of this! The other party had only told him that Pang Qianyuan would remain restricted and unable to leave the Umbra Cave... but nothing about the entire river of evil corrupting the Xia Kingdom!

Didn't that mean that the Xia Kingdom would be completely destroyed?

Although his heart was shaken, he quickly squashed all remnant emotions. The situation had devolved beyond the point of no return, and he was already on the Origin Reversion Institute's side. Even if things got worse, it would not be his concern anymore. Once he revealed that the youth was a fellow conspirator, the Astral Sage College, the Golden Dragon Bank, and the rest of the factions would direct their ire and fury towards him. Even his own supporters might very well turn tail.

At the end of the day, the Origin Reversion Institute's actions went against humanity. When the time came, he would lose everything if he was on the wrong side.

The Regent was a ruthless and ambitious character. He knew how to make decisions swiftly, and so he made his choice after a short internal struggle.

Frankly speaking, the Origin Reversion Institute was a great backer. Relying on them would allow him to gain so much more. It wouldn't even be impossible for him to break into the King Stage with their assistance, ensuring that all his efforts were worth it. "Pang Qianyuan, just leave. Abandon the Xia Kingdom! It is a quagmire that restrains the mighty dragon that you are. I'm helping you break these shackles and leave you unfettered! Why not take this chance to leave?" The Ichythian King cackled with an entrancing voice as he floated above the river of evil.

Pang Qianyuan's expression remained cold as the massive Triple Resonance Saintly Ring behind him continued to shine resplendently whilst he struck at the Cadaverous King. The Other could only retreat when faced with the tyrannical might of the triple resonance blade light.

Still, that was as far as he could go.

He had no way to truly defeat the Cadaverous King, and the Ichythian King was taking advantage of this opportunity to guide the river of evil towards the real world.

The Tree of Resonant Power was aflame and had lost its ability to suppress the Umbra cave, allowing the river of evil to flow unimpeded.

It seemed as though the situation couldn't get any worse.

Pang Qianyuan snorted coldly. "Ichythian King, do you really think that such superfluous words would work on me? Someone who managed to step into the realm of Kings? You belittle me."

"Heh. I'm not trying to entice you. It's just a cold, hard fact! Do you think you can actually reverse the situation? You lost the moment the show started," the Ichythian King mocked.

"The Academic Federation will not sit idly as you conspire!" Pang Qianyuan retorted.

"The Academic Federation has no time to bother with this faraway land."

"Although I don't know what your aim is, I can tell that you have placed a lot of importance in allowing the river of evil to escape into the real world. In this case, I won't let you do so today!" A glint flashed through Pang Qianyuan's eyes before he slowly closed them.

"Oh? Do you really think you can stop us? You and what army?" the Ichythian King sarcastically pointed out.

Pang Qianyuan took a deep breath as he raised his palm. The Dragon Bone Holy Grail reappeared in his hand, and the traces of time were evident in its mottled surface.

"The Dragon Bone Holy Grail?" The Ichythian King's laughter resounded in every direction. "That supposedly peerless treasure that has been passed down through the Academic Federation might be formidable, but I'm afraid it doesn't have the capability to change the situation."

Pang Qianyuan ignored the taunts, only forming a hand seal with both hands. All of the resonant power within him poured out endlessly into the grail as he channeled all his strength within. A moment later, the Dragon Bone Holy Grail began to bloom with scintillating beams of radiant light, and an ancient draconic roar could be heard from it.

The gigantic shadow of a dragon began to descend from the sky.

The shadow covered everything, the Cadaverous King and the entirety of the Ichythian King's river of evil included.

"Dragon Bone Holy Grail, Dragon Bone World Seal." Pang Qianyuan's indifferent words echoed throughout the cave.

The Cadaverous King and the Ichythian King both raised their heads when they saw the shadow of the dragon descend upon them. An indomitable, coercive force enveloped them, and they seemed to lose control of their bodies.

At the same time, the flowing river of evil was forced to a halt, no longer moving.

A white smoke then permeated the entire world. It possessed a special sort of curse that ossified anything it passed through within the range of the shadow.

This included Pang Qianyuan, the Other Kings, and the river of evil.

A dull, grayish-white color began to spread throughout Pang Qianyuan's body, as though he was turning into a sculpture made of bone.

This was a sealing art.

An absolute sealing art without any comparison.

"Pang Qianyuan, how bold of you! You actually chose to accompany us and be sealed together? Is this worth it?" The Ichythian King's tone finally turned glum.

"How naive. Even though it's a peerless treasured artifact, it cannot possibly seal the river of evil," the Cadaverous King stated.

Pang Qianyuan lowered his head as he briefly observed his ossifying body, his expression completely unfazed. "Indeed, this alone will not be enough." He then turned his head, and his gaze pierced through the Umbra Cave, focusing on a certain individual.

At the same time, the observing Li Luo heard a voice ring out by his ear.

"Li Luo, I'll need a hand from you."