

Chapter 2671 Pill Refinemen

In the County Governor's estate in Nine Specters County.

Tian Ji Yu, the County Governor, was patiently waiting in the main hall. He rose to his feet quickly at this moment, as though he had sensed something.

Soon after, a voice rang from outside the main hall. "County Governor."

A bright smile appeared on Tian Ji Yu's face as he moved outside at lightning speed, coming face to face with a purple-clad young man. "Duan Ling Tian, has everything been dealt with? Do you need my help?"

Duan Ling Tian, who had just returned from the Liu clan, faintly smiled as he replied, "Thank you for your concern, County Governor. With your support, they're extremely cooperative." Although it might be difficult for the Pang clan to come up with 200,000 prominent Celestial Stones to compensate him, he had no doubt Pang Bing would find a way to deliver the Celestial Stones. After all, Pang Bing was wise. He would not dare to act otherwise after seeing Tian Ji Yu was on his side.

Naturally, Duan Ling Tian knew he had Tian Ji Yu's unconditional support because Tian Ji Yu knew he was capable of ranking first in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties, and in turn, obtaining the three mediocre Celestial Pills, the Great Overarching Pills. What was a mere inner-estate elder who was only a peak Golden Celestial compared to the Great Overarching Pills?

"That's great." Tian Ji Yu nodded and welcomed Duan Ling Tian to the main hall. "Let's go in and talk."

When they were in the main hall, Tian Ji Yu did not sit on the main seat. Instead, he sat with Duan Ling Tian on one of the lower seats. His expression was solemn as he said with a sigh, "Duan Ling Tian, I'm afraid from today onward, you can no longer stay in the County Governor's estate."

"I understand." Duan Ling Tian nodded.

"You do?" Tian Ji Yu was taken aback, He had just thought about this issue when he returned, but it seemed like Duan Ling Tian had long been aware of it?

Upon seeing the confusion on Tian Ji Yu's face, Duan Ling Tian said, "After today, words will definitely spread about how I possess strength almost comparable to a Great Overarching Golden Celestial even though I'm not even 100 years old. It'll definitely spread all over and out of Nine Specters County! Even as the County Governor, you won't be able to stop people from talking. After all, there's nothing like the lightning oath in Devata Realms. Once the 15 counties receive news of this, they would definitely try to assassinate me before the start of the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties that will be held in King Qing's Mansion. Those people might hire powerhouses who are stronger than you to assassinate me..."

"Yes." Tian Ji Yu nodded. He did not expect that Duan Ling Tian had thought about the matter in such a thorough manner. "As long as they're willing to pay a decent price, it's not difficult to hire someone more powerful than me!"

"I've thought about it as well, that's why I plan to leave." Duan Ling Tian nodded.

“When do you plan to leave?” Tian Ji Yu asked.

“The sooner the better... However, if things go according to plan, I’ll leave in three days after I receive my compensation,” Duan Ling Tian replied.

“Compensation?” Tian Ji Yu was confused. After listening to Duan Ling Tian’s explanation, the corners of his mouth twitched. “You’re really ruthless! Although 100,000 prominent Celestial Stones won’t cause a huge damage to the Liu clan, they would need to sell off their businesses and properties to gather so many Celestial Stones in a short time. As for the 200,000 prominent Celestial Stones from the Pang clan, I don’t think they’ll be able to come up with so many Celestial Stones.”

“That may be the case. However, Elder Pang Bing is a wise and resourceful person. I’m certain he’ll make the Liu clan bear some of the compensation. It won’t be difficult for the Liu clan to come up with another 100,000 prominent Celestial Stones for the Pang clan,” Duan Ling Tian said lightly.

“200,000 prominent Celestial Stones... Even if it’s the Liu Clan, they’ll have to sell off many businesses and properties. This will definitely impact them negatively. Originally, I plan to provide you with some Celestial Stones before you leave. I guess that’s not necessary now. You won’t be lacking Celestial Stones for a time with 300,000 prominent Celestial Stones in hand,” Tian Ji Yu said. His expression turned solemn as he continued to say, “When you leave, please don’t forget about the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties that will be held in King Qing’s Mansion. I’ll help you register for the competition, all you need to do is show up. Even if those people want to kill you, they won’t dare to act recklessly in the presence of King Qing’s people.”

“That’s what I thought as well.” Duan Ling Tian nodded. After a while, he bade farewell to Tian Ji Yu. He still had a few things to do before he had to leave. Refining Celestial Pills was at the top of his to-do list. He had obtained more than enough medicinal herbs to refine Spirit Nourishing Pills.

“Since Liu Qing, one of the Supreme Elders of the Liu clan whom I killed, was a Celestial Alchemist, there must be a cauldron in his Spatial Ring.” When Duan Ling Tian returned to his stone chamber in the Latent Dragon Abyss, he took out a Spatial Ring from his Spatial Ring.

After he had claimed ownership of Liu Qing’s Spatial Ring, it did not take long for him to find a cauldron. He discovered a few medicinal herbs and formulas in there as well. As for the Celestial Stones, he did not even spare a glance at it. Although the number of Celestial Stones was not small, it was nothing compared to what he would receive from the Liu and Pang clans.

“These are formulas for primitive Celestial Pills. Hm? This is the formula for the primitive Celestial Pill, the Hidden Spirit Pill?” Out of all the formulas in Liu Qing’s Spatial Ring, the Hidden Spirit Pill’s formula caught Duan Ling Tian’s attention.

Previously, Tian Ji Yu had given him a bottle of Hidden Spirit Pills. In just a year and a half, it helped improve his cultivation base greatly and he became a Yellow Sun Golden Celestial. Coincidentally, he had run out of Hidden Spirit Pills.

After reading the formula, Duan Ling Tian muttered to himself, “No wonder the Hidden Spirit Pills are more valuable than Spirit Nourishing Pills. Not only is one of the ingredients rare, but the refinement technique is relatively difficult with a low success rate of refining the pills.”

In the end, Duan Ling Tian decided to refine the Spirit Nourishing Pills first. He wondered out loud, “I wonder if the Celestial Fire is one for refining pills or forging weapons?”

Duan Ling Tian inhaled deeply before he began to draw the grey Celestial Fire out of the defective metal piece. However, similar to his previous attempt, he only managed to draw a small part of the Celestial Fire out. At the same time, he positioned the cauldron in front of him and threw the medicinal herbs inside.

For his first attempt, the medicinal herbs were burned to crisps as soon as they made contact with the grey Celestial Fire.

“What a waste!” Duan Ling Tian smiled bitterly. He knew he failed because he did not control the heat properly. After all, it had been a long time since he last refined pills.

“It seems like the grey Celestial Fire is quite powerful even if it’s just a small part of it. I think it’s on par with primitive Celestial Fires at least.”

After determining what he did wrong during his first attempt, Duan Ling Tian proceeded with his second attempt. He tried to control the heat, but the medicinal herbs only lasted for a moment before they were burned to crisps again.

“Again!” Duan Ling Tian continued his third, fourth, and fifth attempts...

He used sets after sets of medicinal herbs, all of them going to waste. Others would feel their heart ached if they were here to witness how wasteful Duan Ling Tian was

During his 13th attempt, Duan Ling Tian finally managed to control the grey flame and turned the medicinal herbs into liquid. However, during the stage where he was supposed to turn the liquid into pills, the cauldron suddenly began to shake. Soon after, thick smoke began to rise from the cauldron, and a burning smell permeated the air.

Chapter 2672 Success In Refining Pills

For a day and a night, Duan Ling Tian tirelessly refined pills in his stone chamber in the Latent Dragon Abyss. It seemed like the medicinal herbs to refine Spirit Nourishing Pills were nothing to him at all. In his quest to master refining pills, he did not mind wasting money. Although he had the knowledge to refine Pills from the memories of the Rebirth Martial Emperor from the Mortal Continent in the mundane realm, the technique to refine pills in the Devata Realms was naturally different. Nonetheless, his knowledge from the mundane realm still served as a foundation for refining pills in the Devata Realms.

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Meanwhile, word about Duan Ling Tian’s feat spread like a wildfire in the Latent Dragon Abyss. Naturally, it caused quite the commotion. Those who were not in closed-door cultivation discussed the matter among themselves.

“Hey! Did you hear? Yesterday, Duan Ling Tian went to the Liu clan and killed their Supreme Elder, Liu Qing!”

“Supreme Elder Liu Qing? Liu Qing? From what I know, the Liu clan has three Supreme Elders. One of them is an inner-estate elder in the County Governor’s estate and another one is a Celestial Alchemist!”

“Yes, I heard the Celestial Alchemist from the Liu clan is one of the three Celestial Alchemists in Nine Specters County.”

“Isn’t... Isn’t the Celestial Alchemist’s name Liu Qing?”

“What?! This means... this means Duan Ling Tian killed the Liu clan’s Supreme Elder who was a Celestial Alchemist? How’s that possible? After all, a Celestial Alchemist can detonate their Celestial Fire to bring their opponents down. Even a Great Overarching Golden Celestial would be affected if the Great Overarching Golden Celestial were in the range of the explosion!!”

“That’s right! Therefore, even a Great Overarching Golden Celestial wouldn’t dare to simply make a move on a Celestial Alchemist...”

“Well, think about it, if the Celestial Alchemist were to detonate his Celestial Fire, wouldn’t he also raze the entire mansion to the ground? How many members of the clan would die at that time?”

“That’s true...”

“Even if he didn’t detonate his Celestial Fire, Elder Liu Qing’s strength shouldn’t be weak, right?”

“He wasn’t weak. Although he wasn’t as strong as the other two Supreme Elders, he’s still stronger than the Clan Leader of the Liu clan. He’s a peak Indigo Sun Golden Celestial and was only a step away from becoming a Violet Sun Golden Celestial!”

“So Duan Ling Tian killed a peak Indigo Sun Golden Celestial? Is this a joke?”

Many people felt skeptical. After all, Liu Qing was a primitive Celestial Alchemist and a peak Indigo Sun Golden Celestial. Although Duan Ling Tian was stronger than most Golden Celestials, they did not think he was capable of killing an Indigo Sun Golden Celestial.

“Word about this has been spreading outside. There’s no doubt it’s true,” a young powerhouse who had just returned to the estate said with a sigh, “I didn’t believe it in the beginning so I asked around. It seems like it’s true!”

Another few people stepped forward and confirmed the veracity of the news.

“Duan Ling Tian’s strength is... is too heaven-defying, right?”

“Not only in Nine Specters County, but even in all counties under the rule of King Qing’s Mansion, I don’t think there’s anyone who was younger than 100 years old with such strength before!”

“I didn’t think I’d see a talented freak like him in my lifetime.”

“There’s more to it!” the young man who had first spoken up to confirm the veracity of the news continued to say, “Apart from killing Supreme Elder Liu Qing, Duan Ling Tian also killed another Supreme Elder, Liu Qian. Liu Qian was the Supreme Elder who was an inner-estate elder in the County Governor’s estate. His strength is only second to Great Overarching Golden Celestials!”

As soon as the young man finished speaking, the entire place fell silent. A few people nodded their heads in agreement as well when they heard his words.

“I’ve heard about Duan Ling Tian killing Elder Liu Qian as well.”

“That’s not all! It’s said that Elder Pang Bing was there as well, and Elder Pang Bing admitted he’s not as strong as Duan Ling Tian!”

“What’s even more shocking is Duan Ling Tian demanded 100,000 prominent Celestial Stones from the Liu clan and 200,000 prominent Celestial Stones from the Pang clan as compensation. He gave them three days to deliver the Celestial Stones to him.”

Everyone was thoroughly shocked.

The first person who regained his senses first weakly said, “Duan Ling Tian’s strength... How’s he so powerful?”

“Isn’t Lord County Governor angry?” Another person asked in confusion.

“Duan Ling Tian’s, naturally, more valuable to Lord County Governor than Elder Liu Qian... Lord County Governor went to the Liu clan yesterday as well and voiced his unconditional support for Duan Ling Tian. For this reason, the Liu clan and Elder Pang Bing have no choice but to comply with Duan Ling Tian’s demand. I heard the two clans have already begun to sell their businesses and properties to gather Celestial Stones.”

“So the Liu and Pang clans are really giving Duan Ling Tian 300,000 prominent Celestial Stones?”

“300,000 prominent Celestial Stones? This is inconceivable!”

The crowd was thoroughly shocked, and it took a long time for them to recover from it. Although Duan Ling Tian was the strongest among them, they did not expect him to be so heaven-defyingly strong!

Meanwhile, Qin Yu who was cultivating in the second to last stone chamber in the Latent Dragon Abyss had overheard the conversations as well. ‘Duan Ling Tian...’

Qin Yu laughed when he heard about what happened. ‘Liu Clan? Serves them right!’ In his opinion, the Liu clan had dug their own graves by provoking Duan Ling Tian. After all, Duan Ling Tian was even capable of killing a Great Overarching Golden Celestial, let alone the Liu clan.

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The Latent Dragon Abyss was not the only place that was in an uproar. The County Governor’s estate, in fact, the entire Nine Specters County, was in an uproar over this matter. Everyone in the County City was heatedly discussing this matter. Many of them were shocked by Duan Ling Tian’s strength.

“He’s not even 100 years old, but his strength is almost comparable to a Great Overarching Golden Celestial... Even Pang Bing, the strongest person under Great Overarching Golden Celestials, admitted he’s not a match for Duan Ling Tian!”

“I didn’t expect Nine Specters County to have a hidden dragon!”

“Once the hidden dragon leaves its nest, the Nine Specters County will be famous for producing such a peerless talent!”

Most people were happy and proud that the Nine Specters County had such a peerless genius among their ranks. They could not wait to see the growth of this genius and was curious about how far he would go in the future.

As with all things, there were, naturally, people who were displeased by this news. These people were the 15 County Governors of the other 15 counties under the rule of King Qing’s Mansion. It was not difficult for them to find out about this. They had their spies in Nine Specters County. Naturally, the Nine Specters County had spies in the 15 counties as well.

At this moment, a man could be seen leaving Nine Specters County in a rush. He muttered to himself, “I must return to Qiu Lian County and report this to Lord County Governor... With such a peerless genius, there’s no doubt the other 15 counties won’t stand a chance in ranking first in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties.” This man was clearly a spy from Qiu Lian County.

Meanwhile, 14 other figures could be seen leaving Nine Specters County one after another in different directions.

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At the same time, Duan Ling Tian who was focused on refining pills were unaware that he was making the 15 counties restless

Another day and night had passed.

A peal of laughter suddenly rang in the stone chamber located in the depth of the Latent Dragon Abyss. “I did it!” His voice betrayed his excitement when he spoke.

He touched the cauldron, and a beam of light appeared as pills began to rise from the cauldron.

Chapter 2673 Preparing to Leave

After a while, Duan Ling Tian narrowed his eyes when he thought about the grey flame in the defective metal piece. He muttered to himself, “I can only draw out a small part of the grey flame for now, and it’s comparable to a primitive Celestial Fire. I wonder if this is the limit? If it’s the limit, then, once I completely master it, it’ll be comparable to mediocre Celestial Fire. If this isn’t its limit, once I have full control of it, it should, at least, be comparable to a prominent Celestial Fire.” His eyes brightened as he drew close to the end of his sentence.

“Anyway, for now, there’s no doubt the small fire that I drew out is only comparable to primitive Celestial Fires since there’s not much energy in it. With that said, if I manage to draw all the grey flame out, it should only be a mediocre Celestial Fire. Since the fire I can use now is only comparable to a primitive Celestial Fire, I guess that makes me a primitive Celestial Alchemist. I wonder why I can’t use

all of the flames? I don't think it has anything to do with my cultivation base. I'm a Golden Celestial, but there are many Heavenly Celestials who are mediocre Celestial Alchemists just because they possess a mediocre Celestial Fire. There must be another reason why I can't use all of the grey flames," Duan Ling Tian murmured, speculating to himself.

Duan Ling Tian's speculation was not wrong. However, not even in his wildest dream would he be able to imagine that the grey flame was not a mediocre Celestial Fire but the second form of the Chaos Divine Flame that was comparable to a mediocre Celestial Fire. Due to his body that could not contain it for now, he was unable to unleash the full potential of the fire. If the grey flame was fully drawn out of the defective metal piece, it would burn Duan Ling Tian into ashes in just an instant. To fully control the second form of the Chaos Divine Flame and safely draw it out of the defective metal piece, he would have to improve his cultivation base and become a Great Overarching Golden Celestial. Only Great Overarching Golden Celestials or those who were stronger had bodies strong enough to contain the second form of the Chaos Divine Flame. This was because when one transformed into a Great Overarching Golden Celestial from a Golden Celestial, one's Celestial Origin Energy would undergo a change. One's body would undergo a transformation as well. The entire process was quite similar to a rebirth. Naturally, Duan Ling Tian was unaware of all these things for now.

"It has been two days. I wonder if the Liu and Pang clans have delivered the prominent Celestial Stones?" Duan Ling Tian muttered to himself as his eyes glinted in the light. Although he had been fully immersed in refining pills during the past two days, he was still aware of the passage of time since it was not like going into closed-door cultivation.

Duan Ling Tian thought to himself, 'I have a day left before I have to leave. After obtaining the prominent Celestial Stones, I'll leave the County City and Nine Specters County. I should say goodbye to Qin Yu and Elder Zheng Qiu before I leave.'

When Duan Ling Tian emerged from his stone chamber, he looked at the stone chamber located above his and called out, "Qin Yu."

Almost as soon as Duan Ling Tian had spoken, the door of the stone chamber swung open, and a figure emerged from the stone chamber. Qin Yu, who came with Duan Ling Tian from Bloody Specter City, smiled when he saw Duan Ling Tian. He said, "Duan Ling Tian, you caused quite a big commotion two days ago. The Liu clan has three Supreme Elders, and you killed two of them."

"Oh, you've heard about it?" Duan Ling Tian smiled faintly.

"I'm not the only one who has heard about it. I think everyone, except for those in closed-door cultivation, has heard about it, regardless if they're from the County City, other places in Nine Specters County, or the neighboring counties." Qin Yu shook his head.

"Hmm." Duan Ling Tian merely nodded his head, he had expected this after all. Then, he looked at Qin Yu and solemnly said, "Qin Yu, I plan to leave the County Governor's estate and the County City... I might even leave Nine Specters County."

"You're leaving?" Qin Yu knitted his brows. Realization dawned on him before he asked, "Is it because your strength has been revealed? You're afraid the other 15 counties might do you harm?"

Duan Ling Tian replied, "Well, that's one of the reasons. I plan to travel around as well. When I was still in Bloody Specter City, I wasn't strong enough to do so. After all, I might get myself killed if I recklessly ventured out. Since I've gotten stronger now, I plan to travel around. Who knows if I'll have a fortuitous encounter?" It would be great if he had a fortuitous encounter, but he knew this was something out of his control.

Qin Yu's brows were still knitted together as he asked, "It seems like you have no plans of returning... Then, what about the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties?"

"I'll go to King Qing's Mansion when the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties begins. Not only would the county where the winner is from be rewarded, but the winner would be rewarded as well. Since King Qing's Mansion is rewarding the winning county with three mediocre Celestial Pills, I'm sure the reward for the winner wouldn't be too shabby. I definitely won't miss the competition. I'll see you again in less than a year." Duan Ling Tian smiled.

Qin Yu sighed in relief. "That's good. I thought I won't be seeing you again. Anyway, based on the current situation, it's for the best that you leave this place." It was not difficult to guess the other 15 counties under the rule of King Qing's Mansion would want Duan Ling Tian dead once they learned about his strength. After all, Duan Ling Tian threatened their common interest. With Duan Ling Tian participating in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties, they had no hope of ranking first in the competition. After a brief moment, he reminded Duan Ling Tian to stay safe. "Please be careful when you're outside. Although you're strong and capable of killing Revered Elder Zhou Tong, there are many people who are much stronger than him out there."

"Yes, I understand." Duan Ling Tian nodded. Then, he looked at his stone chamber and said with a smile, "I don't think I'll be coming back here. You can take over my stone chamber. With your strength, no one in the Latent Dragon Abyss would be able to successfully challenge you for it. They won't dare to object to you cultivating in there." When he finished speaking, he handed a Door Talisman to Qin Yu.

After Qin Yu took the Door Talisman, he said jokingly, "It seems like I'm benefitting from your departure." A hint of excitement could be seen in his eyes. After all, the cultivation environment in Duan Ling Tian's stone chamber was comparable to the County Governor's cultivation place.

"Anyway, I won't be seeing you again before I leave. I'm going to bid farewell to Elder Zheng Qiu and the County Governor now. After that, I'll leave once I collect the prominent Celestial Stones from the Liu and Pang clans," Duan Ling Tian said before leaving the Latent Dragon Abyss.

2674 Gilded Golden Pill

"Elder Zheng Qiu," Duan Ling Tian called out. He could tell Zheng Qiu was more reserved with him now. After all, he was stronger than Zheng Qiu. In fact, back when Zheng Qiu had escorted him from Bloody Specter City to the County City of Nine Specters County, he was already stronger than Zheng Qiu if he had used the Devata Artifact, the Seven Orifices Exquisite Sword. Naturally, Zheng Qiu was not aware of it at that time. News of his deed in the Liu clan had already spread so there was no doubt that Zheng Qiu had already heard of what happened. Since he was stronger than Pang Bing who was stronger than Zheng Qiu, he was, naturally, stronger than Zheng Qiu.

Zheng Qiu looked at Duan Ling Tian emotionally and sighed. "Duan Ling Tian, I really didn't expect you to grow so strong in just two short years. You've become even stronger than me!"

"I am where I am today thanks to Elder Zheng Qiu for bringing me to the County Governor's estate. Without the superior cultivation environment in the County Governor's estate, I wouldn't have been able to grow so strong," Duan Ling Tian said modestly.

Zheng Qiu shook his head and laughed. "You're too humble. You were chosen by the City Governor of Bloody Specter City. Even if I didn't go, another person would still be sent there to escort you here." After a brief pause, he narrowed his eyes and asked, "Are you here to say goodbye?"

Duan Ling Tian was slightly taken aback. "Elder Zheng Qiu, how do you know that I'm leaving?"

"Lord County Governor has told me it's too dangerous for you to stay here now that your strength has been revealed. The 15 counties would definitely seek to get rid of you, they might even join hands to do that. After all, with you participating in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties, they have no hope of taking the first place. You're an obstacle to them obtaining the three mediocre Celestial Pills, the Great Overarching Pills," Zheng Qiu replied.

Duan Ling Tian shrugged. "Well, it doesn't matter. I can seize this opportunity to travel."

"You're truly kind to remember an old man like me before you leave..." Zheng Qiu said with a smile as he looked at Duan Ling Tian. Then, he took out an exquisite little box and handed it over to Duan Ling Tian before saying, "I'm sure you're not lacking in Celestial Stones so I decided to give this pill to you."

"Pill?" Duan Ling Tian's eyes brightened when he heard the box contained a pill. He could not help but ask, "May I know what pill is it?" Since the pill was kept in an exquisite box and it belonged to an inner-estate elder of the County Governor's estate, he was sure the pill was not just an ordinary pill. Otherwise, Zheng Qiu would have stored it in an ordinary pill bottle.

Zheng Qiu replied without beating around the bush, "It's a Gilded Golden Pill."

"A Gilded Golden Pill?!" Duan Ling Tian widened his eyes in surprise. He felt his heartbeat quickened, and his chest rose and fell heavily when he heard Zheng Qiu's words.

The Gilded Golden Pill was only a primitive Celestial Pill, but it was the rarest and most precious among primitive Celestial Pills. Those who were Violet Sun Golden Celestials or below could instantly raise their cultivation base by a level after consuming the Gilded Golden Pill. Moreover, there were no side effects at all. However, one could only take the Gilded Golden Pill once in their entire lives. For Violet Sun Golden Celestials, they could improve their cultivation after taking the pill, but they would not be able to become a Great Overarching Golden Celestial. To become a Great Overarching Golden Celestial, one would have to take the Great Overarching Pill instead. Apart from not being effective for Great Overarching Golden Celestials, these pills were not suitable for Heavenly Celestials as well since their bodies would not be able to withstand the medicinal efficacy of the pill and would cause their bodies to implode. These pills were only suitable for Golden Celestials.

Zheng Qiu smiled when he saw the excitement in Duan Ling Tian's eyes. "Yes. Since you haven't become a Great Overarching Golden Celestial yet, you can use it to further improve your strength. Although its

effect might not be obvious, it'll take you one step closer to becoming a Great Overarching Golden Celestial level." He was under the impression that Duan Ling Tian was already a Violet Sun Golden Celestial. It was only natural he would think that way since Duan Ling Tian was stronger than Pang Bing, the inner-estate elder in the County Governor's estate.

Duan Ling Tian took a deep breath to calm down before he asked, "Elder Zheng Qiu, why don't you keep the pill for yourself?" After all, he knew Zheng Qiu was a Violet Sun Golden Celestial. If Zheng Qiu took the pill, he would be able to get closer to becoming a Great Overarching Golden Celestial.

"I've already taken it once so it won't have any effect on me if I take it again." Zheng Qiu shook his head. Then, he added, "At that time, I obtained three Gilded Golden Pills by chance. I took one and gave one to my son who's currently the Clan Leader of the Zheng clan. This is the last Gilded Golden Pill I have. I know you'll be compensated with 300,000 prominent Celestial Stones from the Liu and Pang clans, therefore, I thought this pill is the most appropriate farewell gift for you."

"Thank you, Elder Zheng Qiu," Duan Ling Tian said appreciatively. He did not decline Zheng Qiu's goodwill, after all, the lure of the Gilded Golden Pill was too big. He was only a Yellow Sun Golden Celestial now. After taking the pill, he would instantly become a Green Sun Golden Celestial. This would save him a lot of time. He would always remember this favor in his heart.

Zheng Qiu was relieved that Duan Ling Tian did not refuse the gift. He said hesitantly, "Duan Ling Tian..."

"Elder Zheng Qiu, please don't hesitate... Please speak your mind." Duan Ling Tian smiled.

Zheng Qiu took a deep breath and said, "Duan Ling Tian, I'm sure you're aware the County Governor's estate will be rewarded with three Great Overarching Pills once you win the competition. Lord County Governor has been a profound Great Overarching Golden Celestial for a long time now without any signs of improvements since his cultivation base has stagnated. Taking two of the pills will probably help him break through to the next stage. During the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties, I hope you can suggest to Lord County Governor to bestow the remaining pill to me instead of bestowing it to Elder Pang Bing. Anyway, I don't ask that you do anything more than suggesting it to him. Regardless of who he decides to bestow the pill to, in the end, I'll still be indebted to you."

"Don't worry, Elder Zheng Qiu. I speak to the County Governor about this during the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties. If he's unwilling, I'll deliberately lose and let someone else win. I'm sure he'll know what to do at that time." Duan Ling Tian promised.

"Thank you," Zheng Qiu said. Although this might anger the County Governor since it was no different from a threat, he did not object to Duan Ling Tian's words. After all, with this, he knew he had a higher chance of obtaining the Great Overarching Pill.

Duan Ling Tian shook his head and said with a smile, "There's no need to thank me... Just treat this as an exchange for the Gilded Golden Pill." After that, he bade Zheng Qiu farewell and left.

After that, Duan Ling Tian went to bid farewell to Tian Ji Yu.

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When Duan Ling Tian was outside the estate, he turned to look at the estate and murmured, "I won't be coming back here..." He took a longer look, committing this place to mind. After all, he had stayed in this place the longest after he had ascended to the Spirit Overarching Heaven.

Then, Duan Ling Tian went to the Liu and Pang clans to collect the 300,000 prominent Celestial Stones. He thought to himself, 'The Liu clan is, indeed, very wealthy!' Just as expected, the Pang clan could not afford to pay 200,000 prominent Celestial Stones so the Liu clan had to pay half of it. He did not encounter any difficulties when collecting the Celestial Stones since he had Tian Ji Yu's support. Otherwise, the Liu and Pang clans might not be so cooperative. He did not waste any time and left as soon as he collected the prominent Celestial Stones.

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Three days after Duan Ling Tian had left...

Swoosh!

A white figure entered the County City of Nine Specters County and infiltrated the County Governor's estate at an extremely fast speed. Upon closer inspection, one would see the white figure hovering in the air belonged to an old lady.

Chapter 2675 Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial

The old lady wore a plain robe. She hovered above the County Governor's estate in Nine Specters County as she said indifferently, "I'm looking for Duan Ling Tian!" Her voice was not loud, but it seemed to contain a magical power that carried her voice through the entire estate.

No one in the estate, including Tian Ji Yu, had detected her presence before she had spoken up. Therefore, as soon as her voice resounded through the estate, it caused a huge commotion immediately.

"The voice seems to come from above the estate."

"It sounds like an old woman. Why is she looking for Duan Ling Tian?"

"Her voice is so emotionless that it's hard to figure out her purpose for coming to the estate."

"Regardless of her purpose, since she made such a big fuss in the County Governor's estate, the inner-estate elders and Lord County Governor won't let her go!"

The servant girls, errand boys, and guards who did not know any better and were weaker than Golden Celestials discussed the matter heatedly.

On the other hand, those who were Golden Celestials or stronger trembled when they heard the old lady's voice.

"This person must be very strong!"

"Although I'm a Blue Sun Golden Celestial, I'm still affected by her voice... She must be a Great Overarching Golden Celestial or stronger!"

“I don’t think an ordinary Great Overarching Golden Celestial would be able to make my heart palpitate like this...”

“We can’t recklessly approach her in case we end up provoking her...”

The stronger guards, outer-estate elders, and inner-estate elders speculated that the old lady must be a Great Overarching Golden Celestial or stronger. Since Zhou Tong, the Revered Elder of the County Governor’s estate and the other Great Overarching Golden Celestial in the Nine Specters County, had died, only the County Governor was able to deal with such a person. For this reason, none of them dared to approach the old woman.

Swoosh!

A figure shot up into the sky from the courtyard of the County Governor’s residence at lightning speed toward the trespasser. The figure belonged to Tian Ji Yu, the County Governor of Nine Specters County.

When Tian Ji Yu heard the trespasser bluntly requested for Duan Ling Tian, he could not help but wonder, ‘Is this person someone who was hired by one of the 15 counties?’

However, he quickly dismissed that thought. He did not think it was possible. ‘What Duan Ling Tian did in the Liu clan only happened 5 days ago. News wouldn’t spread so quickly unless we have Great Overarching Golden Celestials spreading the news. Even if a Violet Sun Golden Celestial travels at high speed to the nearest County City from Nine Specters County, he would need about 10 days before he arrives at his destination.’ Moreover, it was impossible for the other counties to use Great Overarching Golden Celestials as spies. The county with the highest number of Great Overarching Golden Celestials only had three Great Overarching Golden Celestials after all.

Apart from that, Tian Ji Yu, as the County Governor of Nine Specters City, naturally, had information about the spies sent by the other 15 counties. To his knowledge, the strongest among the spies was only an Indigo Sun Golden Celestial. For this reason, he was certain the trespasser had nothing to do with the other 15 counties.

“Hmm?” When he was near the figure, he slowed down and observed the figure. He saw an old lady dressed in simple robes. She stood unmoving like a mountain, and she had an ethereal air about her as though she was not of this world.

The old woman suddenly turned to Tian Ji Yu and asked, “Are you the County Governor of Nine Specters County?” Her turbid eyes seemed to turn as bright as the stars at this moment. An intimidating energy surged out and hit Tian Ji Yu.

Tian Ji Yu, who was terrified by the eyes that were deep and dark, trembled before he spat out a large mouthful of blood. He instinctively took a step back. Although he was furious, he did not dare to express it. When he finally caught his breath, he bowed and greeted the old woman respectfully, “I’m the County Governor of Nine Specters County, Tian Ji Yu. It’s a pleasure to meet you, old senior!” Inwardly, waves of shock appeared in his heart. ‘Even a peak Great Overarching Golden Celestial wouldn’t be able to injure me with just their energy alone. This means the old woman should be an Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial at least.’

An Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial was far stronger than Great Overarching Golden Celestials! In fact, there was only one person in all the places under the rule of King Qin's Mansion who was an Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial!

When Tian Ji Yu realized the old woman was an Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial, he felt a frisson of fear. Meanwhile, his anger had completely vanished and was replaced by worry. He wondered why an Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial would come to Nine Specters County to look for Duan Ling Tian!

The old woman stared at Tian Ji Yu with flashing eyes and asked in a low voice, "Where's Duan Ling Tian?"

Tian Ji Yu could not help but ask, "Senior, may I ask w-why you're looking for Duan Ling Tian?" He could not figure out how Duan Ling Tian was acquainted with an Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial. Moreover, it was clear she came with ill intent. When she mentioned Duan Ling Tian, her eyes had flashed with killing intent. There was no doubt she had come to kill Duan Ling Tian.

"Don't ask questions you shouldn't ask. You just need to answer my question," the old lady said coldly, causing Tian Ji Yu to feel as though winter had arrived.

Tian Ji Wu was so frightened that he quickly replied, as meek as a cat, "Yes, yes." Although Tian Ji Yu was a County Governor under the protection of King Qin's Mansion, the old woman was, at least, an Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial. This meant she was, at least, as strong as the strongest person in King Qin's Mansion. Therefore, if she were to kill him, there was a high possibility King Qin's Mansion would be helpless to avenge him even if they wanted to. What was likely to happen was King Qin's Mansion being unwilling to avenge him and risk offending an Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial for a mere County Governor.

After Tian Ji Yu took a deep breath, he replied fearfully, "Senior, you came a step too late. Three days ago, Duan Ling Tian had left the County Governor's estate and the Nine Specters County."

When the old lady heard this, she narrowed her eyes that shone with a cold light. "Left? I'll give you another chance to repeat it! If I find out you're lying, I'll kill you!"

"Senior, I didn't lie. Duan Ling Tian had left the County Governor's estate and the County City three days ago." Tian Ji Yu smiled bitterly. Then, he added, "I know why he left. If you're interested, I'm willing to tell you why..."

The old lady's eyes flashed like lightning as she said imposingly, "Speak!"

Tian Ji Yu did not hesitate and began to recount what happened in the Liu clan. "Five days ago..."

The old lady furrowed her brows as she thought to herself, 'He's as strong as a Great Overarching Golden Celestial even though he's not even 100 years old? The brat who defiled Miss Bing'er has such a high innate talent?' Nevertheless, the killing intent in her eyes did not disappear. She was determined to kill Duan Ling Tian as soon as she could! Finally, she asked icily, "In other words, he left Nine Specters County because he's afraid the other 15 counties would send powerhouses to kill him?"

“Yes.” Tian Ji Yu nodded.

“Did he say he would participate in the upcoming Martial Competition of the 16 Counties at King Qin’s Mansion?” the old woman asked.

“He didn’t say anything about that,” Tian Ji Yu replied. Naturally, he would not tell the old lady that Duan Ling Tian had promised to meet him at King Qin’s Mansion to participate in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties. After all, he still had to rely on Duan Ling Tian to obtain the three mediocre Celestial Pills, the Great Overarching Pills. He had honestly told the old lady about the reason behind Duan Ling Tian’s departure only because he had no choice. After all, she could easily verify the veracity of his words. She would definitely be furious if she found he was lying. At that time, she would surely kill him. ǎ

Chapter 2676 Brushing Pas

Tian Ji Yu, the County Governor of Nine Specters County, definitely would not tell the old lady about Duan Ling Tian participating in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties in King Qin’s Mansion if he had a choice. There was no doubt the old lady would make her way to King Qin’s Mansion to kill Duan Ling Tian if he did. No one would be able to stand up to her except for King Qin himself at that time. He did not wish to see Duan Ling Tian die. After all, Duan Ling Tian was his only hope to obtain the three mediocre Celestial Pills, the Great Overarching Pills. He did not stand a chance otherwise. He had longed for those pills for a long time now. He would not allow anyone, not even an Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial, to ruin his chances.

The old lady scoffed, and a wave of imposing energy hit Tian Ji Yu again, causing him to stumble back a few steps and spit out a mouthful of blood.

Blood splattered in the air, looking like red roses blooming. It was an extremely eye-catching sight.

“You should’ve been a profound Great Overarching Golden Celestial for a long time now, right? It seems like your cultivation base has stagnated...” the old lady said as she looked at Tian Ji Yu knowingly. Without waiting for his reply, she continued to say, “If you’re able to consume two or three Great Overarching Pills, it would be easy for you to break through the bottleneck. If I were you, there’s no way I wouldn’t make Duan Ling Tian participate in the competition. After all, based on your words, it’d be easy for him to rank first in the competition. Isn’t that why the other 15 counties want to get rid of him?”

Tian Ji Yu smiled bitterly. “Senior, you’re right. Naturally, I really hope Duan Ling Tian would participate in the competition since there’s nothing I want more than those Great Overarching Pills. However, before he left, he had hinted that he didn’t want to participate in the competition. I even told him I’m willing to give him one of the three Great Overarching Pill, but he didn’t seem interested at all. Since there’s a risk of him being killed by the other 15 counties, he thought it’d be better if he didn’t take the risk and participate in the competition.”

The old lady asked in a low voice, “Why didn’t you force him to stay and participate in the competition?”

“Senior, even if I force him to stay, I won’t be able to stop the powerhouses sent by the 15 counties to get rid of him. At that time, I’d be left with nothing. However, he might feel grateful to me if I didn’t force him to stay. Someone with such a high innate talent like him definitely has a bright future. Who knows, once he becomes stronger, he might reward me with Great Overarching Pills? For this reason, I decided it’s better to let him leave than forcing him to stay.” His explanation was sound and flawless. He had come up with such a meticulous explanation in hopes of misleading the old lady. Otherwise, he knew she would definitely wait for Duan Ling Tian in King Qin’s Mansion and kill him before the competition even began. At that time, he would lose the three Great Overarching Pills.

The old lady did not doubt Tian Ji Yu’s explanation. After all, it was a flawless explanation. Finally, she asked in a low voice, “Did he say where he was going before he left?”

Upon hearing this, Tian Ji Yu knew the old woman had bought his explanation. He was inwardly delighted that his plan to mislead the old lady had worked. However, outwardly, he smiled bitterly as he said, “I did ask him where he planned to go. He said he had no destination in mind and that he was going to travel. However, since he had only left three days ago, he should still be in Nine Specters County.”

“I hope you’re not lying. If I were to find out you’re lying, you’ll definitely die!” the old lady said threateningly. As soon as she finished speaking, she disappeared into thin air. At least, it seemed that way to Tian Ji Yu who could not catch her movements.

After the old lady had left, Tian Ji Yu still felt lingering fear in his heart. He thought to himself, ‘I think the old woman isn’t an ordinary Overarching Heavenly Supreme Celestial.’ Even King Qin’s speed might not be as fast as that old lady’s speed.

‘I wonder how Duan Ling Tian provoked a person like that?’ Soon after, his eyes widened as he thought to himself, ‘Duan Ling Tian is almost as strong as a Great Overarching Golden even though he’s not even 100 years old. Is it possible that he has an extraordinary background? Is he from a major force that had been annihilated so he’s left alone to wander Nine Specters County? Perhaps, that old woman is from a rival force?’ The more he thought about it, the more he thought it was plausible.

If Duan Ling Tian were privy to Tian Ji Yu’s thoughts, he would have admired Tian Ji Yu’s overactive imagination.

However, it was only natural that Tian Ji Yu had such thoughts since he was not aware that Duan Ling Tian had only ascended to the Spirit Overarching Heaven less than three years ago!

Tian Ji Yu continued thinking to himself, ‘I hope that old lady doesn’t go to King Qin’s Mansion during the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties. She’ll definitely find out I lied to her if she sees Duan Ling Tian there. At that time, not only would she kill Duan Ling Tian, but she would definitely kill me as well!’ He fervently prayed the old lady would not show up in King Qin’s Mansion during the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties.

...

Meanwhile, Duan Ling Tian was unaware that if he had left the County Governor's estate a few days later than he had planned, he would have been killed by the powerhouse from the Compassionate Celestial Traveler Sect.

At this moment, Duan Ling Tian was making his way to Bloody Specter City to bid farewell to Liu Feng Gu before he left Nine Specters County.

Although their relationship was not deep, there was no doubt that Liu Feng Gu had helped him tremendously, even if it might be only due to their deal. Moreover, thanks to the information Liu Feng Gu had given him, he managed to obtain a Celestial Fire. Therefore, he planned to give Liu Feng Gu some prominent Celestial Stones and Spirit Nourishing Pills before he left. These things might not be particularly valuable to him, but he knew it would be precious to Liu Feng Gu.

'I don't like owing people favors. Giving him some prominent Celestial Stones and Spirit Nourishing Pills can be considered as me returning his favor for disclosing the location of the Celestial Fire to me. Moreover, there's a chance we won't be able to meet anymore after this,' Duan Ling Tian thought to himself.

When Duan Ling Tian met Liu Feng Gu, he was taken back to see hints of relief and excitement on Liu Feng Gu's face when Liu Feng Gu saw him. It was obvious that Liu Feng Gu was relieved to see that he was fine.

Liu Feng Gu stumbled over his words as he asked, "Duan Ling Tian? You... you... you're alright?!"

Duan Ling Tian saw a hint of guilt flashed in Liu Feng Gu's eyes as well. It was as though Liu Feng Gu felt ashamed. He could not understand why Liu Feng Gu would feel relieved, ashamed, and guilty at the same time when he saw him. He asked skeptically, "City Governor, what's it?"

Seeing that Duan Ling Tian was unaware of it, Liu Feng Gu sighed. "Duan Ling Tian, please forgive me. I had no choice. A few days ago, an old lady came and demanded to know where you've gone. She even killed all the people in the City Governor's estate and Black Dragon Army to threaten me. I had no choice but to tell her you've gone to the County Governor's estate in the County City of Nine Specters County. She was too strong. With just her energy alone, she pressured me until I fell to my knees and made me like dying. There's no doubt she's even stronger than Lord County Governor!" His expression was grim when he spoke.

2677 Powerhouse of Unknown Origin

"Stronger than the County Governor?" Duan Ling Tian's expression turned slightly grim when he heard Liu Feng Gu's words. Even if he used the Devata Artifact, the Seven Orifices Exquisite Sword, his strength was only comparable to Tian Ji Yu, the County Governor of Nine Specters City. It would be difficult for him to defeat Tian Ji Yu since Tian Ji Yu had better Celestial Methods and Divine Abilities compared to Zhou Tong, a Great Overarching Golden Celestial whom he had killed previously. Even if he took the Gilded Golden Pill and became a Green Sun Golden Celestial, he was not certain he would be stronger than Tian Ji Yu. He would have a difficult time defeating Tian Ji Yu, let alone someone who was stronger than Tian Ji Yu.

“An old lady? City Governor Liu, why is that old lady looking for me?” Duan Ling Tian asked as he looked at Liu Feng Gu. He could not figure out why a powerhouse stronger than the County Governor would come looking for him. After all, he had just ascended recently.

“I don’t know why she’s looking for you, but there’s no doubt she came with ill intention. When she mentioned you, I can see the killing intent in her eyes even though she was expressionless. There’s no doubt that she wants to kill you!” Liu Feng Gu replied in a low voice.

Duan Ling Tian narrowed his eyes. A hint of fear flashed in his eyes as he thought to himself, ‘I’ve just ascended to the Spirit Overarching Heaven roughly three years ago. When did I provoke such a powerhouse when I spent most of my time in Nine Specters County? Is she sent by Yun Qing Yan from the Divine Offering Land? No, the paths connecting the Divine Offering Land to the Devata Realms have closed... It’s impossible for him to send someone here now. Moreover, if she’s really sent by Yun Qing Yan, why would she need to come to Bloody Specter City to investigate my whereabouts?’

Duan Ling Tian still remembered the man who was sent by Yun Qing Yan to kill him. That man had personally torn a hole in the void and entered Yan Huang Realm directly. That man was even stronger than most Heavenly Emperors in the Devata Realms. If the old lady was sent by Yun Qing Yan, she should be able to locate him in just an instant using her Divine Consciousness. There was no need for her to investigate his whereabouts.

‘If she weren’t sent by Yun Qing Yan, then, who’s she? I’ve never encountered someone so strong since I ascended to the Spirit Overarching Heaven...’ Duan Ling Tian thought to himself in confusion. He really could not figure out why someone so strong wanted to kill him.

“Duan Ling Tian, it has only been roughly three years since you ascended to the Spirit Overarching Heaven. How and when did you provoke someone like that?” Liu Feng Gu asked as he looked at Duan Ling Tian.

“I don’t know either.” Duan Ling Tian shook his head. He was equally as baffled by this.

Liu Feng Gu inhaled sharply as a thought occurred to him, and he asked, “Does it have something to do with Zhou Tong?”

“Zhou Tong? There are only a few people who know I brought Zhou Tong to you so you could kill him. If it’s related to him, the old lady would not have just looked for me. She didn’t kill you when she met you... It’s clear that the old lady has nothing to do with Zhou Tong.” Duan Ling Tian shook his head and analyzed the situation.

Upon hearing Duan Ling Tian’s words, Liu Feng Gu nodded in agreement. “You’re right. Then, why is she targeting you?”

Duan Ling Tian furrowed his brows and said, “Could she be a powerhouse who was hired by the 15 counties to kill me?” Duan Ling Tian knitted his brows.

“A powerhouse hired by the 15 counties?” Liu Feng Gu was taken aback.

However, after mulling it over for a moment, Duan Ling Tian shook his head. "No, it's impossible. If she's hired by the 15 counties, she should know that I was in the County City of Nine Specters County. Moreover, I don't think news about what I'd done in the Liu clan has spread that far yet."

"Duan Ling Tian, what are you talking about? Why would the 15 counties hire someone to kill you?" Liu Feng Gu asked, baffled.

Although news about Duan Ling Tian's deed in the Liu clan had begun to spread, it had not reached Bloody Specter City yet.

Duan Ling Tian recounted everything that had happened in the Liu clan to Liu Feng Gu and also told Liu Feng Gu about the reason behind his departure from the County Governor's estate and Nine Specters County.

Upon hearing Duan Ling Tian's words, Liu Feng Gu sighed in relief. "So that's what happened... It seems like the old lady is a step too late in finding you..."

Duan Ling Tian felt lucky. "That's right. It seems like I unintentionally saved my life by leaving..."

"Duan Ling Tian, why did you come to Bloody Specter City if you planned to leave Nine Specters County?" Liu Feng Gu asked.

"I came to bid you farewell. Moreover, I wanted to thank you for disclosing the location of the Celestial Fire to me," Duan Ling Tian said honestly.

Liu Feng Gu's eyes brightened. "Y-you... You obtained the Celestial Fire?"

"Yes." Duan Ling Tian nodded.

"Is it a primitive Celestial Fire?" Liu Feng Gu asked.

"Yes. Initially, I wasn't sure of its grade. However, after I refined the Spirit Nourishing Pills, I discovered that it should be a primitive Celestial Fire." Duan Ling Tian nodded.

Indeed, the grey flame was only comparable to a primitive Celestial Fire. However, Duan Ling Tian did not tell Liu Feng Gu that he was unable to use all of the grey flames. Only the part that he was able to draw out from the defective metal piece was comparable to a primitive Celestial Fire. If he could draw the grey flame out in its entirety, it was probably comparable to a mediocre Celestial Fire.

"Although it's a primitive Celestial Fire, it's obviously not an ordinary one since it could only be obtained by Great Overarching Golden Celestials. Congratulations on obtaining that Celestial Fire and becoming a primitive Celestial Alchemist!" Liu Feng Gu congratulated Duan Ling Tian.

"It's all due to the information you gave me. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to obtain the Celestial Fire, let alone become a Celestial Alchemist." Duan Ling Tian smiled. At the same time, he took out a Spatial Ring and handed it over to Liu Feng Gu.

"What's this?" Liu Feng Gu was surprised.

"I don't know when and if I'll come back. This is a token of my gratitude for disclosing the location of the Celestial Fire to me," Duan Ling Tian said with a smile.

Liu Feng Gu smiled bitterly. "Duan Ling Tian, the moment I betrayed you by disclosing your location to the old woman, I've already considered all the favors returned. In fact, I'm still indebted to you. If you didn't help me, I wouldn't have been able to avenge my direct disciple. And yet, I returned your kindness with ingratitude..." As he spoke, he felt more and more guilty.

"City Governor, I understand that you had no choice but to do so... Moreover, I'm fine now, aren't I? Just accept these things since it's my wish for you to have them." Duan Ling Tian shook his head and smiled.

Due to Duan Ling Tian's repeated persuasion, Liu Feng Gu eventually accepted the Spatial Ring. However, after he claimed ownership of the ring and saw the mountainous pile of prominent Celestial Stones and the few dozen bottles of the primitive Celestial Pills, the Spirit Nourishing Pills, he hastily removed his ownership of the ring. "Duan Ling Tian, they're too much. You should keep these Celestial Stones and Spirit Nourishing Pills for your own use."

Duan Ling Tian did not take the Spatial Ring from Liu Feng Gu. Instead, he shook his head and said, "No, City Governor. Just keep it. I'm not lacking in Celestial Stones and Spirit Nourishing Pills now." Then, he added, "Since I've already achieved my objective of coming here, I'll be taking my leave now. If there's a chance, I'll visit you in the future."

Before Duan Ling Tian left, Liu Feng called out to him before he solemnly asked, "Duan Ling Tian, do you still plan on participating in the Martial Competition of the 16 counties in King Qin's Mansion?"

"I have promised the County Governor that I would. Moreover, if I rank first, King Qin's Mansion will definitely place great importance on me. At that time, I'll have access to the cultivation resources and environment there!"

"But... But what if the old lady waits for you in King Qin's Mansion? Wouldn't you be endangering your life by showing up in King Qin's Mansion? Since she's stronger than the County Governor, he wouldn't be able to protect you from her." Liu Feng Gu smiled bitterly.

"There are so many powerhouses in King Qin's Mansion, I don't think she'll dare to cause trouble there, right?" Duan Ling Tian frowned.

"That might not be the case. Who knows if there's anyone in King Qin's Mansion who's able to defeat her? How can we say for sure she's not strong enough to cause trouble there? I'm sure it won't be difficult for her to find out the reason you left once she arrives in the County City. It's highly likely that she'll wait for you in King Qin's Mansion during the Martial Competition of the 16 counties.!" Liu Feng Gu said.

2678 Time Flies

Based on Liu Feng Gu's words and analysis of the situation, Duan Ling Tian could see how meticulous Liu Feng Gu was. His expression turned grim when he heard Liu Feng Gu's analysis. If the old lady was so strong that no one in King Qin's Mansion could defeat her, then, who would be able to protect him if he went there? Liu Feng Gu's words had made him aware of the danger of participating in the Martial

Competition of the 16 counties in King Qin's Mansion. It would not be wise for him to go to King Qin's Mansion if he could not ascertain the old woman's strength and identity since it was likely that she would be waiting for him there.

Although Liu Feng Gu had told Duan Ling Tian that the old lady was stronger than Tian Ji Yu, the County Governor of Nine Specters County, he only took the words at face value. He did not think about the possibility of the old woman being stronger than the people in King Qin's Mansion.

"Unless you can verify the old lady's strength and identity, I don't think you should participate in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties in King Qin's Mansion!" Liu Feng Gu said.

"Thank you for your reminder." Duan Ling Tian thanked Liu Feng Gu. With Liu Feng Gu's reminder in mind, he left with a troubled heart. After all, this concerned his life.

After Duan Ling Tian left, Liu Feng Gu looked at the Spatial Ring in his hand and sighed. His hand tightened its grip on the ring as he murmured, "Duan Ling Tian, I hope you'll keep my words in your mind. It's best if you don't join the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties, and stay away from the areas governed by King Qin's Mansion."

...

Outside Bloody Specter City.

Swoosh!

Like a shooting star, Duan Ling Tian flew in the air toward the border of Nine Specters County. Since he did not have a specific destination in mind, he was flying without directions.

He was clearly troubled as he thought to himself, 'Who's that old lady? She must have a reason for wanting to kill me. However, I really don't remember provoking someone like her.'

Duan Ling Tian began to recall everything that had happened since his ascension to the Spirit Overarching Heaven roughly three years ago. He really wanted to figure out the old lady's purpose. All of a sudden, a figure appeared unbidden in his mind. 'C-could it be her?'

Duan Ling Tian came to a halt immediately as he thought about the time when he had just ascended to the Spirit Overarching Heaven. He remembered when he had strolled around Bloody Specters City when silence suddenly descended on the street. He remembered everyone's eyes were trained on something behind him. Out of curiosity, he had turned around to have a look. The sight that greeted him at that time had caused him to fall into a momentary daze. The reason everyone had fallen silent was due to a beautiful woman. She had worn a plain purple dress at that time. Her eyebrows were perfectly arched. Her skin was clear, and she had a wasp waist. A translucent veil covered the lower half of her face, but it did not detract from her beauty. Instead, it drew attention to her bright eyes, and it filled people with the urge to peel the veil off her face. She had an elegant and graceful air about her. One could imagine how much more attractive she would be if she had taken her veil off.

Duan Ling Tian remembered as the woman daintily walked down the street, the crowd instinctively parted for her. Everyone, regardless of gender, was attracted by this woman as though they were under

a spell. With her appearance, most men would have lecherous thoughts in their minds. However, strangely, that did not seem to be the case at that time. They had a reverent expression on their faces. It was as though they treated her like a sacred being, not to be desecrated with filthy thoughts.

When Duan Ling Tian finally regained his senses, he heaved a long sigh. "Murong Bing..." He already had two wives and a partner from when he was in the mundane realm. Although there were many women around him, he only treated them as normal friends. He felt blessed with his two wives and a partner and had no wish of having more women in his life. He even guarded his heart carefully so as not to fall in love with any woman. Who knew he would end up having sex with a woman while he was not fully conscious? Moreover, he had only met the woman once prior to having sex. However, since they had sex, he was determined to take responsibility. He had told the woman, Murong Bing, that he would find her again and that the woman whom he had sex with could only belong to him. He had already seen her as his woman once they had had sex.

"Is it possible that the old lady is related to her? If she wanted to kill me, she would've done it at that time. There's no need for her to send someone now, right?" Duan Ling Tian muttered to himself. He did not think the old lady was sent by Murong Bing since she could have very well killed him at that time if she so wished. Moreover, she placed great importance on her virginity. Even if she changed her mind and wanted to kill him, she would have done it personally instead of sending someone else. After all, she would not tell another person that she wanted him dead because she had lost her virginity to him.

Duan Ling Tian became even more confused the more he thought about it. 'If the old lady isn't related to her... then, who could it be? However, if the old lady is sent by her, even more so, I shouldn't go to King Qin's Mansion to participate in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties.' He had seen, first hand, how strong Murong Bing was. Moreover, it seemed like she came from a very powerful sect with a Sect Guarding Celestial Weapon. There was no doubt that the people from King Qin's Mansion would not be able to deal with someone who was sent by Murong Bing.

...

Time flew by in just a blink of an eye. Roughly a year had passed, and the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties in King Qin's Mansion was about to begin.

King Qin's Mansion was the name of a force, a region, and a huge sprawling estate.

The capital, known as King City, of King Qin's Mansion was located in a vast grassland. From afar, it looked like a slumbering beast with a gaping maw.

There was a rule in King Qin's Mansion that prohibited people from entering from above. Everyone who wanted to enter King City had to enter through one of the four gates. This was so they could easily maintain order and prevent chaos and disturbance. It was only natural for King Qin's Mansion to lay down such a rule since King City was huge and had a large population.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The sound of wind blowing rang in the air as two groups of people coming from different directions flew toward the eastern gate of King City in King Qin's Mansion.

The number of people in the two groups was roughly the same. They had about 30 people each in the groups. Both groups were led by a man respectively. Both men carried an imposing aura. It was clear they held a high position.

As soon as the group arrived at the eastern gate, they descended on the ground. None of them dared to defy the rule and directly fly into the city.

One of the men said, "County Governor Tian, what a coincidence to meet you outside the gate of King City."

County Governor Tian was none other than Tian Ji Yu, the County Governor of Nine Specters County! Apart from a few inner-estate elders and Revered Elders, the remaining people in Tian Ji Yu's group were 29 men who were younger than 100 years old.

If Duan Ling Tian was here, he would definitely recognize two of the inner-estate elders as Zheng Qiu and Pang Bing.

2679 Martial Competition of the 16 Counties

Qin Yu, a close acquaintance of Duan Ling Tian, was one of the 20 young men who came with Tian Ji Yu. He looked rather absentminded at this moment as he looked at the majestic King City of King Qin's Mansion, clearly lost in his thoughts.

"County Governor Wang," Tian Ji Yu replied with a faint smile on his face.

County Governor Wang's name was Wang Qi Ling. He was the County Governor of Fair Mountain County. He was here for the same reason as Tian Ji Yu. Both of them had brought young men in their respective counties here to participate in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties. The people standing behind Wang Qi Ling, apart from the 30 young men, were his favorite subordinates. The young men behind Wang Qi Ling stared at Qin Yu and the other young men behind Tian Ji Yu with hostility. After all, they were competitors. Only by defeating each other would they be able to rank in the top of the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties.

Wang Qi Ling studied the young men standing behind Tian Ji Yu for a moment before he said with a knowing smile on his face, "County Governor Tian, it seems like you're missing one person from your team?"

"He has gone out to train. He'll come when the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties begins," Tian Ji Yu replied indifferently.

When Wang Qi Ling heard Tian Ji Yu's words, his eyes narrowed, and he asked probingly, "Gone out to train? County Governor Tian, is the person you're referring to Duan Ling Tian? The young powerhouse who gained fame in Nine Specters County?"

A pleased expression appeared on Tian Ji Yu's face as he smiled. He did not reply to Wang Qi Ling's question and only said, "County Governor Wang, we'll enter the city first." Then, without waiting for a response, he led the group of people and entered King City of King Qin's Mansion, leaving Wang Qi Ling who had a dark expression on his face behind.

An old man behind Wang Qi Ling said in a low voice, "Lord County Governor, I'm afraid that the man who has gone out for training is most probably Duan Ling Tian!"

Wang Qi Ling said in a low voice, "Who else could it be other than Duan Ling Tian? Initially, when I received news that Duan Ling Tian is as strong as a Great Overarching Golden Celestial even though he's less than 100 years of age, I met with the other 14 County Governors. We spent a large number of supreme Celestial Stones just to hire a heaven-rank Great Overarching Golden Celestial to kill Duan Ling Tian. Who knew that powerhouse couldn't find Duan Ling Tian even though he combed through all the areas in Nine Specters County? Duan Ling Tian managed to escape the powerhouse and avoid death."

About a year ago, the spy from Fair Mountain County in Nine Specters County had sent word about Duan Ling Tian, a young Golden Celestial who was less than 100 years of age but possessed strength comparable to a Great Overarching Golden Celestial. Wang Qi Ling knew the severity of this matter since Duan Ling Tian's existence meant his team would not be able to rank first in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties. Most importantly, this meant he would not be able to obtain the three mediocre Celestial Pills, the Great Overarching Pills.

Wang Qi Ling and the other 14 County Governors were, naturally, unhappy with this situation. For this reason, they had convened and decided to use supreme Celestial Stones to hire someone who was stronger than Tian Ji Yu to kill Duan Ling Tian. Alas, their target disappeared and vanished without a trace.

A middle-aged man standing behind Wang Qi Ling said with a bitter smile on his face, "Well, if our Fair Mountain County has a powerhouse like Duan Ling Tian, we would've protected him with the same method as well. It occurred to me that County Governor Tian would send Duan Ling Tian away when we hired the assassin to kill Duan Ling Tian."

Another man from Wang Qi Ling's entourage scoffed and said, "Do you think Lord County Governor didn't think about that? However, we can't let go of the slightest possibility of killing him." He sighed before he said again, "Duan Ling Tian's presence will greatly affect the outcome of the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties... If he shows up, there's no doubt he'll definitely rank first in the competition."

"Indeed." The others agreed with his words as well.

Wang Qi Ling was rather displeased and frustrated that they had failed to kill Duan Ling Tian. However, he knew there was nothing he could do at this point.

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At this moment, the King City of King Qin's Mansion was filled with many young powerhouses from the 16 counties governed by King Qin's Mansion since the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties would begin in three days. The city that had been bustling was surprisingly calm during the days before the competition. It was like the calm before the storm.

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Inside an inconspicuous inn in King City.

In a large room, an old lady wearing a long plain robe stared at a middle-aged man before her and asked in a low voice, "The County Governor of Nine Specters County only brought 29 young men with him?"

If Tian Ji Yu, the County Governor of Nine Specters County, was around, he would definitely recognize the middle-aged man. The middle-aged man was none other than Wang Qi Ling, the County Governor of Fair Mountain County, whom he had met outside the gate of King City!

Although Wang Qi Ling was a County Governor, he appeared to be very humble and respectful before the old lady. His attitude was comparable to how it would be if he met King Qin.

Wang Qi Ling said worriedly, "I saw it with my own eyes. I'm assuming the 30th place is kept for Duan Ling Tian who has been missing for a year now. Senior, perhaps, you'll be able to catch him in King Qin's Mansion. However, if he shows up when the Martial Competition of 16 Counties begins, it might be difficult for you to kill him. The powerhouses in King Qin's Mansion will definitely intervene to protect him."

The old lady scoffed. Her expression was so cold that it caused Wang Qi Ling to feel as though winter had arrived early. She said domineeringly, "If Duan Ling Tian shows up, even if King Qin himself wants to intervene, he won't be able to do so unless he wants to die!"

Wang Qi Ling gulped audibly when he heard the old lady's words. He became even more respectful at this moment. Although he knew she was very strong, he did not expect she was even stronger than King Qin. How could he not be surprised when he heard her say she was stronger than King Qin?

"Based on my knowledge, the Martial Competition of 16 Counties that's going to be held in King Qin's Mansion isn't open to the public. Find a way to bring me in. I don't want to act recklessly and alert Duan Ling Tian. If I cause too big of a commotion, I'm afraid he won't show up," the old lady said indifferently.

"Yes," Wang Qi Ling replied respectfully. Then, he asked, "Senior, do you have orders for me? If there's none, can I take my leave?"

"Yes, you may," the old lady replied. Throughout the entire conversation, she did not even spare a glance at Wang Qi Ling.

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Three days later.

The Martial Competition of the 16 Counties in King Qin's Mansion started just as planned. Everything seemed calm and normal on the surface. However, as the days passed, the competition turned more and more intense as it was about to reach the end.

Tian Ji Yu, the County Governor of Nine Specters County, grew more and more anxious as well. "Why hasn't Duan Ling Tian shown up? The competition is about to end!" He could not help but feel he had been cheated by Duan Ling Tian. He was beginning to think that Duan Ling Tian had reneged on their deal.

On the other hand, Qin Yu, who had just been eliminated, could not help but worry about Duan Ling Tian when he did not see Duan Ling Tian. He thought to himself, 'Duan Ling Tian should be fine, right?'

Pang Bing, the strongest inner-estate elder in the County Governor's estate in Nine Specters County, snorted derisively before he said, "I don't think Duan Ling Tian is going to show up! What an ingrate! The County Governor's estate had nurtured him, and yet, he doesn't show up at the critical moment!"

Upon hearing this, Zheng Qiu spoke up in defense of Duan Ling Tian, "Elder Pang Bing, you can't say such things. Perhaps, Duan Ling Tian encountered a problem or has something important to attend to and couldn't arrive in time?"

Pang Bing smiled coldly. "Something important to attend to? What an excuse! Is there anything more important than the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties? After all, three Great Overarching Pills are at stake here. If he doesn't show up, we'll lose our chance of obtaining any pill, let alone three pills." His expression was rather unsightly as he spoke.

Tian Ji Yu was irritated when he saw his two subordinates arguing. "What's the matter? None of us can be 100% certain that Duan Ling Tian won't show up. Just wait and see for now."

2680 The Last Day

On the last day of the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties, the finalists would fight among themselves for the top ten positions. However, the finalists had not been confirmed since there were many young powerhouses who had yet to fight.

King Qin's Mansion had set a rule where all counties were given a choice and could select one participant to fight for the top three places. In other words, this meant the selected participant was given a free pass and would automatically qualify for the finals. This was so the strongest powerhouses from every county would be in the best condition to fight in the finals. However, if the selected participant could not qualify in the top ten, the county the participant was from would have to pay three times more prominent Celestial Stones for ten consecutive years when they paid their tithe to King Qin's Mansion. For this reason, unless they were absolutely certain, the counties would not simply select any participant to participate in the final round.

For this reason, three out of 16 counties did not select any participants for the final round. The other 13 counties, including Nine Specters County, had already decided on their participants. Naturally, Duan Ling Tian had been selected to represent Nine Specter County. However, if he did not show up, he would be considered absent and would be disqualified. As a consequence, Nine Specters County would be punished accordingly. For this reason, the people from Nine Specters County grew more and more anxious as the final battle drew near.

'It's the final day today... Why isn't Duan Ling Tian here yet? Did something really happen to him?' Qin Yu thought to himself. He was the only person from Nine Specters County who qualified, through normal means, in the top ten.

However, the people from Nine Specters County were not assured since the top ten positions had not been confirmed. The other 12 participants were no weaker than Qin Yu after all. Only ten out of the 13 participants would be rewarded by King Qin's Mansion.

Although Qin Yu's position was not secure, and he still had to face 12 strong competitors, he was calm. The only thing that worried him was Duan Ling Tian's safety.

At some point, Wang Qi Ling, the County Governor of Fair Mountain County, approached Tian Ji Yu. He smiled as he said, "County Governor Tian, your last participant should be Duan Ling Tian, right? However, I heard that he hasn't shown up yet. I heard he left Nine Specters County a year ago... Could something have happened to him out there?" His smile grew wider and wider as he spoke.

Tian Ji Yu narrowed his eyes, but his voice remained indifferent as he said, "The Martial Competition of the 16 Counties hasn't ended yet, right? County Governor Wang, it seems like you're hoping Duan Ling Tian won't show up because you have no confidence in Yang Jin..." A hint of ridicule could be heard in his voice as he approached the end of the sentence.

Yang Jin was the participant from Fair Mountain County who had yet to fight in the competition. He was widely acknowledged as strongest among the younger generation in the entire Fair Mountain County. He might not be stronger than Duan Ling Tian, but he was as famous as Duan Ling Tian in their respective counties.

Wang Qi Ling was, surprisingly, unaffected by Tian Ji Yu's words. "I have confidence in Yang Jin if his opponent isn't Duan Ling Tian. I'm certain the other 11 counties feel the same way as I do if their participants have to face Duan Ling Tian. After all, Duan Ling Tian is as strong as a Great Overarching Golden Celestial. Even Pang Bing, the strongest powerhouse below Great Overarching Golden Celestials, isn't a match for him. With someone like that as an opponent, how can I have confidence in Yang Jin who's far weaker than Pang Bing?" He had spoken so candidly that it seemed as though he admired and acknowledged Duan Ling Tian's strength. If one did not know better, they would think Duan Ling Tian, the strongest person below Great Overarching Golden Celestials in Nine Specters County who had disappeared a year ago, was from his county.

Tian Ji Yu could not come up with a retort when faced with Wang Qi Ling's seemingly earnest words. He only looked at him meaningfully and said, "County Governor Wang, it seems like you're well aware of your strength."

Wang Qi Ling returned Tian Ji Yu's gaze and said knowingly, "County Governor Tian, I think Duan Ling Tian has arrived, right? Are you hiding him?"

"County Governor Wang, you seem very interested in Duan Ling Tian," Tian Ji Yu said.

"Of course, and I don't think I'm the only one. I'm sure the other 14 County Governors are as interested in him as I am. In fact, rumor has it that even Lord King Qin has been talking about him, both in private and in public," Wang Qi Ling answered frankly. A hint of jealousy could be seen in the depths of his eyes as he asked curiously, "County Governor Tian, I'm really curious if Duan Ling Tian has arrived..." It seemed like he was not aware of how eager he was to find out if Duan Ling Tian was present or not.

Tian Ji Yu said apathetically, "County Governor Wang, didn't you say that it's very likely that Duan Ling Tian had died somewhere out there?"

Wang Qi Ling was taken aback by Tian Ji Yu's words. He smiled awkwardly as he said, "I... I was just joking."

Tian Ji Yu continued to speak indifferently, "County Governor Wang, if you want to know if Duan Ling Tian is here, you'll find out come evening. Today, we'll find out who would be the ten finalists and who would rank in the top three of the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties. If Duan Ling Tian is present, he'll show up in the evening. However, I'm sure you're hoping he won't show up." A hint of ridicule flashed in his eyes as he looked at Wang Qi Ling.

Wang Qi Ling shook his head as he laughed. "Now, why would I hope for something like that? I look forward to his appearance even though it means that he'll rank first. After all, I'm really curious and am looking forward to seeing the young man who's less than 100 years old but has strength comparable to Great Overarching Golden Celestials." He sounded sincere when he spoke, but was this really his true thoughts? After a brief pause, he said before he excused himself and left, "County Governor Tian, the battle for the top three places is about to start. All the participants from the counties are about to fight so I'll take my leave now."

Tian Ji Yu expressionlessly looked at Wang Qi Ling's retreating back and said, "Farewell..." However, a hint of worry could be seen in his eyes. Today was the final day of the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties, however, he had yet to see hide nor hair of Duan Ling Tian in the King City of King Qin's Mansion.

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Meanwhile, Wang Qi Ling, who had returned to the audience seats of Fair Mountain County, approached a figure covered in grey robes whose face was hidden. He spoke respectfully through Voice Transmission, "Senior, I tried to question Tian Ji Yu, but I didn't glean any information from him. He's very cunning and replied to me with a bunch of nonsense."

A calm and ancient voice entered Wang Qi Ling's ears. "It doesn't matter. Today's the last day of the competition. If Duan Ling Tian is going to show up, he would show up by this evening latest. If he doesn't, then, it just means he doesn't intend on participating in this competition."

Meanwhile, the elders and Revered Elders of Fair Mountain County who had come with Wang Qi Ling were shocked when they saw how respectful their County Governor was behaving toward the mysterious person in grey.

"Who's that person?"

An elder muttered under his breath, "Is this the person Lord County Governor hired to kill Duan Ling Tian?"

"How's that possible? If Lord County Governor does something like that here, do you think King Qin will spare Lord County Governor?" another elder said.

"In any case, we've not seen Duan Ling Tian up until now so there's a chance he might not show up. If that's the case, Yang Jin will probably be able to rank first in the Martial Competition of the 16 Counties," a Revered Elder of the County Governor's estate in Fair Mountain County said.