

## **BEASTMASTER OF THE AGES**

### Chapter 2 - Aeternal Infernal Phoenix!

A figure appeared before Li Tianming. “???”

Alas, it wasn't the fearsome beast of his dreams! It was readily apparent that the thing crawling out of the eggshells was nothing but a little chick. A particularly yellow and tender one. Li Tianming could only think of one way to describe it: fluffy, and the perfect main dish for a hearty breakfast. In fact, the only thing protecting it right now was that it wasn't morning yet...

“How does a chick like you even release the aura of a fearsome beast...” Li Tianming could already feel a headache oncoming.

“Huh? Who's the chick here! Don't look down on me, you nugget! I'm gonna beat your ass!” The little chick stared fiercely at Li Tianming, as if it was trying to kill Li Tianming with its eyes.

A newborn chick that threatened his master? That was a novelty alright.

Lifebound beasts could communicate telepathically with their beastmaster, but not many could talk with the exception of parrot-types. Perhaps this chick was similar to those parrot-type beasts, which was why it could speak.

Li Tianming inspected the chick's eyes closely, where he could see a pinprick of light, a star.

“When a lifebound beast is born, the number of stars determine their tier,” Li Tianming murmured.

Li Tianming could still remember that Midas had five stars when it first hatched, marking it as a rare five-star lifebound beast in Flamehaven. A lifebound beast's tier directly determined the potential of the beast, as well as the limits of the beastmaster's cultivation. A five-star lifebound beast was enough for Li Tianming to be Flamehaven's top genius in the past three hundred years. This chick had only a single star, suggesting that it was only a miserable one-star beast.

“Wait!” As Li Tianming stared into the star spark, he seemed to see the star collapse and scatter before him. Li Tianming couldn’t tell if it was just an illusion or reality.

Tens. Hundreds. Thousands. Tens of thousands as it continued to grow even further! At long last, Li Tianming saw that single star expanding into a massive starfield.

Inside this starfield, countless stars burned. Despite seeming infinitely far apart, their radiance merged and blinded Li Tianming.

“What was that? That’s billions of star sparks!” He could feel his brain exploding, as his vision faded and he felt himself seemingly sucked into the distant star field.

Within the endless void, there was nothing but an infinite number of stars burning like massive fireballs. The next thing he knew, Li Tianming heard an earth shattering cry from a bird. He examined the direction of the sound, where a ball of flame was bearing down from the other side of this starfield.

Magnificent wings extended from the field of flames, its radiance overwhelming all the other stars around it. As it approached, Li Tianming was shocked to find that it was just as big as the starfield! Every stream of fire that flowed across its body was composed of billions of stars. It was an eternal phoenix!

Everywhere it went, countless stars would be yanked from their orbits, gathered into a burning stream that was swallowed by the creature shortly afterwards. It was like the phoenix was just slurping some noodles, except that each strand was made up of billions of stars, subsumed into its body with an effortless slurp.

It was an unfathomable sight for Li Tianming. He continued to follow that eternal phoenix as it devoured everything in its path, without any care as to whether it had swallowed any life-bearing suns.

Until one day, a huge dark hand appeared.

The creature was clearly scared of this hand. It screamed in panic and tried to flee from the hand. What kind of existence was it that would terrify even the eternal phoenix? As the phoenix tried to flee, it even resorted to consuming its

own flames, becoming tinier and tinier. Each time the hand landed, thousands of sparks flew out, each birthing new stars.

“Henceforth and forevermore, I am the master of all primordial chaos and reincarnation.” The voice of the hand rumbled through the starfield, reducing everything in the realm to an endless base state of terror.

Li Tianming could sense the eternal phoenix's fear as it slowly spread to his body like a poison. At last, the phoenix could no longer maintain its flight and tumbled from the stars. Just as its life was about to come to an end, it suddenly seemed to spot Li Tianming.

“What on earth are you!” Li Tianming barely noticed how hoarse his voice was, such was his fear.

Time ground to a halt as the phoenix stared at him quietly. “I am... the ‘Aeternal Infernal Phoenix!’”

As his vision dissolved into a blur, Li Tianming could feel his face hurting as he finally found himself back in his own room. The little chick had made its way up his shoulder without him realising, and was now pecking at his face.

“You, an “Aeternal Infernal Phoenix?” Li Tianming grabbed it by the wings and dangled it in front of him, while still trying to calm down from all he had seen just now. The single star was still in its eyes, but it was no longer expanding into a starfield.

“Yeah, pretty badass eh?” The little chick snapped back as it struggled to escape Li Tianming’s grasp.

“And what exactly is an Aeternal Infernal Phoenix?” Li Tianming questioned.

“One of the Primordial Chaos Beasts!”

“And?”

“I too wish I knew!”

“Then, what do you even know?”

“Give me a break, I just hatched and the first thing I see is that stupid face of yours. What do you reckon I know?”

Getting insulted by a little chick sure didn't feel good.

Of course Li Tianming knew better than anyone else that this little chick was no ordinary lifebound beast. Likely, the same could be said about the other nine eggs.

What he had just seen was just way too extraordinary. A beast that snacked on suns, the hand that contained the entire universe within its grasp, and the endless field of stars.

And such a creature was his lifebound beast? Li Tianming could already sense his spirit burn with passion.

"Will you do symbiotic cultivation with me?" he asked the little chick.

"Of course, training a little chickling like you is easy peasy." The little chick wasn't even trying to hide its cockiness.

"Let's be clear, you're the chick here!"

"Lucky you huh, dual cultivating with a chick for free." The little chick snorted vulgarly.

"...!" One of those chicks was not the same as the others!

As the little chick relocated itself onto his head, Li Tianming was thrilled by the prospect of cultivating with a Primordial Chaos Beast.

Back in ancient days, the ancestors invented symbiotic cultivation. A channel for cultivation was formed between man and lifebound beast, giving rise to the beastmasters. Through symbiotic cultivation, man and beasts shared their blood veins and their wisdom, forming a dynamic duo of great power.

The first stage of cultivation was the beast vein stage. Both beastmasters and lifebound beasts had nine beast veins each, and cultivation in the beast vein stage required them to pair and connect them together. Each connected set of beast veins would strengthen the blood connection between the two. After that, special methods could be used to convert the spiritual energy of heaven and earth into 'beast ki', which would be stored in the beast vein.

Beastmasters and lifebound beasts shared their beast ki, thereby allowing power to be shared between the pair.

Through symbiotic training, the latent power in the beast's blood veins would strengthen the master's body, while the latent power from the beastmaster's blood veins would enhance the beast's intelligence.

“Ever since Midas died, I lost all my beast ki, and all my beast veins wasted away as well. Without a lifebound beast, my journey as a beastmaster was supposed to be over. Whatever this Aeternal Infernal Phoenix is, be it a Primordial Chaos Beast or what, at least it'll allow me to cultivate once again.” Naturally, Li Tianming had never heard of the legends of the Primordial Chaos Beasts before.

Right before he was sabotaged by Lin Xiaoting and Mu Qingqing, he had connected all nine pairs of beast veins with Midas, completing all nine levels of the Beast Vein stage, and had even made a breakthrough to the spirit source stage.

“Since my lifebound beast has changed, I have to reconnect all the beast veins. That's basically starting over from scratch.”

The first step of the beast vein stage was to figure out the location of the beast veins on both parties. As Li Tianming tried to figure out where the beast vein of the little chick was, he could feel the little chick doing the same for him. Once their first beast veins were successfully connected together, they would reach the first level of the Beast Vein stage.

“How could such a tiny chick have such a thick beast vein?!” Li Tianming exclaimed.

Inside that tiny body of the chick, each of the beast veins was like a dragon unto itself, terrifying yet magnificent. It was hard to imagine what kind of fearsome beast these beast veins belonged to. Placed side by side, Li Tianming's beast veins seemed like little worms.

“What a rookie, look at these pathetic beast veins, clearly a lack of masculine strength. And look at mine! Thicker. Longer. More perfect than yours!” The chick was clearly despising him.

But why did that sound so weird?

“Let's see if you can still brag later. Don't forget your beast veins will eventually become mine too.” Li Tianming returned the insult.

A short while later, their beast veins started connecting with each other. While the chick's beast vein might be way thicker, it didn't make the connecting process anymore difficult since it was more of some kind of 'activation' instead of a true physical connection. As long as the two could sense each other, the two beast veins would eventually merge and form a complete circulation.

Li Tianming was no beginner, but only when the first beast vein connected did he realise how much the blood of the Aeternal Infernal Phoenix could do for his body.

"No way..."

Once their beast veins were connected, it was akin to a dragon being connected to a centipede. Li Tianming could feel his very own beast veins turning into a dragon as well. As the dragon roared in his body, he could clearly feel the beast's blood travelling through his torso, transforming every inch of his body. For a moment, it even made him feel like an Aeternal Infernal Phoenix itself.

His Four-Winged Goldroc had transformed his body before too, but nowhere near to this extent. This must be the power of a real Primordial Chaos Beast! Li Tianming knew this was a huge opportunity for him.

It was clear that Li Tianming was a changed man as his eyes shone. Once his beast vein grew to the size of the chick's, the process of connection would be complete, as was their conquest of the first level of the Beast Vein stage!

The next step was to make use of cultivation techniques to absorb the spiritual energy of heaven and earth into their beast veins as beast ki. The quality of the beast ki would be decided by factors such as the quality of the technique and the blood of the lifebound beast. Li Tianming used the best technique available in Flamehaven, the Darkgold Technique, to create Darkgold Beast Ki.

Just as he was preparing the Darkgold Technique, the chick snapped, "What the hell are you doing? What kind of garbage is this?"

"What do you mean?" Li Tianming was clearly confused, because this 'garbage' was the best technique in Flamehaven!

"Just shut up and let me lead the cultivation. We'll do it my way, the 'Aeternal Infernal Codex' way!"

“What?” Before Li Tianming could even react, something unimaginable happened...

A lifebound beast leading the cultivation, and with its own cultivation technique? But the moment the Aeternal Infernal Codex started running, he was clear that the Darkgold Technique was indeed only describable as garbage.

After not cultivating for three entire years, the thrill of being able to cultivate again got Li Tianming’s spirit burning. Before he knew it, an entire night had passed, one in which Li Tianming and his little chick both made a breakthrough to the third level of the Beast Vein stage!

It was true that Li Tianming had some foundations. Still, such speed was unheard of in the entire nation. Even his body became an Aeternal Infernal Body, somewhat similar to the little chick. Such a body possessed immense strength and speed, let alone crazy potential.

“This beast ki from the third level of the Beast Vein stage... it feels even stronger than the beast ki I had at the fifth level with the Darkgold Technique!”

As the Aeternal Infernal Beast Ki coursed through his three beast veins, Li Tianming imagined lava flowing through his body. The beast ki had turned him into a volcano that was ready to erupt any moment.

“There’s still nine other eggs in my lifebound space, and one of them is already showing signs of hatching, just that there’s no cracks yet. What kind of Primordial Chaos Beast will it be next time?”

Li Tianming was filled with anticipation on what the next egg, as well as the rest, could possibly offer him. Could it be, by any chance, that he had obtained all ten Primordial Chaos Beasts as his lifebound beasts?

“I once thought that my dream was over, that I could never make a comeback. Even with my mother encouraging me every day, I couldn’t see any hope. But! The heavens have yet to give up on me, Li Tianming! Lin Xiaoting, Mu Qingqing, just you wait, I will return! I will get back everything that you have taken away from me! And of course, your life as well...”

Li Tianming stared out of the window, mapping out everything he wanted to do in the future. “Most importantly, I can’t let my mother get hurt any further...”

His mother, Wei Jing, had already been living a turbulent life, and his expulsion from the Flameyellow Scions Institute only made matters worse. Throughout these three years, all of her suffering and helplessness had been deeply engraved in his mind. Even after the symbiotic cultivation came to an end and the little chick had already fallen asleep, Li Tianming was still cultivating.

It was his mother's birthday today.

"How happy will she be if she sees me pick myself back up, and that I have a future again? The power to cultivate again also means I can collect more clear spirit grass, which should prolong her life further..."

As the family member that brought him up for the past twenty years, all Li Tianming asked for was to see her joyous face.

However, at this moment, a commotion broke out outside of their house. It seemed that someone had just broken into their home.

"Wei Jing, Li Tianming, open up!"

"We have a big, big 'gift' for you!"