Emperor 3021

Chapter 3021: Mysterious Treasure

The aura of the city changed after the figure jumped into the abyss.

A while ago, people felt a mighty force permeating across this broken city. This was no longer the case. The flame engulfing the city was gone too.

The dark power filling the sky also disappeared now that the undead armies have jumped down there.

The broken city assumed its initial appearance - broken and crumbling - a scene as melancholic as the setting sun.

"Is it over?" Holyfrost murmured after noticing this.

"No, this is only the beginning, it can't even be considered the prelude. What's coming will come and it won't be long from now." Li Qiye said.

Her breathing skipped a beat after hearing this and her heart grew heavier. She stood among the upper echelon of Three Immortals in terms of fighting force.

However, she was far from enough to contribute at all. Everything she has seen so far was at the progenitorial level. A twelve-palace emperor like her couldn't weather the storm.

She glanced over at him, hoping that he would change his mind about protecting this world. He certainly had the ability to do so.

Li Qiye only smiled and looked at the item in his palm - the thing buried in the charcoal earlier.

That figure wanted to take him down the moment he touched it. This showed the item's importance to warrant such a swift response from that being.

The group also stared at the item and saw that it looked like a small box made of jade. Perhaps this was a piece of jade carved into this shade.

However, it looked perfect from top to bottom without any nick or jag, no obvious way to open it either.

"What is it?" The bull couldn't notice anything despite using its heavenly gaze. It has been concealed by an amazing method.

"It's not bad and will be awfully useful later." Li Qiye smiled.

"A peerless treasure, huh?" The bull's eyes lit up: "Don't tell me this is the key to open the mysteries of Uncrossable Expanse?"

It salivated after saying this.

"You can have it if you want it." Li Qiye saw the drooling bull and handed it over.

"Really?" The bull's eyes became bright enough to illuminate the four directions.

"Really." Li Qiye didn't care at all about the item.

"Something this good should have a big origin." The bull walked around restlessly while thinking about the item. However, its hoof was shaking as if the item was a hot potato.

Holyfrost was very curious as well. The figure clearly viewed this item with great importance, hence its panic earlier.

Unfortunately, she couldn't see through the item at all, unable to see its usefulness. Her gaze was stopped outside by the great technique of someone.

This must be another brilliant progenitor or someone even greater. This concealment technique was beyond her means.

"Good, good indeed." The bull threw the item up and down before concluding.

It was clearly tempted and as the saying goes - the older the ginger, the hotter the spice. Though it couldn't understand the thing right now, it still knew how useful it was.

"Hmm, forget it, I'm not someone like this." The bull eventually returned the item to Li Qiye and put on a heroic act: "I am righteousness incarnate and carry the wellbeing of the world on my shoulder. How can I monopolize this item? It's best if you keep it, Sir."

Li Qiye smiled at its righteous act and didn't say anything.

"Master, you really don't want it?" Liu Yanbai was surprised. This was her first time seeing her master so heroic so she thought she was only seeing things.

"Of course, don't you know that your master is a divine bull with an immortal bloodline? Personal gains mean nothing to me compared to the prosperity of everyone else." The bull laughed proudly.

"You're amazing, Master." The inexperienced girl truly believed it and said with admiration.

"Don't be tricked by your master." Li Qiye shook his head: "He just doesn't want trouble, quite smart actually, not blinded by greed like other fools who eventually throw their lives away."

"Ahem..." The bull coughed and immediately interjected: "Sir, I'm not that kind of person!"

Li Qiye only smiled in response. He knew everything about the bull's treacherous way.

"This thing will really invite problems?" The bull eventually asked, seemingly not wanting to give up.

"Oh? Changing your mind?" Li Qiye smiled.

"That's not what I meant." The bull cleared its throat and continued: "I'm just afraid that this thing might cause trouble to the world, that's all."

"It can be problematic. Of course, its value is priceless too." Li Qiye said: "Someone who knows its worth will pay any price for it."

"Is that so..." Greed returned to the bull.

It wasn't an idiot. It could see that Li Qiye wouldn't care for regular treasure. The fact that he bothered to get it from that figure meant that the item should be valuable.

"I'll let you keep it since maybe Three Immortals will need it one day. Hmm, but then again, perhaps it's useless in your possession." Li Qiye smirked.

"Sir, your words are truly hurtful." The bull became unhappy: "I might not be invincible across the ages but I'm still a big shot. True Emperors and Everlastings are nothing compared to me."

It was telling the truth. Even someone like Tai Yinxi was nothing in its eyes. One could see how strong it was from this.

"Not enough." Li Qiye said: "Keep in mind the person who got that black rock out of the Eternal Abyss. Or, the person that Flame Emperor and his group met." [1]

The bull's expression changed after hearing this. It had only exchanged one move with the rock but it got a pretty good idea of the rock's power.

It became clear that the person mentioned by the rock was above him right now. Only very few progenitors in history had a chance.

"Still want it?" Li Qiye smiled while tossing the item up and down.

"No, no, I was just kidding." The bull laughed in response: "No one is more suitable than you to keep it, yes, yes."

"A supreme treasure like this belongs to you, Young Noble." Holyfrost chimed in. In her opinion, Li Qiye had the best chance of stopping any trouble.

"Little girl, don't push this treasure on me." Li Qiye understood her intent right away and chuckled: "I have no ties to Three Immortals."

"I'm sure that there will be people and things worthy of your remembrance here." Holyfrost smiled.

Chapter 3022: The Bull's Plan

Li Qiye didn't answer; he set his gaze towards the horizon.

"Sir, I'm not one to spew doom and gloom, but just hypothetically, what if the calamity actually comes and destroys Three Immortals? How would you feel then?" The bull said.

"Psychological tricks won't work. Three Immortals has its own fate." Li Qiye looked at it in response.

"But what about some of the people in it?" The bull continued: "Of course, you wouldn't care about an old bull like me..."

"Enough, I know what you're trying to say, you wish for me to act." Li Qiye shook his head and paused for a bit: "Well, let's see how lucky Three Immortals will be then. If it happens before I leave, then I'll sweep through the vanguard. A bit of training is fine."

"Haha, I'm sure it will be very fun. You'll benefit greatly too." The bull laughed and started celebrating.

It knew that Li Qiye didn't care much about Three Immortals. He might just sit back on the sideline and watch the calamity unfolds. However, he had given his words that he might do something.

It meant that Three Immortals still had a chance and Li Qiye would do more than just being an observer.

Holyfrost was ecstatic as well, aware that the bull had just saved countless lives in Three Immortals.

She chose to bow towards these two instead of wasting words on behalf of everyone in her world.

"Hmm, will there be a battle once you enter Uncrossable Expanse? I'm sure there will be enemies there." The bull pondered for a bit and brought up another topic.

It could see that the meteor and ships from the expanse were only the beginning. The real threat still originated from there.

Something big had happened in that place and a storm would happen once Li Qiye got involved.

"Indeed, they will serve as polishing stones if they are foolish enough to cross me." Li Qiye said while still gazing over yonder.

He smiled, knowing that his grand dao was complete and it was time to polish it in order to reach the next level of perfection. This was necessary in order to open a new epoch.

"Hehe, plenty of people are blind in this world." The bull said: "Those fiends have no idea who they're dealing with until it is too late."

It started gloating as if it could see that day already.

"Look at you, seems like you want me to go to the expanse and start killing everywhere. Or, in other words, you're praying for me to be ambushed in there." Li Qiye chuckled.

"No, absolutely not." The bull put on a serious expression right away: "What I meant to say is that you need the right polishing stones so that place is a good opportunity. It'll let you reach the peerless realm, helping you ascend into a true immortal."

Though the bull was a big troublemaker and never seemed to care about a thing, the truth was that it truly cared about Three Immortals. Thus, it offered its assistance by baiting Li Qiye into joining. It hoped that Li Qiye could destroy the seeds of discord to guarantee Three Immortals' safety.

"A true immortal, huh? Hard to say, what type of immortal? But anyhow, you should start praying if I do become one." Li Qiye chuckled and stared at the bull.

The bull felt a chill because of this stare and took one step backward.

"Sir... your eyes are a little weird right now... and scary..." The bull understood the implication.

"That's why such an ascension is not a good thing." Li Qiye said.

"I'm sure you won't become the dangerous type, only the most supreme one superior to the fakers. You will herald a golden age to all." The bull immediately responded.

"Don't be so sure. So many brilliant men and progenitors have made it that far, only to lose by one step." Li Qiye said.

"Yes, a single thought can decide everything." The bull murmured and knew the crux of the issue since it lived for so long.

"It has nothing to do with who is currently evil or is part of the light. After reaching that level, they might switch their stance, faith, and perspective for the future just like that. Everything stemmed from power and the heart." Li Qiye's eyes became profound.

"Yes, it's the dao heart that you speak about so often." The bull took a deep breath and said.

"Right. For example, you are living a carefree life right now, thinking that you can deal with potential issues later on. That's why you are complacent and won't try to take the next step forward. However, there might come a day where you feel helpless and weak, that's when you'll become an even more handsome and courageous bull. The key is whether you can stay yourself after gaining an increase of strength." Li Qiye said.

"I will never change since I'll always be the same handsome bull." The bull pondered for a bit before claiming.

"We'll see about that." Li Qiye elaborated: "You have seen him before, the guy far more brilliant and stronger than you with a better vision. In the end, he still made the other choice." [1]

The bull became emotional after hearing this. Though it rarely gave a damn, it actually had an immense level of pride and confidence.

It believed that with effort, it could be comparable to any progenitor in the world. It had this ability thanks to its talents and bloodline.

However, would its dao heart always stay the same? Would it forget about its original aspirations and goal?

The bull fell into rumination. After a long while, it looked up and took a deep breath: "Perhaps my dao heart will falter one day and I will forget who I used to be, no longer being the same handsome bull. However, I can say with confidence that you will still be you, and that's enough for me."

"So much confidence in me." Li Qiye chuckled and shook his head: "Don't be so sure about anything in this unpredictable world."

"I trust in my insight, that I'm not misjudging you. Plus, believing in you is far better in believing in myself." The bull took a deep breath and solemnly said.

Li Qiye smiled and didn't respond.

"Do you not have confidence in yourself?" The bull became nervous and asked.

"Getting nervous now?" Li Qiye gave him the side-eye.

"A little bit, if even you can't maintain your dao heart at that point, the world is over, and I'm not only talking about Three Immortals." The bull honestly said.

"You can stop worrying then. I am me, in the present and in the future." Li Qiye answered.

The bull heaved a sigh of relief in response.

"However..." Li Qiye made it worried again with this pause: "The heaven will crumble and the ages will shatter after the future battle. No one knows how it will end."

"It's better than everything turning to ashes, at least there's a chance instead of being fish on the chopping board. No one will escape at that point either way." The bull said.

"Yes, time for ants to show their fangs against the heaven." Li Qiye chuckled.

The bull sighed emotionally and lamented: "It's a shame that my cultivation isn't enough or I would come with you to Uncrossable Expanse and wave your flags and shout battle cries for you."

"You finally know you're weak now? That you have wasted millions of years?" Li Qiye narrowed his eyes at the bull.

"... Hehehe..." The bull smiled wryly. It still had plenty of room to grow. Unfortunately, its heart was not in this.

Chapter 3023: Sky Ruins

Li Qiye looked at the bull without saying anything then glanced over at the broken city.

"Let's go, we're done here." He eventually concluded.

The bull nodded, knowing that this place was the center of the expedition ship. There was no need to go any further.

Before leaving, Holyfrost Emperor took another look at the abyss with a worried expression. She found out too many ominous things today.

On the other hand, Li Qiye didn't give a damn about the abyss or the dark figure and moved on.

On the way back, this minor world was completely peaceful, borderline silent.

Many experts have entered a while ago, resulting in a lively scene. However, the battle earlier scared the hell out of them so they retreated.

It felt as if they were the only ones left in this entire world - both the living and dead were gone now.

Holyfrost realized that this serenity had something to do with the battle earlier because that figure had escaped.

This didn't mean that those undead creatures were done for. They have simply escaped and might return later - hence her anxiety.

The undead legions were insanely powerful and numerous. Moreover, the kings and war riders were once invincible existences, not to mention the dark figure in the cauldron.

They must have had a reason for leaving Uncrossable Expanse. Perhaps this was their expedition. But where to? She didn't have a clue. Maybe Three immortals was the target.

As they left the minor world and returned to the deck, they found the ship moving on with great speed.

It crossed through space like a silent beam just like a ship from hell.

The floating pieces and ships that came before it started slowing down after reaching Sky Ruins. The power that moved them seemed to be gone.

On the other hand, the expedition ship soared faster and faster like a flying whale.

It wasn't flying aimlessly either, clearly having a destination from the start. A massive force was moving it or perhaps something in Sky Ruins attracted it.

"There's a purpose." Holyfrost said.

The other broken debris and ships might have other reasons for showing up now but this expedition ship had a clear target for leaving the expanse.

Sky Ruins was extremely far away from Uncrossable Expanse but the ship had a perfect path, not making a single mistake from start to finish. She didn't know what kind of power was behind his phenomenon.

"So beautiful!" Suddenly, Liu Yanbai sitting on top of the bull blurted out and pointed ahead.

There existed a massive star. It looked quite strange - separated into two halves. The right looked like a sun with an endless flame burning for millions of miles.

The left side was extremely cold with a yin aura. Everything on that side was shrouded in a layer of ice. This ended up with a gigantic section of space looking like a crystallized glacier.

This star seemed to be slowly orbiting but this wasn't the case. Its speed was fast enough to move from one side of Sky Ruins to the other.

Thus, the combination of fire and ice spanning for millions of miles could mesmerize any spectator.

"We're in Sky Ruins now." The bull laughed: "There are magnificent scenes here so don't be surprised. Why? Because this is Sky Ruins."

"Sky Ruins..." Holyfrost murmured to herself while becoming slightly emotional.

Sky Ruins and Uncrossable Expanse were separated by Sky Moat, seemingly two independent worlds.

They were full of mysteries and unknowns, definitely worth taking a look.

However, there was one difference. Uncrossable Expanse was a place of no return regardless of how strong the cultivator was.

As for Sky Ruins, anyone could come back as long as they survived the danger there. They didn't need to be at the progenitorial level either.

Moreover, a weaker cultivator could also pay to let someone else take them to Sky Ruins.

For example, Arrogance Enterprise had an escort service taking people there. Thus, even a weak cultivator could find something amazing in Sky Ruins, provided that they're lucky enough.

For many cultivators, Sky Ruins was a heaven for exploration. The place was filled with danger, albeit a proportional level of fortune.

On the other hand, Uncrossable Expanse was meant for progenitors and top masters only.

Thus, so many cultivators went to Sky Ruins each year, including top emperors or unknown brats.

They had different goals for doing so. Some sought after fortune, others only wanted to broaden their horizons by witnessing the awesome sights here.

"Rumble!" Liu Yanbai was still in awe but some heavy noises interrupted her enjoyment.

Space trembled as a result. She looked over and saw a colossal mountain with a silvery light appearing in space. It had strange, flashing runes all over; they looked just like eyes open and closing.

It wasn't moving on its own accord. Many elephant statues in front were pulling the mountain. Who knows if they were carvings or had this form from the inception? They looked quite animated regardless of the answer.

Coiled around their back were long and thick iron chains with the mountain on the other end. Their destination was deeper into Sky Ruins.

One could hear their loud footsteps despite being in space. Elephants looked clumsy normally but these were fast beyond words.

"One, two three... nine. Nine elephants." Yanbai counted.

"Hmm, nine elephants pulling a mountain." The bull was slightly surprised to see this.

Chapter 3024: Blue Waves

"Rumble!" The nine elephants and the mountain disappeared into Sky Ruins.

"Why are they pulling that silver mountain?" Yanbai became curious and innocently asked: "And are they carvings or just a rock type?"

"Who knows, who knows?" The bull laughed, not knowing the exact reasons.

"So is that mountain a treasure?" She was curious about everything in this magical place.

"Not the mountain itself. The runes on the surface belong to a mysterious and ancient grand dao. It doesn't belong to Three Immortals World." Li Qiye answered since the bull couldn't.

"You're right, Young Noble. Rumor has it that a progenitor had chased this mountain before for a very long time to learn about the runes. Alas, they were too profound and the progenitor lost consciousness. No one else found success later on either." Holyfrost joined in.

"It's that amazing?" Yanbai became startled. Though she was inexperienced, she still knew about how great progenitors were.

"It's frightening." The bull nodded: "Not to mention regular cultivators, even the most brilliant historical figures couldn't figure out all the mysteries in there. Sky Ruins is on the same level as Uncrossable Expanse."

"Yes." Holyfrost agreed: "We still don't know how vast it is. No one has been able to go through all the reaches so this place still has plenty of secrets."

Yanbai listened to these two in amazement.

"Many years have passed since the start of time." Li Qiye said: "Three Immortals World is rather new so it's hard for its inhabitants to see everything in this place. The great era in the past has faded away."

"Right, there are too many things to see here." The arrogant bull admitted.

Some progenitors have tried to reach the ends of this place in the past. Keep in mind their speed - just one step is enough to cross through an entire domain. Alas, this task remained impossible so they eventually gave up.

Future generations considered the place to be boundless. Even the strongest wouldn't be able to make it through this entire place.

This only played to Sky Ruins' appeal. People kept on coming here for adventures in order to find the hidden secrets.

"Splash!" The group suddenly heard a splash.

A great wave emerged out of nowhere and covered the area above them. It was as if an ocean had just taken form.

Strangely enough, top masters like Holyfrost could easily avoid getting wet, repelling the water from touching them. This wasn't the case here.

The water from this ocean seemed special and made everyone wet.

"Master!" Yanbai became scared and shouted.

It was also strange that they could speak normally while being underwater.

"It's fine, it comes quickly and leaves quickly." The bull consoled her.

"Splash!" Sure enough, another wave came by and took the ocean away.

Their clothes became dry right away the moment this happened. Not even a single drop of water was left behind.

"Splash! Splash! Splash!" They watched and saw this undulating wave happening in the horizon before disappearing altogether.

While watching this phenomenon, one would suddenly have the illusion that this azure ocean was actually a living being moving from one place to another.

"What was that?" Yanbai said in astonishment after the ocean was gone.

"Blue Waves." Holyfrost said: "A miracle of Sky Ruins. Everyone can see it and be drowned by it for only a split moment before becoming completely dried. Some actually come here just to experience this phenomenon."

"How strange, a moving ocean." Yanbai has never seen anything like this before.

The whole thing seemed like a dream. It felt as if nothing had happened after it was gone.

"It's not an ocean." Li Qiye smiled and elaborated: "It's an ancient organism, very special. You didn't get splashed earlier, only having entered its body."

"Uh..." Yanbai found this disgusting.

"It's actually very cool." The bull laughed: "Many auspicious beasts and rare birds want to live inside. I heard that there was an immortal type of carp that lived here, it's very hard to find now."

It started salivating and the others could hear it swallow loudly.

"You've eaten these carps before, Master?" Yanbai asked.

"No, of course not! Have you ever seen a bull eat meat? No, I only eat grass, yep, yep." The bull denied this right away while putting on the look of an enlightened bull.

Yanbai remained skeptical while Holyfrost had a faint smile on her face.

"Don't listen to your master's nonsense." Li Qiye didn't hold back: "It's a devil bull. In fact, it probably ate all types of meat, including humans. The only thing that it wouldn't eat is grass."

"Hey, please don't harm my reputation, I'm not someone like that. I can swear with my dao heart that I have never eaten people before!" The bull shouted.

"So you have eaten other types of meat then." Li Qiye said.

The bull looked dejected after losing the argument: "It's not my fault... a progenitor needed a favor from me and brought several pounds of carp. Hehe, they were pretty tasty..." It smacked its lips after saying this.

"Master, a bull doesn't have to eat grass." Yanbai said: "You're a divine bull that has reached the dao, it's very normal for you to eat other things, no?"

"Well said, well said, my disciple is so sensible and intelligent, worthy of my love." The bull was very satisfied with her comment.

Chapter 3025: Seeing The Meteor Again

The group stayed on the ship and let it take them anywhere. They wanted to see its destination anyway.

They saw many miraculous phenomena along the way - things that couldn't be seen anywhere else in Three Immortals.

One such occasion included a massive whale unlike any other whales found in the ocean. It consisted of numerous stars and nebulas gathered together to take on this bestial form.

The celestial whale made space tremble with every jump. One could also hear a splashing sound as if the spatial fabric around it was made of water. Ripples would emanate from the impact point.

It seemed to be playing around at home, leaping above then diving deep downward. Starry light trailed from its path, making the world look illusory and beautiful.

"It's gorgeous." Yanbai said with astonishment.

Of course, not everything was rosy in this place.

"Raaa!" A black shadow crossed by the area, looking just like the legendary gluttonous dragon. It opened its massive jaw and sucked in numerous stars before disappearing from sight.

Because of this, the ravaged area became utterly pitch-black.

"What was that?!" Yanbai shouted in horror.

"A monster that consumes stars." The bull put on a serious expression.

However, this monster didn't bother messing with Li Qiye's expedition ship. It disappeared into the darkness in a silent manner.

The next thing they saw was an enormous golden city floating in space. One could see its bright radiance from far away.

Waves of wondrous sounds came from within as if it was a lost city from the realm of the immortals. However, as the ship drew closer, the city suddenly disappeared from sight as if it was nothing but an illusion.

"Was that real?" Yanbai couldn't believe her eyes.

"No one knows." Holyfrost shook her head: "Some have tried to find it before to no avail. Some believed that it is real; others say that it is only an illusion."

"It's real but it's not actually in front of your sight, that's why finding it is impossible with this method." Li Qiye said.

"Haha, disciple, I'll take you to it next time." The bull said confidently.

"Sounds good!" Yanbai celebrated.

As they moved on, she kept on being wowed by the visual phenomena seen here. Meanwhile, this wasn't Holyfrost's first time here but she still felt the same astonishment after seeing certain things.

There were too many worthwhile places here in Sky Ruins, hence people's ongoing interest for millions of years.

"So what does Uncrossable Expanse look like?" This made the emperor wonder.

These two worlds stood at the two extremes of her world. Thus, seeing the miracles here made her wonder about the expanse.

"Haha, do you understand why all the top progenitors and Everlastings would go to the expanse despite knowing the risk of never returning?" The bull laughed.

"Right, seeing this place here really makes people want to take the risk to go to the expanse." Holyfrost had to agree that the expanse was too tempting for top masters.

They saw Sky Ruins and wanted to know more about the mysterious expanse with fewer travelers. Perhaps she would also make the same journey once she was strong enough.

The ship moved with extreme speed through this area. The group saw other cultivators along the way.

These people traveled with various methods - ships, flying, vessels... However, they were too slow compared to the expedition ship.

It finally slowed down after a long while, eventually only drifting forward.

"We're here." Li Qiye looked ahead and said.

The group calmed down and saw a black shadow ahead like a monster blocking everyone's path. This seemed to be the end of the world.

"The meteor!" Holyfrost blurted.

Yes, this was indeed the meteor from Uncrossable Expanse that nearly struck Immortal Lineage prior.

Everyone was scared out of their mind that day when seeing the shadow looming above them. They were lost in despair, thinking that a calamity was coming. Fortunately enough, the meteor just skirted by and went into Sky Ruins instead.

She didn't expect to see it here again. It was massive - almost like a super planet. It seemed impossible to move forward without getting around it somehow right now.

There was numerous debris around it. Of course, this was only relative to the huge meteor. Each piece was as big as a continent as a star.

The meteor also had tassels of light fully wrapping around it.

"So this is the ship's target. It left Uncrossable Expanse to give chase." The bull murmured.

"Shit, this means that a supreme treasure must be inside, these fiends want it so they resorted to this drastic measure!" It loudly reacted.

Holyfrost knew that the ship didn't have consciousness and wouldn't move on its own accord. A dark power must have been using it to get here.

"So what's inside?" She became curious.

Whatever inside was worth it to break the eternal precedence of nothing leaving Uncrossable Expanse. There must be a great secret at work here.

"Maybe something that can save the world?" The bull laughed: "Hear me out, the progenitors who entered the expanse have left their descendants something unmatched so that they can save themselves from a calamity."

"That's one possibility." Holyfrost agreed with this possibility since none of this was a coincidence.

Perhaps their great sages have left behind an ace card for Three Immortals.

Chapter 3026: Ascension Pond

"What's your take on this, Young Noble?" Holyfrost asked Li Qiye regarding the origin of the meteor.

Li Qiye wasn't actually looking at the meteor. His focus was towards another direction in space, completely fixated as if it was more interesting than the meteor.

Holyfrost followed his gaze and saw the other side. Though it was far away, she was strong enough to see everything clearly.

A resplendent world just like an ocean drowning everything in the nearby vicinity. At the deepest part was something akin to a pond with a crimson glow - a piece of cornelian engraved in this ocean.

Strangely enough, this pond and its bloodlike flow didn't stain the ocean in the slightest. There was a clear distinction between the two.

Most importantly, the ocean was certainly a majestic entity. However, this tiny pond seemed to actually be the core, the ruler of this great ocean.

Thick rays of light flowed around this ocean just like heavenly swords. Even the strongest being, once close enough, would be turned into mincemeat by these rotating rays.

"Ascension Pond." Holyfrost murmured: "One of the six redeeming grounds." [1]

"It changed position again. There has to be a reason, right?" The bull looked in the same direction and laughed.

"Maybe it has something to do with the meteor." Holyfrost murmured.

Li Qiye only smiled and didn't offer his take on the issue.

At this time, other experts have arrived as well and saw the massive meteor. Others took note of Ascension Pond on the other side.

"Ascension Pond? Why is it here? Just a coincidence?" A big shot shouted in astonishment.

"That's one of the six redeeming grounds, Master?" A junior asked with curiosity.

"Yes." The big shot nodded with a serious expression: "It hasn't changed location for a generation now, as far as I know. Why is it here on the opposite side of the meteor, so strange..."

This pond, a mysterious and strange place, has always been in Sky Ruins. Its name had various explanations.

Some said that after entering this place, it would be the person's last moment in the mortal world, a final ascension of sorts. Of course, there were other hidden meanings behind this explanation.

As one of the six redeeming grounds, it had a similar mechanic.

One difference was that anyone could enter Ascension Pond. However, they needed to be mentally prepared.

One could exchange anything in this place - the only requirement was that it had to be the most precious thing in their heart - a thing that they couldn't give up. That's the only thing that has value in this place.

For example, a peerless treasure or familial love, or it could be some seemingly random memento that has no value to others. It just needed to be the thing the trader valued the most.

Living people were also counted here - a parent or spouse...

All in all, as long as it was their most precious thing, they could trade it for anything here. They could get ultimate power for a pebble if the rule applied.

"Master, we can really trade for anything here?" A junior asked.

"Yes, anything, and you can get whatever you want too." The senior seemed frightened of this place.

"Really...?" The junior inquired again.

The senior answered with a stern glare to shut the youth up.

Another young cultivator began joking with his friend: "Wanna go there and see if we can get the power of a True Emperor?"

"Huh? Is that possible?" The friend became excited with bright eyes: "That's definitely worth a shot if we can become that powerful."

The young cultivator immediately smiled and asked: "What do you treasure the most in your heart?"

The friend tilted his head in contemplation.

"Foolishness!" An elder nearby slapped the both of them and gave them a murderous glare: "I'll feed you two off to some monster the next time I hear this nonsense again."

"Elder, we're just messing around." They felt indignant about the harsh scolding.

"This isn't something to joke around with or it'll become your heart devil." The elder sternly said: "There is no free lunch in this world. Something that comes so easily will always bite you back in the future!"

"Why?" The junior inquired.

"Because the second you agree to a deal, you're no longer you. Only the heart devil is left." The elder had a profound gaze. Alas, there was a hint of fear looming in there.

"Really?" The junior remained skeptical.

"Let me tell you the story of a mortal." The elder could tell that these juniors didn't buy his teaching and elaborated: "A great scholar versed in all aspects of life, a walking library. Unfortunately, he came from a poor family but just happened to love a noble daughter. His love was unreciprocated since she eventually married an official instead. He eventually suffered humiliation and was bullied, resulting in resentment and indignation."

"Later on, he came here with help from others and decided to do a transaction." The elder continued.

"What did he offer?" The juniors naturally enjoyed the tale.

"His talents and education." The elder went on: "All of his lifelong knowledge in order to become an invincible existence."

"What happens next?" Another junior immediately asked.

"He became invincible indeed and returned to his home with vengeance on his mind. He killed those who humiliated and looked down on him, all of them, including the noble daughter he once loved!"

"Hmm..." A few juniors were startled.

"That's not too bad." A more extreme junior said nonchalantly: "A man always pays a debt of gratitude while having a duty to get even with those who have wronged him. He's already invincible and isn't afraid of others avenging the dead ones."

The elder glared at him and said: "Not too bad? Do you think he's still himself? The moment he made that transaction, his heart devil had devoured him completely. He became nothing but a moving corpse."

"What happens next to this scholar, Elder?" A different youth cared about the main character of this tale.

"Death and destruction." The elder coldly said: "He gradually became insane and went on a rampage. No one in the world could stop him back then but don't think it ended well for him because of this. Someone eventually found him dead in a corner all alone."

"Death from insanity." The juniors felt a chill. This invincible master eventually died without knowing what was going on due to his mental instability - the opposite of what he traded for power.

Chapter 3027: Transaction

The juniors nearby took a deep breath after hearing this tale. A while ago, some of them wanted to play around, thinking that Ascension Pond was very interesting.

This was no longer the case. They felt as if there was a pair of dark eyes staring at them from behind, causing cold sweat to drip down their back.

"Dao Brother, you must be talking about Mad Emperor?" A different big shot nearby quietly asked.

The elder only gave him a cold glare without answering.

"Our ancestor, Mad Emperor?" One of the juniors blurted out.

The elder didn't confirm this and stared at Ascension Pond in silence.

This was obviously an answer so the disciples of his sect slowly digested this information.

Mad Emperor was their strongest ancestor but there were few writings about him in the sect. The older seniors never talked about him either. It was as if he was a stranger, not a respected ancestor in the sect.

The disciples finally understood why now, shuddering with a grim realization.

A brilliant and powerful emperor eventually died from his own insanity with quite a tale behind it all.

An emperor alone was invincible enough in the mind of these juniors, let alone an exceptional one. What in the world could trouble a being of this level? Alas, he still suffered a sad fate in the end. "Is this a curse?" One junior said while trembling.

"The heart devil." The senior coldly uttered: "The moment one makes the deal, the heart devil will be hiding in the deepest part of your mind, ready to devour at a given notice."

"I see..." The juniors nearby became afraid. Their great ancestor couldn't escape this curse, let alone regular cultivators like them.

"Still want to try now?" The elder asked.

The juniors exchanged glances and shook their head as quickly as the movement of the tides. They no longer stared at Ascension Pond with the same excitement as before. The same fear as the elder's could be seen now.

"How strange." The bull stared at the resplendent world: "Why is there an additional barrier there? To stop people from entering?"

"Because something big had happened. Even that thing is entering a state of defense. Use your imagination now." Li Qiye said.

"Wait, so the blinding explosion from Sky Ruins actually came from the pond on that day when the meteor first arrived?" Holyfrost recalled the previous event.

"Shit, a monster, no, an overlord is coming." The bull took a deep breath and said: "The pond has greater foresight than we do."

Holyfrost shuddered after seeing this great area trying to defend itself.

Ascension Pond was a terrifying and mysterious entity. Even the top progenitors were wary of dealing with it.

What was waiting in the future to warrant the land putting on a defensive barrier ahead of time?

"This has never happened before. Is the heaven falling down?" She said.

"Haha, it's reaching a point of no return. Not just the heaven but whatever above is done for too." The bull laughed: "The pond is terrifying beyond your imagination. The geezer Desolate Saint came here before but left without doing anything. He returned untouched but hahaha, I know that he was very annoyed. I'm sure that he lost big there but didn't say anything for the sake of face."

"Really?" Holyfrost was moved. No records of this event existed at the system.

"Absolutely." The bull smiled: "I don't know what that geezer went there for though but from what I know about him, he was definitely up to no good and probably wanted to do a transaction too, but something failed in the negotiation process. Hehe, then he probably tried brute force but lost with that too. All he could do afterward was run back, completely dejected while needing to keep it a secret."

Holyfrost took a deep breath to calm her emotions.

As a disciple of the academy and an enlightened user of the light, she knew just how stronger their progenitor was.

Desolate Saint wasn't only an immortal-level progenitor. He was listed as a member of the Decemvirate.

During his era, he could have swept through everything. Not another soul could take him on. Therefore, his light illuminated all of Three Immortals. Even his toughest enemies had no choice but to hide, not daring to show their face ever again.

Now, the bull said that he had lost to the pond? This news would shock the entire world.

"It is definitely an interesting place." Li Qiye smirked while looking at the pond.

"Haha, Sir, are you wanting to give it a shot?" The bull saw Li Qiye's eyes and felt as if Li Qiye would go in there.

He only answered with a smile.

"You're really doing it, Young Noble? I'm afraid that it will be an inauspicious trip." Holyfrost became surprised.

She definitely had confidence in Li Qiye's power but this pond has been devilish all this time. So many people who made a deal with it died a horrible death.

"This is a type of training for him. Nothing is better than this to sharpen his dao heart." The bull contemplated and added, showing off its knowledge and wisdom once again.

Holyfrost didn't see this point of view but upon closer rumination, she thought that the bull was right. His dao heart should be tough enough to stop any influence.

"It's not bad for training but unfortunately, it can't give me what I want or it would be very interesting." Li Qiye smiled and said.

"Hmm... my most precious thing..." He paused for a moment and gazed at the pond.

Holyfrost also wanted to know what Li Qiye considered his most precious, the thing that he would have the biggest trouble giving up.

In her opinion, it wasn't going to be a treasure or merit law since he never seemed to care about them.

A person? What kind of person would be worthy of such love from this top-level being? They must be just as peerless, far superior to her. In that case, she truly wanted to meet this person.

Alas, she shook her head and carefully thought twice. No one would be able to hold Li Qiye back or win his heart - thus, they couldn't be his most precious thing.

Chapter 3028: Celestial Dragon Venerable

Finally, the expedition ship stopped next to the meteor almost as if the latter was a dock - a returning home of sorts.

"Looks like this is the real destination." Holyfrost murmured after seeing this.

"The biggest problem is always coming from home. Some dirty business was done in the past then covered up." The bull laughed.

Holyfrost only sighed and didn't wish to critique the ancestors. After all, she didn't have any concrete evidence and didn't want to harm anyone's reputation.

"We're going." Li Qiye smiled and jumped off the ship with the group right behind him.

A heatwave greeted them as if something was burning on the meteor.

This meteor was massive beyond imagination, far bigger than some planets. Dao systems seemed tiny in comparison.

The heatwave emanating from the meteor made everyone feel parched. The land here became golden sand, seemingly the result of being scorched a very long time ago.

This temperature was ever-present despite a lack of a hot sun above or volcanoes on the surface. It resembled a specter that would never go away.

The bull squatted down and broke off a piece of the golden soil for a better look.

"Completely scorched but it's changing a bit now. A true flame must have ravaged this place, turning the surface into clay. Very few people have access to this power." It let the pieces scatter to the wind and concluded.

"So this meteor itself is a treasure since the mud is filled with the affinity of a divine metal. This meant that it used to be a massive mine in the past. The toughness of the metal still couldn't withstand the flame at the progenitorial level." It added.

"So why was this place scorched?" The emperor asked while thinking of the various possibilities.

"A battle of the top-level very far away. This place simply got struck by the fallout." The bull looked forward and concluded.

"There's something going on here, part of a long strategy. It's why that piece of rock fell down to Sky Pass." Li Qiye smiled.

"Right." The bull said: "Anyhow, we know that the expedition ship is chasing after this meteor. It's hard to tell what happened before this. Perhaps someone had changed their mind."

Holyfrost started wondering about the mighty forces of the expedition. Alas, what happened to them now?

"So what powerful foe took down so many progenitors?" Holyfrost wondered.

"Haha, the foe is definitely powerful but I'm sure the real enemy is the heart of men. The easiest and fastest way to defeat a powerful legion is to destroy its unity from the inside." The bull said.

Holyfrost sighed and refrained from pursuing this any further.

"Rumble!" Another great ship started floating in the airspace above.

Debris scattered everywhere as massive creatures landed and crushed the ground - fierce birds, devil bulls the size of a mountain, mixed-phoenix with sky-blotting wings, and armored leos...

Young cultivators rode these beasts. They had impressive auras and were clearly famous prodigies.

A primordial and beastly presence engulfed the land with their arrival. Everyone felt as if a stampede was on the way, capable of breaking everything.

"Divine Beast Legion!" A cultivator who had just got here shouted in astonishment.

"Why is True Dragon Court sending its legion here?" People started wondering.

This power was created by Violet Dragon Empress. Divine Beast Legion was an important branch there. Their appearance here naturally surprised the crowd.

The leader of this legion was an old man sitting on an auspicious beast - a fiery scaled lion. Its body seemingly made from ruby with a layer of flame on the surface.

He had a cold expression with a frightening flash in his eyes. One could hear the roars of dragons emanating from him as if there was a true dragon inside, ready to break out.

"Celestial Dragon Venerable." Some were startled to see him here in person.

"Are they attacking this place?" An expert wondered.

Celestial Dragon Venerable was the royal uncle of Violet Dragon Empress, a noble of the court. Some believed that he was a grand-completion Everlasting or a peak one.

He rarely took action but when he did, it would end with the death of his enemies.

"We meet again, Fiercest!" He glared at Li Qiye and snorted.

They have met back in Sky Pass, or at least the venerable took notice of Li Qiye. He was there during the auction.

"Do I know you?" Li Qiye gave him a quick glance. He didn't remember this guy at all since the auction was filled with people.

"Yang Chengli was my useless disciple!" The venerable revealed.

"Oh, I remember now, that archer or whatever. Yes, I killed him." Li Qiye smiled.

"Looks like Fiercest will be fighting against the court." A spectator from afar quietly said.

"Fiercest will do anything, including taking on True Dragon Court." A big shot smiled wryly. He saw Li Qiye killed Master Dajue and the dao avatars of Brightking Buddha and Metalkin War God.

"Good, so you admit your crime." Celestial Dragon Venerable couldn't stay calm.

He couldn't do anything back in Arrogance Enterprise or Sky Pass since he didn't want to offend their masters.

This was no longer the case. He could do whatever he wanted on this meteor.

"Of course. I've killed plenty of people so having one more or one fewer doesn't matter. Come if you wish to avenge your disciple, I'll only be adding another number to my list." Li Qiye nonchalantly said.

"Such arrogance!" The venerable was infuriated. He actually didn't wish to avenge his disciple.

After all, his disciple simply lost in a duel. It was his own fault for being weaker than Li Qiye.

However, the guy's blatant disdain was ridiculous.

He was a powerful Everlasting and a noble of True Dragon Court with military power. Fear was not in his dictionary.

So many emperors assumed the role of juniors when speaking to him. Thus, he couldn't swallow being treated in this manner by Li Qiye.

Chapter 3029: Violet Dragon Empress

Celestial Dragon Venerable was furious. Even the two current progenitors addressed him as "Venerable" whenever they visited the court.

His power and status commanded respect in Immortal Lineage. Now, a junior didn't give a damn about him in the slightest.

"The world is full of crouching tigers and hidden dragons..." The venerable barked back.

"So what? They better not cross my path unless they wish to die." Li Qiye interrupted him.

"You think no one else can stop you, that you're unbeatable?" The venerable scowled.

He was being quite patient already. Anyone else would have rushed forward to avenge their fallen disciple.

"Indeed, but if there were someone capable of stopping me, it certainly wouldn't be you." Li Qiye retorted.

"You!" The venerable's fury erupted like a volcano.

"I see, I see, I've roamed the world for thousands of years. This is the first time a junior dares to talk to me like this..." The venerable glared at Li Qiye with a smile stemming from anger and indignation.

Everyone sympathized with him, especially those who have met Li Qiye and his domineering style before.

"Why the need for this, why can't Fiercest be more courteous to avoid needless fighting?" A spectator quietly said.

"Haha, he wouldn't be Fiercest if he was more amicable." An expert who had experienced this before said: "Plus, he's so damn strong, why would he need to be polite towards anyone. You see arrogance but in his opinion, he's only telling the truth, no big deal."

"Well, people have different perspectives at different levels." An elder from the previous generation said.

"Is he really that strong? Comparable to Orchid Sage and Luminous Master?" Many didn't believe in his power.

"Who knows? In my opinion, he should be just as strong as Brightking Buddha and Metalkin War God. As for the two progenitors? They need to fight for us to know." A big shot maintained a conservative guess.

"Come if you want to fight, bring your legion too. Stop wasting my time otherwise." Li Qiye looked at the furious venerable and smiled.

The legion behind Celestial Dragon Venerable became angry as well. Many members glared at him.

First of all, they were individually famous as prodigies. Secondly, their legion had swept through the realms before in an unstoppable manner.

Now, Li Qiye treated them like some random hoodlums. How could they stay calm?

Of course, Li Qiye was telling the truth. It's just that his truth seemed like rampant arrogance and disdain in others' eyes.

"Very well!" The venerable laughed again: "This isn't about personal feud today, I don't care to avenge my useless disciple either. However, I will not allow you to insult the prestige of our court!"

"That's right!" Many experts in the legion roared: "Honor over death! Our legion will raise our glorious flag today!"

"Fine, you got my interest." Li Qiye smiled and stood up, waving his hand provocatively: "Work together now, let's see how many moves your famous legion can withstand."

"Clank! Clank! Clank!" The members unsheathed their weapons, ready to attack.

"We will not let this go until a victor is decided!" The venerable also stepped forward and released a majestic draconic aura.

"You may go first." Li Qiye said freely.

"Boom!" Divine light erupted from the venerable in the form of halos.

He seemingly became one with the world and grew larger - capable of plucking the stars and palming the sun and moon.

The aura of an Everlasting swept through the area to the astonishment of the spectators. Weaker cultivators were immediately suppressed.

"He deserves his fame." A few praised.

The guy was indeed mighty, far above other True Gods.

"Clank!" The legion members also activated their power in a dazzling manner. The area was drowned out by their boundless strength.

Some saw an illusion of themselves being surrounded by a great army; walls of steel blocked out any potential escape path.

"They're doing it." A spectator murmured after seeing the preparation.

"Let's see how strong Fiercest actually is." Others were eager to see Li Qiye's might.

"We'll see what you can do!" Celestial Dragon Venerable let out a roar that echoed across space.

"Stop!" However, a shout filled with authority detonated. Its imperial aura forced people to submit.

"Raaa!" A draconic aura came like a storm capable of destroying the celestials.

A great dragon descended from the sky. It had violet scales from top to bottom; its claws had a tinge of gold looking like two sabers.

One cut could sever the earth; another could crush a mountain.

Everyone shuddered after feeling this aura belonging to a supreme bloodline. People suddenly felt an animalistic instinct to bow before a dragon.

"A true dragon..." One expert blurted.

"A violet dragon! It's the empress!" Someone looked up and saw a woman standing on top of the dragon.

She also wore a violet robe while being surrounded by purple clouds, making her look quite mysterious.

Her brows were black and well-defined. She didn't wear an imperial robe nor a crown yet she looked as regal as ever, regardless of her current mood.

She wasn't a True Emperor yet her imperial aura was inferior to none. She was born to be noble, destined to be a peerless ruler with full authority.

"Violet Dragon Empress..." A young cultivator stared at her, mesmerized.

She was the current leader of True Dragon Court and one of the greatest contemporary geniuses. Her fame was on the same level as Metalkin War God and Brightking Buddha.

She had entered the academy too, becoming a student of Dawn. She eventually created Divine Beast Legion, a force with numerous accolades.

"Your Majesty." The members got on one knee to greet her.

Even Celestial Dragon Venerable got off his stallion to greet her despite being her clan uncle.

This wasn't only because she was the current ruler but because she herself was a powerful Everlasting, even stronger than him.

This respect came from the heart, not out of fear regarding royal authority and status.

Chapter 3030: The Empress' Stance

A while ago, the east of the academy had Violet Dragon Empress, the south had Metalkin War God, the west had Brightking Buddha, and the north had Holyfrost Emperor.

In terms of fame, the first three overshadowed Holyfrost Emperor.

Violet Dragon Empress had total authority and military power - virtually matchless among the young generation in terms of aura.

Metalkin War God was enamored with fighting, true to his title. He fought numerous battles and made his enemies wail in agony. Just mentioning his title alone made people shudder.

Brightking Buddha needed no introduction. His Buddhist arts were peerless, enough to save the living beings and make a name for himself as one of the greatest Buddhists.

On the other hand, Holyfrost Emperor kept a low profile and rarely showed herself outside of her system. Moreover, she was also the youngest of the four. Thus, she had less popularity outside of the academy.

The arrival of Violet Dragon Empress made people breathless. A few big shots were intimidated by her regal aura.

"Now this is interesting." An expert quietly said.

The other side had just received an immense boost of power, especially the legion.

"Rumor has it that when she's in command of the legion, she can summon a true dragon with immense power." Another who has seen her in battle before revealed.

"I don't think anyone can stop her legion under her command outside of progenitors." An elder added.

Not only was she powerful, but she was also a capable strategist. Divine Beast Legion was immensely effective under her control.

Thus, people felt that this could be a test for Li Qiye since he was facing something only barely beneath a progenitor.

"We'll see how strong he is, depending on how he faces the legion." Many were waiting to see both Li Qiye's true strength along with the empress' leadership.

The empress stood on her dragon and looked around the crowd with her sword-like gaze, seemingly able to cut others.

"I commanded you here to train in both willpower and actual battle, not for personal feud or face!" She suddenly scolded the legion with a stern tone.

The members didn't expect this. They lowered their head, not daring to disagree.

"Venerable, you are the commander yet you act on personal feelings with wanton regards for your duty. I sentence you to 300 years of no salary and eight years of confinement, effective after this operation!" She then stared at Celestial Dragon Venerable.

"I accept." The venerable didn't defy her in the slightest and bowed his head.

No one expected this development. In the beginning, they thought that she would personally take command to fight Li Qiye for the prestige of her court.

After all, a powerful entity normally cared about their image. This wasn't the case here. She seemed to be supporting and protecting Li Qiye instead of her own men.

"Hmph, leave now." She loudly commanded.

The venerable and the legion bowed towards her before departing towards the horizon of this desert.

The empress then jumped off her dragon and came up to Li Qiye's group, cupping her fist.

"Dao Brother, my men were ignorant and let emotions cloud their judgment, please forgive them." She said with a bow.

This act looked natural and full of sincerity to the astonishment of the crowd. The imperious empress was actually apologizing to Li Qiye?!

"You're far smarter than them. Very well, big shots are always benevolent, right? I won't pursue this any further." Li Qiye smiled and shook his head before leaving.

The empress actually followed along with the group.

Meanwhile, the spectators had no choice but to scatter away since a battle wasn't going to happen.

"Dao Brother, I heard you were able to open Sir Yinxi's boulder." The empress asked Li Qiye.

"Looks like you have figured out something to come here." Li Qiye smiled.

"Metalkin and Brightking were the first to come here. However, the matters here are above my station. I'm not here for the treasures, only to train for a bit." She smiled and said. Her style was different yet still on the same level as Holyfrost in terms of attractiveness.

"You've noticed then." He smiled, not particularly interested.

"Yes, this is the idea of those two. A progenitor has left several things behind here." The empress revealed.

She didn't dwell on this matter, seemingly not interested in competing for the treasures.

"Dao Brother, do be careful of the dangers here since you've only just arrived." She continued: "Evil comes out once night falls, impossible to destroy and hard to resist. It's best to hide in the temple at that point."

One could easily imagine how dangerous it was considering her power. She was just as strong as Holyfrost and sincerely reminded them out of kindness.

"We'll keep that in mind." Li Qiye nodded.

She pondered for a bit and added: "I'm sure you'll go deeper eventually. Just be aware that Metalkin and Brightking are antagonistic towards you, tread carefully."

She wasn't fond of gossip so she must have heard something to make a statement like this.

In fact, this wasn't strange at all since he had destroyed their dao avatars previously.

"I'll be waiting." Li Qiye didn't mind at all.

The empress was moved to see his nonchalant attitude. Remember, those two were renowned for their strength.

Thus, Li Qiye was either an invincible master or insane. The latter was clearly not the case so she realized that her estimation was correct.

"Your court has a decent secondary dragon bone." Li Qiye suddenly brought this up. [1]

The empress became frozen and shocked. Fewer than few people knew of this.

"The purity of blood is indeed at the true dragon level." Li Qiye continued: "Quite a big deal and very profound."

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand, Dao Brother." She smiled wryly, looking a bit nervous.

"Don't worry, I have no intention of taking it." Li Qiye shook his head after seeing her unnatural expression.

"You're teasing me, Dao Brother." The empress heaved a sigh of relief.

For some reason, she felt as if he could actually do it and they would only be able to watch him take it away. Her True Dragon Court could take on any other lineage or system in Immortal Lineage so she didn't get why she had this feeling.

"However, I actually thought about taking it before. The profundity inside a pureblood true dragon is worthy of pondering, quite precious indeed." Li Qiye said.

Her heart skipped a beat again.

"But, we can be considered acquaintances now and you have been courteous and proper. I'm no longer in a position to rob your treasure. I would have had a good justification to do so if your legion attacked me earlier. I would have massacred everyone and then take that dragon bone later on." Li Qiye continued on.