

Resonance 701

Chapter 0701: Black Plaque

"Principal Pang? A hand?" When Li Luo heard that familiar voice, he was completely dazed for two seconds before he replied softly with a bitter smile. "Principal. don't you think you're putting me on too high of a pedestal? There are three Kings clashing in the Umbra Cave. Someone as insignificant as me can't even fart in the presence of Dukes! Do you actually think I'd dare to scurry over to where you Kings are? I'm afraid I'll just drop dead if the Other Kings simply stare at me!"

"I don't need you to personally act. I'll loan you something." Principal Pang seemed to find Li Luo's comments a little amusing.

"Lending me something?" Li Luo paused for a moment before immediately nodding.

"Do you want some blood essence too? No problem! Have it!"

"Hehe. I don't need your blood essence this time. Plus, I think you've already realized that you're a little drained. If I take any more, I'm afraid you will be finished," Principal Pang bantered.

Li Luo sighed with a hint of melancholy. Ever since the day of the Housemeet, when he roused all of the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's strength and paid for it with ten drops of blood essence, he felt a sense of emptiness within himself. Clearly, Principal Pang could see it too.

"So you don't need blood essence... then what can I give you in return?" He felt a little depressed at this point. He was a tiny Fiend Palace Tier cultivator, and the only thing that had attracted Principal Pang's attention in the past was his Heavenly Emperor blood essence. What else could he give?

"Obviously, it has to do with the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li," Principal Pang replied.

Li Luo was suddenly hit by a realization. He swiped his hand over his pocket sphere, and an ancient plaque appeared in his hand. A mystical "Li" character was engraved upon it. Beneath it was a slightly blurry image of a dragon that still radiated a tyrannical and coercive aura.

"Are you referring to this?" This was the only thing he had that had to do with the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li.

"Indeed. This is the item I'm looking for. I will have to borrow it for a while," Principal Pang replied.

"Principal Pang, are you alright?" Li Luo couldn't help but blurt out. Judging by the current situation, it seemed as though he was planning to use a method that would harm both sides. It might very well be a pyrrhic victory if he succeeded.

"I am the Astral Sage College's Principal. Although I was unable to protect the Tree of Resonant Power, that does not mean that I will absolve my responsibilities of protecting the college. If these Others think I will choose to abandon this place and escape on my own, they have underestimated Pang Qianyuan! I will seal them together with me, but this will only last for a few years. The Dragon Bone Holy Grail's seal will eventually falter, and we will have to see if the Academic Federation will take action." Pang Qianyuan smiled. At the same time, the black plaque in Li Luo's hand zoomed away into the depths of the Umbra Cave.

The slowly ossifying Pang Qianyuan reached out and retrieved the black plaque, feeling a mighty presence within. He squinted slightly before saying to himself, "Heavenly Emperor Energy is truly extraordinary."

He rapidly formed a series of hand seals as he roused his triple resonances and poured all of his energy into the black plaque. The plaque seemed to have been activated as a result, and a beam of golden light blasted into the sky. The golden light was not simply blinding, it also emitted a faint brilliance. At the same time, the Ichythian King and the Cadaverous King began to turn pale.

"Heavenly Emperor Energy?!" A look of fear formed on their expressions for the first time. Even they felt an indescribable pressure and fear that they had only ever experienced in the presence of the Saturnine Hydra Emperor.

"Pang Qianyuan! You actually still had more moves to play!" Fury arose within the Ichythian King's grayish-white fish eyes. On the other hand, Pang Qianyuan completely disregarded it, combining the golden light that was emitted with the Dragon Bone Holy Grail's sealing light. At the same time, the white smoke strengthened, accelerating the rate at which the three parties were turning into bone.

Even the roiling river of evil was affected, gradually turning calm and no longer flowing forward.

White spots began to quickly appear all over the trio's bodies as the ossification process sped up.

"Pang Qianyuan, your little tricks are ineffective and worthless! You actually used Heavenly Emperor Energy to seal us and the river of evil! Even so, all we need to do is hold on for a few years and then the seal will naturally break! Everything will proceed as per plan then! Your Tree of Resonant Power has already been ruined, so even if you seal the river of evil today, its corruption will still seep forth! Pang Qianyuan! The Astral Sage College and the Xia Kingdom are beyond salvation no matter what you do!" the Ichythian King gloomily declared.

Even when faced with these harsh words, Pang Qianyuan remained unfazed as he observed the seal work its magic. "Who knows what will happen in a few years' time? Perhaps when I open my eyes again, reinforcements will already be here."

"Naive! The Academic Federation can't even take care of their own issues. They don't have the time or resources to send someone to the outer divine continents." The Ichythian King coldly smiled.

Pang Qianyuan similarly returned a grin. He would soon turn into a statue made of bone, quietly resting in the void.

The Ichythian King and the Cadaverous King had yet to be completely sealed as well, but their gazes were full of frustration, anger, and despondence. As they glanced at each other, a conversation occurred between the two, one that could not be heard by anyone else.

"Damn it! That damned Pang Qianyuan actually obstructed us with this shitty seal!"

"The river of evil can no longer propagate forth. We are unable to continue with our plan."

"We need the river of evil to help us find the Original Seed of Genesis. This was the order given to us!"

"Perhaps we can get the Leader to act."

"No. The Leader has already said that he cannot act lightly. Otherwise, the news of the Original Seed of Genesis will be sensed by other existences!"

"Then we can only wait. Pang Qianyuan's seal can only hold us back for two or three years. On the other hand, we still have an ally outside that can assist us."

After that quick exchange, the two were completely covered in white and silently transformed into statues of bone as well.

The depths of the Umbra Cave had turned eerily silent.

However, waves of corruption continued to emit endlessly.

Within the college, everyone could see that the three Kings had turned into bone, and it had plunged the depths into absolute silence. At the same time, everyone secretly heaved a breath of relief as the two Other Kings were simply too terrifying. If they were able to escape from the Umbra Cave freely, they would undoubtedly be the harbingers of the apocalypse.

It was a pity that Principal Pang had been sealed as well.

"Principal..." Vice Principal Su Xin had a pained look as she glanced at the Principal.

"Principal!" Countless students were similarly beset with a wave of sadness, their eyes welling up. Although Pang Qianyuan did not often show his face, his presence within the hearts of the students was undeniable. The very fact that he had sacrificed himself to protect the college from the creatures in the Umbra Cave was more than sufficient to earn their respect.

Now that he had been sealed, the Astral Sage College's strength had also diminished.

Yu Hongxi, Duzé Yan, and the rest were similarly glum. Pang Qianyuan was the Xia Kingdom's only King, so his disappearance would have a huge effect on the kingdom's internal structure.

On the other hand, the Regent was ecstatic as he glared at the bone statue of Pang Qianyuan, his heart surging with excitement.

The only mountainous weight hanging over his shoulder had chosen to seal himself away today!

Who else could obstruct him, Gong Yuan, now?

The youth helplessly smiled as he disrespectfully commented, "Ah. Those two Other Kings weren't very bright."

"My Lord, with Pang Qianyuan and the two Other Kings sealed, you're the strongest one here now." Shen Jinxiao smirked.

The youth was about to speak when his expression warped. Everyone saw a black light shoot forth from the depths of the Umbra Cave. It was the black plaque Pang Qianyuan had borrowed from Li Luo.

As the black plaque shot over, it circled once in the void and then created a frightening blade light. It was constructed of triple resonance energy, and everything crumbled before its might.

The target?

It was the youth with dual pupils of gold and silver!

His grin was wiped off his face, replaced with an expression of displeasure.

"Pang Qianyuan!" The youth snorted in anger with an incensed gaze.

Clearly, Pang Qianyuan had left behind one last move before being sealed away, and it was directed towards the youth!

The youth did not dare to tarry, explosively retreating as he quickly formed a series of hand seals.

"Duke's Worldspace Domain!" he exhorted. A domain quickly took form with him at the center, spreading in all directions like a protective field.

However, the domain that was unshakeable in the face of Vice Principal Su Xin and everyone else's attacks was as sturdy as a piece of tofu before that horrifying blade light.

Bzzst!

An ear-piercing scream echoed out at that moment.

At the next moment, the youth was bisected from head to toe.

Chapter 0702: Xia Kingdom's Monumental Changes

Seeing the youth bisected brought great joy to the people around. This entire situation had been caused by this beast, including triggering the disturbance in the depths of the Umbra Cave. In a way, this was the true culprit for the entire mess today.

However, their happiness was short lived as the two halves of the youth began to quickly melt down and combine, turning into a puddle of squirming flesh and blood.

"Hehe. Principal Pang is a vengeful fellow. He even dealt me a vicious blow." The youth's laughing voice rang out from the pool of flesh. The only difference was that it seemed a little bitter and weaker than before, testament to the fact that Principal Pang's final strike had left him with severe injuries.

"Kill him now! While he's heavily injured!" Vice Principal Su Xin exhorted with murderous intent. The countless Dukes immediately roused the resonant power within them and began to throw everything they had at that pool of flesh, determined to kick the youth when he was down.

Bang!

However, just as the group of Dukes struck out, two of the corrupted Violet Vibrance mentors pounced over, directly choosing to self detonate at that very moment.

Alarming amounts of energy surged out berserkly, destroying parts of the college.

Fortunately, the Dukes were already prepared, immediately taking action to reduce the collateral damage and preventing the college from being engulfed in a wave of destruction.

"Fiend!" Vice Principal Su Xin's eyes turned red. The two mentors were experienced teachers and friends who had contributed much to the faculty, and she had to watch them explode before her eyes. It was infuriating and heartbreaking.

As the wave of energy scattered, the flesh puddle that was the youth had spread out and completely encased Shen Jinxiao like a suit of armor. A pair of mocking eyes could be seen observing the Dukes from within the flesh.

"Everyone, I'm afraid I have to end the show here today. I feel deeply sorrowful that the Astral Sage College will no longer exist in the Xia Kingdom! Ah, yes, that reminds me. I do have a piece of wonderful news to share! Now that the Umbra Cave is unsealed, corruption will constantly flow out of it and this land will undoubtedly be a paradise for Others! A time of chaos will soon commence!" With those last words, the flesh puddle that had encased Shen Jinxiao burrowed into the ground, vanishing completely.

"Damn it!" Seeing the two disappear without paying a price caused the Violet Vibrance mentors to feel frustrated and furious.

Vice Principal Su Xin could only grit her teeth. "Quickly restrain all of the corrupted mentors!"

The situation here was a mess, and they did not have the strength to chase after the youth. It was only due to the Principal's final strike that the youth had been injured. Otherwise, a single high-grade Duke could have wreaked uncontrollable havoc, leading to an unsalvageable result.

At the same time, the black plaque slowly came to a halt, floating above Li Luo's head as Principal Pang's voice resounded from it.

"Hello, everyone. I, Pang Qianyuan, would like to apologize for my inability, which has led to the situation we are in today. Now that things have transpired, it is useless to say more. I am unable to control the Umbra Cave's eruption of corruption and can only temporarily influence the speed and extent of its spread. However, the corruption will inevitably spread, and the region five thousand kilometers around the Astral Sage College will soon be unfit for the living." Hearing those words caused Vice Principal Su Xin and the rest to have a change of expression. In this case, the college could no longer be protected, and even Xia City would also be affected. This was the heart of the Xia Kingdom! This area was the home to tens of millions of people!

"Su Xin, now that the Tree of Resonant Power has been ruined, the Astral Sage College will lose its title as a sage college as per the rules... However, this is of minor concern. Surviving is the most important thing! In the future, you will have to lead and guide the people of the college to find a new location to rebuild. Once the foundations have been set, there will be an opportunity to regain the title of a sage college. You will possibly have to cooperate closely with the Xia Kingdom to ensure that it is protected."

Everyone quietly listened to the Principal's last exhortations. Even the Dukes had downcast looks on their faces as they understood that the Xia Kingdom's lasting peace had been upended by the monumental changes that had taken place today.

The Others would soon breed and flourish upon this land. And if they were not vigilant, the Xia Kingdom would end up like the Blackwind Empire, a territory overrun by Others. Countless people of the Xia Kingdom would be sacrificed without even a corpse left behind.

If the atmosphere of the Xia Kingdom yesterday was one of gentleness and warmth, then it would be like the coldest and harshest winter from today onwards.

Winter had come.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e glanced at each other and could similarly see the heaviness in their hearts. The Other Kings and the river of evil had been sealed by the Principal, but the door to the Umbra Cave had been left ajar with the Tree of Resonant Power's burning. There was nothing within the Xia Kingdom that could suppress and keep it sealed.

At the very least, an area thousands of kilometers wide with the Astral Sage College at the center would now become a no man's land.

"Things are going to become troublesome." Li Luo sighed.

House Luolan's Headquarters was situated within Xia City, and if the city became engulfed with corruption, they would have to think of a new plan.

This was something they could not avoid. Even a Duke had to retreat in the face of this situation.

The only exception was if they could invite a King to suppress the Umbra Cave.

"Is the Academic Federation simply going to sit by and watch a sage college collapse? Now that the Tree of Resonant Power has been ruined, what does it mean to lose the title of a sage college?" Li Luo asked Mentor Chi Chan.

"The Academic Federation's core resides within the inner divine continent. The outer divine continent is simply too far away and is frankly beyond their reach. Losing the sage college title is purely because cultivating a high-grade Tree of Resonant Power is simply very difficult. The resources that are required are beyond your imagination, and thus the Academic Federation has set these strict rules to ensure that sage colleges invest effort into protecting it." Mentor Chi Chan's beautiful face seemed a little dejected, but she nevertheless still answered Li Luo's question.

"Then can we seek help from the other sage colleges on the East Divine Continent?" Li Luo pressed on.

"Do you think the Blackwind Empire's sage college did not reach out for help? Every kingdom in the East Divine Continent has their own territorial considerations, and it's hard to gather them together. Their own sage colleges similarly bear heavy burdens, so who can truly and casually dispatch experts from their own homes to help others? Additionally, once news of the Ichythian King and the Cadaverous King appearing here spread, I'm afraid no other colleges will dare to help." Mentor Chi Chan sighed. Li Luo fell into deep thought and his heart sank.

He stretched his hand out and stored the black plaque in his pocket sphere.

With that, he raised his head and took a look at the ancient college that he had spent a year in.

The entire college was devastated. The majestic Tree of Resonant Power was still burning, and countless branches continued to wither and fall, some smashing into buildings. Yet no one stopped it, because they already knew that things were over. The college had to be abandoned.

In the vicinity of the college, innumerable students were standing in various states of grief and panic. Principal Pang's words had also been transmitted to each and every one of them.

Some were bawling their eyes out. They had always felt proud for being able to cultivate here. However, their sense of pride had crumbled.

All of them were full of sorrow and in various states of daze. No one knew what the future of the college was going to be like.

Li Luo managed to catch a glimpse of a few familiar faces, and he rushed towards them.

"Leader!" Bai Mengmeng waved her hand when she noticed that he was rushing over. Even she was unable to squeeze out her usual, sweet smile.

Li Luo took a good look at Bai Mengmeng, Bai Doudou, Yu Lang, Zhao Kuo, and the rest. "Are you guys alright?"

Everyone nodded, but it was evident that they were a little down. Even the sloppy Yu Lang seemed ill at ease.

"Leader, is the Astral Sage College doomed?" Bai Mengmeng softly asked.

Li Luo reluctantly forced out a smile. "There's no need to be too hung up over this. The Tree of Resonant Power might be wrecked, but the college itself has not collapsed irrecoverably. Vice Principal Su Xin will rebuild the college, and we can regain our title of sage college after a while. If you don't have any place to go now that the college is a mess, you can stay at House Luolan for a few days. I believe that the entire Xia Kingdom will be thrown into chaos shortly."

Bai Mengmeng and the rest quickly exchanged looks before nodding lightly in agreement.

Li Luo sighed deep down. Today's developments had exceeded anyone's imagination. No one would have ever thought that the Xia Kingdom's almighty Astral Sage College would experience such an upheaval of fate, one that would affect the entire body, from students to mentors. The next few days would definitely be full of changes, perhaps ones that would even be extreme and full of violence.

He, too, would need to find a solution for House Luolan to escape from the current situation.

Chapter 0703: Giving Up

Things gradually quietened down in the aftermath of the battle.

After the last corrupted Violet Vibrance mentor was subdued, Vice Principal Su Xin took a group of Dukes to attempt to seal the Umbra Cave. Unfortunately, the results were not ideal. Corruption continued to leak out, and even the combined efforts of the Dukes was only able to slightly alleviate the issue.

After trying for half a day, despite how unwilling Vice Principal Su Xin was, she accepted fate.

In the end, she informed all of the mentors to retrieve all of the college's resources, the Resonant Art Pagoda, the treasury, and all other libraries. This was the culmination of blood and sweat of the college's many years of existence. If the college wished to rebuild itself, it could not lack any of this.

The Tree of Resonant Power's burning had already brought about great damage to the college's foundation. If these possessions were lost, it would severely cripple the college.

Additionally, all of the important students, the future seedlings, had to be placated as well.

The college would be in complete chaos for a time.

When things finally calmed down, the numerous powers began to scatter and leave with downcast expressions. Today's changes concerned the entire Xia Kingdom, and none of them would be able to escape the repercussions.

Especially with the unsealing of the Umbra Cave. Endless corruption continued to pour forth from it, right next to the Xia Kingdom's most prosperous city.

This would affect those living in Xia City the most. It was the capital of the kingdom, and all of the headquarters of the largest factions were situated here as well. With these changes, they would now have to make decisions.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e did not approach Vice Principal Su Xin at this point. They knew that her heart was also a mess. As a result, they took Yu Lang, Bai Mengmeng, and Bai Doudou out of the college and back to the city.

Entering Xia City was like experiencing a whole different world. The atmosphere was still bustling and the streets were riddled with pedestrians, creating a scene of utmost peace and prosperity.

The changes within the college had not been felt by the common man.

Alas, this sort of blissful ignorance would only last till the end of the day. Once news spread, the most magnificent city of the Xia Kingdom would turn into a ghost town.

Li Luo and the rest continued moving with heavy hearts.

They quickly made their way back to House Luolan. After the rest were settled in, Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e made their way to find Ox Biaobiao and Cai Wei to inform them of what had happened.

"What? The Tree of Resonant Power has been burned down and the Umbra Cave was unsealed?!" Even Ox Biaobiao was completely flabbergasted upon hearing the news. Cai Wei similarly covered her mouth in shock, and her expression turned pale.

"The Origin Reversion Institute? I would never have expected that they would extend their tendrils all the way to the outer divine continents. They truly are a bunch of madmen." Ox Biaobiao had a similarly solemn expression. As he came from the inner divine continent, he had naturally heard of them.

"Uncle Biao, now that the Umbra Cave has been unsealed, corruption will endlessly flow from it. At the rate it's leaking out, I'm afraid the city will be covered by it in less than a month. At that point, it will be simply unfit for human life. We have to consider moving the headquarters," Li Luo continued.

The problem was that House Luolan possessed a defensive ward. If they chose to migrate, their ward would be taken apart, and this would pose a considerable risk to them. It was the reason why House Luolan was able to continue to survive.

"There is another problem. If we were to shift the headquarters, Uncle Biao would be affected as well," Jiang Qing'e reminded him.

Ox Biaobiao was acutely injured, and he could only possess the might of a fourth-grade Duke when he was inside House Luolan's headquarters. Once he left, his strength would drop drastically.

Ox Biaobiao removed a pipe of tobacco from his waist and took two puffs before sighing. "The defensive ward will definitely be ruined as it was constructed by your father for the sole purposes of protecting the inner areas. If the headquarters were to be moved, it would no longer be operational."

Li Luo replied, "The defensive ward being destroyed might be heartrending, but it is inevitable. We cannot stay and turtle up in Xia City. Once the corruption spreads, the defensive ward will not be able to protect us."

He sighed as well. "We have to give up on Xia City."

Although this was the bustling center of the Xia Kingdom's activity, so long as the Umbra Cave remained unsealed, he would have to give it up no matter how unwilling he was. That also applied to the royal court.

Jiang Qing'e nodded slightly. "Actually, the defensive ward is no longer as critical to House Luolan as it was before the Housemeet. Master and Mistress' illusory projections have already deterred any unsavory thoughts towards us. If they wish to covet our belongings, they will have to closely reconsider their decision as it will incur Master and Mistress' inevitable revenge. Thus, even without the defensive ward, House Luolan won't be in as much danger as it was before the Housemeet." She agreed with Li Luo's decision.

The only remaining consideration was Ox Biaobiao's condition.

"Uncle Biao, the reason you're able to exhibit fourth-grade Duke strength inside the headquarters has to do with the defensive ward, right? No, more accurately, it should be because of the Divine Matter that is being guarded within the defensive ward, right?" Li Luo asked.

Ox Biaobiao grinned as he praised him. "Young Lord, you are astute. Your guess is correct. The Divine Matter is indeed the reason why I'm able to utilize fourth-grade Duke strength in the headquarters."

"In that case, things are simple. Even without the defensive ward, so long as we bring the Divine Matter along with us and place it in your possession, wouldn't you be no different from a fully capable fourth-grade Duke?" Li Luo clapped as he smiled.

"Well, that is one solution. However, Divine Matter is something that every Duke desires innately as it can give them the opportunity to break into the King Stage. With that in mind, do you still plan to leave such an important item in my possession?" Ox Biaobiao replied tentatively.

Li Luo retorted in a tone that made his displeasure known, "Uncle Biao, why would you speak such superfluous words when we are a family? The way I see it, if the Divine Matter can truly allow you to recover, then I'd happily give it to you. I believe if my father and mother were around, they would agree."

Ox Biaobiao had been stuck inside House Luolan for countless years, and could be said that he had watched Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e grow from young. In Li Luo's eyes, Ox Biaobiao was a trustworthy elder, and it was his secret protection throughout all these years that allowed them to flourish today without Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan around.

The value of their relationship far surpassed the value of the Divine Matter in Li Luo's eyes.

Ox Biaobiao glanced at Li Luo with a happy smile on his pudgy face. He had watched this youngling grow up and mature and naturally understood his personality and why he would say these words.

"Young Lord, you have matured." Ox Biaobiao sighed wistfully.

"Uncle Biao, if there are no problems, I will leave the dismantling of the defensive ward to you. All you need to do is leave Master and Mistress' natal flame to Li Luo to guard." Jiang Qing'e smiled. She would wholeheartedly support Li Luo's decisions.

Ox Biaobiao nodded. "Leave it to me."

Li Luo then turned to face Cai Wei. "Sister Cai Wei, could I trouble you to make preparations regarding the things going on within the headquarters? Especially our skygold and various important materials. Everything has to be taken away."

Cai Wei nodded solemnly. "Young Lord, you can rest easy. I'll arrange for everything to be done."

Once arrangements were made, Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e glanced at each other and sighed lightly. Who would have expected that House Luolan's headquarters would not be destroyed by external forces, but be voluntarily abandoned?

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Regent's Palace

In a secret study.

The Regent gloomily glanced at the two figures that had walked out of the shadows. It was the youth with dual pupils of gold and silver and Shen Jinxiao.

"Xuan Chen, I want you to give me an explanation!"

Chapter 0704: Xuan Chen

The youth who had been called Xuan Chen nonchalantly looked at the Regent, who was fuming. He directly took a seat on the chair beside him. His expression was still ghastly pale as Principal Pang's single blow had critically injured him, despite him utilizing a secret art to dodge it.

"Gong Yuan, interrogating an ally isn't appropriate behavior. I've done as I promised. Pang Qianyuan did not leave the Umbra Cave and I've made your wish come true." Xuan Chen coughed lightly twice before grinning at him.

The Regent's face was dark. "But you've wrecked the Xia Kingdom! Now that the Umbra Cave is left ajar, Xia City cannot be protected from the aftermath of this issue!"

Xuan Chen shrugged. "Well, you're not the Xia Kingdom's Emperor. Why do you care so much about it?"

"I am the Xia Kingdom's Regent!" the Regent emotionlessly continued.

"Do you think that you'll be able to remain as the Regent after the Little Emperor finishes the coronation ceremony?" Xuan Chen smirked as he waved his hand. "Okay, okay, there's no point in continuing with these meaningless words. Gong Yuan, set your sights a little further. Once you become a King Stage

expert, you can construct an imperial dynasty that far surpasses the Xia Kingdom by over a hundred times. At that point in time, you'll be the founding Emperor and your efforts will far exceed the Gong family's ancestor."

The Regent's eyes fluttered a little. "It's not a simple task to become a King."

However, in contrast to his acrid words, his tone had softened immensely.

"With our support, the King Stage is not an unattainable goal. You should know in your heart how mighty we are," Xuan Chen indifferently continued.

The Regent fell into contemplation for a moment before replying, "What do you want to do next, then?"

"The Astral Sage College's Tree of Resonant Power has been devastated and the Umbra Cave is unsealed. Unfortunately, Pang Qianyuan has managed to hinder our plans by sealing himself, the two Other Kings, and the river of evil. As a result, the speed at which the corruption will spread has also been suppressed. I wanted the Xia Kingdom to collapse with haste, but our plans will have to be delayed. Still, this is a good thing from our point of view. If the two Other Kings truly were released, it would not be good news for us. I can't just wave two Kings from the headquarters to come over and suppress them, could I? Others are fickle; they might turn on us at any moment," Xuan Chen explained with a laugh. Although the Origin Reversion Institute and Others had a relationship, this was only because of their similar aims. If the Ichythian King and the Cadaverous King were allowed to roam free, someone with seventh-grade Duke strength would be unable to command them. And if they ever wished to, they could end his life on a whim.

On the bright side, Pang Qianyuan had helpfully sealed the two Other Kings away, and that would give them more time to achieve the Origin Reversion Institute's aims.

Xuan Chen smirked as he asked, "Xia City will soon be abandoned. What are your plans now, Gong Yuan?"

"What do you mean?" The Regent frowned.

Xuan Chen raised his palm, and resonant power flowed forth, forming the projection of a massive map of the Xia Kingdom and its surroundings.

"Now that the Umbra Cave is in this state, the corruption will constantly spill forth. However, Pang Qianyuan's seal is suppressing the rate at which it spreads. Based on my estimates, the location of the corruption's source will undoubtedly be where the Astral Sage College is. It will then leak west and form a gigantic corrupted area."

He then snapped his fingers, and a piece of black territory appeared on the map, running from east to west like a huge, black river that divided the entire Xia Kingdom into two.

"In two to three years' time, the Xia Kingdom should transform into something that looks like this. As Xia City will be abandoned, the royal court will have to find a new city to develop into a new capital. Which location do you think the First Princess will choose?" Xuan Chen grinned.

The Regent sighed deeply. "She will likely choose somewhere in the south as she has a greater number of supporters in that region."

"What about you?"

The Regent paused for a moment as he meaningfully looked at Xuan Chen. "You want me to go to the north?"

"Following the First Princess to the south would only lead to meaningless conflict. The entire Xia Kingdom is in turmoil, and with your influence and power, why would you have to follow the Little Emperor? You can simply revolt and declare yourself Emperor in the north! It would be sufficient to use the river to divide the Xia Kingdom with the First Princess," Xuan Chen said.

"Additionally, with our support, you will encounter a meteoric rise in your strength, beyond your wildest dreams. When you eventually decide to reclaim the southern region and unify the kingdom, it will not be difficult."

The Regent's expression fluctuated. "You wish to separate the Xia Kingdom and reduce its overall strength, all to facilitate your plotting? However, considering the power that you possess, there should be no need to do so. The way I see it... Pang Qianyu must have wounded you grievously."

Xuan Chen's expression finally turned downcast. He did not confirm nor deny it, only continuing, "Why don't you go clash with a King? You'll understand then."

The Regent shook his head. "I understand my limits at least."

If even a seventh-grade Duke utilizing a secret art was unable to take on a single blow from Pang Qianyu, a fifth-grade Duke would have been pulverized to dust.

"However, I am interested in your suggestion." The Regent changed the topic quickly, and a sly smile formed on his face.

Xia City would be ruined soon and the entire Xia Kingdom would be thrown into unrest. All of the previous rules would no longer hold water.

If he were to journey south with Gong Luanyu and the little emperor, the issue with the little emperor's gender would also pose a head-scratching problem. At the same time, he would also be involved with the numerous forces present there, and they would hinder his ambitious plans. Therefore, it would make more sense to retreat to the north with his people. When the time was ripe, he could directly leave the royal court and declare himself the Emperor of the North! With the Origin Reversion Institute's support, his plans would not be limited to the Xia Kingdom.

It was as Xuan Chen had said, his future results would surpass the founding ancestor's.

With this thought, a fire blazed within his eyes.

He understood that he would have to rely on the Origin Reversion Institute more and more. Now that the situation had reached this stage, there was no return, and the youth before him would not allow it either. "This is not a bad suggestion." He flashed a grin at Xuan Chen.

Xuan Chen's pale face similarly radiated a warm smile. The Regent's tactful reply also satisfied him greatly.

"Regent, I have a small request." At this moment, Shen Jinxiao, who had been silent the whole time, piped up with a smile as he looked at the Regent.

"Mentor Shen, you can speak without restraint." The Regent waved his hand.

"It's nothing you haven't already heard of. Now that Xia City will be abandoned, the numerous powers will choose to leave. This includes House Luolan," Shen Jinxiao unhurriedly continued.

A glint appeared in the Regent's gaze.

"Now that they have chosen to leave, the defensive ward will no longer influence us. I think this will be a great opportunity." Shen Jinxiao crossed his fingers before him as he smiled.

"Mentor Shen, you still plan to make a move on House Luolan? Aren't you afraid of Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan?" the Regent asked.

"Of course I'm afraid!" Shen Jinxiao answered, still smiling. "However, now that enmity has already been formed, there would be no way to smooth things over! Why not act more viciously, then? With the Origin Reversion Institute's support, we have no need to be afraid of them anyway."

"So what do you suggest?"

"Lord Xuan Chen will continue to observe things at the Astral Sage College. The First Princess and House Luolan have a tight relationship, and I will need your help to restrain her forces. You can leave the rest to me." Shen Jinxiao cupped his hands respectfully.

The Regent batted him an eye. "House Luolan not only has Chi Chan, but also that man named Ox Biaobao. This is a hidden danger you can't predict. Are you sure you can deal with them?"

Xuan Chen smirked. "You shouldn't underestimate Shen Jinxiao. He is someone that even the Ichythian King praised! Now that I think about it, he is very suited to join the Origin Reversion Institute. I believe his achievements will even exceed mine someday."

These words cause the Regent to squint, and his gaze flickered amidst a moment of contemplation.

"Lord Xuan Chen, you are being too generous with your praise." Shen Jinxiao looked at the Regent with the deepest smile he could muster.

"In fact, I don't want the Divine Matter. I only want... Jiang Qing'e."

Chapter 0705: Royal Court Schism

The news of the Umbra Cave unsealing on the grounds of the Astral Sage College was spread far and wide in the following days.

With so many individuals and students at the scene of the disaster, it was no surprise that this piece of news could not be suppressed.

As word spread, it incited significant turmoil. Xia City was the closest city to the Astral Sage College, and everyone living there panicked. Even with the assistance of the soldiers maintaining order, they couldn't prevent the panic from spreading.

Countless individuals began to flee in hysteria and alarm.

Even when faced with this situation, the royal court did not attempt to stop the populace from leaving. Instead, they actively sought to stabilize the situation and assist with the evacuation. At this point in time, abandoning Xia City was inevitable.

Xia City's numerous powers had similarly made their own preparations. Although no one wanted to leave, especially after they had planted their roots in the city for countless years and invested endless amounts of lifeblood and resources, there was no other option. Ultimately, the people could be evacuated, but the businesses and industries could only be regretfully let go, incurring large losses for the factions involved.

There was no choice in this matter. The corruption was difficult to resist, and although some mighty individuals would be able to block off the effects, the vast majority of people were helpless. The corruption was like a poison that would slowly transform the environment.

Xia City would become a ground of death.

Therefore, there was no point in staying behind.

Under these chaotic circumstances, the royal court opened up a forum for discussion, inviting all of the powers in Xia City to participate.

The parties were invited by the First Princess and the Little Emperor. Strictly speaking, because the coronation ceremony had not truly been completed, the Little Emperor's position was a little awkward. At the same time, the current circumstances did not really permit a second coronation ceremony to be held, and thus the numerous powers tacitly accepted that the Little Emperor was the rightful Emperor.

"Greetings, esteemed guests. We have conducted some investigations in the past few days and have determined the trajectory of the flow of corruption due to the Umbra Cave's unsealing. Perhaps it is due to Principal Pang's actions that the corruption will not spread as disastrously as we had expected. Over time, the corruption will form a large belt that will run through the center of the Xia Kingdom, almost akin to a big river, dividing the kingdom in half."

Within the resplendent hall of the palace, the First Princess glanced at the numerous leaders of the factions she had invited. Her kingdom-toppling beauty seemed a little haggard as the turmoil had taken its toll on her in the past couple of days.

In front of the First Princess was a crystal ball that projected a large map of the Xia Kingdom.

What was displayed on the map was what was mentioned prior. A giant, black river divided the entire Xia Kingdom into two halves.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e were present as well, carefully observing the map. They quietly heaved small sighs of relief. Although the area affected by the corruption was still significant and numerous cities would be ruined, most of the kingdom would be spared. Looking at the bigger picture, this was a relatively acceptable outcome.

This was the last bit of assistance Principal Pang had provided before his sealing.

Vice Principal Su Xin was also present at the forum. She was a little different when compared to her past warm and genial self. Now she seemed a little downcast, which was understandable. She had seen the destruction of her college firsthand—even an individual with a stronger will would find it difficult to shrug off such a disastrous event.

"Finally, a piece of good news." Yu Hongxi glanced at Vice Principal Su Xin briefly upon seeing her silent visage and sighed. "At the very least, the corruption is confined to a specific area and will not spread wantonly. The Xia Kingdom will be able to maintain a significant amount of uncorrupted land."

"I'm afraid this situation will only last for a few years. Once Principal Pang's seal loses its effect, the corruption will spread unabated once again," Duze Yan emotionlessly added.

"Being able to buy time is a good thing." Si Qing bitterly smiled.

The First Princess lightly nodded before unhurriedly continuing, "I've invited everyone here today to discuss our path of retreat. The Xia Kingdom will now be split into two halves due to the corruption that is spreading across the lands. My recommendation is to head south, and I hope that everyone here will join the royal court. At the same time, we will see Others gradually appearing in the lands of the Xia Kingdom, and we will require everyone's help to repel them." The First Princess sincerely appealed to the guests.

The numerous representatives nodded slightly. Her words were logical. In order to prepare for future eventualities, they ought to band together. That was the wisest choice.

However, just as everyone was coming to a decision, a faint voice rang out.

"I don't agree with heading to the southern region." Everyone's gazes turned. They realized that it was the Regent who had suddenly opened his eyes to speak with a stern expression.

"Royal Uncle, what is the meaning of this?" The First Princess's gaze fluctuated slightly and her tone became icy.

The Regent ignored her, only continuing, "I recommend that we head to the north. The Xia Kingdom has numerous soldiers stationed there and we can best amplify our strength there."

A hint of fury arose within the First Princess' phoenix eyes. "This is the decision of the royal court. Royal Uncle, do you intend to go against the will of the royal court?"

"Luanyu, with what happened at the coronation ceremony, factually speaking, the royal court still remains under my control," the Regent continued with his eyelids drooping slightly.

"Royal Uncle, do you wish to rebel?" the First Princess asked.

The Regent smiled. "Why do you have to put words in my mouth? After all, this entire situation can be blamed on your father, the Emperor. In order for his family to hold on to power, he utilized secret means to change Jingyao's gender. He tried to deceive the Kingdom Protecting Formation and violated the will of our ancestors. If a crime has been committed, the criminal is your father! He's the one who has committed the most heinous of crimes. I simply don't know how he can face the ancestors in the underworld!"

"Impudent!" Hearing the Regent slander her father, the First Princess furiously burst out. At the same time, numerous bodyguards streamed in from every direction. Chief Steward Qin appeared behind the First Princess, quietly staring at the Regent.

The situation had turned tense in a blink, and the countless representatives of the kingdom's powers began to glance at each other. Their internal strife had already been exposed during the coronation ceremony, but due to the unexpected developments at the college, it had been put off temporarily. Still, procrastinating would not solve this problem, and it seemed as though things had come to a head once again.

Vice Principal Su Xin frowned. The internal affairs of the royal court were a headache, and there was no solution. The Regent wanted the position of the Emperor. Gong Jingyao had failed to take control of the Kingdom Protecting Formation, ultimately giving the Regent the perfect excuse to take power.

In this situation, just who could force the Regent to back off? To control his uninhibited ambitions?

Only Principal Pang.

Unfortunately...

Within the hall where the discussion took place, the Regent remained seated with an impassive face and a resolute look in his eyes. "If you have set your mind to retreat to the south, then I will have to say that he will not follow your wishes. I will lead my men to the north and gather the troops and garrison the north! All for the sake of vanquishing the Others!"

His words caused anger to surge within the First Princess, and her body trembled with a frozen expression. "Gong Yuan! Do you wish to take the north so you break away and then call yourself Emperor?" Everyone's expressions changed upon this realization. The Regent seemed to have steeled himself to separate the Xia Kingdom.

Yu Hongxi's expression turned serious. "Regent, the Xia Kingdom is facing an existential crisis, and we have to be united. If the royal court splinters, will the people not be shocked?"

This was met with the Regent's calm reply. "This is why I beseech all of you to support me. The current Xia Kingdom requires a qualified individual to rule. Do you feel that Gong Jingyao's might can compare to mine?"

The blunt reply left people silent.

The Regent had been in control for numerous years, and even though he was ambitious, no one could deny his personal strength. At the very least, the royal court had strengthened considerably while he was in charge.

Vice Principal Su Xin glanced briefly at Yu Hongxi. The Regent's strength was unquestionable, but he was simply too wild and constantly sought to acquire more power. This caused others to be fearful of him. If one had to choose, they would definitely prefer the First Princess.

A sudden laugh punctuated the quiet air before Zhu Qinghuo stood up and proclaimed his view. "The Regent's strength is clear for all to see. If we have to fend off the Others, letting him control the royal court would allow people to feel assured.

"Thus, I represent House Jiyan in declaring that we will follow the Regent and head to the northern region."

Chapter 0706: Taking Sides

Zhu Qinghuo taking the initiative to make a statement had caused the atmosphere to freeze up. Everyone's expressions changed. Amongst the Xia Kingdom's five Great Houses, House Jiyan was considered to be the strongest after Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's departure and Zhu Qinghuo becoming a fourth-grade Duke. This was one step higher than the rest of the other house lords.

His declaration was akin to openly standing with the Regent.

There was nothing strange about it, especially after the situation with House Luolan's Housemeet. Zhu Qinghuo and the Regent were now on the same boat.

"The three counties I govern also happen to be in the north and thus my choice does not need to be explained." At this point, Governor Zhong similarly spoke up as one of the Regent's staunch supporters.

House Jinque's Si Qing's eyes flashed briefly before he too spoke up. "House Jinque is willing to head north."

If he had not taken action against House Luolan during the Housemeet, he would have almost wanted to go south with the rest. But the Regent was strong, and he gave Si Qing a dangerous and foreboding feeling. Additionally, he was not a fan of this overt way of demonstrating one's support. Alas, he had ruined relations with House Luolan and he had to make a calculated decision on how he was to protect himself against Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan's eventual retribution.

If one were to look within the entire Xia Kingdom, the only one who had the strength to resist the duo was the Regent.

More importantly, the Regent had also acted against House Luolan, and the enemy of his enemy was his friend. They would naturally work together to deal with Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan.

With these thoughts in mind, Si Qing thus made his decision.

His words similarly sent a tremor through the forum. The countless representatives changed expressions as two Great Houses had demonstrated their decision to stick with the Regent. Of the remaining three, House Lanling was not present and House Luolan was just the two brats playing house. The remaining house lord that had yet to make a decision was Duze Yan.

At this point, a few important officials of the royal court and other powers who were somewhat neutral expressed their desire to stick with the Regent in the north.

In a blink, a significant amount of support was drummed up for the Regent.

This scene caused the First Princess' face to freeze over, her delicate body trembling, evidently restraining the fury building up within her.

At this point, a youth's laughter broke through the tension, echoing throughout the forum. "Hehe, during House Luolan's Housemeet, Pei Hao experienced an explosive growth in strength. We discovered from our investigations that it was due to the hidden support of Shen Jinxiao. Similarly, the Regent also stealthily acted against us. It leads me to wonder if the Regent and Shen Jinxiao have some sort of connection between them," a smiling Li Luo said.

"Shen Jinxiao and the youth with dual pupils of gold and silver are in cahoots. They were both instigators of the Umbra Cave unsealing. If the Regent and Shen Jinxiao have some sort of relationship, then we have to suspect that he is a member of the Origin Reversion Institute too."

These words caused everyone to turn silent. Even Vice Principal Su Xin shot a stern glance towards the Regent.

In the face of this pressure, the Regent remained unfazed as he indifferently stated, "House Lord Li Luo is barely mature, but he possesses such a vicious personality and speaks such harsh words. House Luolan holds a treasure that everyone covets. There's no need to blame anyone for doing so. If you wish to blame someone, then it's your parents who hold the fault of revealing it. Just because I want your treasures doesn't mean that you should frame me. If you have any proof, take it out. Words are cheap and meaningless."

Li Luo grinned slightly. "I was merely voicing out my thoughts aloud. Why so serious? Still, House Luolan will choose to head to the south with the First Princess. Now that the Regent has spoken so openly about desiring our treasures, wouldn't following you just be sending myself to the chopping block?"

This was met with the Regent's emotionless expression as though he was already expecting such a result.

House Duze's Duze Yan then slowly enunciated his decision. "House Duze will head to the south to set up a new home. All things go back to their source eventually. If we have to leave Xia City, that is our choice."

This choice was not strange. Duze Yan had chosen to block Si Qing during the Housemeet, and it also marked a strained relationship between him and the Regent.

Still, if the choices made by House Luolan and House Duze were considered to have caused a slight commotion, then the next individual's words were something that everyone was paying attention to closely.

"I am willing to accompany the First Princess to the south." These were the words of Qin Zhenjiang. His heroic posture was coupled with a body akin to a steel pagoda, crisscrossed with countless scars and giving off a bloody air.

The Regent's eyelids twitched. Qin Zhenjiang had a pivotal position in the army. If he chose to head south, it would naturally attract numerous other generals to accompany him, heavily impacting the Regent's side.

"The Astral Sage College will head to the south. There are several colleges in the smaller cities that can be remodeled to fit our needs. It will greatly simplify things," Vice Principal Su Xin calmly explained.

The Regent's expression turned ugly. The Astral Sage College might have been destroyed and a few of the Violet Vibrance mentors had been corrupted and injured, but it was still a special power. Its foundation and background were still solid, and if they were to follow the First Princess to the south, it would bolster her momentum in times to come.

However, this was Vice Principal Su Xin's choice.

The Regent was clear that Su Xin had her reservations about him. The college used to have Pang Qianyuan, a King Stage expert, so there was no need to be concerned. However, now that he was sealed away and the college had suffered immense losses, if she took the initiative to side with the Regent, there was a chance he might employ some underhanded means to suppress her... which was precisely what the Regent wanted to do.

That woman was cunning and would not give him any chance to exploit her.

The Astral Sage College heading south was not necessarily a bad thing. In a few years' time, the Origin Reversion Institute's presence on his side would deepen. If the college was with him, they might discover them and it would lead to inevitable trouble.

Thus, there was no choice but to walk their separate ways, giving him more time to take full control of the north.

When his own strength rose and he entered the ranks of a high-grade Duke, he would have the confidence to suppress any dissent even if the Origin Reversion Institute were revealed to be working with him. All of these thoughts flashed through the Regent's mind, but his expression remained gloomy as he coldly stated, "Since this is Vice Principal Su Xin's decision, we can only respect it."

He then turned towards Yu Hongxi. "President Yu, what is the Golden Dragon Bank's decision?"

Yu Hongxi smiled as she answered, "To the Golden Dragon Bank, the north and the south are both areas for us to conduct business. Our headquarters will head south, but we will not abandon relationships with the north. We will continue to ensure that our branches remain open for business there."

Clearly, Yu Hongxi was more partial towards the First Princess. Still, they were businessmen and opted to remain neutral. If not for these extraordinary circumstances, they would not have chosen to act so rashly.

Once the two behemoths, the Astral Sage College and the Golden Dragon Bank, made their decisions, the rest of the representatives voiced their views one after another. What was most curious was that quite a few opted to continue following the Regent towards the north. Perhaps this was partially due to the fact that some of them were from the northern side of the kingdom to begin with. But it was more likely that the Regent's rule had influenced them over the years. Although the other powers were not equivalent to the Five Great Houses, they were a force to be reckoned with when added together.

At this point, the forum representing the highest powers in the Xia Kingdom had separated into two factions, one in the north and one in the south.

If one were to remove the Astral Sage College and the Golden Dragon Bank from the equation, it would seem that those supporting the Regent were greater in strength and influence.

This result was something the Regent was pleased with. He did not continue to beat around the bush, haughtily looking at the First Princess. "Luanyu, since you've made your decision, I hope that you will manage the southern region well. The future of the Xia Kingdom requires it to be whole."

The First Princess coldly responded, "Gong Yuan, my father the Emperor was truly blind. He would never have expected that choosing you as the Regent would have led to the kingdom splintering."

"As I have said, he was simply too greedy. He did not abide by the rules set by the ancestors," the Regent retorted. However, he did not continue to bicker, merely turning to leave.

With his departure, those who supported him similarly took their leave.

A few moments later, a good half of the forum had emptied out.

The First Princess' beautiful face had an indeterminable expression, but her gaze was riddled with killing intent. She had almost wanted to command her men to take action, but reason and logic allowed her to calm down. The truth was that the forces siding with her might not have been able to overpower him.

Perhaps without Vice Principal Su Xin and Yu Hongxi's presence, she suspected that Gong Yuan might have taken the initiative and disposed of her immediately, taking control of the royal court directly.

It might have been crude, but it would've been effective in such chaotic times.

The First Princess heaved a few deep breaths. Her gorgeous palatial dress could not hide her turbulently beating chest. She did her best to remain calm despite the fire burning within her. She then turned to face Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e, revealing a smile full of gratitude.

"Hello, everyone. Now that you've made your decision, we can make preparations to leave. Xia City might be done for, but I hold hope for the future of the Xia Kingdom. I believe that we will return here one day."

Upon hearing her motivating words, the representatives who sided with her also hurriedly took their leave. A lot of work had to be done.

Li Luo exchanged his farewells before rushing over to catch Vice Principal Su Xin before she left.

"Vice Principal, are there places in the south to rebuild the Astral Sage College?" Li Luo lightly asked.

She glanced at Li Luo before forcing a smile. "Well, there are a few choices. Why? Do you have any suggestions?"

Li Luo grinned. "I would like to recommend Southwind Academy."

"Southwind Academy, huh? That was actually one of the choices." Vice Principal Su Xin nodded lightly. She knew that both Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e had graduated from there.

"I will discuss the situation with the Violet Vibrance mentors. If they were able to produce two outstanding students like yourself and Jiang Qing'e, their luck mustn't be too bad."

Li Luo smiled and nodded. As he observed Su Xin's haggard expression, he couldn't help but speak out and comfort her as well.

"Vice Principal Su Xin, you don't need to feel too disheartened. The college is destroyed, but this might be the opportunity to be reborn from the ashes. Perhaps the Astral Sage College might just produce a super expert that no other sage college is able to compare with! At the very least, it will be considered an 'ancient college!'"

Listening to Li Luo's consoling words brought a smile to her face. Her gaze turned warm and she stretched out a hand to ruffle the youth's hair.

"If that's the case, I will have to pin my hopes onto you and Jiang Qing'e."

Chapter 0707: An Answer

Xia City was in a flurry for the next ten days as everyone was scrambling.

Innumerable people had chosen to abandon their homes and head either to the north or the south. Although they were unwilling in their hearts, they could only escape as the corruption had become even thicker in the surroundings and traces of Others could be seen.

The good thing was that these were low-grade Others, and with Xia City's experts being as common as the clouds, they were easily vanquished.

But even with the Others being killed, a terrifying atmosphere had built up within the city.

Every single day, the number of individuals fleeing continued to rise, all filled with panic. Some had not even gotten over the fact that they were about to celebrate the new year just a few days prior. Instead, life had turned into a nightmare.

This was a disaster none could avoid.

Even the top powers of Xia City were not exempt.

All of them hurriedly attempted to collect all of their resources, but due to the limited time, the amount they were able to retrieve was relatively miniscule, forcing them to give it up reluctantly.

Meanwhile, all was not at ease within Xia City.

A lack of peace had stemmed from the royal court's schism. The First Princess and the Regent had acrimoniously parted ways. The news of one of them heading to the north and the other to the south had spread within the city, and this incited tremors of shock amongst the populace. Even a toddler understood the implications of this action.

The royal court had split into two and the Xia Kingdom would inevitably separate into two smaller kingdoms.

The south would be controlled by the First Princess' faction, whereas the north would be ruled by the Regent's.

If this separation had happened a month ago, the Regent would undoubtedly have invited endless criticism. After all, this was a treasonous conspiracy! Unfortunately, due to the critical issue of corruption spreading throughout Xia City, no one could be bothered to even glance at the Regent a second time.

Only those of the First Princess' faction were still spending their time haranguing the Regent in public these days. The two factions continued to confront each other as the days passed, resulting in their conflict becoming more and more heated. If not for the overhanging threat, they might have simply burst out into an all-out war.

In short, the division within the royal court had caused the situation within Xia City to become even more chaotic than before!

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House Luolan, underground palace

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e were currently sitting together as they watched Ox Biaobiao with trepidation. He was currently executing a series of hand seals, and with each one, the runic light patterns that covered the underground palace were gradually weakening in intensity.

These light patterns were the bedrock of the defensive ward that guarded House Luolan.

Li Luo's gaze was complex. The defensive ward had protected House Luolan for countless years, and he had never imagined that it would be broken by him instead of outsiders.

However, there was no choice. Xia City was headed to destruction and House Luolan had to migrate.

Thus, they had to retrieve the Divine Matter and protect the natal flames left behind by Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan.

After noticing that Li Luo was in a state of internal strife, Jiang Qing'e glanced at him with her bright, cold eyes before tightly gripping his hand.

Feeling a cold and delicate touch on his palm, Li Luo turned to look at Jiang Qing'e with a warm feeling in his heart.

"The defensive ward has served its purpose. It has protected us through the trials of the Housemeet. We should move ahead and rely on ourselves from now on." Jiang Qing'e gave a slight smile. Her beautiful face lit up with such a bright luster that even the dimly lit underground palace seemed to have become brighter for a moment.

Facing this absolute beauty that was so close at hand caused even Li Luo to momentarily fall into a daze, despite long being accustomed to her appearance.

He similarly clasped his hand around her slender, jadelike fingers and lightly sighed. "Sister Qing'e, it seems that a year has gone by in a blink. Do you still remember when you first came to Southwind Academy to pick me up? Don't you think that I've passed enough trials and tribulations by now for you to accede to my proposal? Don't you think I should have an answer now?"

Jiang Qing'e was left a little surprised. She blinked innocently before asking, "What answer are you referring to?"

"Don't act dumb!" Li Luo angrily said.

"Annuling the engagement! When can I change the agreement? Don't you think I've passed your tests!? Now I'm the House Lord of House Luolan to boot!"

Jiang Qing'e helplessly replied, "You really like to kick up a fuss, don't you?"

"I'm not kicking up a fuss! This is extremely important to me," Li Luo solemnly replied.

Jiang Qing'e then gave a smile that wasn't a smile. "Your strength hasn't surpassed mine. Didn't you always think that once you surpassed me, you could do as you please?"

Li Luo resentfully grumbled, "Surpassing you is a little crude. Are these words a couple should use on each other? Isn't that a little too competitive?"

After which, he forcefully clutched Jiang Qing'e's little hand as he attentively looked at her. "I don't care! Sister Qing'e, I just want to know, do you like me? Do you like me in the way a man likes a woman and not due to some sort of brotherly affection?" This sudden attack left even the usually calm Jiang Qing'e a little lost for words. A faint blush emerged on her fair cheeks that looked as delicate as porcelain, and a rare hint of shyness appeared in her eyes at the same time.

Perhaps it was due to the defensive ward being deconstructed and they were abandoning House Luolan that Jiang Qing'e felt like Li Luo was acting a little more reckless than usual.

At the same time, she did not know how to reply as her heart pounded in her chest.

Seeing that she did not reply, Li Luo's eyes widened. "Although your answer is not important, you are already part of House Luolan! As House Luolan's young mistress, you have to do what you're supposed to do!"

Knowing that Li Luo had been messing with her all along, Jiang Qing'e did not know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Keh!" At this point a dry cough echoed throughout the underground palace, interrupting the romantic atmosphere.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e hurriedly turned over as Ox Biaobiao had formed the final hand seal, causing all of the complicated, runic-light patterns to turn dim. A formless wave of energy swiftly washed over them.

The underground palace shuddered and dust flew all around.

Crack!

The stone pillar in the center of the underground palace began to gradually shatter, and a mysterious, diamond-shaped crystal slowly floated into the air, emanating waves of light. With the appearance of the object, a mystical energy pervaded the underground palace, and even Li Luo could feel the resonant power within him boiling with excitement.

Divine Matter!

Li Luo froze upon seeing it. This was a treasure left behind by his parents which every Duke coveted.

He slowly walked forward, first walking towards the two natal flames. "Father, Mother, the Xia Kingdom is undergoing an upheaval and we can't protect the headquarters any longer, so I have no choice but to take the Divine Matter somewhere else. If you can hear what I'm saying, please take care on the Nobles' Battlefield."

The Divine Matter had been kept in the underground palace to sustain the defensive ward, but it had another function. During a time of need, Li Taixuan and Tan Tailan could transmit some of their strength through it from the Nobles' Battlefield and project themselves to defend the house.

Thus, if there was any other choice, Li Luo would not have opted to shift the Divine Matter away.

After which, he stretched out his hand and very cautiously placed the two natal flames into his pocket sphere.

Then he turned to face Ox Biaobiao. "Uncle Biao, store it away quickly!"

Ox Biaobiao glanced at Li Luo with a smile as he reached out and clutched the Divine Matter, the envy of all Dukes.

"Young Lord, I will safekeep this for the time being. Once the danger has passed, I'll return it to you," he said with a grin.

Li Luo nonchalantly waved his hand.

"House Luolan has already tidied up everything. We will probably leave in the next two days. Traces of Others have appeared in the outskirts of the city, so we can't tarry any longer."

Ox Biaobiao nodded. "I will make the final preparations on my side."

After which, the three gave one last look at the slightly derelict and collapsing underground palace for a good moment before they turned to leave.

Li Luo and Jiang Qing'e followed Ox Biaobiao closely.

As Li Luo grasped Jiang Qing'e's little hand, he secretly said, "Sister Qing'e, you haven't answered me yet."

As the words blew past Jiang Qing'e's dainty, little ears, they seemed to have turned a little redder, and she snuck a glance at Ox Biaobiao. She then whispered back, "I'll give you an answer when we reach the City of Southwind!"

After which, she hastened her steps, no longer entangling herself with Li Luo.

Li Luo grinned as he looked at the usually calm and unflustered girl who was striding away. With that, he began to leisurely follow.

Chapter 0708: Conditions

Time passed day by day, and the activity in Xia City gradually died down. The previously bustling and lively atmosphere had turned cold and lethargic.

Golden Dragon Bank

Yu Hongxi was standing by the window, staring at the empty streets below as she sighed lightly. As a businesswoman, she innately disliked such unexpected developments, and a change in the ruling party didn't matter to the Golden Dragon Bank. After all, they still needed someone to do business with!

The only exception was the Others.

They were cold and gloomy creatures with no sense of interaction.

In this period of time, the Golden Dragon Bank had quickly collected their resources. However, their operations were simply too widespread, so even after doing their best, their efficacy was simply not good enough.

Thoughts on future plans for expansion within the Xia Kingdom filled Yu Hongxi's mind. Suddenly, a knocking sound came from the door which broke her train of thought. Indicating for the person to come in, a serving maid quickly stepped in and quickly passed on a message in a low voice.

"Oh? She actually came to the Golden Dragon Bank to visit me?" Yu Hongxi's eyebrows arched in curiosity as she nodded. "Invite her in and don't let anyone interrupt us, including Qing'er." A few moments after the serving maid left, Yu Hongxi leaned back in her chair with her fingers crossed, showcasing her amazing figure.

It was only when a light knocking was heard and the door pushed open that she raised her head to look at Jiang Qing'e. "I never expected you to come to me on your own. I thought you wished to avoid such a situation. I guess House Luolan's mistress might have no shortage of bad things to say about me... am I right?"

"My Mistress does not talk bad about others behind their back." Jiang Qing'e shook her head.

Yu Hongxi remained noncommittal but did not remain overly polite either, directly cutting to the chase.

"I suppose you know that I prefer to speak to Li Luo directly. Since you've come here personally, I suppose you're looking for something from me?"

Jiang Qing'e continued to look at Yu Hongxi. Although she was already a mother, she was still as charming as ever, her every expression exuding a mature charm that added to her gorgeousness.

"I do have something I require your assistance with."

Jiang Qing'e didn't beat around the bush either. "House Luolan will be migrating in three days' time. I suppose the bank will also leave around the same time?"

Yu Hongxi nodded slightly.

"However, I don't think we will be taking the same path."

The Golden Dragon Bank would first withdraw to the county closest to Xia City as it was to be a gathering point for the branches as well.

"President Yu, you should understand House Luolan's situation. We might have avoided a disaster during the Housemeet, but there are still people who covet our Divine Matter. Without the protection

of the defensive ward, I'm afraid there will be rats skulking in the shadows. Thus, House Luolan's migration will not be a peaceful affair. I'm afraid some individuals might be unable to restrain themselves," Jiang Qing'e continued.

"Well, you're aware," Yu Hongxi replied.

"Still, the Regent and the First Princess are locked in such an intense struggle over the royal court's resources that they almost broke their heads. Thus, I feel that the Regent will not have the time nor opportunity to steal House Luolan's treasures."

Jiang Qing'e fell into a gloomy silence momentarily before continuing, "Actually, I'm more afraid of Shen Jinxiao."

Yu Hongxi's gaze flickered. "The Astral Sage College's Violet Vibrance mentor?"

"That man is venomous and sly—he has even joined up with the Origin Reversion Institute. And in my opinion, he is a much bigger threat than the Regent. He has always coveted me, from the moment I entered the college. If not for the college's rules, he would have acted much more flagrantly. Unfortunately, now that he has abandoned it, I feel that he can no longer resist nor control himself," Jiang Qing'e calmly explained.

"House Luolan has that mysterious Duke, and with Chi Chan around, it should be more than enough to deal with him," Yu Hongxi countered.

"Although we have made our own preparations, we would like to have greater assurance. I'm afraid of him, and in the worst case scenario, we can fight to the bitter end. However, we are retreating, and Li Luo is with me. I don't want him to be dragged into this quagmire."

Yu Hongxi said, "You wouldn't happen to still be concerned about the Golden Dragon Bank's internal issues, would you? You can relax, I will keep a close watch and ensure that no one runs over and causes you trouble."

Jiang Qing'e shook her head. "No. What I hope is that if you sense any issues happening on House Luolan's side, you will personally take action and intervene."

Yu Hongxi laughed in response to those words. "Jiang Qing'e, have you forgotten the Golden Dragon Bank's creed of neutrality? As the Golden Dragon Bank's president, I will never personally take action. I may like that brat Li Luo, but don't you think that your suggestion is a little overboard?"

"I know this is a little too much, but during the Housemeet, didn't you similarly promise Li Luo that you'd just watch over the Golden Dragon Bank's situation? Still, I believe that you're a businesswoman. Aren't there some areas we can further discuss?"

A hint of interest appeared within Yu Hongxi's eyes as she focused upon Jiang Qing'e. "You're a smart girl. So what conditions do you think you possess that will be of interest to me? Let me think... Perhaps if you were willing to give me House Luolan's Divine Matter, I might be sufficiently moved."

A smile appeared on Jiang Qing'e's cheeks, which surprised Yu Hongxi. She replied softly, "President Yu, my fellow student Qing'er is infatuated with Li Luo. Am I not wrong?"

The smile on Yu Hongxi's face faded as she retorted unhappily, "So what?"

"Li Luo is engaged to someone already, yes? Don't you think that her actions are a little inappropriate and you should take action to guide her appropriately?"

This was met with a cold tone. "Do I need your reminder to discipline my child? Plus, your engagement with Li Luo was just some spur of the moment decision made by that fellow Li Taixuan. I'm sure there's no real affection between the two of you. Am I wrong?"

"How could you know that, President Yu?" Jiang Qing'e replied.

Yu Hongxi pursed her full, red lips as she stood up gracefully, pressing both hands upon the table as she stared at Jiang Qing'e with her sharp eyes, almost as though they could see through her completely. "So, why don't you tell me? Have you given yourself to Li Luo already?"

When faced with those piercing words being uttered by such a charming, mature woman, even Jiang Qing'e was slightly taken aback, and she lost focus for a mere moment.

"Since you are already engaged, you can do anything you wish. If the two of you really had such deep affection for each other, knowing Li Luo's temperament, you'd have long done the deed together," Yu Hongxi indifferently continued.

Jiang Qing'e's gaze flashed. When compared to her daughter, Yu Hongxi was a much more troublesome individual to deal with.

Seeing her lack of reply, she snorted within her heart. Once upon a time, she was wrestling handily against Tan Tailan. Dealing with someone as inexperienced as Jiang Qing'e was too simple!

"If there is nothing else I can help you with, I advise you to leave. The Golden Dragon Bank is very busy." Yu Hongxi once again took a seat.

Jiang Qing'e, on the other hand, remained rooted. She hesitated for a while before she looked Yu Hongxi in the eye. She was lightly gritting her teeth as she forced out the next few words almost unwillingly.

"President Yu... when we return to the City of Southwind, I can annul the engagement agreement with Li Luo. What do you think of that?"

Yu Hongxi's fingers, which were flicking through a document, froze in midair as she slowly raised her head to inspect Jiang Qing'e once again.

In the end, she put the document away, and a warm, gentle smile surfaced.

"Jiang Qing'e, your offer has moved me."

The two then faced each other and proceeded to shake hands lightly, signifying their agreement.

They did not say anything else, and Jiang Qing'e turned to leave. Yu Hongxi similarly sat back down and continued with her work.

After Jiang Qing'e had left and the door was tightly closed behind her, Yu Hongxi continued to flip through the documents for a while longer. Eventually, a sly smirk formed on her face as she said to herself, almost in glee, "Tan Tailan, it looks like I can finally beat you this time, huh?"

She placed down the documents in her hand as she stretched herself, showcasing her wondrous figure.

At this point, the serving maid knocked on her door once again.

"President, House Lord Li Luo has arrived. The Young Mistress is accompanying him."

Her eyebrows arched curiously upon hearing this.

Not long after, Li Luo's smiling countenance graced Yu Hongxi's office as he enthusiastically greeted her. "Aunt Yu, it has been a few days, but your beauty has only blossomed and you look even more gorgeous than before!"

Ten minutes later.

Li Luo stepped out of the office with Lu Qing'er, both equally confused as they exchanged looks with each other. "Did she just agree? Just like that?"

Chapter 0709: Returning to the South

On the fifth day after House Luolan's defensive ward was deconstructed, Li Luo finally gave the command to migrate.

Outside House Luolan's headquarters was a giant convoy with numerous carriages ready to go. All of the elites of House Luolan were assembled, so the convoy was under heavy protection. It was expected as all of the house's accumulations were being shifted that day.

At the same time, a few critical items such as the Spirit Liquids and Purifying Lights, high-grade resonance arts, and high-grade treasures were being safekept by Li Luo, Jiang Qing'e, and Cai Wei in their respective pocket spheres. The rest of the resources and materials that could not be fit in pocket spheres were thus being transported by the carriages.

Li Luo inspected the surrounding streets. Xia City was once bustling with life and activity with an effervescent atmosphere. But now the roads were starkly empty. Numerous shops were now boarded up and dilapidated, with nary a person in sight.

This scene made Li Luo sigh deep down. Who would have expected that in the short span of half a month, the Xia Kingdom's most bustling city would turn into a ghost town.

Li Luo retracted his gaze and turned towards the headquarters. The last few days had been hectic as all of the important buildings had been dismantled, such as the skygold room which he utilized for cultivation. It looked as though the entire area had been pillaged of anything of value.

At this point, the older individuals of House Luolan who were sitting within the carriages stared wistfully towards the headquarters. They had spent many long years here and had naturally developed feelings for this home. Alas, today was the day they would have to let it go, and so they felt heartbreak.

"There's no need for everyone to feel hurt. When we eventually reseal the Umbra Cave, we will have the chance to come back here and rebuild." Li Luo consoled everyone when he felt the gloomy atmosphere.

Jiang Qing'e was currently mounted atop a black wildebeest with hooves that seemed to be wrapped in flames. She was currently garbed in long, white robes, and her slender legs were bare for all to see. Her usually cascading, long hair was neatly tied up into a ponytail and the short, azure cloak that Tan Tailan had personally sewn for her rippled in the wind, giving her an unusually heroic temperament. Her very

presence seemed to enliven the dull and gloominess all around her. "Everything has been prepared. Now we are just awaiting Mentor Chi Chan." She glanced at Li Luo with her golden eyes.

Mentor Chi Chan had spent most of her days within the college providing assistance. Considering the sheer amount of students present, their migration was an even more complicated affair than House Luolan's.

Li Luo nodded before he turned to mount his own wildebeest. He then went to inspect the final carriage in the convoy, where Ox Biaobiao was currently seated.

He now held in his possession the Divine Matter, and thanks to its mystical strength, he was able to exhibit power comparable to that of a fourth-grade Duke. This put him at the very top of the Xia Kingdom.

However, Li Luo did not let Ox Biaobiao flaunt his strength, but got him to conceal himself instead. Only by being discreet could they ensure that their opponent's guard would be down. With the chaos unfolding in the Xia Kingdom, Li Luo was sure that news of House Luolan taking apart their defensive ward was no secret amongst the powers of the kingdom.

Similarly, anyone could also guess that Li Luo would take the Divine Matter somewhere else.

House Luolan without its defensive ward would definitely be a juicy target for covetous hearts.

By ensuring that Ox Biaobiao remained hidden, it could possibly reduce the likelihood of unexpected situations.

At this point, a stream of light arced across the sky, landing before Li Luo. When the light finally scattered, Chi Chan appeared.

"Mentor, you're here!" Li Luo perked up.

Mentor Chi Chan nodded slightly. "The college side has been extremely busy. They simply don't have enough people, so I stayed for as long as I could to help out."

"No worries, no worries, I understand." Li Luo smiled. Mentor Chi Chan might have left the college, but it was only temporarily. Now that the college was in trouble and Vice Principal Su Xin's state of mind wasn't ideal, Mentor Chi Chan naturally focused more upon the college's affairs, helping wherever she could. Even though she was a part of House Luolan, everyone knew this was just a temporary thing.

In the current situation, Chi Chan had chosen to put aside the college's problems and to accompany House Luolan instead. This was something that Li Luo felt great gratitude for.

Mentor Chi Chan had brought some good news. "Li Luo, I've explained your situation to Vice Principal Su Xin, including the possibility of Shen Jinxiao ambushing you. He has now been placed on the wanted list of our college and is considered a mortal enemy. If we discover any traces of him, the college will not sit by idly and will assist you in dealing with him.

"The college is simply too large, so the evacuation will happen over several phases. Because of Shen Jinxiao, Vice Principal Su Xin will lead a group of the most powerful Violet Vibrance mentors to escort the students. They will be trailing just behind House Luolan's carriages, and if there are any strange developments, they will immediately rush over and assist."

"I have to profusely thank Vice Principal Su Xin once again." Li Luo sighed.

With the college's assistance, he could feel a certain degree of relief. Even though the college had suffered heavy losses, it still had the deepest foundation and strength amongst the numerous superpowers of the Xia Kingdom.

In the past, such a formation would not have been required to deal with Shen Jinxiao, but with what had happened to the college, even Li Luo knew that that fellow had hidden himself deeply. The strength he had displayed was not necessarily his true strength, and being alert was of utmost importance.

After Chi Chan's arrival, Li Luo no longer tarried. He waved his hand and issued the command. "Let's move out."

As his command echoed out, the numerous massive carriages began to move, almost like a long, gigantic serpent slithering through Xia City's deserted and wide streets, finally passing through the massive city gates.

Li Luo rode atop his wildebeest, his gaze focused forward as he squinted slightly.

He could see a gray and dark fog before them, bringing about a gloomy atmosphere that permeated like a mist. Anyone who was within it could feel a terrible sense of unease.

At the same time, a strange and inexplicable whispering could suddenly be heard. No one knew where it came from, but everyone suddenly felt a little agitated.

Li Luo, on the other hand, remained calm. He had once visited the Umbra Cave, where the corruption was much thicker. Thus, the current corruption was bearable for him.

But not everyone felt the same way.

Some disturbances occurred within the convoy. Although there news had spread about the corruption, one had to experience it in the flesh to truly understand what it was like.

Li Luo waved his hand, and Lei Zhang with his armed cavalry guards came forth to stabilize the situation.

With that, he turned to face Jiang Qing'e. "Do you think Shen Jinxiao will appear?"

Jiang Qing'e's golden eyes stared at the grayish fog that surrounded them. "This is his last chance to act. Once we return to the City of Southwind, we will be in the presence of the royal court, and the college will also be establishing a perimeter. With his wanted status, it will be much more difficult to attempt to do so. I can keenly feel how strong his obsession with me is... So..." A cold expression appeared on Jiang Qing'e's face.

"He will definitely be here as we migrate towards the south!" Li Luo fell silent. Boundless killing intent towards that man fermented in his heart.

At the same time, he felt powerless when he considered his personal strength.

If he were strong enough, Jiang Qing'e wouldn't have to face such troubles.

He clenched his fists and he shut his eyes, veins throbbing on the back of his hand as he felt fury surging within his heart at his own inability. He truly wanted to vent his frustrations.

However, a small, warm hand suddenly grabbed his fist. Li Luo opened his eyes to see Jiang Qing'e focusing on him as she gave him a graceful smile.

"Li Luo, there is no need to be angry. Your results this year are something no one else could have ever matched. Don't be discouraged just because you're not strong enough now. We still have time. We might currently be insignificant in the eyes of a Duke, but one day..." Jiang Qing'e similarly clenched her other fist, and a hint of a merciless smirk could be seen on her face.

"We will crush them beneath our very hands."

Chapter 0710: Heart Stealer

House Luolan's convoy continued to unhurriedly move down the spacious road while elite cavalry guards continued to patrol up and down, attentively watching every direction for even the most minute movement.

Li Luo continued to sit atop his wildebeest, carefully inspecting his surroundings. There was a gray fog of corruption that permeated every inch of his surroundings like a cloud, affecting the vision of everyone within the convoy. The corruption was more intense in the deeper parts of the forest, and there seemed to be some movement, almost as though strange things were wriggling and being born from it.

There was a pervasive cold and oppressive feeling throughout the entire area.

Li Luo remembered that a year ago, when he had first entered Xia City, this road was full of beautiful scenery, one that would even cause others to stop and linger just to admire.

But everything had been ruined

The wide road was filled with escaping refugees. Panic could be felt in the air, and everyone could feel that something big was coming.

Li Luo sighed in his heart. He remembered the scenes of the destroyed Blackwind Empire during the Holy Grail Meet. Would this place end up the same? Of course, he truly didn't hope for such a result, where the Xia Kingdom would turn into a land of death and decay.

At the end of the day, he was born in the Xia Kingdom, so he felt a sense of attachment to it.

It was unfortunate that the current him did not possess the means to rescue it. Even now, he was still struggling on his own battlefields, with a tight countdown on his life.

Li Luo's gaze deepened before he closed his eyes, feeling the changes within his own body.

He had just entered the Fiend Palace Tier Stage, and after a month's worth of cultivation, his three resonant palaces had been completely tempered. Li Luo had fully stepped into the Fiend Palace Tier.

Still, all of them could only be considered to be at the Lesser Fiend Palace Tier.

With three resonant palaces, Li Luo possessed resonant power that was far more dense and bountiful when compared to someone at the Greater Fiend Palace Tier.

Li Luo focused upon his waterlight resonance palace. There was a mysterious light flitting within it, almost like a bird. This was the abstruse fiend light he had spent much effort bitterly cultivating for.

It was the foundation of an Earth Fiend cultivator's strength.

Not only would its existence help with continuously tempering his resonant palace and making it more tenacious and mighty, it could also be used in battle to amplify his resonant power, greatly enhancing his combat abilities.

This was the reason why an Earth Fiend Stage cultivator had battle strength that far surpassed a Resonant Master.

"Three hundred and seventy-eight strands of abstruse fiend light..."

Li Luo swept his focus over the strands of light that were flying around the inside of his resonant palace. This was the result of a month's worth of endless effort. It couldn't be considered slow, and this was also Three Revolutions Draconic Breath abstruse fiend light.

As a Five Fiends Art, it had a refining efficacy that even caused Li Luo to sigh in amazement.

There was a saying about the Fiend Palace Tier. Three thousand strands Lesser Fiend, eight thousand strands Greater Fiend.

It meant that a Lesser Fiend Palace could only hold up to three thousand strands of abstruse fiend light, whilst the Greater Fiend Palace could have eight thousand strands.

At the same time, this referred to the lower limits. The limit of one's Fiend Palace also had to do with the individual's fiend art compatibility with their resonances. If one had a greater affinity, their body would be able to hold much more strands of the abstruse fiend light.

This was why Li Luo had such great results.

Simply speaking, he possessed triple resonant palaces.

If someone with one Fiend Palace could hold three thousand strands of abstruse fiend light, then in Li Luo's case, as he had three resonant palaces, he could thus hold at least nine thousand strands of abstruse fiend light even in the Lesser Fiend Palace Stage... and that was not even his limit!

Based on his estimations, by the time he reached the Greater Fiend Palace Tier, he would have a terrifying amount of abstruse fiend light. And such a foundation would allow him to leap into the Fiend Body Tier with a single step.

At the same time, filling up his resonant palaces completely would also require significantly more time and resources compared to the average fellow.

"It would be great if I had even higher-grade cultivation resources..." Li Luo sighed in his heart. Although House Luolan had a decent foundation, advanced cultivation resources were not always easy to find. And at the end of the day, the East Divine Continent was considered an outer divine continent, so the resources available were lacking to begin with.

Li Luo opened his eyes and looked at the scarlet bracelet on his wrist.

That was where the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf was housed.

The Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf had not moved ever since the Housemeet. It seemed as though the final fight had affected it greatly. However, Li Luo could occasionally feel that the resonant power fluctuations coming from the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf were gradually intensifying.

A faint trace of a Duke's pressure could be felt coming from it.

It was clear that the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's transformation had very much to do with the ten drops of the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li blood essence.

"Is the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li that useful?" Li Luo rubbed his chin. He could feel that he had undervalued this blood essence of his and sold it off for cheap! In the future, he would have to be careful when giving it out to others. He also could feel that if he squeezed out too much of it, it would have negative repercussions.

Thinking of the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li, Li Luo flipped his palm over, and a black plaque appeared in his hand.

This was a token of authority of Heavenly Emperor Li.

His finger caressed the mottled surface of the cold plaque as he closely observed the mysterious and ancient "Li" character engraved upon it. He had a guess that the origin of this plaque might not have been as simple as he had expected. It might even have come directly from the hands of Heavenly Emperor Li.

Was Heavenly Emperor Li an ancestor of his?

The Heavenly Emperor Stage was an unfathomable idea to him.

It was an existence that existed at the pinnacle of the world. They could move the oceans and shift the mountains with a wave, causing all creatures to tremble before their might.

Having such a background seemed incomprehensible. As he was born in the Xia Kingdom, the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Li was a foreign concept to him. However, based on Li Taixuan's grudging confession, he seemed to have an inexplicable connection with them as well.

If the opportunity came by in the future, he would look more deeply into it.

At this point, Li Luo's expression suddenly changed. He raised his head and glanced around his surroundings. He could suddenly feel that the corruption around them had become significantly more dense.

Rustling noises could be heard.

On both sides of the road were large trees whose lush branches and leaves suddenly stretched out and blocked the path in a threatening way, giving everyone a strange and icy feeling.

Li Luo remained expressionless as he waved his hand, and the Onyx-Elephant Blade appeared within his grasp.

On the other side, Jiang Qing'e had similarly unsheathed her golden sword.

The two stared at the foggy road before them. The corruption seemed to swirl and ripple as a familiar figure strode out.

His gaze was piercing, landing squarely on Jiang Qing'e. He gave a slight smile.

"Student Qing'e, I'm here to steal your heart away."

The entire atmosphere seemed to explode with murderous intent at this moment.