

Resonance 971

Chapter 0971: Strange Cultivators

"Your resonant power doesn't just have three affinities. Perhaps all of them are split into a primary and secondary resonance?"

Li Luo raised his eyebrows when Qin Yi finished her question. After all this time, she was the first opponent that had managed to figure out one of his secrets after such a short fight.

It was not really hidden in any way. However, most would not think that way. It was already a really rare sight for someone to possess triple resonances, as rare as someone with a ninth-grade resonance. As such, one would not expect a split of primary and secondary resonances on top of his triple resonances.

In a certain sense, this was akin to having six resonances in total.

Even though the secondary resonances were weaker than the primary resonances, they still held onto the fundamental characteristics and strengths of each element. At times, these different resonant powers had been the key to helping him conquer his challenges.

Li Luo had not tried to hide his secondary resonance deliberately in his previous battles. After all, a lot of his Pseudo Duke Arts actually required his secondary resonances.

It was just that people thought he had utilized artifacts and treasures in order to use them. They had not expected him to possess both primary and secondary resonances.

Hence, Li Luo could not help but sigh when Qin Yi guessed it right on the spot. Her senses and intuition were on a different level compared to the common rabble.

Other than that, there was not much for him to brood over. Ultimately, his secret regarding the primary and secondary resonances was bound to be revealed sooner or later.

"Seems like I've guessed correctly."

Qin Yi had figured out the truth of the matter from his momentary silence. Her charming eyes were filled with surprise.

"This must be why you have such strong resonant power. I am just wondering if you only have one secondary resonance or if it's for all three resonances."

Li Luo smiled in response. "Since you are so perceptive, Fairy Qin, do you want to keep guessing?"

Qin Yi also chuckled and replied, "I'm afraid you will silence me if I make too many guesses, Dragon's Head Li Luo."

"You've overestimated me, Fairy Qin," Li Luo said.

Despite what was said, Li Luo's eyes lit up for a second as he took a glance at the crimson bracelet on his wrist. If he really borrowed the power of the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf now, could he finally threaten her? He knew that Qin Yi was no ordinary foe. She was the most unfathomable opponent that he had come across to date. Given her special background, it would not be surprising if she had some secret trick up her sleeve to save herself in times of danger.

Li Luo really had no confidence that he could finish her in a single strike here.

"Why have you stopped your attacks, Fairy Qin?" Li Luo continued with a grin.

Qin Yi sighed a little and replied, "I was originally planning to dispose of you before Lady Li Lingjing arrived. I thought it wouldn't take up too much time. However, it seems like I've underestimated you."

"I am sure you still have secret moves that you've yet to reveal."

Qin Yi chuckled lightly. Her pure, white skin radiated holiness and her stunning beauty easily bewitched everyone present. "Aren't you hiding your killer move too? I heard that the Duke Art you used to defeat the energy replica of your father during the Battle of the Dragon's Head is truly terrifying."

Li Luo pouted in response. Qin Yi had even learned of this... Which diehard fan of hers had leaked it out? Nonetheless, Qin Yi was cunning and quick-witted. All she had done until now was test his strength. If she had an easy way to take him down, it would have turned into a real fight.

However, since Li Luo had surprised her with unexpected power, she had made the decision to withhold her intention of going all-out here.

This was a really complicated situation. If she fought Li Luo here and both of them ended in a dire state, it would be truly undesirable.

On the other hand, Li Luo's eyes flashed with this realization. He did not want to fight Qin Yi to the death. After all, he felt that she was a much more fearsome foe than Zhao Shenjiang.

Now that all the rogue cultivators had entered the gilded hall, his utmost priority was to gather as much loot as he could.

Just as Li Luo was about to soften his tone and negotiate with Qin Yi again, his face suddenly changed. He frowned and looked behind her.

A strong energy wave came from that direction.

Qin Yi also raised her eyebrows as she felt the same disturbance.

This energy wave was coming really quickly. It was as if someone was charging towards them at maximum speed. In a few moments, Li Luo and Qin Yi noticed an extremely fat figure flying in their direction like a zooming cannonball. Although the new arrival seemed sturdy, his movements were extremely erratic. In a blink, he was right next to them.

As soon as Li Luo saw the unique body-type, he realized who it was.

Who else could it be but Zhu Dayu from the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Zhu?

Li Luo's eyes flickered as he hurriedly shouted to him, "Brother Zhu, help me! Quick!"

To his surprise, Zhu Dayu shouted back at him at the same time, "Brother Li, help me as well! Even quicker!"

The two of them were dumbfounded after hearing each other's plea.

The first thought that came to Li Luo's mind was that this guy was too thick-faced. They barely even knew each other, and the first words out of his mouth were a plea for help? Hmph!

Li Luo gave a dry cough and replied, "Brother Zhu, I have a great deal for you. There is a lot of Spirit Resonance Golden Dew in the hall, so let's work together to chase her away. After that, we can split the dew equally. How about it?"

When Qin Yi heard this, her charming eyes narrowed a little, and the Boundless Ocean Pearl on her palm floated up slowly.

Zhu Dayu looked over at Qin Yi after hearing the proposal. He laughed out dryly and shouted in response, "Brother Li, she is the least of your worries right now. I think that what's coming my way is more troublesome."

Li Luo cast a suspicious look at Zhu Dayu. Just what kind of trouble had this fatty brought along with him? In that case, he couldn't be blamed if he escaped... After all, they were simply acquaintances.

As they were shouting back and forth, Li Luo spotted dozens of people in the direction Zhu Dayu had come from.

He frowned immediately. First of all, the composition of the group was very strange—there were rogue cultivators as well as people wearing the robes of other powerful forces. Furthermore, their faces were completely blank. There were also clear signs of injuries on their bodies, perhaps left behind by Zhu Dayu. One of them had even lost an arm during the chase.

The most mysterious part of it all was that none of these people displayed any signs of anguish or pain. Their eyes were eerie and their bodies were surging with resonant power, giving anyone who saw them a really cold and frightening feeling.

All of them were at different cultivation levels, with the strongest being a three or four-pearl and the weakest a Fiend Finisher.

Well, it was no surprise that Zhu Dayu was running for his life, considering the sheer number chasing after him.

"What have you done, Zhu Dayu? Why are they chasing after you? If you've done something wrong, just apologize to them quickly," Li Luo said with a serious tone.

Zhu Dayu stared back at Li Luo resentfully. This guy had referred to him as "Brother" a moment ago. Now that he saw so many people chasing after him, he changed his tone and addressed him formally immediately.

"Brother Li, I did not do anything to them. They're also not willing to communicate with anyone. Something strange is going on," Zhu Dayu explained in a hurry.

In fact, Li Luo had sensed it even before he finished his sentence. The eerie and blank stares from these people had already locked onto him as well.

They were definitely not ordinary.

Li Luo frowned a little. He sensed a whiff of the Others from them.

However, the Spiritual Resonance Cave was not like the Dark Domain, so how could he possibly feel such a sensation here?

As Li Luo pondered over the situation, the new foes began to turn hostile. Their resonant power surged up.

Li Luo and Zhu Dayu instantly noticed that things were not right, so they retreated in unison to a spot beside Qin Yi.

"Fairy Qin, things don't seem right. Let's work together," Li Luo said as he smiled warmly at Qin Yi.

Qin Yi pursed her red lips lightly and replied with a light grin, "Weren't you planning to work together with Zhu Dayu to chase me off just a moment ago?"

"Of course not! I was simply kidding... I'd never do something as shameful as having two men team up against a single lady," Li Luo quibbled. Qin Yi was left speechless at his shameless response, but it was indeed true that these strange people gave her an uneasy feeling.

"Let's deal with them first."

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In another corner of the gilded hall.

In a quiet hallway, Li Lingjing was whistling a tune as she walked with both her hands behind her back. Suddenly, she paused in her tracks. She raised her head and stared into the shadows far ahead.

There was a figure that did not really seem like a living human quietly standing there. His eyeballs were wriggling slowly as he watched Li Lingjing in silence.

"What a disgusting aura," Li Lingjing said in a low voice as she looked at him.

The figure slowly walked out of the shadows. Strange, black worms wriggled out of his eyeballs as he stared at Li Lingjing intently. There appeared to be miniature human faces on the heads of the tiny worms, each one grinning.

A cold and hoarse voice came from his mouth.

"Number Three, let me consume you."

Chapter 0972: Luring the monsters

Wild resonant power erupted outside the hall.

The dozens of emotionless individuals who were previously chasing after Zhu Dayu charged towards the group. Although most of them were rogue cultivators and not too strong, the two leaders of the group were three-pearls.

The remaining people weren't too weak either. Coupled with their advantage in numbers, they posed a real threat to Li Luo and his group.

Li Luo went up directly against a rogue cultivator who had reached the three-pearl tier. It was only at this moment that he truly felt how strong his own resonant power was. Although his opponent was way

ahead of him in cultivation level, the pressure during their clash was far weaker than what he had felt from Qin Yi earlier.

He was finally comparing himself to someone normal.

After all, Qin Yi possessed a ninth-grade water resonance. On top of that, she was naturally gifted and could win against opponents at higher tiers. With her domineering strength, she could probably fend off a four-pearl opponent, let alone a three-pearl one.

This was evident when she clashed with another three-pearl tier rogue cultivator not far away. Her control of the battle was even better than that of Li Luo.

"Ah! Brother Li Luo, help me quickly!"

At this moment, a loud cry from Zhu Dayu came from the other side. Due to the large number of opponents, Zhu Dayu had to hold off all the others while Li Luo and Qin Yi focused on the two strongest ones.

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He had tried to drag out the fight with the strange rogue cultivators using all the tricks up his sleeve, coupled with speed.

However, no matter how talented and quick he was, there were bound to be attacks that landed on him from time to time. After a short while, there were terrible injuries all over that fat body of his. Fortunately, Zhu Dayu's recovery capability was truly unfathomable. While he dodged around pathetically, he took out cooked pieces of meat and stuffed them into his mouth gluttonously.

As he consumed them, the terrible injuries all over his body began to recuperate with surprising speed.

He might be able to recover from these injuries, but the pain inflicted was unavoidable. As a result, his terrible, loud cries echoed in the air across the whole battlefield.

Li Luo and Qin Yi felt a little angry about the entire situation as well. After all, these cultivators had been lured over by him.

"Fairy Qin, we can't continue this forever. These people are really strange, and they feel similar to Others. Could they have been corrupted by Others?" Li Luo shouted out. Qin Yi nodded slightly. Her captivating eyes continued to focus on her foe, who had not spoken a single word since their clash started and simply continued going after her life with a blank stare that lacked any sign of spirit and vitality.

Most importantly, the rogue cultivator was not showing any signs of pain no matter how many attacks landed on him.

Although the opponent wasn't too strong in terms of battle prowess, it was clear that Qin Yi would not get out of this unscathed if she dragged things on for too long.

Moreover, it would become increasingly dangerous for Zhu Dayu. If they got surrounded by more of these strange rogue cultivators later, she would probably have to sneak away on her own first.

"How could the Other corruption extend to the Spiritual Resonance Cave?" Qin Yi asked with a frown.

Li Luo shook his head and responded, "Our utmost priority now is to finish them off. If we get caught up with them now, there will be no way for us to collect any more Spirit Resonance Golden Dew."

Qin Yi understood this as well. There were more and more people flooding into the gilded hall. The longer they took, the fewer the rewards left behind for them later.

However... It was not an easy feat to get rid of all these rogue cultivators in a short amount of time.

"I've got an idea. Fairy Qin, if you trust me, please help me hold off this rogue cultivator over here," Li Luo suddenly told her.

Qin Yi's eyes flickered for a moment as she pondered over it in silence. Afterwards, she raised her jade hands, and a veil of water resonance power emerged from the ground. It formed a wall of geysers, trapping the three-pearl rogue cultivator that Li Luo was holding off previously.

"There are two three-pearl foes. I will not be able to hold them down for long. If you take too long, I am afraid I'll have to go for another option," Qin Yi replied calmly.

Li Luo simply smiled in response as he turned around and headed off into the hall.

Seeing this, Zhu Dayu hurriedly shouted at him, "Brother Li, surely you aren't thinking of collecting the Spirit Resonance Golden Dew inside and making an escape, right?"

"Who knows? That's indeed possible," Li Luo replied playfully as he pushed open the doors and went into the hall.

In the same moment, Qin Yi's eyes lit up as if she had figured out his plan. "He's thinking of luring the guardian spirits that guard the Spirit Resonance Golden Dew here. He plans to use them to fight against these rogue cultivators. Since both are lacking in sentience and awareness, it's perfect for them to fight against each other."

Zhu Dayu's eyes lit up after hearing this. "Brother Li, what a brilliant plan!" he praised.

However, Qin Yi continued, "The guardian spirits will attack whoever is in range as soon as they spawn. In other words, Dragon's Head Li Luo's plan is pretty risky. If the guardian spirits decide to focus on him first, what will be coming from our back will not be reinforcements, but another dangerous tiger."

Zhu Dayu let out another cry, and he could immediately feel his heart pounding. If they were caught in a pincer attack by these strange rogue cultivators and the guardian spirits, they would really have to fight for their own lives and escape pitifully.

Nonetheless, Li Luo had already entered the hall. He looked around and noticed the stone cup in the center. This stone cup was not small, and gold light flowed within it. Like little sprites filled with sentience, there were multiple Spirit Resonance Golden Dew drops dancing around in it.

Li Luo did not hesitate to move towards the cup. As he got closer, it shot out rays of golden light. In the blink of an eye, the light transformed into guardian spirits who surrounded him in all directions. They were all wearing the familiar robes of the Sacred Void Resonance Sect.

As soon as they appeared, their eyes locked onto Li Luo and a wild storm of energy swept up.

Like a flash of lightning, the disciples of the Sacred Void Resonance Sect charged towards him.

His response was to lift his hand as quickly as possible, the Acquired Resonance Flame materializing on his palm. The guardian spirits that were charging towards him paused as soon as they noticed it, and the wild storm of energy dissipated. At the same time, they bowed down towards Li Luo politely.

Witnessing this familiar scene, Li Luo extinguished the Acquired Resonance Flame in satisfaction and reached for the stone cup. He took it, turned around, and started walking out of the hall.

When the stone cup began to move, the guardian spirits followed it obediently.

Outside the hall, Qin Yi was holding down both of the three-pearl rogue cultivators single-handedly. At the same time, she kept looking into the hall to keep an eye on what was happening. The berserk undulations of energy which erupted in an instant earlier was a clear sign that Li Luo had activated the guardian spirits. However, how would he avoid being the focus of the guardian spirits now? Would he simply cause a mess and lure the attacking guardian spirits towards them?

Qin Yi kept her vigilance up as her eyes glanced over from time to time. As soon as she noticed Li Luo's plan failing, she would escape by herself without any hesitation.

Just as Qin Yi was thinking about it, Li Luo emerged from the hall. He came running towards her straight with a fearsome force of guardian spirits following closely behind.

Qin Yi retreated immediately when she saw them coming, keeping a close watch on the guardian spirits at the same time.

She was completely astonished by this scene. Although the guardian spirits were chasing Li Luo, they were showing no signs of attacking him. Li Luo approached, and the two three-pearl rogue cultivators were soon in attacking range of the guardian spirits.

Bang!

The next moment, the disciples of the Sacred Void Resonance Sect started attacking the two rogue cultivators with full force. Although the two tried to defend against their attacks, they were soon overwhelmed.

"Brother Li, come over here and help me! Quickly!" Zhu Dayu screamed from across the field, delighted at the sight he had just witnessed.

Li Luo grinned and directly threw the stone cup towards him.

However, Zhu Dayu's face changed completely. He dodged it, avoiding the cup as if it was a poisonous scorpion. When it landed, the huge group of Sacred Void Resonance Sect disciples followed along.

Zhu Dayu quickly used his arts and escaped in a hurry.

However, the strange rogue cultivators were unable to escape in time. When the Sacred Void Resonance Sect disciples arrived, the two groups clashed with one another.

A crossfire of savage energy flew across the sky as the two sides threw everything they had at each other.

Li Luo, Qin Yi, and Zhu Dayu made full use of this chance to make their escape, not wanting to get caught in the middle.

"Brother Li, that was impressive! You managed to lure the guardian spirits over and not get trapped yourself," Zhu Dayu praised.

Li Luo looked over to him and said, "Remember, you owe me a favor."

Zhu Dayu froze for a moment and replied, "That was considered worthy of a favor?"

Li Luo responded confidently, "They were after your life, and I saved you. Is this not considered a favor? Are the people from the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Zhu so unreasonable?"

Zhu Dayu grumbled something to himself.

Li Luo looked around as blood was shed on the battlefield. He frowned a moment later. "These rogue cultivators have lost their senses. They act just like puppets with an eerie air around them... I don't recall them being like this earlier."

Qin Yi agreed with him. "I recognize one of them. He spoke to me before we entered the gilded hall. He is acting like a completely different person now. I think something strange happened when he entered the gilded hall."

Li Luo thought about it carefully and replied, "It seems like there's something really dangerous in this place."

Changing so many rogue cultivators into puppets would indicate that the mastermind was extraordinary.

Bang!

As Li Luo was waiting for the clash between the rogue cultivators and Sacred Void Resonance Sect's disciples to conclude, an enormous torrent of energy shot into the air a distance away in the gilded hall.

This was a truly shocking clash that shook the entire area.

Even Li Luo and the group could clearly sense the waves despite being far away from its origin.

Lifting her beautiful face, Qin Yi looked over and exclaimed, "Based on the energy undulations, it must be a confrontation with an eight-pearl at the very least!"

On the other hand, Li Luo's expression changed completely at that moment. He was very familiar with the energy that had shot into the sky.

It was none other than Li Lingjing's!

What is going on over there?!

Chapter 0973: Li Lingjing's Predicament

The terrifying energy boom resounded through the air and echoed throughout the vast gilded hall, causing the ground to tremble.

Li Luo looked towards the direction of its origin with a frown on his face. He then glanced over at Qin Yi. If one of the two energy undulations was from Li Lingjing, who is she fighting against?

Is it Qin Ying? Or Zhu Zhu?

As Li Luo thought about it, he looked back over to the battle between the rogue cultivators and guardian spirits. Both sides were lacking in consciousness, so neither showed any signs of backing down.

The numbers of both factions dwindled rapidly. Such a brutal scene caused Li Luo and the others to look on with a little bit of aversion.

Nonetheless, the threat they posed to Li Luo and the others decreased as their numbers fell.

"Let's prepare to strike too. We've caused quite a commotion over here. If we drag this on any longer, other people might make their way to us," Li Luo said.

He scanned the surroundings, and his gaze landed on the center of the battlefield. That was where the stone cup had landed, the dazzling, golden glow of the liquid inside it attracting the gazes of the three of them from time to time.

The Spirit Resonance Golden Dew in it was their true target.

Hearing what Li Luo had said, the other two had no objections. In the next moment, the three of them took action with all their might. They eliminated the guardian spirits that were between the rogue cultivators and them before they went ahead to clear out the rogue cultivators.

Dozens of minutes later, blood filled the floor outside the hall. The place was deathly silent all of a sudden.

Li Luo looked at the corpses of the strange rogue cultivators. There were traces of pitch-black coloration within their fresh blood that gave one a really uneasy feeling.

It was as if these rogue cultivators had been corrupted by an Other. However, there were some differences in the details.

He had no time to ponder over what had caused this change, however. As the trouble was resolved, the three of them glanced over at the stone cup.

"Ahem."

Li Luo coughed lightly as he looked over to Qin Yi and asked, "How do you think we should share the Spirit Resonance Golden Dew, Fairy Qin?"

Qin Yi smiled gently and replied, "The two of us were the first to arrive. Under normal circumstances, I'd suggest we split it between the two of us equally. As for Brother Zhu, he not only did not contribute anything, he even lured a group of weird rogue cultivators over to us. No matter how you look at it, there's no reason to share the Spirit Resonance Golden Dew with him, right?"

When Zhu Dayu heard this, his fat face changed completely. He was about to flare up, but he understood just how powerful Qin Yi was. He could only look over to Li Luo with a sad face and say, "Brother Li Luo, I was covered in blood and wounds in order to hold back that group of rogue cultivators earlier. Surely I deserve a little for that hard work, right?"

Li Luo thought for a moment and said, "Fairy Qin, although Zhu Dayu did attract the strange rogue cultivators, we would have had some trouble dealing with the guardian spirits if not for those very rogue cultivators. As such, I propose that we each get forty percent of the Spirit Resonance Golden Dew here. The remaining twenty percent will be allocated to him. What do you think?"

As soon as Zhu Dayu heard his words, he jumped for joy. "Thank you, Brother Li Luo!"

Although it was only twenty percent, it was still better than nothing. The two in front of him were much more troublesome to deal with than others. As such, Zhu Dayu was very satisfied to be able to get even a little reward from them.

Despite his plump and fat appearance, his heart was as clear as a mirror. He knew that everything Li Luo and Qin Yi did had a purpose, and things were not as they seemed right now. At present, the two of them were staying vigilant against the other. By helping him, Li Luo was hoping to borrow his strength to pressure Qin Yi. If a fight broke out, he could borrow his strength to tilt the situation in his favor slightly.

Qin Yi's eyes moved a little before she calmly said, "Dragon's Head Li Luo, you're trying to make me the bad guy here."

She was astute as well. She knew very clearly what Li Luo meant with those words. Perhaps he was hoping that she would reject his suggestion on the spot. In that case, Li Luo and Zhu Dayu could team up against her. If they emerged victorious and chased her away, they could share her portion amongst themselves.

After all, Zhu Dayu was not a weakling by any means. If he really joined hands with Li Luo, Qin Yi might have to endure humiliation today.

Qin Yi pondered over it for a few moments. In the end, she nodded slightly and replied, "In that case, let's split it according to your suggestion."

It was clearly not a wise choice to make an enemy out of Zhu Dayu just for a bit more dew.

Li Luo was beaming when he heard her reply. At the same time, he was slightly disappointed in his heart as well. Qin Yi was really a cautious one; she would not give him any chance to get rid of her at all.

With a wave of his hand, resonant power surged up and the stone cup flew towards him. Under the gazes of the other two, he collected all the Spirit Resonance Golden Dew from the cup and shared it with them as agreed.

Li Luo was able to gain twenty-five droplets of Spirit Resonance Golden Dew in the end. With such a harvest, he could not help but sigh a little in his heart. If he had been able to take all of it for himself, it would have been a bountiful harvest.

After they allocated the Spirit Resonance Golden Dew, Li Luo looked over to the other two and asked, "Are we going to continue our search together?"

Zhu Dayu answered without any hesitation, "I'll tag along with you. Those rogue cultivators are really strange and eerie. It's better if we can look out for each other on the way."

In contrast, Qin Yi smiled a little and answered, "Thank you for the offer, but I will kindly turn it down. I'll go and look for my clanmates first."

She was unable to tell what exactly the relationship between Zhu Dayu and Li Luo was. As such, she was not willing to take the risk and continue the search with them. If they were ambushed along the way, she might end up placing herself in an undesirable situation.

As she finished speaking, she floated off into the distance.

"What a pity." Li Luo sighed as he watched her disappear.

Similarly, Zhu Dayu nodded and said, "Indeed. Fairy Qin is as gorgeous as the rumors have said. It's truly a pity we cannot journey together with her."

Li Luo shook his head and said, "I'm referring to the Spirit Resonance Golden Dew that was allocated to her... If she had continued the journey with us, we could have found a chance to snatch it back from her."

Zhu Dayu paused for a moment after hearing him. "You fool! Such a beauty should be cherished. How can you harbor such sinister thoughts?!"

Li Luo replied, "She must have at least seventy or eighty droplets on her."

At this point, Zhu Dayu paused once again. "Is it too late to chase after her now?"

Li Luo glanced over at him with a smile that was not a smile. Nonetheless, he turned around and headed off towards where the terrifying energy wave had come from earlier.

Seeing this, Zhu Dayu hurried after him.

The two of them navigated the complex routes in the gilded hall in a hurry. At this point, the districts around the hall began to turn into a mess. Not only were people from various powers fighting against each other for Spirit Resonance Golden Dew, there were also battles against guardian spirits. Of course, there were plenty of strange rogue cultivators that seemed to have been corrupted by Others as well.

Chaos reigned as battles were strewn throughout the place.

There were even people who didn't know their place, sneakily following Li Luo and Zhu Dayu. Fortunately, the two of them were able to deter these people with malicious intentions after a destructive display of their powers.

As for the stronger ones that had four or five-pearl strength, they were well aware and cautious of the duo's backgrounds. They kept their distance from the two guys and did not make any moves on them.

After all, this place was full of Spirit Resonance Golden Dew, so there was no need to forcefully pit themselves against these two well-respected talents from Heavenly Emperor powers. Moreover, it was hard to say if they had any secret artifacts with them that could turn the tides when things turned dire.

As such, it was a smooth journey for Li Luo and Zhu Dayu as they made their way through the gilded hall.

Li Luo's face suddenly changed when he approached the origin of the energy wave. His body froze for a moment as a terrifying energy storm washed over him once again.

Bang!

This wave was much stronger than the previous. Li Luo and Zhu Dayu were thrown backwards by it. Their bodies shook vigorously from the violent energy. The constructs in their surroundings cracked repeatedly under the sheer force.

"What's happening over there?!" Zhu Dayu exclaimed in horror.

Li Luo looked over to the district not too far ahead. There was previously a hall standing over there, but the buildings and structures had been torn down. Two opposing energies continued to clash and wreak havoc to their surroundings, and one of the energies belonged to Li Lingjing.

She was fighting against a truly fearsome opponent.

As he thought about this, worry surfaced in Li Luo's eyes.

He summoned up all the resonant power in his body to resist the terrifying energy storm, which died down after a few moments.

Li Luo could see a black mist rising up into the sky from the district. It was a mist that left him with a sense of unease. After a few moments, it disappeared completely.

He frowned, gritting his teeth before charging ahead at full speed.

"Brother Li Luo, it's too dangerous over there. Let's not get too close!" Zhu Dayu warned him in a hurry when he saw his reaction.

However, Li Luo did not care, speeding up instead.

Zhu Dayu hesitated for a moment before similarly committing himself, following Li Luo with all his speed.

The two of them rushed off, and after a few minutes, they finally arrived at the spot where the energy eruption had occurred. The ground was full of cracks and the buildings were totally crushed. The remnant energy undulations still left them in surprise.

Li Luo looked over to a destroyed hallway that was shrouded in darkness.

There was a familiar figure standing still right there.

Li Lingjing.

Li Luo slowly walked over to her.

"Brother Li Luo, don't go over there! Something is wrong with her. Her aura is just like those rogue cultivators we faced earlier!" Zhu Dayu shouted in a hurry as sweat dripped from his plump face.

Li Luo waved his hand and replied, "Wait for me here, Brother Zhu."

He had to go over and find out what had happened with Li Lingjing. He could not leave and ignore her now.

He gradually made his way into the eerie darkness. He soon paused and tentatively whispered, "Cousin Lingjing? Are you alright?" She did not reply. Her white face was cloaked in darkness.

It seemed like something was wrong.

Li Luo took another deep breath and cautiously went closer. He stretched his hand out into the darkness and grabbed Li Lingjing's wrist. When they came into contact, he could feel an eerie coldness run up his spine.

Then he saw Li Lingjing suddenly open her eyes violently.

Her beautiful, almond shaped eyes that were always filled with a look of amusement were now clouded in countless negative emotions. It seeped right out of her eyes like a tide, powerful enough to cause anyone present to shudder.

Chapter 0974: Spread of the Devilish Mist

Li Luo froze for a moment when he saw that Li Lingjing's eyes were filled with negative emotions. For a moment, it reminded him of the way she looked when she was under the influence of the Soul Eater True Devil back in the Western Region's Dark Domain.

Still standing on the same spot, she grabbed Li Luo's hand in response. Her slender fingers grasped his hand tightly, nails digging deep into the back of his palm. At that moment, the strengthening provided by the Sanctified Dragon's Body seemed to have no effect at all.

Li Luo could feel an icy sensation from her fingers, which gave him an uneasy feeling.

When he felt a lancing pain from the back of his hand, Li Luo said solemnly, "Cousin Lingjing, what's wrong?! Wake up!" However, she did not respond. She started squeezing his hand with even greater strength, and veins began to pop up on her arm. Although her hand appeared tiny and weak, it was making Li Luo's bones creak.

The negative emotions that she had been repressing this whole time were flooding outwards.

And there were strange, black lines crawling about in her pupils.

"Traces of the Soul Eater True Devil!" Li Luo was shocked when he saw it. It seemed like the Soul Eater True Devil that had been completely eradicated previously had begun to show up after the huge battle earlier.

However, this thing could not be deterred even by an ordinary Duke. Only a King was sufficient.

After these thoughts ran through Li Luo's mind, he was hit with an idea. He clenched his fist, and the Golden-Jade Onyx-Elephant Blade appeared in his hand. He channeled his mental state inwards and activated the Kingmark hidden deep within the blade.

Bang!

An indescribable energy surged up. Li Lingjing's tiny body shook a little when she came into contact with the energy, and she released her grip on Li Luo's hand instantly. The overwhelming negative emotions in her eyes also died down speedily.

After a few moments, her eyes were back to normal.

"Li Luo..."

She looked at him with a bitter smile on her face. Her body sagged with weakness immediately after. Seeing this, Li Luo caught her immediately and held her by the waist.

Li Lingjing grabbed Li Luo's clothes as her tiny body leaned into him for support. Her pale face seemed completely helpless.

"Cousin Lingjing, what happened over here?" Li Luo asked.

Li Lingjing pressed her cheek weakly against Li Luo's chest. She sighed and said gloomily, "I met another Soul Eater True Devil."

Hearing this, Li Luo's eyes were horrified. He couldn't help but ask in a wavering tone, "Another Soul Eater True Devil? How did that thing get into the Spirit Resonance Cave?!"

At present, there were countless elites from the various powers standing guard right outside the Spiritual Resonance Cave. These Others could not have possibly snuck in!

Li Lingjing thought about it for a moment before she replied, "They're not ordinary Others... they're a special hybrid of Others and something else. This is why they cannot be detected by Dukes as long as they do not reveal themselves willingly. The Soul Eater True Devil must have sought me out intentionally. I fought with it, and it was a tough opponent."

Li Luo's face turned serious as he listened. If it was an opponent that even Li Lingjing claimed to have difficulty dealing with, the situation earlier must have been a terrifying ordeal. It was no wonder the energy waves coming from it were so frightening.

"However, it cannot just do as it pleases. I managed to force it to retreat in the end." Despite Li Lingjing's soft and weak voice, her willpower remained strong.

"Cousin Lingjing, you are truly impressive. Things would have turned even uglier if Qin Ying had encountered it," Li Luo said in an attempt to console her a little.

Li Lingjing smiled bitterly as she said, "Although I forced it to retreat, I was corrupted by it earlier. That was why I was acting completely differently..."

Her eyes drooped slightly and she continued in a soft voice, "This shows that my previous corruption has not been erased completely. I have failed your kind intentions."

Li Luo sighed and replied, "Don't worry about it, Cousin Lingjing. What's most important is that you're safe."

"You are too kind," she said with a light smile.

Li Luo continued out of concern, "How're you feeling currently?"

"I've exhausted a huge amount of resonant power and will need some time to recuperate." Li Lingjing rubbed her red lips a little before she continued, "Cousin Li Luo, you can put me down now. We should not let others see me in such a weak state. If we do, there will be no one to stop people like Qin Ying later."

Indeed, the situation in the gilded hall was a mess. The various forces were all fighting against the rogue cultivators. If anyone saw how weak Li Lingjing was, people like Qin Ying and Qin Yi might make full use of this opportunity to attack them.

At that time, Li Lingjing would not be able to render much assistance in her weak state. Li Luo alone would most likely be unable to fend them off.

"Cousin Lingjing, don't worry about it. I have plans of my own," Li Luo said with glee. He was a little moved seeing how Li Lingjing was so concerned about him even though she was absolutely exhausted.

Nonetheless, he could also tell that their current position was making her a little uncomfortable, so he slowly released her.

Li Lingjing staggered a little with her body still slightly limp. Her slender hands held onto Li Luo's arm for support while her pale cheeks slightly flushed. Afterwards, she took out a broken sword filled with an ominous aura from her pocket sphere and tossed it away like scrap.

Li Luo recognized it with a single look. That was the violet-eye treasured artifact that Li Lingjing had used previously. It seemed like it had been completely shattered in the earlier battle.

After she regained a bit of her strength, she looked up towards the outside of the hallway. There was a fat figure that had been stealing glances at them every now and then.

When he noticed Li Lingjing looking over, he shivered and hid behind a pillar.

"He's Zhu Dayu from the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Zhu. We just started working together," Li Luo explained.

Li Lingjing nodded slightly. Just as she was about to speak, her expression suddenly took a complete change. She raised her head and looked far ahead into the distance of the gilded hall. There was a strange, black mist slowly spreading in all directions.

The mist seemed unusual, as if it had a life of its own, and they could faintly hear numerous strange whispers from it. Even from a distance, the mist was able to arouse the negative emotions within one and make one feel uneasy.

"It's the Soul Eater True Devil. After I shattered its physical body, it became completely unscrupulous. It's spreading its corruption now. I guess it's not going to stop until it has me captured," Li Lingjing explained slowly.

Li Luo frowned when he heard this. The situation in the gilded hall was already a mess, and now they had to deal with the Soul Eater True Devil on top of it all. This was really troublesome.

"Let's go into the depths of the gilded hall. The other pairs from the various powers will be headed there too. Looking at the way the Soul Eater True Devil is spreading its corruption, it'll be hard for the other

teams to escape unscathed. In that case, we may be able to work together with them and borrow their strength to fight against it," Li Luo whispered to her.

His current plan was to drag the other teams down along with them. There was no way they could fight off the Soul Eater True Devil without help.

Li Lingjing nodded lightly.

Afterwards, Li Luo stepped forward and told Zhu Dayu seriously, "A very strong Other has snuck into the gilded hall. Those strange rogue cultivators from before should be its work. My cousin fought against it just now and was nearly corrupted."

Zhu Dayu replied in disbelief, "How can there be Others in the Spiritual Resonance Cave?"

"It is true." Li Luo pointed over at the strange mist spreading in the distance.

Zhu Dayu was at a loss for words. As a member from the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Zhu, he was no stranger to Others. Based on the eerie and peculiar feeling he got, it confirmed his suspicions.

"I'll have to hurry up and find my clan member too," Zhu Dayu said in a panic.

When the situation took a turn for the worst, it was safest to stick with who he knew.

"Let's go together. Your clan member should be heading towards the depths of the gilded hall too," Li Luo suggested.

Zhu Dayu hesitated for a moment, but he did not turn down the offer. Looking at the situation on hand, it was indeed safer for them to work together.

As such, the three of them made their way towards the center district of the gilded hall in a hurry.

While they did that, the creepy, black mist slowly spread to the outer districts of the gilded hall.

The strange whispers echoed in the air as it gradually filled every room.

Some of the rogue cultivators did not manage to escape in time. When they came into contact with the mist, their eyes turned pitch-black immediately and faintly visible worms started crawling inside their pupils.

Following this, the corrupted individuals would follow the black mist, slowly creeping towards the center district of the gilded hall.

Chapter 0975: Cooperation

Li Luo, Li Lingjing, and Zhu Dayu flew past numerous halls as they headed towards the center district of the gilded hall.

At this point, the situation in this vast building had begun to turn chaotic.

The strange, black mist continued to spread at a frightening pace with no signs of stopping. Everything seemed to be swallowed up completely as it passed by—even the buildings disappeared without a trace.

Li Luo turned back to look at it from time to time. His gaze had turned solemn. The Soul Eater True Devil had lost its physical body after its fight with Li Lingjing earlier. As a result, it became even more uncontrollable. However, it did not feel as scary as the one they encountered back in the Dark Domain of the Western Region, perhaps due to the restrictive effects of the Spiritual Resonance Cave.

Nonetheless, the situation before them was vastly different. Li Luo had the support of the various banner members back then. With the boost from Harmony, he had the strength to rival foes as strong as Dukes. Now, he did not have allies by his side. He would have to rely solely on his own strength to fend off the Soul Eater True Devil.

This was a truly challenging task. Based on his estimate, the strength of the Soul Eater True Devil must have reached the pinnacle of the Heavenly Pearl Tier even when restricted.

They might not stand a chance against it even if the eight-pearls like Li Lingjing, Qin Ying, and Zhu Zhu worked together.

Li Luo could not help but frown as he thought about all of this. If he had the option, he would rather leave the gilded hall at this very moment. However, that was impossible given that the mist had surrounded the outer regions and completely cut off their escape routes.

At this moment, he turned around to take a look at Li Lingjing, who was following closely behind. Signs of redness had begun to return to her pale face.

Li Luo had utilized numerous recovery resonant arts with his water, wood, and light resonant powers to speed up her recovery.

As he was pondering, Li Luo and the group jumped onto the top of a tall structure. He took a quick glance towards the back and suddenly paused for a moment.

The district behind them had been completely engulfed by the black mist. However, there was a small, untainted region amongst it.

Li Luo could faintly see the outline of a figure in the empty region in the distance.

"Is that... the lantern bearer from before?"

He was surprised. The lantern bearer could be considered the highest ranking and most exceptional character in the entire gilded hall. However, his actions just made him seem like a walking corpse. Even with the black mist engulfing his surroundings, he just stood there without any movement.

While Li Luo tried to come up with a game plan, he sensed movement coming from the front. He looked back up, and a fat figure came rushing towards them.

"Sister Zhu!" Zhu Dayu shouted happily when he saw the incoming person.

It was Zhu Zhu, whom Li Luo had met earlier.

Her body was pretty rotund, which was the signature characteristic of those from the Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Zhu. When she landed in front of them, she took a quick look at Zhu Dayu before locking her eyes on Li Luo and Li Lingjing.

"Sister Zhu, they're my friends. We've looked out for each other on our way here," Zhu Dayu said.

Hearing this, Zhu Zhu nodded and revealed a friendly and warm smile towards Li Luo and Li Lingjing. "I would like to thank you for your help, my friends."

Her attention was mainly fixed on Li Lingjing. She had seen her fight outside of the gilded hall earlier, so she was well aware of how strong this lady in front of her truly was.

"Do you know what's happening over there?" Zhu Zhu asked with a serious look on her face. At the same time, her fat fingers pointed towards the black mist in the distance.

She had been collecting Spirit Resonance Golden Dew all this while before she felt the disturbance.

"I think an Other managed to sneak into the Spiritual Resonance Cave," Li Luo explained.

He did not mention anything about the Soul Eater True Devil. After all, this concerned Li Lingjing, and she surely preferred it if others did not know about her history of getting corrupted.

Zhu Zhu was stunned. "How's that possible? There are so many peak experts standing guard outside!" Indeed, the various Heavenly Emperor powers had sent many of their strongest cultivators to stand guard outside the cave. Some of them were even seventh-grade Dukes. They were all the elites within the Heavenly Origin Divine Continent.

Li Luo shrugged in response.

"Sister Zhu, let's move together. This Other is really troublesome. It'll be a headache for anyone to face it alone," Zhu Dayu suggested.

Zhu Zhu hesitated for a moment before she nodded in agreement.

"Let's move towards the main hall for now. We can look for others and work together to deal with it," Li Luo stated as he pointed towards the great hall that was not too far away from them. It was the most majestic looking one that they had come across so far.

The others had no objection, so they made their way towards that direction. At this point, the black mist had caught even more people by surprise. They were all shocked by this strange development. With nowhere else to escape, everyone ended up heading towards the same great hall.

After a few moments, Li Luo and the group arrived.

They noticed that other people had arrived before them, Qin Yi being one of them.

She was the center of attention as usual. With her cute smile and charm, she caught the passionate gazes of everyone in the surroundings. Close by her side was Qin Ying protecting her.

"You guys got here really quickly," Li Luo commented with a smile towards Qin Yi.

Qin Yi responded with a faint smile. She then took a quick look at Li Luo before turning towards Li Lingjing. After taking a quick look, she asked, "Is Lady Li Lingjing injured?"

A smile appeared on Li Lingjing's face as soon as she heard the question. "I had a fight with that Other earlier," she replied.

She chose not to hide everything from Qin Yi. Given Qin Yi's exceptional intelligence, doing so would only raise her suspicion even more. In fact, she had chosen to reveal that the enemy was an Other straight away to draw Qin Yi's attention away from her injuries.

As expected, everyone was shocked as soon as they heard her, even Qin Yi. Ignoring Li Lingjing's weak breath for now, she continued, "Is that really an Other?"

Li Lingjing explained, "It is extremely strong, and even with the restrictions from the Spiritual Resonance Cave, it's not something that we can handle. I fought against it earlier and ended up with these injuries, as you can see."

Qin Ying frowned as he listened. His strength was similar to Li Lingjing's. If Li Lingjing had come out with such bad injuries, he would surely have a tough time against it as well.

"Everyone, we'll need to cooperate if we want to fight against that Other. That way, we may be able to carve a path out of this place even if we cannot eliminate it. Once we make it outside and get word to the experts outside, we'll be able to surround it and kill it," Li Luo told the others.

"Due to the restrictions in the Spiritual Resonance Cave, the Other has been unable to display power above the Heavenly Resonance Tier even though its actual strength is unfathomable.

"However, what's most troublesome now is not the Other. There are also many individuals who have been corrupted by it. If the Other makes use of the corrupted to deplete our stamina, we'll end up in a really precarious situation. Hence, our only choice now is to cooperate and work together."

"Brother Li Luo is right. If we remain divided now, there will be more and more corrupted individuals. If that happens, none of us will be getting out of this alive," Zhu Dayu added.

Qin Yi hesitated for a moment before she replied decisively, "That's right. Cooperating is the most rational choice."

She was well respected and admired by many within the group. As soon as she agreed, the others naturally followed suit.

"Dragon's Head Li Luo."

Qin Yi's beautiful eyes turned towards Li Luo, then her slender, jade finger pointed towards the golden great hall in the distance. "There are numerous protective wards and runes in that hall. It should be set up for protection. If we're somehow able to enter it, we should be able to get some shelter for the moment."

Hearing this, Li Luo immediately looked over. Indeed, there were many runes glowing around the outside of that great hall.

That was the main hall of the gilded hall. Who knew what secret treasures were hidden over here?

"However, we've been unable to make any progress because of the runic protection. We spent half a day attacking, but were still unable to make our way in. I suggest we focus our efforts, work together, and make an opening in the ward first, so that we can go in to take shelter," Qin Yi suggested. Li Luo took a step forward and carefully placed his hand on the heavy doors of the main hall. As soon as his palm came into contact with it, an enormous force appeared and pushed him away.

Runes glowed on the doors. For a moment, it seemed like they formed the shape of a flame.

As he stared at the flame shape, his eyes narrowed. This looks like... the Acquired Resonance Flame.

Chapter 0976: Treasure Seizing

Acquired Resonance Flame...

Li Luo thought about it. It seemed like he would need to use the Acquired Resonance Flame as a catalyst in order to open the doors of the main hall. However, there were too many people around, and he did not want to reveal his secret like this.

"Our situation is dire. Let's cooperate and focus our efforts to make an opening and force our way in. We'll have an additional layer of protection once we're inside," Li Luo suggested calmly.

Qin Yi nodded slightly. This was exactly her thoughts as well.

In the next moment, they worked together to create an extraordinary blast of resonant power that struck a corner of the doors. The runes fluctuated brightly as they resisted the attack. However, the doors remained stationary.

Li Luo had summoned up his resonant power in this moment as well. However, his resonant power had a strand of the acquired resonance flame hidden within it.

Bang!

As soon as Li Luo's resonant power struck the doors along with the attacks from the others, the runes started reacting vigorously.

"It's working! Let's redouble our efforts!" Zhu Dayu shouted when he saw that there was finally a reaction.

The others were similarly motivated, and their attacks grew fiercer.

Meanwhile, Li Luo ensured that his strikes continued to hit the doors. Gradually, the runes turned darker. A few moments later, they completely dissipated.

Bang!

The doors of the main hall opened up slowly.

Li Luo and Qin Yi were the first ones to rush into the main hall. They knew that if the main hall had such an impressive protection set up, there could very well be treasures hidden inside.

The interior of the hall was dazzling gold, with the marks of earth, wind, water, and fire engraved onto its walls. It was a really magical sight.

However, what really caught everyone's attention was the center region.

There was a golden platform there, with numerous runes carved into it. These runes extended out and stretched to all the other parts of the main hall.

One could faintly see worldly natural energy flowing continuously towards the golden platform.

And there were more than a dozen balls of light hovering above the platform and constantly moving about. Within them were numerous artifacts, each emitting an extremely powerful energy wave.

"Treasured artifacts!"

The eyes of everyone who had entered the main hall lit up immediately. The items inside the balls of light were all treasured artifacts. In fact, they were all violet-eyed treasured artifacts based on the energy waves.

Moreover, the brightest one in the middle had such a strong energy wave that it could very well be a triple violet-eye treasured artifact! Not to mention the ordinary rogue cultivators, such a high-grade treasured artifact was attractive to even people like Li Luo, Qin Yi, and Zhu Dayu.

Li Luo's eyes lit up as well at the same moment. The only triple violet-eye treasured artifact he had to date was the Heavenly Dragon's Sunchaser Bow. The only other one would be his violet Resonant Tree Brooch. Yet there were dozens of such treasures lying in front of them right now.

If he could just get even one of them, his battle strength would surely improve significantly.

After a short moment of silence in the main hall, resonant power began to surge up. In the blink of an eye, everyone was rushing towards the golden platform.

There was no doubt that everyone wanted to get their hands on a treasured artifact first.

When the crowd approached the platform, it abruptly began to give off a sharp ringing noise. Then there was a golden flash all of a sudden, and the crowd was blown back with everyone spitting out blood.

The treasures stored in the center also flew out in all directions at this time.

The place turned into chaos as everyone chased after the treasured artifacts.

Li Luo scanned the surroundings with his eyes. The three resonant palaces within him buzzed and resonated with each other as resonant power surged within his body. He then combined them into dual resonance power as he chased with explosive speed.

His eyes scanned the surroundings swiftly before focusing on a ball of light.

This was the brightest ball among all the treasures here. The energy coming from it was as shocking as a volcanic eruption. Clearly, this was no ordinary treasure.

Li Luo was naturally drawn to it.

However, it had caught the eyes of Qin Ying and Zhu Zhu, two of the strongest people in the room, as well. Eight Heavenly Pearls appeared behind those two, and their fearsome energy undulations swept across the field and blew the others away. The two of them charged straight towards that ball of light.

Seeing this, Li Luo looked over to Li Lingjing. However, her resonant power had yet to fully recover and she could only respond with a helpless look. If she were to fight Qin Ying and Zhu Zhu for the treasure now, it would only reveal to them that her body was in bad shape.

Li Luo felt a little regretful. He signaled for Li Lingjing to watch out for herself before he rushed out as well. However, he had no intention to compete with Qin Ying and Zhu Zhu for the time being. He wanted

to grab hold of the other violet-eye treasured artifacts first. As for the most eye-catching one? He would see if there was a chance to get it later.

His eyes were soon locked onto one ball of light, which was already the target of many others. Resonant power reached out towards the ball of light repeatedly, causing it to tremble violently.

As the ball of light weakened, Li Luo could see the item within it. It appeared to be an emerald feather fan, radiating green light full of vitality.

This treasured artifact likely had a wood resonance affinity.

Li Luo possessed wood resonant power, so it was perfect for him. Without any further hesitation, he charged towards it with his Nine Scales Sanctified Dragon's Body activated. His wings spread out behind him, and the boom of lightning and thunder filled the air.

"How bold of you!"

It seemed like many people had already laid their eyes on this treasured artifact too, and none of them were weak, the strongest amongst them being a three-pearl. He shouted out angrily when he saw a Fiend Finisher like Li Luo coming to fight with them for the treasure.

Although they all knew about Li Luo's background, the final result would be decided by strength. One's background was completely disregarded when such a delicious treasure was right in front of their eyes.

As such, he glared angrily. The Heavenly Pearls behind him shone even brighter, then he launched an attack towards Li Luo.

Nonetheless, Li Luo did not back down. His eyes were filled with murderous intent as he lifted his hand and a sword silhouette emerged in his palm.

It seemed to contain a vast ocean of indescribably sharp sword energy, drawing over the horrified gazes of many in the hall as soon as it materialized.

This was shocking even to those multiple tiers stronger than Li Luo.

In the distance, Qin Yi also looked over with a serious expression. The sword silhouette in his palm has to be the secret ace up his sleeve. It must have been the secret art that had helped him defeat the replica of Li Taixuan during the Battle of the Dragon's Head.

The silhouette exuded horrifying power. Clearly, this Duke Art was of a really high grade, perhaps a Destiny-grade.

The people who had thoughts of retaliating against Li Luo froze in their tracks instantly. Their faces changed completely and they did not dare to attack anymore. They could totally tell that the azure sword intent in Li Luo's palm was fatal, even to them!

Even the three-pearl cultivator knew that he would likely end up seriously injured if he became Li Luo's target.

The situation was beyond chaotic now, especially with Others coming after them from the outside. If he got seriously injured now, he could really lose his life in the fights that followed.

No matter how precious and attractive the violet-eye treasured artifacts were, it was not a wise choice to fight over one with Li Luo. Besides, he could still go after the other treasures.

Li Lingjing was also observing the situation from nearby. Although he did not know why she had chosen to stay out of battle for now, her strength was something he could not ignore.

Hence, many of the people backed down despite how unwilling they were.

Li Luo went ahead and reached into the ball of light without any further hesitation when he noticed the others backing down. Opening his hand, he went ahead to grab the emerald feather fan.

However, there was a strong resistance as soon as his hands came into contact with the handle of the treasure. There seemed to be a special mark on the handle, and Li Luo could not gain control over the fan without getting rid of it.

Li Luo frowned as he attempted to erase the mark by channeling his resonant power. However, the mark seemed to be alive, resisting his efforts. It was a really troublesome mark. If he continued at this pace, it would take a really really long time to erase it completely.

It seemed like even if they got ahold of these treasures, they would not be able to gain control over them.

Li Luo raised his head at this moment. He noticed that the other people who had managed to get their hands on treasured artifacts were facing the same problem too. There appeared to be some kind of mark protecting them.

Li Luo thought about it for a moment before he summoned up the Acquired Resonance Flame. As an experiment, he tried to let the Acquired Resonance Flame come into contact with the mark.

To his surprise, the Acquired Resonance Flame simply made one rotation around the mark and then was completely erased without any traces left behind. Li Luo channeled his resonant power into the treasure once again. This time, he easily gained control of the emerald green fan.

A message surfaced deep in his mind as soon as he did so.

Violet-eye treasured artifact: Blackwood Feather Fan. With a single swipe, it can sweep out with the mysterious light of life and death. The light of life is white in color, granting vitality to one and aiding in recovery. The light of death is black in color, dissolving one's blood and bones.

Chapter 0977: Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff

"Blackwood Feather Fan..."

Li Luo held onto the emerald feather fan as his eyes lit up with interest. The fan was made out of a special kind of wood that only grew on ancient battlefields. It needed corpses as its fertilizer, but once the tree started growing, it would contain a well of life energy. Even the tree sap was enlaced with so much lifeforce that it could treat most serious injuries.

As such, this fan was an artifact that contained both life and death energy. After some refinement, it had gained the power to activate both.

Li Luo took another look at the handle of the feather fan. On it was an extremely bright, violet jewel. This was clearly a single violet-eye treasured artifact.

Li Luo was pleasantly surprised. Although it was only a single violet-eye, its strength should not be underestimated. He had obtained another treasure to bolster his strength.

Bang!

When Li Luo got hold of the Blackwood Feather Fan, a shocking and wild energy storm exploded in the center of the main hall. Many people spat out blood from the crazy shockwave before taking a few steps back.

Looking over, he saw that Qin Ying and Zhu Zhu had begun their aggressive fight for the most brilliant treasured artifact.

They had exchanged over a hundred blows in the blink of an eye. They struck out with their full strength, neither side holding back. The eight radiant Heavenly Pearls behind each of them spun vigorously as they sucked in all the worldly natural energy from the surroundings, emitting a tremendous and frightening pressure.

Every time they traded blows, the strong resonant power aftershocks were so great that the air trembled.

Nonetheless, it was clear that Qin Ying had the upper hand when it came to offense. The Bloodline of Heavenly Emperor Zhu ultimately specialized in regeneration, so they were bound to have a harder time when faced with such a situation.

In one of their clashes, the plus-sized Zhu Zhu was forced to retreat multiple steps. As she shifted back, the energy in the air vibrated so violently that white smoke could be seen.

Qin Ying made use of this opportunity to reach out towards that most brilliant ball of light. As his hand reached towards it, dark-gray energy enveloped his arm in the shape of an iron eagle claw. With a tight grip, he shattered the ball of light.

An item flew out of it immediately after. It was a long staff that was aquamarine in color, covered with scales similar to those of a python.

As soon as the staff appeared, it sucked in worldly natural energy from the surroundings. It seemed like water flowing into the mouth of a whale.

In this instant, everyone could see that the worldly natural energy was gathering on the aquamarine staff, on which three violet marks could be seen.

"Triple violet-eye treasured artifact!" someone shouted.

Although everyone would have guessed that this would be an extraordinary treasure given the brilliance of the ball of light earlier, a lot of them were expecting just a twin violet-eye treasured artifact. They did not expect it to be a triple instead!

Such a treasured artifact was considered the strongest kind that anyone below the Duke Stage could ever get. Even among all the various major forces, only the most talented individuals could get their hands on one.

Qin Ying's eyes lit up jubilantly when he saw the treasure. He let out a long cry, and a golden falcon materialized behind him. The falcon exuded an unusually sharp aura, with every feather dazzling brightly like swords made of light.

This was his resonance, an upper eighth-grade Sword Falcon resonance.

Qin Ying reached out as quick as lightning and grabbed the aquamarine staff, his resonant power surging.

However, the treasure trembled aggressively as soon as they came into contact. Aquamarine light flowed around it and took the shape of a giant python. Then the snake opened its maw with a vicious hiss. A deadly, poisonous ray shot out of its mouth, aimed directly at Qin Ying.

This sudden development caught him completely off guard, and his mind fell into a daze all of a sudden.

"What a vicious poison ray!"

Qin Ying's face changed completely as he released his grip on the staff. He flipped the sleeve of his robes, and golden resonant power surged up, clashing directly with the ray of poison. In the next moment, pungent smoke filled the air, and the golden light quickly melted away.

After the aquamarine bamboo staff forced Qin Ying to take a step back, it transformed into a aquamarine light and slithered across the main hall.

As there was no owner yet, the triple violet-eye treasured artifact attracted the greed of many rogue cultivators around the hall as they chased after it.

However, the staff seemed to possess a life of its own. Like an aquamarine python slithering through the battlefield, it was really swift and no one could catch up to it. Occasionally, someone would get close to it out of pure luck. However, they were immediately forced to retreat by the poison ray. In just a few moments, quite a few people were turned into pools of blood by the poison ray.

Li Luo was shocked at the sudden turn of events. At the same time, he was also eager to try in capturing the aquamarine bamboo staff.

"Cousin Lingjing's treasured artifact was completely destroyed earlier. If we can get our hands on this staff, we should be able to keep Qin Ying in check if we combine it with her original strength," Li Luo thought to himself as his gaze flickered.

However, the staff was far too lively. It was a true challenge to capture it, as one could easily tell from the shock Qin Ying had received earlier. However, Li Luo had the experience gained from obtaining the Blackwood Feather Fan previously; he should be able to do the same thing with the staff too.

He had no choice. After all, his Acquired Resonance Flame was simply too useful in the Spiritual Resonance Cave, so how could he let such a wonderful treasure run loose? Just as Li Luo was thinking about it, the staff seemed to be heading in his direction. Seeing this, he did not retreat. Instead, he reached out and grabbed the bamboo staff directly.

The crowd sneered when they saw his arrogant move. Even people as powerful as Qin Ying had suffered at the hands of this thing. How daring was Li Luo, a mere Fiend Finisher, to touch it with his bare hand like this? Was he not afraid of the poison ray that would turn him into a pool of blood?

On the sidelines, Li Lingjing was shocked to see this too. She did not expect Li Luo, who was usually calm and composed, to act so rashly all of a sudden. Was he blinded by his greed for a triple violet-eye treasured artifact?

Nonetheless, it was far too late for her to do anything now. Before the gazes of the crowd, Li Luo got a firm grasp on the aquamarine light.

He tightened his grip on the handle of the staff. It was densely covered with what looked like python scales, causing it to feel slightly prickly. However, he had no time to be bothered by that. At this moment, the aquamarine light flashed and the huge aquamarine python emerged. It hissed with its ferocious mouth, and the poison ray shot out like a waterfall.

The poison ray lanced across the main hall. Everyone retreated immediately, afraid to get caught up in it.

At the same time, they felt disapproval in their hearts as they watched Li Luo, confident that he would end up paying a really heavy price for his greed today.

Qin Yi was also looking at him intently. She found the entire situation a little out of the ordinary as Li Luo was clearly not such a dumb fool, judging from their previous encounters.

"Aiya, Brother Li Luo."

Zhu Dayu let out a sigh. "We'll be brothers again in the next life!"

However, Li Luo's face was totally calm despite all the gazes from the peanut gallery. He stared directly at the incoming poison ray as the Acquired Resonance Flame emerged in the palm of the hand that was holding the staff. In the blink of an eye, the flame wrapped around the whole treasure.

Weng!

The Acquired Resonance Flame burned fiercely, and the staff buzzed violently in response.

Everyone in the main hall was dumbfounded by what happened next. The poison ray that was about to finish Li Luo off split into numerous branches all of a sudden, avoiding Li Luo completely.

In the next moment, the poison rays gathered back together and were then swallowed back up by the giant python!

The giant python hissed as if it were speaking as it stared at Li Luo with its vertical pupils. It then gradually moved closer to him and actually hissed with what seemed like affection towards him.

At this moment, multiple messages flashed across Li Luo's mind.

Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff, triple violet-eye treasured artifact. It was created through a combination of the Heavenly Aquamarine Python and Aquamarine Bamboo, both of which were tens of thousands of years old. It's immune to thousands of poisons, and its Aquamarine Bamboo body grows

back whenever it breaks. A resonant power injection can cause it to transform into the Heavenly Aquamarine Python, which can spit out deadly rays of poison that can completely disintegrate the flesh.

"What a treasure," Li Luo unwittingly muttered after understanding the information that had surfaced in his mind. With such strength and capabilities, this was indeed a triple violet-eye treasured artifact.

While he had a heart full of satisfaction, many of the people in the hall had their eyeballs nearly dropping out of their sockets after seeing the result.

They could not understand why the deadly aquamarine staff had been so easily captured by Li Luo. Their stares all turned into gazes of jealousy in an instant.

"Hand it over!"

Qin Ying, who had worked so hard to capture it, was the most furious of all. His face was gloomy as he screamed. In a flash, he appeared right in front of Li Luo. The eight radiant Heavenly Pearls behind him exploded with terrifying pressure, trying to force Li Luo into submission.

At the same time, he did not hesitate to attempt to snatch the staff away from Li Luo's hands.

Bang!

The air shook violently. Li Luo had fully activated the Nine Scales Sanctified Dragon's Body to resist the tremendous pressure.

Right at this moment, a slender, jade hand tapped Li Luo's shoulder and pulled him back just in time to avoid Qin Ying's clutches.

Li Lingjing walked up from behind Li Luo and stood in front of him, looking at Qin Ying directly with an icy stare.

"Do you really want to fight?" she asked.

When he locked eyes with Li Lingjing, Qin Ying felt a chill run up his spine, as if he could instinctively feel fatal danger coming from her.

He could sense that there was a frightening existence hidden inside this pale lady that would frighten anyone.

As a result, Qin Ying froze on the spot instead of taking another step forward like he originally planned.

His eyes were full of questions. He could not understand why Li Lingjing, who should be around the same level as him, could emit such a terrifying sensation.

"Li Lingjing, you're injured, right? If not, you'd surely have joined the fight to grab the treasures earlier," Qin Ying said with a gloomy expression, clearly trying to sound out his opponent.

However, Li Lingjing did not reply. She merely stared at him coldly.

At this point, a sneerful laugh came from the distance. Zhu Zhu was walking over, obviously gloating over his misfortune. "Hey, Qin Ying, I've given you a chance, but you did not make full use of it. The treasure has found its owner; are you so ill-mannered that you would steal it?"

Qin Ying's face twitched a little.

"Brother, forget it. Danger is approaching, so we should not fight amongst ourselves now," Qin Yi said with a gentle voice as she walked over.

The situation was really unfavorable for him. Besides, they could not tell how strong Li Lingjing truly was. It would be really unwise to get into a fight right now, considering all the uncertainties present.

Hearing her words, Qin Ying nodded unwillingly.

The crowd was very disappointed at this ending. A fierce fight had erupted between two of the strongest cultivators in the room, and no one would've guessed that the treasure they had fought over would end up with Li Luo.

Nonetheless, Li Luo simply turned towards Li Lingjing and smiled. The crowd sighed at this uneventful ending.

Li Lingjing looked at him angrily and whispered, "Why are you trying to show off at this point in time? Although the triple violet-eye treasured artifact is precious, it's not as if you do not have one."

At this moment, Li Luo simply reached out and took Li Lingjing's hand. He placed the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff in her grasp as he looked into her confused eyes and replied with a smile, "It's for you."

When Li Lingjing felt the cold touch of the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff in her hand, her red lips opened slightly. She was totally surprised as she stared blankly back at Li Luo. "For me?"

Chapter 0978: Gift

Faced with Li Luo's sudden gift, Li Lingjing was at a loss for words. It was a triple violet-eye treasured artifact with unimaginable value. In the Western Region's Li family, no one of the younger generation had ever received something like this.

"No, no, it's too much. Why don't you take it? If you don't need it, you can even give it to Li Fengyi." Li Lingjing hurriedly rejected it.

"Your previous treasured artifact was destroyed by the Other, and you lack one now. You're my guardian, and your strength has been affected! If you become stronger, no one would dare to set their greedy gaze upon me." Li Luo grinned.

Li Lingjing was a little stumped for words. He had risked danger to obtain a treasured artifact for her based on just this?

"That was too dangerous," she softly said.

"If you truly wish to decline, then why not treat it as me lending it to you? I still need you to get me out of this place in one piece." Li Luo continued.

With his persuasive words, Li Lingjing fell silent for a while before reluctantly nodding. She gingerly grasped the icy Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff, and her resonant power surged up, flooding into the

staff and causing the scales to light up brilliantly. Very faintly, it seemed to have manifested an aquamarine snake that coiled and swam around the staff's body.

She casually waved her hand, and an aquamarine light sprayed forth.

Whether it was intentional or not, it shot straight towards Qin Ying. When he saw this, he punched outwards with a fist wreathed with golden resonant power, colliding directly with the light. Mighty waves of energy blasted out in every direction, causing the void to shake.

Qin Ying trembled and his face turned dark. Aquamarine poison had corroded his fist, sticking to it like gangrene attached to the bone. He hurriedly circulated resonant power to counteract and eliminate it.

That simple clash allowed him to experience the might of the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff in the hands of Li Lingjing. He felt extremely infuriated and also fearful towards her.

She was already a tricky opponent, but now that she had a triple violet-eye treasured artifact in her arsenal, he might not be her match in a fight.

"Li Lingjing, what are you trying to do?" he angrily shouted.

"Just testing it out a little." Li Lingjing casually wrote him off.

Li Luo smirked as he grasped his Blackwood Feather Fan. With a single swish, white light full of life force landed upon both parties' bodies.

Li Lingjing's gaze flashed as she could feel the injuries sustained from the battle with the Soul Eater True Devil heal at a rapid rate.

This method far outstripped the resonance arts Li Luo had utilized previously.

"Cousin Lingjing, you can count on me to support and aid you with all my might from behind as you battle!" Li Luo smiled. Li Lingjing felt that the notion was a little amusing. It seemed like their roles were reversed. Normally speaking, the hot-blooded male, Li Luo, would be at the forefront fighting on the edge whilst she would be supporting him, no?

However, these were just minor details. Li Lingjing's pale, slender fingers tightly grasped the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff, and she could feel the boundless amount of energy that was contained within the treasured artifact.

No matter how dangerous things got, she would do everything to get Li Luo out safely. She wouldn't care even if everyone else had to die.

At this point, all the violet-eye treasured artifacts within the gilded hall had been fully subdued and the chaos subsided. Although some empty-handed individuals were unhappy, they had no means to snatch the artifacts away from others.

But while they were fighting for the treasures, the black mist outside the main hall had continued to spread relentlessly.

Even if one obtained a treasure, the biggest question was how they could escape.

Qin Yi took a few steps forward, her beautiful eyes inspecting the mist that had covered the hallway. A solemn look arose on her fair and crystal-clear cheeks.

"Everyone, we have to hurry and combine our strengths. This way, we can see if we are able to battle against the Other," Qin Yi continued.

Li Luo's gaze swept across the interior of the large hall, and based on a quick estimation, there were three with eight-pearls, multiple six-pearls, and even more five-pearls. However, the vast majority were only one and two-pearls.

In a certain sense, their combined strength was not to be scoffed at. If they were to combine their strengths, even a Heavenly Resonance Tier opponent would not be their match.

However, the Soul Eater True Devil was not some simple opponent.

Its true strength should be at the Duke Stage, and although it was greatly suppressed within the Spiritual Resonance Cave, it was likely powerful enough to obliterate even Heavenly Resonance Tier cultivators. What was most troublesome was the fact that it was not just a single Soul Eater True Devil. It could control numerous corrupted individuals, which would undoubtedly increase the pressure on everyone.

"I suggest that those at the five-pearl tier and above combine their strength and face off against the Other directly. The rest will handle the corrupted individuals. If we are defeated, we can use this hall as a barrier to stall for time," Qin Yi coldly suggested.

The rest nodded in agreement.

Li Lingjing then dragged Li Luo away and sent him a secret message that was protected by her resonant power. "If it comes to a point where we cannot resist the Soul Eater True Devil, you have to find an opportunity to escape. I will create a path for you."

She did not think very highly of the cooperative efforts as she had a clear understanding of the terror known as the Soul Eater True Devil. Even with the suppression of the Spiritual Resonance Cave, she did not think that they could triumph even with the aid of everyone here.

Li Luo frowned slightly as he looked straight into her eyes. "We will both find an opportunity to escape together."

Li Lingjing gave a slight smile but did not reply.

The Soul Eater True Devil had its eyes set on her, so if the two of them were together, it would be even harder to escape. Everyone in the main hall stood ready as they nervously glanced at the quickly advancing black mist. The entire sky seemed to have turned overcast at this moment.

Tens of minutes later.

The black mist had encircled the entire central district, and the main hall was gradually being surrounded.

Whispers could be heard coming from the mist. A series of strange and twisted figures jumped out with eyes as dark as ink, emitting negative emotions just by being present.

After being corrupted, those cultivators' bodies had been warped into unimaginable creatures, crawling on the ground with all four limbs like monsters.

Eventually, the mist halted a distance away from the main hall and then transformed into a gigantic visage of a man. It stared at the numerous figures within the hall before letting out a harsh, grating laugh full of hunger and greed.

When its laugh reached everyone's ears, it incited feelings of irritation, anger, and murderous intent within their hearts. Those with weaker mental states had their eyes turn red.

"Everyone, calm your hearts. Do not be riled up by it," Qin Yi reminded them. A drop of blue spiritual liquid was produced from her fingertip. It was catalyzed by her ninth-grade resonant power, and it quickly transformed into a mist that spread out amongst the crowd.

As the mist washed past them, they could feel a cool sensation arise within their hearts, and the Other's provoking thoughts were washed away.

"Let's see what this Other is all about!" Zhu Zhu coldly stated. She waved her hand, and a massive hammer appeared within her grasp before it heavily landed on the ground, creating an indent in the floor that was protected by a mysterious formation.

Then eight pearls appeared behind her and began to spin rapidly.

With her lead, Qin Ying similarly screeched as he led a group of five-pearl experts forward.

Li Lingjing glanced at Li Luo before tightly grasping the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff and ascending into the air.

Heavenly Pearls began to manifest behind each and every individual present, creating a startling sight. From afar, it was like a sea of stars, which was truly a magnificent sight to behold.

The gigantic face in the mist began to let out strange laughs. It then unhinged its massive mouth, and dusky liquid spewed out like a coursing river. This liquid had a fishy stench, and countless twisted corpses with hideous faces could be seen floating inside.

The black river was headed straight towards Li Lingjing, Qin Ying, and Zhu Zhu.

When the crowd saw this, they no longer dared to tarry and quickly activated all the strength they possessed.

All of their resonances were on full display. They summoned every bit of worldly natural energy they could and clashed with the fishy, black river.

Li Lingjing grasped the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff, and all of the resonant power within her body surged up. A titanic, black snake manifestation appeared behind her, giving off an archaic air.

Lower ninth-grade: Abyssal Serpent resonance.

After her resonance took form, the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff in her hands began to shudder and aquamarine energy coursed out of it, transforming into a colossal python.

The python seemed to hiss at Li Lingjing with much pleasure after it took form.

It seemed that Li Lingjing's own resonance was extremely compatible with the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff.

She then waved the staff, and the humongous python immediately opened its maw. A moment later, a ray of poison shot outwards. This poison ray was significantly larger than the ones seen before, being over a hundred feet wide. It sliced through the air and collided with the river in tandem with everyone's attacks.

Bang!

Energy scattered and the void shattered. The black river continued to erode the attacks thrown at it.

Unfortunately, it seemed like the black river came from a source that could never be exhausted, constantly raging with waves. The liquid suddenly split apart, and a gigantic, alabaster hand stretched out from the depths. If one were to look at it closely, they would see that it was formed from countless limbs. The middle of the palm had a huge mouth full of razor-sharp teeth, making it a horrifying sight.

Bang!

When the humongous hand appeared, it swatted directly towards the trio.

Whilst the stronger cultivators were fighting against the Soul Eater True Devil directly, many corrupted individuals flooded out from the mist.

They crawled and jumped along the ground like a swarm of ghosts and attempted to distract the main force.

Weng! Weng!

However, the first group of corrupted individuals were immediately blasted into a mush of mud and blood by a series of extremely violent arrows of light which pierced through the sky with alarming speed.

Li Luo was wielding his dragon-shaped greatbow as he walked out of the main hall. He calmly surveyed the area, which was now being overrun by corruption.

Quite a number of the corrupted began to screech as they quickly attempted to mob him from every direction, climbing across both the ground and walls relentlessly.

Bang!

Behind Li Luo, majestic resonant arts were activated and completely submerged the corrupted within like a tide.

He lifted his head as he observed the grand battle in the air with a frown.

The pressure coming from the corrupted was not significant. Achieving victory would all be dependent on Li Lingjing, Qin Ying, and Zhu Zhu's group's battle against the Soul Eater True Devil.

From what he could see, he could only hope that the Spiritual Resonance Cave had suppressed the Soul Eater True Devil enough to prevent it from utilizing any stronger moves. Otherwise, escaping would be extraordinarily difficult.

Chapter 0979: Heroes Battling the Devil

Li Luo, Qin Yi, and Zhu Dayu's group began to fight off the endless hordes of corrupted people. However, the battle in the sky had turned even more intense and dangerous at this point.

With Li Lingjing, Qin Ying, and Zhu Zhu as the leaders of the group, they had pushed themselves to the limit as their Heavenly Pearls shone radiantly like stars in the sky, constantly devouring worldly natural energy to sustain their bodies.

The fishy, black river, on the other hand, had created a gigantic, white hand to retaliate. A mouth filled with countless fangs dripping with black liquid opened up in the middle of the palm. It spewed out a stream of black light that swept towards the group.

The black light was terrifyingly powerful, and it left everyone in a difficult situation as it seemed to squirm and move like a living creature, making it difficult to target.

A five-pearl was struck by the black light, which had penetrated his defenses. When the hit landed, the black light swiftly infiltrated his body. A few breaths later, he screamed pitifully. His entire body then erupted with innumerable black worms that had completely gorged up every bit of his flesh and bone, leaving nothing behind.

Not a single shred was left behind.

This frightened everyone and left them sweating buckets. As a result, they hastily took out treasured artifacts and activated resonance arts to protect their bodies, afraid to let even a trace of the black light stain their skin.

The eight Heavenly Pearls behind Li Lingjing brightened as she gripped the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff tightly. Then a stream of azure light surfaced on the staff's body and surrounded it.

The halo of light gave off a delectable fragrance, but the truth was terrifying. This was a halo containing poisonous gas. Anything that approached Li Lingjing would inevitably be dissolved into nothingness just by being near her.

This was the protective ability of the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff, and it demonstrated how unique it was.

Every time Li Lingjing activated her resonant power, the staff wrapped in azure light would meet the black light headfirst whilst the azure python would strike it.

With a swing of the staff, the void started to show signs of shattering. The force seemed to be able to blow even a mountain to pieces.

Bang!

Li Lingjing smashed the staff downwards, leaving an afterimage in its wake as it heavily collided with the black light once again. The black light broke into pieces, and numerous worms that were too small to be seen with the naked eye started to shoot towards her. However, the staff emanated a poisonous gas that corroded the worms into nothingness.

"This is an amazing treasured artifact," Li Lingjing thought to herself. Without its aid, she would have to rely on her own resonant power to ward off the worms, forcing her to split her concentration.

Looking at the others around her, it seemed that everyone was in quite a sorry state. Only she was safe from the Soul Eater True Devil's attacks for the time being.

However, Li Lingjing knew that her situation would only be temporary.

Others might not be able to sense it, but she could. The gaze hidden within the mist was solely focused upon her.

It was as though a spotlight was shining upon her. "Everyone, don't hold back any longer. We have to destroy the black river!" Qin Ying exhorted. As time went by, the number of hands coming out of the river were increasing, and they would be in a precarious position if things continued this way.

When his words resounded throughout the group, he was the first to take action. Golden resonant power erupted into the sky, transforming into dozens of golden feathers. These feathers were like swords and were piercing to the eye.

Duke Art: Golden Feathersword Technique!

Qin Ying roared, and the golden feathers resembling massive swords that could pierce through the skies struck downwards, directly chopping countless alabaster hands into pieces before striking directly at the black river.

Zhu Zhu's attack swiftly followed. She grasped her massive hammer and waved it once, manifesting a humongous, crimson mountain before her. It was so incredibly heavy that its sheer presence and weight caused the air to tremble.

The crimson mountain was added to the weight of the hammer. With a low grunt, the veins on her arm twitched as she hefted it and struck downwards.

Bang!

The entire area was struck by an ear-rending sonic boom, kicking up a frightening gust of wind that buffeted everyone.

Duke Art: Mountain Moving Strength!

Li Lingjing chimed in at this point. A humongous Abyssal Serpent manifested behind her before transforming into an obsidian light that shrouded the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff. The aquamarine python then shot outwards and underwent a transformation. A hint of obsidian color could be seen on its scales, and its body swelled up immensely, looking like a legendary inky-green flood dragon.

The inky-green python turned into a stream of rainbow light, shattering the black lights that were coming towards them and striking the black river with great force.

She might not have used a Duke Art, but the attack was not at all inferior to the ones Qin Ying and Zhu Zhu had dished out. In fact, it was even stronger than theirs.

It was clear that the Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff had increased her battle power to the point that she would not be at a disadvantage even if she were to face a nine-pearl.

The other cultivators also activated their most powerful resonant arts, and the entire sky was filled with energy undulations. All sorts of Duke Arts weaved through the air and struck the black river heavily.

When faced with everyone's combined efforts, the numerous gigantic hands that were sticking out of the black river were destroyed, sending huge waves roiling across the surface. It looked as though the black river was gradually shrinking.

A short while later, the black river was broken into several pieces, looking like a writhing snake that had been chopped into a few segments.

Outside the main hall, the group fending off the corrupted felt their morale soar.

Li Luo turned to glance at the scene, but there was no trace of relief in his gaze. Instead, the lines on his forehead furrowed even more deeply. He had fought against the Soul Eater True Devil in the past, so he knew how hard it was to deal with this unique Other. Although it had been suppressed by the Spiritual Resonance Cave and its strength was gravely weakened, they alone might not be enough to deal with it.

As these thoughts passed through Li Luo's mind, the face in the black mist began to laugh. The sound was grating, as if countless painful wails had condensed into a single cry. It instantly aroused the negative emotions in everyone's hearts.

The black mist then descended from the sky, condensing in the air. A humanoid figure took shape a few moments later.

This figure was like a fleshy mountain, looking even more stalwart than the likes of Zhu Dayu and Zhu Zhu. Its most unsettling feature was its head. It was constantly spinning, and a new face appeared after each rotation.

Qin Ying, Zhu Zhu, and the rest felt a chill in their hearts. They could see their own faces within the constantly changing faces.

At this time, a bloody hole was ripped open on the side of its neck, where a black worm tunneled out. It opened its maws and bit off an entire face with a crunch. The sound of it chewing was truly sickening, causing everyone's hair to stand on end.

Every time a face was eaten, the body of the strange figure expanded and the terrifying aura coming from it increased in strength accordingly.

This scene was both bone-chilling and eerie to everyone present.

Li Lingjing's glum voice sounded out. "When we struck the black river with our attacks, it absorbed a strand of resonant power from each one of us. That's what allowed it to create replicas of our faces. As it gobbles our energy up, it will continue to strengthen unceasingly."

Everyone felt their scalps turn numb. This Other truly possessed a strange ability.

"We have to stop it from getting even stronger!" Qin Ying shouted.

Even without his reminder, the rest had already begun to renew their assault. Resonance arts poured out from them, targeting the mountainous figure.

Bang!

Bloody holes riddled the Soul Eater True Devil's body, but countless black worms crawled out of them a moment later, filling up the gaps that had been created.

The Soul Eater True Devil didn't take long to finish eating the replicated faces of everyone present. It then transformed into a faceless entity, but its towering body stood confidently in the sky, emanating a daunting sense of pressure that restrained everyone.

However, worldly natural energy suddenly poured into the area, and a mysterious power began to restrict the ever-strengthening Soul Eater True Devil.

The Spiritual Resonance Cave's rules were now acting upon it with even greater intensity.

Even then, the Soul Eater True Devil still struck fear in the hearts of everyone present.

It resisted the suppression of the Spiritual Resonance Cave and struck out with a gigantic hand. This attack seemed to ignore the distance between itself and everyone else, and it appeared directly before them.

As the hand descended, the void began to show signs of shattering.

Li Lingjing, Qin Ying, and Zhu Zhu were the three strongest, allowing them to quickly shrug off the influence of the Soul Eater True Devil and retreat.

Though they had managed to dodge the first strike, there were two who were unable to do so. They were captured by the hand, then a mouth opened up in the middle of the palm, baring its sharp fangs. With a few crunches, the two were completely swallowed up, causing blood to spill and stain the skies.

It was horrifying to watch.

The Soul Eater True Devil began to laugh with a strange sound. A ray of blood light was spat out by the mouth, and within it were the twisted and pained faces of the two who had just been eaten.

This light then swept towards the trio. They could not directly evade it in time, having to utilize their own methods to block it.

Bang!

An explosion echoed throughout the skies.

The three were sent flying before landing heavily on the ground.

A wall was smashed into pieces where Qin Ying and Zhu Zhu lay defeated, each vomiting a mouthful of blood. It was clear that they had been seriously injured from that one attack.

Everyone's hearts sank. If the three strongest amongst them had worked together and yet were grievously injured, how could they survive?

Li Lingjing, on the other hand, was not left in such a miserable state. Her figure flashed and she appeared by Li Luo's side.

Li Luo hurriedly supported her as he asked, "Cousin Lingjing, are you alright?"

Li Lingjing grabbed Li Luo's hand, placing something within it before she hurriedly let go. Her gaze was gloomy as she said in a low voice, "Cousin Li Luo, activate this rune if something goes wrong. It can protect you from the black mist. That way, you can escape quickly."

Li Luo was shocked as he glanced at his palm. He could see a black rune writhing within.

"Don't let anyone else discover it. The Soul Eater True Devil is too strong, and only you can escape. The others..."

There was no pity in her words, only indifference.

"Let them remain and be the bait that attracts its attention."

The moment she finished speaking, she once again soared into the sky and engaged in a struggle with the Soul Eater True Devil. Li Luo wasn't even given time to react.

Chapter 0980: Li Luo's Plan

Li Luo stared at the battle in the air between the Soul Eater True Devil and Li Lingjing. He clenched his fists and his expression turned heavy.

Clearly, Li Lingjing didn't think the alliance could deal with the Soul Eater True Devil.

This was probably the truth. The three leaders with the highest cultivation levels, Li Lingjing, Qin Ying, and Zhu Zhu, were already at a disadvantage from the start, and the ones supporting them were attacked and slaughtered by the Soul Eater True Devil as time went by.

With the way things were going, their cohesive strength would be greatly depleted in just a short while. The Soul Eater True Devil would be able to do whatever it wished very soon.

Li Lingjing also understood that this was the case and had prepared an escape route for Li Luo.

Although he was a little surprised that Li Lingjing had the means to escape through the mist, he understood that she had her own secrets and did not ask too much.

However, abandoning her to escape by himself just wasn't something he planned to do.

Additionally, the situation didn't seem that dire.

Li Luo continued to observe the Soul Eater True Devil in the sky as his finger gently brushed the crimson bracelet on his wrist. He did not know if utilizing the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf's power would cause him to be similarly suppressed like the Soul Eater True Devil. That being said, he had the confidence that borrowing its strength would allow himself and Li Lingjing to escape safely.

It was his final trump card, but there was no need to use it yet.

Why? There were still numerous existences in the gilded hall that could deal with the Soul Eater True Devil.

Li Luo's eyes flickered and his gaze shot towards a certain location within the black mist. He remembered the lantern bearer, who clearly held a status that was far superior to the average Sacred Void Resonance Sect disciple. His mere presence gave Li Luo a sense of immense pressure that indicated it was likely a Duke.

Perhaps the lantern bearer was the highest ranked individual within the gilded hall and might have been tasked to oversee the area.

If he could rouse the lantern bearer from his befuddled state, he might be able to borrow his strength to deal with the Soul Eater True Devil!

If that came to be, he could save the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf for a more opportune time.

That being said, he did not know if the lantern bearer could even be manipulated, but he would still try.

With this thought in mind, his figure flashed forward as he moved towards Qin Yi and Zhu Dayu. "My two friends, I suppose you understand the current situation... right?"

Qin Yi and Zhu Dayu both had grim expressions. The sense of oppression the Soul Eater True Devil gave off was so intense that even Qin Ying and Zhu Zhu were left in a pitiful state.

The situation wasn't going well.

Qin Yi's eyes flashed as she asked, "Do you have an idea, Dragon's Head Li Luo?"

Although she did not know what Li Luo, a mere Fiend Finisher, could do in the face of such a dominant foe, she didn't reply in disdain but asked cautiously.

"I don't know if this is a solution, but I wonder, have the two of you come across the lantern bearer?" Li Luo asked.

When they heard his words, their expressions changed and they nodded. "You've also chanced upon the lantern bearer? We did meet him previously, but he is extremely dangerous, so we dared not approach. I heard that someone tried to get close to him to see if they could discover any opportunities."

Li Luo asked in surprise, "What happened after?"

Qin Yi frowned slightly. "He was completely untouchable. The lantern bearer doesn't seem to exist in our plane, and no matter how close we approach him, we cannot so much as touch him."

Zhu Dayu then asked, "Are you hoping to borrow his strength to deal with the Other? The idea is good, but it will not work out, unfortunately. The lantern bearer is a mysterious ethereal existence. We can't even tell if he truly exists, so how can you borrow his strength?"

This was met with Li Luo's calm reply. "I've got to give it a try regardless. Otherwise, if things continue progressing this way, the situation will definitely turn out to be a disaster."

"So, what do you plan to do?" Qin Yi asked after thinking deeply.

Li Luo grinned. "I was hoping you could help open a path for me. There are many corrupted individuals blocking the way, so I can't go out there on my own. I'll see if I have any means to get the lantern bearer to act."

Zhu Dayu was taken aback. "The entire area is filled with black mist. If you were to linger inside it for too long, you might also be corrupted. Even so, you dare to take the risk?"

Qin Yi similarly stared at Li Luo in surprise. She had never expected him to take on such a risk.

"If I languish here and do nothing, I'll die in the end as well. So instead of inaction, I'll take the risk and see if I can find an opportunity," Li Luo reluctantly explained with a sense of righteousness.

He would not tell them about the black rune Li Lingjing had given him for his protection.

Complicated gazes from all around fell upon him, coupled with respect and admiration.

Zhu Dayu's chubby face also changed upon hearing those words. "Brother, you're truly noble. If misfortune falls upon you, I will definitely burn some incense for you at the Dragon's Fang Lineage..."

Li Luo guffawed. "If I'm misfortune enough to die here, do you think you will be able to live as well?"

That damned fatty was truly dreaming. Did he really think that Li Luo was going to sacrifice himself?

Qin Yi's gaze wavered slightly. Li Luo was not an impulsive person. The fact that he wanted to look for the lantern bearer at this time indicated that he had found some sort of clue. At the very least, this was not a whim built on purely hotheaded hope.

Thus, she felt that there was a possibility of success.

"If Dragon's Head Li Luo wants to try, we will do our best to create a path for you," Qin Yi stated.

The situation was deteriorating, and Li Luo had an idea that could reverse it. This was a good thing for everyone.

The rest hurriedly assented as well.

"Then I'll have to trouble all of you," Li Luo said. He did not hesitate any longer. Based on his memory, he recalled the direction in which he had spotted the lantern bearer and rushed towards him.

Numerous corrupted individuals surged towards him, screeching at the top of their lungs.

However, Li Luo did not have to take action as the people around him swiftly activated their resonant arts, blocking the attacks before gradually tearing a hole in the encirclement of corrupted.

The gloomy mist squirmed as the rest carved a way in for Li Luo, causing all who saw it to feel a shudder run down their backs.

The group showed looks of fear as they did not dare to approach the mist.

Li Luo did not hesitate. He charged forward and directly carved a path through the corrupted under the complicated gazes of the crowd. The mist then surged forth once again, covering up the gap and swallowing up every trace of him.

Zhu Dayu glanced at his fading figure and sighed. "My good brother, I hope you will come back alive."

At this point, Li Lingjing glanced downwards. She thought he had finally taken the opportunity to escape with the help of the black rune she had given him.

With that, she heaved a sigh of relief. The previous few years of her life were like living in a hellish limbo where life was worse than death. She constantly grappled with the darkness and yet never even saw so much as a glimpse of light. Things only changed when Li Luo arrived at the desolate courtyard that everyone had abandoned.

He had rescued her from the depths of despair. After which, he even brought her to the Dragon's Fang Lineage to have the True Devil taken care of, and thus she held immense gratitude towards him.

"Cousin Li Luo... the Soul Eater True Devil is here for me. I'll stall him and give you time to escape... You have peerless talent and will eventually stand supreme amongst the heavens and the earth. I will protect your future today," Li Lingjing said to herself as she tightly grasped the cold Aquamarine Bamboo Python Staff. Her gaze turned icy and dark as the gigantic Abyssal Serpent manifestation behind her transformed into a female figure that looked identical to herself.

This manifestation exuded a sense of majesty and mystery whilst immediately allowing Li Lingjing to become more in tune with the worldly natural energy around her.

Lower ninth-grade: Abyssal Serpent resonance.

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As Li Luo barreled through the mist, the black rune in his hand turned into a film of light that enveloped him. The black mist did not attack him, and it even seemed to treat him like an Other.

Li Luo's tense heart finally relaxed a little, but he did not slacken his pace. Instead, he sped up and rushed to the location in his memory.

He glanced in every direction as he surveyed the broken buildings he rushed past.

"Lantern bro, where are you?" Li Luo anxiously shouted. When his voice echoed, he suddenly felt the hairs on his back stand on end. His entire body screamed in warning as he quickly turned his head and glanced at a corridor to the right. It was there where he saw an ephemeral figure with a lantern, dragging his footsteps and wandering around.

Wherever he went, the black mist would part and hover a few feet away from him, making it difficult to approach him.

Li Luo's expression stiffened. Now that he had found him, he would have to test if his idea would work. Otherwise, he could only return in defeat and slaughter the True Devil Other with the aid of the Three-tailed Heavenly Wolf. If that plan failed as well, he could at least escape with Li Lingjing.

Although she wanted him to escape at the first opportunity, his personality would never allow him to do so. No matter how bad the situation was, he would never abandon her and escape by himself.