

## **Necropolis 1401**

### **Chapter 1401: Rainbow Bridge**

As renowned as Hua Fengwen was throughout the Hongmeng, there were very few who truly understood him. What the Dragonsea city lord spoke of—she'd learned from Dragonhollow Mountain as well.

The great battle between Hua Fengwen and Hua Fengzhan had long since concluded. No victor had been determined, and the brothers had parted ways.

None of the kings present had anything to say. A sixth step king slay a seventh step king? "Genius" was insufficient to describe the man, he was a perverse talent! The gap between mid and high level kings was so great that it couldn't be bridged by personal strength alone.

Qing Yu and the little fox exchanged glances, both reading shock in each other's eyes. They hadn't thought that the usually irreverent fellow who spoke of ants at the drop of a hat would be someone so incredible!

Eighth in the Hongmeng?

How many geniuses were there in the realm? As many as carp in the river and too many to count!

Though Qing Yu and the little fox had set foot into ninth step kingdom upon their ascension, they both knew full well that one of them had benefited from Violetgrave's legacy and the other from the Hongmeng Tower cheating for them. Their strength when in the superior realm ranked among ordinary geniuses—a far cry from Hua Fengwen.

What Lu Yun and Qing Ting were accomplishing together in Dragonsea City would've been achieved by Hua Fengwen alone a hundred thousand years ago. Setting aside Qing Ting, Lu Yun's current achievements were the function of fortune and luck.

From the world of immortals until now, it wasn't until Lu Yun incorporated the hellfire of order into his sword dao and formed the sword dao of order that he truly set foot onto his own path. Only through that did he make all of his fortune and luck into his own.

The auction continued at a rapid pace and identity tokens exchanged hands at every moment. No one dared wait or just sit back and observe. There were only so many identity tokens available and each one sold meant one less available. If any of the auctions failed, the Champion Duke really would destroy the token on the spot!

No one doubted his words.

Even more important was that they would receive his protection after purchasing a token. They wouldn't have to worry about someone else taking it from them! This imparted new hope to the weaker cultivators who ardently wished to participate in the Dragonling Assembly.

A hundred premium crystal veins were the entire wealth of an ordinary king, but none of the cultivators present were backed by ordinary characters!

The benefits they would glean if they could participate were beyond imagination. Thus, cultivators who'd previously remained on the sidelines joined the fray and furiously bid on the tokens, causing many Azure Dragon cultivators to squawk with outrage.

Near the end, numerous kings in the audience began bidding themselves. They couldn't take action in the city, but they could talk and bid on an identity token for their juniors.

Other than the one thousand premium crystal veins that Dragon Butterfly offered, the cheapest token went for two hundred crystal veins and the most expensive went for five hundred. Lu Yun's seed storage swiftly filled to capacity. He held more than one million premium crystal veins now!

Some high level kings eyed him covetously. If they weren't within Dragonsea City, they would've already attacked the young duke and taken his purple crystals.

Qing Yu and the little fox also looked on nervously. They were tensed to act and would kill anyone who dared make a move.

"I wonder if the Champion Duke will make it back to the Trueriver Sect." Dragonfeather swallowed hard and looked gleefully at the Trueriver King, then carefully at Qing Yu and the Intrace King. Perhaps only these two women would be able to protect a madman like the Champion Duke.

Lu Yun saved four identity tokens for Azureclad and the others, and another one for the pitiful Qing Di. He'd also wanted to save one for his convenient disciple, Dusksnow Morningstar, but the latter was at a crucial moment of comprehending the sword diagram and couldn't spare attention for anything else.

Lu Yun earned nine million premium crystal veins at the end of the auction, neatly replenishing all of the purple crystals that the Immortal Pagoda had traded for ghost crystals over the past year.

He didn't plan on sharing them with Qing Ting or Coiling Dragon City—they wouldn't be able to retain such a level of wealth. What Qing Ting had obtained thus far was the limits of their ability to keep and protect.

Lu Yun could also sense dense malice circling in the air. Regardless of what the Dragonling Assembly results were, he would be attacked as soon as the gathering was over. High level kings were sure to move against him.

The combined total of nearly a thousand premium crystal veins was the equivalent of an enormous mine. Even the current Redbud Mountain didn't possess so many minor crystal veins. But Lu Yun didn't care about this. If any of them dared attack him, he'd let them know what the true Ten Valleys of Evil were!

With the conclusion of the auction, everyone who'd purchased a token huddled quietly next to Lu Yun and Qing Ting, receiving their protection.

"Should we charge a protection fee?" Qing Ting suddenly asked. "Why don't we blockade the bridge to Dragonhollow Mountain in a bit and force them to pay a toll!"

Her idea sent shudders of horror through everyone.

"Let's not," Lu Yun chuckled. "We have enough wealth now and should avoid overdoing things. If our greed knows no bounds, a tribulation will strike us."

“Okay then.” Qing Ting was slightly unhappy, but quickly forgot about it when she thought of the purple crystals and treasures she now owned.

The other cultivators relaxed with relief as well; Lu Yun felt a massive cloud of goodwill burst from them and flow into his body to be absorbed by the Karmic Tree. The bald tree swiftly budded a hundred and eight thousand karmic fruits that weren’t ripe yet.

“I’m... obviously the villain here, so why are they thanking me?” Lu Yun didn’t really understand it. He’d robbed the entire city and taken all of their belongings, then forced them to spend even more money to buy back what was theirs...

He definitely wasn’t running a charity here.

The identity token was a right to participate, a hope, but that didn’t mean they were guaranteed benefits from the Dragonling Assembly.

“I don’t get it... not at all. Forget it, I’m not thinking more about that.” Lu Yun stood on the eastern city walls and looked to the Hongmeng Sea in the east.

Instead of being a shade of blue, it was hazy purple and stretched on without end. Fog drifted over its surface, obscuring its true appearance.

The kings in the city stared longingly at Lu Yun, deeply wishing that he’d somehow lose his mind and visit the shore. They couldn’t move in the city, but the shores of the sea were outside Dragonsea City.

Lu Yun was no idiot.

“Aooooou!” A piercing dragon croon traveled from the Hongmeng Sea as an enormous dragon of seven colors surged out of it and rushed for the city. It turned into a massive rainbow bridge when it reached the city walls, connecting Dragonhollow Mountain and Dragonsea city.

Lu Yun’s identity token dissolved into rainbow radiance the moment it appeared, lifting him up to the bridge.

### **Chapter 1402: Three Thousand Living**

Rays of seven-colored radiance rose from the city and melded into the rainbow bridge.

“So it’s like this... no wonder the Champion Duke didn’t want to charge a protection fee. He probably knew this was how the assembly would commence.” Qing Ting looked on regretfully as a ball of radiance wrapped around her and she vanished on the spot.

The kings observing the proceedings sighed with relief. They really had been worried that the Champion Duke and Qing Ting would go back on their word and take back the identity tokens or demand more purple crystals.

“It’s a pity that the venerated enforcer didn’t come, or that the Purpleclad and Bloodclade Dukes haven’t come,” the Azure Scaled-Dragon King said with some regret. “I would’ve loved to see what makes the venerated enforcer so strong that he is hailed as the first beneath titled kings. Is he stronger, or is the Champion Duke or Qing Ting stronger?”

“The venerated enforcer, Purpleclad Duke, and Bloodclade Duke traveled to Dragonhollow Mountain a while ago,” the Dragonsea city lord commented faintly. “Geniuses ranked in the top one hundred of the realm have the right to bypass this meaningless qualification round and enter the assembly proper.”

“The top hundred geniuses of the Hongmeng?” Some high level kings in the crowd blinked.

“The ancestral soul of the azure dragon has awoken,” the city lord said meaningfully. “Dragonhollow Mountain set a Dragonling Ranking for this time’s assembly, incorporating all of the realm’s strongest geniuses beneath titled kingdom.”

“After the azure dragon’s ancestral soul made preliminary calculations, anyone who can be listed in the top one hundred of the Hongmeng was directly invited to Dragonhollow Mountain.”

“The ancestral soul of the azure dragon has awoken?” Qing Yu and the little fox looked at each other. They knew why Lu Yun was headed to the mountain—he was going to help Dragon Butterfly retrieve the ancestral blood! Now that the azure dragon’s ancestral soul had awoken, it seemed drastic changes were in store for his trip.

The Dragonsea city lord frowned faintly at them upon noting their reaction. She had a rough idea of the Intranse King and unknown girl’s background, but the two weren’t displaying strong energy ripples. The Intranse King seemed to possess only three dao rules, so she was a third step king.

Making titled kingdom as a third step king made her a rare genius, but in the city lord’s eyes, she was only a genius and not yet a powerhouse. As strong as her potential was, it was yet to be fully excavated.

Though the city lord couldn’t see through the other woman, she wasn’t concerned by that. It was their reactions and current expressions that raised her guard. Cultivators at their level showed visible emotion only when they encountered something they cared so much about that they couldn’t help themselves.

“What about the Immortal King?” Miao suddenly sneered. “When you sent an invitation to the Immortal Pagoda, you didn’t mention anything about the top one hundred of the Dragonling Ranking.”

The city lord blinked—she understood the reason for their noticeable reaction.

“The Dragonling Ranking evaluates battle strength. While the Immortal King is a king, he is only a supplemental king. To be frank, Dragonhollow Mountain doesn’t think much of the Immortal King’s true battle strength. His invitation was a courtesy due to him being a titan of the realm,” chuckled the city lord.

Supplemental kings usually focused on their supplemental dao and battle through the supplemental arts. They didn’t care much about their own battle strength, so it was understandable that Dragonhollow Mountain hadn’t listed him in the top one hundred.

“Do you really think that the Immortal King has no battle strength to speak of?” the little fox snorted with laughter.

“If he attends the Dragonling Assembly, he will naturally be able to prove himself.” The city lord remained indifferent in the face of Miao’s questioning. “Geniuses in the Hongmeng are as numerous as

fish in the river. Even the generally acclaimed Azureclad and Crimsonclad Dukes are not in the top one hundred.

“Take the Bloodclad and Purpleclad Dukes instead. One was defeated by an ordinary half step king and another weathered the extermination of his master’s faction. Thus tempered by the trials of life, they all vaulted forward into the top one hundred after that.

“On the other hand, nothing else needs to be said for the venerated enforcer. He is the Purple King’s disciple, and while he may not be number one beneath titled kings as the realm makes him out to be, he is absolutely a stunning genius well deserving of a spot in the top ten.”

The city lord rather sounded like she was imparting knowledge to the naive.

“The Purple King?” Merriment appeared in the little fox’s eyes. That was her son! But she’d learned from her earlier mistake and kept her emotions tightly in check.

“Correct, the Purple King,” the city lord continued to wax eloquent. “His era is too far in the past, which makes him a legendary character now. Of course, he is a legend to begin with since he defeated a seventh step king as a sixth step king.

“When the chaos erupted with disorder a while back, the Enforcer Alliance sent three sixth step kings to suppress him. If it wasn’t for their venerated enforcer being his disciple, he would’ve crushed them all with a finger. Back in his day, he could already kill a seventh step king. How much stronger must he be now?”

The Redbud King’s assessment of the Purple King had been that though he was a sixth step king, he nearly had the battle strength of a seventh step king.

That was just her guess—in reality, he was much stronger than that.

The venerated enforcer being the Purple King’s disciple was a secret to all but the strongest personages and the Enforcer Alliance. To those in the know, this relationship was an open secret that no one haphazardly exposed to the public. The alliance was also happy to be connected to the Purple King through their leader.

The Purple King had left the Hongmeng due to pursuit from the Immortal Region. He was a denizen of the mythological realm and the Immortal Region was responsible for its destruction.

“Everyone in attendance here is a heavyweight of the realm and thus has the right to observe the proceedings from Dragonhollow Mountain. This way, please.” The city lord raised a hand and summoned a tuft of rainbow clouds beneath their feet, gently conveying the group forward.

“The rainbow bridge is actually another test, one that not everyone can pass,” she continued to explain. “All beings are equal in the Hongmeng, apart from ghosts. Arcane beasts are also part of our realm, so they will be fighting the cultivators on the bridge. Only three thousand souls have the right to set foot on the mountain.”

Faces darkened as conversation petered out. The three thousand on the bridge weren’t there because of strength; they were there because of wealth! Many of them were, in fact, good-for-nothing spoiled scions.

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On the rainbow bridge.

Lu Yun frowned slightly. "Strange, there's more than three thousand living souls here... there's also arcane beasts?"

He looked around to see many cultivators peering around blankly.

"Congratulations on obtaining the right to participate in the Dragonling Assembly," sounded a resonant voice. "However, this is only the start. You must pass through the rainbow bridge if you wish to set foot on Dragonhollow Mountain.

"Not only do you have to face those by your side, but you must also face the countless beasts on the bridge. The assembly isn't open to just cultivators—arcane beasts may participate as well.

"Only three thousand may be left alive on the bridge. Either you can jump down, be thrown down, or die!

"When only three thousand living remain on the bridge, you will reach the true Dragonhollow Mountain."

#### **Chapter 1403: The Terrifying Champion Duke**

People exchanged blank stares with each other after the voice quieted, not knowing what to do.

"There's also arcane beasts here?" Qing Di paused. He was Azure Dragon City's only representative now; his identity token had come from Lu Yun reserving one for him. Naturally, he followed closely at Lu Yun and Qing Ting's side.

He'd been thoroughly convinced of their dominance and was their newest, most fervent fan.

When he exited closed door cultivation, he'd thought that it was a foregone conclusion that his cultivation was much higher than the Azureclad and Crimsonclad Duke's. And that was indeed the case, but he'd then had all self assurance kicked out of him by Lu Yun and Qing Ting.

He'd first thought that the Champion Duke and Qing Ting had defeated him together, but when they took him on separately and still beat him black and blue, he finally accepted the truth of the situation.

Add to that him being Qing Ting's cousin—he didn't consider himself an outsider or stand on ceremony.

"There are." Lu Yun nodded. "There's more than ten thousand of them and they're all the stronger of their kind.

"Alright, aftermarket service is included in your purchase. If you're willing to, you can stay by my side and I'll continue to protect you. If you want to try your hand against the arcane beasts and test yourselves, you're free to do so as well.

"You can always come back here if you run into trouble you can't resolve. This is gratis, free of charge." Lu Yun smiled, then sensed a massive amount of goodwill flooding toward him.

Though Hongmeng denizens didn't understand what aftermarket service was, they understood that the Champion Duke was willing to continue protecting them!

This had never occurred before in a Dragonling Assembly and neither did they feel insulted. The words of an absolute heavyweight were no humiliation.

"The Champion Duke is a person of virtue and integrity! He is the second Luminous King and we are honored by his presence!"

"Hold on, what Luminous King? Does that piss poor king have the right to be compared to the Champion Duke?"

"Don't worry, Your Grace! We won't make trouble for you unless we have to!"

Lu Yun inclined his head. "Remember that staying alive is the most important. Only when you are alive can you pursue your future and dreams. Nothing matters if you are dead."

"...thank you for your reminder!" Numerous titled dukes jerked when they heard his words, suddenly feeling that they'd been a bit too fixated on certain notions.

They felt that they had to fight to the death in many matters and determine who was superior even at the cost of their own lives. They wouldn't have bothered listening to anyone else who said otherwise—cultivators should think nothing of life and death. Where does one gain strength from, if one is not willing to risk one's life?!

But it was different when the Champion Duke spoke of this. He was the one who'd beaten them, and just he and Qing Ting had robbed tens of thousands of cultivators. The two never killed unless they had to, so the cultivators naturally didn't doubt his words.

"I take my leave then!" Some titled dukes left the area while others stayed. Those who stayed weren't confident in facing the arcane beasts and elected to stay in Lu Yun's bubble of protection.

"Then... I'll be off?" Qing Di asked hesitantly as he looked at Lu Yun and Qing Ting.

"You're a right and proper titled duke, what are you doing if you aren't out fighting arcane beasts? Do you want to nap under our wings?" Qing Ting glared impatiently at him. She turned around and spoke to her brother. "And you four, do titled dukes need our protection?"

Azureclad and the others smiled ruefully; the former had no idea what'd happened to his biddable, sweet, and gentle baby sister. Look at how fierce she was now and how she was yelling at him!

They didn't have the thick skin to remain either and left with Qing Di. Meanwhile, Qing Ting's words instilled some awkwardness in the other cultivators.

"Hey hey, don't look like that! You're different from them—their identity tokens were gifts while you paid for yours. Since you've bought your spot, we'll protect you to the end and make sure you really make it onto Dragonhollow Mountain!" Qing Ting chuckled.

Hesitant smiles spread through the crowd. Err, was staying or leaving the better choice now? None of them were titled dukes and their factions were the strong ones, not them. It was only due to their individual high status that they received enormous amounts of purple crystals.

The Dragonling Assembly was a violent affair and cultivators were supposed to grow through these bloody struggles. But up until now, not that many had died solely because of the unexpected Lu Yun and Qing Ting.

The ones still here didn't want to die either.

As he looked at them, Lu Yun couldn't summon the desire to proceed forward. The rainbow bridge was unfathomably big, like a minor world. Rainbow radiance shimmered on all sides. While the voice had said they could jump down, he hadn't been able to find out where from, even after prolonged searching.

"I bet you that was nonsense... and the only way off the bridge is to pass or die," he muttered with a frown.

Scowls and darkening expressions appeared on the faces of the almost five hundred left.

"Don't worry, I won't let you guys die." Lu Yun grinned. "But since we're here, I might as well teach you something. I may not be able to increase your strength, but I can improve your battle techniques so that you won't die so easily!"

"Do, do we need to pay for that?" a half step king asked meekly.

"Nope." Lu Yun shook his head. "That's part of your payment for your identity token."

The cultivators beamed, and the kings resting on a rainbow cloud gaped at the scene on the bridge.

Many cultivators had grouped together to fight and kill arcane beasts, but there were five hundred cultivators huddled near the entrance. They listened raptly, as if students attending a lecture given by the notorious Robber Couple. The infamous duo then began actual demonstrations, showcasing techniques to use in battle and how cultivators could maximize their output with minimal effort.

"Would you say... that we've been fleeced or gotten a huge deal in paying for those identity tokens?" A sixth step king was wordless at seeing his son easily change his battle style under Lu Yun's tutelage, thereby increasing his battle strength by a prodigious amount.

"If they can make it out alive... then we got a deal. If they die here... then we got fleeced," another sixth step king answered woodenly.

"The Champion Duke possesses unparalleled battle strength and he's immensely skilled at teaching disciples. Look, he's not just teaching them, but his own strength is growing in the process! He's using the hand of another to discover and fix his own flaws, he's terrifying!" gasped a seventh step king.

#### **Chapter 1404: Three Strokes**

The path of cultivation wasn't one of smooth sailing—one often ran into numerous bottlenecks and obstacles. Many cultivators chose unique or extreme methods to break through when they encountered such barriers, such as fights to the death or challenging someone stronger than them. Enormous pressure under these circumstances could help them advance beyond these problems.

Lu Yun was facing one such instance of a bottleneck.



Challenging half step kings no longer held any meaning for him. Even using the Army Pagoda wouldn't help him set foot into the next level within a short period of time. Thus, he returned to his tried and true method from the world of immortals—teaching the world.

As he imparted pointers for battle and cultivation, he also studied his pupils' reactions to identify his own shortcomings. It was easy enough to locate someone else's flaws, but incredibly difficult to recognize one's own limitations.

The mirror of another could shed light on the insufficiencies of the beholder.

He'd defeated all of these half step kings before—they were inferior to him. However, each of them possessed a unique characteristic that Lu Yun lacked and well deserved observation. At the same time, their weaknesses provided inspiration for continual self reflection on Lu Yun's own journey.

This was also cultivation, and the high level kings could see what he was doing. However, there weren't many who could do what the young man was doing. A cultivator who wanted to make use of this method had to fully display all of his knowledge, combat arts, methods, and cultivation path to others.

Qing Ting wanted to emulate him, but she had yet to reach his level. All she could do now was offer advice while Lu Yun was truly giving guidance.

Nearly five hundred cultivators—and Dragon Butterfly—benefited from his tutelage. She repeatedly polished her control, enhancing the grasp of her power and moving it from the realm of "pure violence" to the arena of "skillful deployment".

After taking in the strengths of so many cultivators, Lu Yun began to rework his sword dao. Though he'd already transformed the second stroke of Dragonsoar from one into two blows, it still needed to be perfected. Gaping flaws abounded in the move and Lu Yun was doing his best to refine and close the openings.

"Roar!!" A heaven-shaking bestial roar echoed as a herd of roughly a thousand pitch-black beasts with a single horn on their head crowded in from every direction.

That there were five hundred cultivators here didn't escape the arcane beasts' attention. Not only were these cultivators blocking them from obtaining a spot for the Dragonling Assembly, but these age old rivals were also food. Consuming cultivators and devouring their nascent spirit and internal force would enhance a beast's personal strength and help it evolve further.

Since arcane beasts couldn't cultivate, their only methods of improvement were through battle or consuming others. When they fought, whoever died would become food.

"There's arcane beasts surrounding us!" Five hundred cultivators were conversing and exchanging reflections in such a harmonious atmosphere that they'd almost forgotten this was the Dragonling Assembly. The abrupt appearance of the enemy woke them up to the truth of their circumstances.

Aooooou! rang a piercing dragon croon. A large cerulean-silver dragon appeared out of nowhere and charged the herd of black unicorn beasts. Lu Yun showed them no mercy.

All of the participants had progressed to the cruelest stage of elimination. There were only two paths forward—advancement or death.

He slew a hundred beasts with Dragonrise, then twisted around and deployed Dragonsoar. The enormous dragon split into two, swinging back down on the herd. They were like a giant pair of scissors, scything through everything they touched and swiftly churning through another five hundred arcane beasts.

“Die!” Lu Yun shouted and struck out with another stroke. It exploded in the void as sword rain and neatly eliminated everything still alive in the herd.

Quiet reigned over the scene.

“I feel like... it would’ve been easier for him to kill us than to defeat and rob us one by one,” a half step king whispered cautiously.

“Uh... yeah,” someone replied haltingly. “He used this kind of method when he faced the Robber Slayers. He wouldn’t have needed to strike a fourth time to end us all.”

Lu Yun had deployed only three strokes to kill a thousand arcane beasts. Of course, this was a result of his recent trials propelling his strength forward. His flame of order had also melded with his sword dao to become the sword dao of order.

When he’d taught the five hundred cultivators, he’d located some of his own shortfalls and improved upon them, displaying his efforts in a strengthened Dragonsoar.

At the same time, the cultivators looked at the eagerly jumping Qing Ting who hadn’t had time to draw her sword. The little princess would probably deliver destruction on the same level as the Champion Duke!

“Little princess Qing Ting doesn’t have a title yet, right?” someone suddenly asked.

“You’re not thinking of giving her one, are you? Kings are the ones who give out titles, we don’t have the right to give her one,” another person responded with resignation.

“Fair enough.”

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Up on the rainbow cloud, undefinable expressions crossed the kings’ faces.

“Those five hundred don’t seem like they’re here to participate in the Dragonling Assembly—more like they’re out on a leisure trip with a side of cultivation,” a high level king said ruefully.

The Champion Duke had killed a thousand arcane beasts with three strokes. That was an incredibly heaven-defying feat!

“How about you let the Champion Duke and Qing Ting just cross the bridge, City Lord? This will be unfair to the arcane beasts if the situation proceeds as is,” another king raised gingerly.

“Who knew that the Champion Duke and Qing Ting would possess this level of battle strength?

Unfortunately, the rainbow bridge has its own set of rules and even ninth step kings cannot interfere,” sighed the Dragonsea city lord. “We can only hope that there are some incredible geniuses among the beasts, or the Champion Duke and Qing Ting really will massacre them all.”

She used the word massacre, not put down.

High level kings had long since set aside racial prejudices against arcane beasts. In their eyes, both beast and cultivator were denizens of the Hongmeng united against the ghosts. The high level beast kings that'd already reached Dragonhollow Mountain would be immensely displeased if all of their juniors really were completely eliminated.

"I don't think you should pin your hopes on that." Qing Yu shook her head. "If that's the case, the Champion Duke would be the first to kill such an arcane beast."

Strange expressions flickered across faces again, but no one spoke.

"How dare you?!" a furious howl rang out when Lu Yun finished killing all thousand beasts. A black unicorn beast the size of a small mountain bounded forward, screaming at Lu Yun with reddened eyes.

Golden light flared from its horn as it lowered its head in a charge.

Bam!

The black unicorn flew backward—Lu Yun had kicked it away and also broken its horn with his kick.

"Too strong, time to run!" The unicorn fled after it scrambled to its feet, shouting with this newfound sentiment.

#### **Chapter 1405: Self Awareness**

Lu Yun refrained from pursuing the black unicorn—several strong presences had drawn close to the group at some unknown point in time. This was very possibly a trap to lure him away as many of these presences were locked onto Qing Ting!

Since she'd activated her bloodline, she possessed the power of the azure dragon. If the arcane beasts ate her, they could potentially evolve into a dragon themselves.

Thankfully, there was nothing for Lu Yun to worry about since Qing Ting was strong. But if the arcane beast hidden in the shadows came again, the five hundred under Lu Yun's protection would be dead without a doubt. There wouldn't be anything left of them since they'd be devoured down to the bone.

That was the last thing he wanted to happen.

Kaleidoscopic light shimmered over the rainbow bridge, providing cover for the arcane beasts. They weren't purposefully concealing their movement, so Qing Ting could easily pinpoint where they were.

"They want to eat you," Lu Yun said half jokingly to her.

"And I want to eat them! The meat of half step king arcane beasts must taste super good!" Qing Ting responded seriously.

"Ah, eh, want me to hunt down a few to eat?" Lu Yun sheepishly looked at the ashes covering the ground. His three strokes hadn't been well controlled and he'd just annihilated all one thousand beasts.

“I’ll do it.” Qing Ting’s Azuresky blossomed with cutting sword light and she vanished on the spot. Moving through the air as if she was on the ground, she flashed through the void, striking out every time she materialized somewhere and sending an arcane beast crashing to the ground.

She reappeared three hundred and sixty-five times in the air, stabbing out each time and decapitating an arcane beast.

Plop!

Plop!

Plop!

They landed on the ground at almost the same time and Qing Ting returned to her original position less than half a breath later.

Shocked gasps rose and fell in the crowd of five hundred cultivators. They’d witnessed Lu Yun’s strength earlier and found him incredible at killing a thousand beasts with three strokes. Now the little princess decapitated three hundred and sixty-five of them in less than a breath?

They didn’t know how to describe the... gap? Could it even be called a gap? between them.

“What are you waiting for? Hurry up and roast these beasts!” Qing Ting sheathed her sword with a grand flourish and roared out in gallant style.

“Right, let’s hurry up and skin these beasts!” The half step kings busied themselves with processing the corpses while the remaining arcane beasts in the surroundings scattered, looking for other targets.

Lu Yun and Qing Ting didn’t run after them. Protecting five hundred on the bridge was already going above and beyond. The other twenty-five hundred striking out on their own would face defeat and death—and many of them would die.

But that was out of Lu Yun and Qing Ting’s hands—they weren’t saints.

His comment of aftermarket service had been a joke; his primary focus was on Dragon Butterfly. She couldn’t be allowed to do anything here, no matter what.

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The fragrance of roasting meat quickly wafted through the air as the arcane beasts that Qing Ting had killed turned on spits. Such was the nature of the relationship between cultivators and arcane beasts.

Arcane beasts ate cultivators, and cultivators hunted arcane beasts. Cultivators consumed their meat or used their hide and blood in refining supplemental treasures. Titled kings also hunted arcane beast kings to use their crystal cores in pills and treasures. As long as they didn’t hunt too many at a given time, the high level arcane beast kings turned a blind eye to such actions.

It was a certain kind of equilibrium of life.

Lu Yun and Qing Ting only ate a few pieces, whereas Dragon Butterfly befriended all of the cultivators. She’d fished out some flasks of fine wine and were sharing them with the crowd.

“Do you think we can challenge kings now?” Qing Ting murmured. “Ghost kings and titled dukes aren’t much of a test anymore. Only titled kings of the cultivators and arcane beast kings can give us any pressure.”

Ghost kings lacked combat arts and while titled dukes possessed the strength of a king, they hadn’t mastered a king’s forcefield. The current Lu Yun and Qing Ting could defeat a second step ghost king by themselves now, but they weren’t so confident in facing a human king. Just the forcefield alone could rob them of their mobility.

The ghostly qi of a ghost king enabled them to ignore the forcefields of kings, but titled dukes couldn’t do the same. When Lu Yun faced the third step king of the Li Clan, he would’ve been crushed by a finger if he hadn’t been prepared with formations and talismans against the forcefield.

As Lu Yun and Qing Ting had never truly faced a real king, they weren’t certain how they’d fare against a forcefield either. If one wanted to defeat a king in face-to-face combat, one had to destroy the king’s forcefield. Those who’d comprehended the second level of “influence” would be even more difficult to deal with.

“Rice needs to be eaten one mouthful at a time. It’s quite an accomplishment that we’ve reached our current heights, given how long we’ve cultivated.” Lu Yun remained optimistic. “Let’s find a few kings to practice with once we get back and familiarize ourselves with forcefields. We should be able to defeat real kings then!”

“There are many kings in Coiling Dragon City and the Trueriver Sect, they should be happy to spar with us, right?” Qing Ting broke out in a broad smile.

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“Those two children haven’t lost themselves?” The kings up on the rainbow cloud could clearly eavesdrop on the conversation; shock crept across their faces to hear this kind of conversation.

If it was them and they’d possessed this level of strength as a half step king, they’d probably immediately lose sight of what was important and consider themselves the greatest in the Hongmeng.

At that level, killing kings was as easy as breathing, and first and second step kings weren’t worthy of consideration.

“Hmph,” snorted the Dragonfeather King. “Only base-born cultivators become cocky and arrogant after gaining a little bit of strength. Those are the type to put on airs and lose the respect they should have for titled kings.

“I don’t know about the Champion Duke, but Qing Ting has trained with my brother since young. She is well aware of the might of a titled king and conducts herself accordingly.”

“Hmph!” harrumphed the Crippled Dragon King.

When Qing Di emerged from closed door cultivation, they’d declared to the outside world that he’d killed a second step king. It’d actually been a second step ghost king, so Dragonfeather’s words were a slap at Azure Dragon City.

However, Crippled Dragon wanted nothing more than to find a hole to burrow into. His city lord's son had become the Champion Duke and Qing Ting's sidekick! If it wasn't for Qing Ting jeering at him, he'd probably still be following by their side.

"The Champion Duke is being humble," chuckled Miao. "It wouldn't be hard for him to break through the defense of a second step king. The edge of the Stellar Sword would rip right through a second step king's forcefield or influence."

"That's just relying on external objects," Azure Scaled-Dragon refuted. "It goes against the original intent of the Dragonling Assembly for him to be here with a treasure like the Stellar Sword."

#### **Chapter 1406: The Three Thousandth Person**

"Supplemental dao is not forbidden in the Dragonling Assembly." The Dragonsea city lord shook her head.

The Azure Scaled-Dragon King opened and shut his mouth, not knowing what to say to that.

"Supplemental dao is supplemental. It is an aid to cultivation, not some deviated, unnatural way," Miao chuckled. "If just using treasures goes against one's original cultivation intent, then all of the half step kings on the bridge below should throw away their flying swords and fight using only their fists."

Azure Scaled-Dragon flushed, but continued doggedly, "That Stellar Sword is refined from Stellar Stone Magneticus—the light within is one of the sharpest in the realm. Even you and I would have to treat it with caution. Him wielding that kind of weapon is a bit unfair to the other half step kings, no?"

"I'm afraid that much of the credit for him using only three strokes to kill a thousand arcane beasts goes to the keen edge of the Stellar Sword."

"How do you still not understand?" sighed the little fox. "The Stellar Sword is just a king grade treasure at the end of the day and it contains only one dao rule. In terms of ranking, it's on par with Qing Ting's Azure Sky Sword."

"Do you think that just any random person in the Hongmeng can wield Stellar Light Magneticus? If you'd dared touch it when you were a half step king, the first thing it'd cleave into two would be yourself instead of the enemy!"

Azure Scaled-Dragon opened and shut his mouth once more; Crippled Dragon patted his shoulder and shook his head. He knew what his peer was thinking. Azure Scaled-Dragon nursed enormous enmity toward the Immortal Pagoda and Coiling Dragon City after Qing Di's loss had lost an ultimate and half step Hongmeng treasure for Azure Dragon City. This was a very bad turn of events.

It'd be one thing if it was just Coiling Dragon City—the city lord there was the Azure Dragon city lord's younger brother. The two were competitors, but would never be enemies.

The Immortal Pagoda, however, was different. With its current level of influence, it was far too easy for it to handle a mere Azure Dragon City. It didn't even need to do anything as there were plenty of high level kings in the realm who wanted to curry favor with the pagoda. If the Immortal King was willing to personally refine a king grade treasure for them, their strength would grow by leaps and bounds.

Pills of Creation were also highly coveted by all kings.

Be enemies with the Immortal Pagoda?

The Supplemental Dao Alliance could do so, the Immortal Region could do so. Even Dragonhollow Mountain or the Enforcer Alliance could afford to do so. But if a tiny Azure Dragon City dared entertain the thought, it would be exterminated in the next second.

Azure Scaled-Dragon came to his senses with a violent shake and realized that his mentality had shifted off balance. If things continued in the same vein, he would start to oppose the Immortal Pagoda and cause trouble for the Trueriver Sect. Once everything ballooned out of control, it would drag down his entire city into the mess.

Everyone understood the potential chain reaction if they dared seek revenge for their juniors being robbed in Dragonsea City. They were the seniors of the half step kings on the rainbow bridge and had taken out a massive amount of purple crystals after their faction's juniors lost all of their possessions. Despite that, no one flew into a rage at the humiliation—not even when they had to buy back their own identity tokens.

Though they coveted the purple crystals currently on Lu Yun, they would never show it.

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None of the arcane beasts dared draw near after Lu Yun and Qing Ting slew more than a thousand of them. Instead, they turned to attack the other cultivators on the bridge.

Many grievously injured cultivators filtered back, requesting shelter. The rainbow bridge was a place where life and death were decided at every second; their decision was the correct one. There was nothing more to consider if one died, everything would be over. Only in staying alive was their hope and the possibility of realizing their grand ambitions.

Lu Yun naturally didn't turn them down. He drew a circle that was one kilometer across with his Stellar Sword. Anyone who entered it would be under his and Qing Ting's protection—no one else could pursue them.

Otherwise, Lu Yun and Qing Ting would commence a massacre of the arcane beasts.

Struggles of life and death continued on the rainbow bridge. Arcane beasts died, cultivators died.

A bedraggled Azureclad, Crimsonclad, and Leng Che fled back to safety. You Cang was dead. An arcane beast had swallowed him alive.

Soon after, desperate Blackclad, Seven Slaughters, and the other titled dukes who'd founded the Robber Slayers came sprinting into the circle. Of the twelve titled dukes who'd established the alliance, only six survived.

It was easy enough to imagine the grisly struggles on the bridge.

Qing Di returned as well in the end. He'd kept a rather open mind about things as he fought when he could and ran when he couldn't. The arcane beasts couldn't do anything to him, but they were starting to coordinate their attacks. If he was surrounded by a herd of them, there could be no other end for him but death.

“That little girl was something... she suppressed a group of Terra Bears by herself!” he recounted, still shaking when he thought of the scene. “She appeared when they almost surrounded me and charged right into them with nothing but her fists!”

“So you left your savior behind and ran back here yourself?” Qing Ting frowned and questioned him pointedly.

“I...” Qing Di’s jaw dropped and he didn’t know what to say. “No, she’s not one of us. I’ve never seen her before—she’s probably an arcane beast!” he said hesitantly after some thought. “An arcane beast in human form that’s not yet a titled king!”

“The little girl is the three thousandth person,” Lu Yun suddenly said. “Qing Ting and I took two thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine identity tokens in the city. Excluding the two of us and the one that Ghost Dragon destroyed, that leaves one that we didn’t take.

“The little girl should be the three thousandth person... with the last identity token. Don’t worry, she should be quite strong if she could protect her token and hide from me and Qing Ting.”

“Who’s worried about her?” Qing Di mumbled. “She laughed at me for being a weakling...”

“It’s the truth,” Qing Ting agreed with all seriousness. “You are a weakling.”

Qing Di’s eyes reddened, but he didn’t say anything. Qing Ting had violent tendencies and he wasn’t stronger than her. If he continued to argue, she’d probably beat him black and blue again.

“Ahem, sister, that’s not nice to say about Qing Di,” Azureclad coughed awkwardly. This was their relative, after all, and they were all in the same boat at the moment.

“You’re a weakling too.” She glared at brother. “All of you are weaklings!”

Some shame and humiliation appeared on the faces of the cultivators around them.

“There’s too many arcane beasts and they’re traveling in packs... We can’t withstand them all,” Blackclad huffed helplessly.

“If the beasts are traveling in packs, why don’t you? You were real tough when you formed up into the Robber Slayers to take down me and the Champion Duke!” Qing Ting scoffed.

One thousand out of twenty-five hundred cultivators had been eaten in less than a day!

“The arcane beasts aren’t having an easy time either, apparently they ran into some trouble too. Someone killed fifteen hundred of them in one go—I wonder who?” Seven Slaughters grabbed a piece of meat on bone and started gnawing. “Haven’t you guys encountered any arcane beasts in staying here? And where did all this meat come from?”

## **Chapter 1407: Threat**

Seven Slaughters regretted the question as soon as he asked it. Where else would this meat come from, if not arcane beasts?!

There were no corpses here, just massive piles of meat and bones gnawed clean, as well as stacks of internal organs and hides.



The newly returned dukes were immensely indignant at the sight. Here they were, fighting for all they were worth on the rainbow bridge and tempering themselves against the arcane beasts. They balanced on the tightrope between life and death at every second, but the others were having a bonfire party??

Those who'd remained with Lu Yun were in high spirits and the ripples of energy coming from them seemed to have strengthened by a large amount.

"Did you guys do it?" Azureclad asked dumbly. "Did you guys kill the fifteen hundred arcane beasts?"

"Not us," boomed a nearby cultivator. "Champion Duke killed a thousand with one stroke and the little princess handled another five hundred with less than half a breath. And take a look at our cultivation levels! Heh heh heh, it's His Grace the Champion Duke and Her Highness Qing Ting who guided us themselves. How about it? We haven't improved any less than you." He smiled proudly.

...the cultivators who'd just escaped from the arcane beasts wanted nothing more than to curse everything in sight.

"I'm not going anywhere anymore! No more! No where! Screw this shitty trial and tempering, forget that stupid fighting! I'm not going anywhere anymore!" Blackclad plopped down and waved over a slightly charred piece of meat, chomping into it with gusto.

"Ooh, there's wine here too. Hey little brother, will you share some with me?" He looked around and glimpsed Dragon Butterfly drinking with another cultivator. Blackclad quickly sidled up with a merry grin.

"Yeah, join us!" Slightly inebriated, Dragon Butterfly picked a jug and shoved it into the newcomer's hands.

"My name is Long Batian!" she grumbled.

"Alright then, Long Batian." Lu Yun swept a glance over the girl and continued, "You may now select one thousand and seven beasts to remain for the Dragonling Assembly. You can choose to fight each other, take your own life, or jump off the rainbow bridge... Whatever it takes, only one thousand and seven can remain on the bridge in the end.

"If Qing Ting and I have to make the choice for you... I can't fully control my power yet, so I might just kill you all and leave no one behind."

Hummm.

Cerulean-silver sword light flared from the Stellar Sword as a dragon shadow of the same color flashed past his side.

### **Chapter 1408: Submission**

"He's a bit too cocksure, isn't he?" The kings on the rainbow cloud were stunned by Lu Yun's words. He wanted to block six thousand arcane beasts by himself?? There were descendants of high level kings in that crowd!

The race's heritage resided in each arcane beast bloodline; their strength was innate. The bloodlines of high level kings passed down through their children to become their own talents and combat arts.

The children of arcane beast kings were stronger than any of the titled dukes if they were all within the same level. There were roughly one hundred arcane beast king descendants in the herd and a dozen of high level kings.

Lu Yun was threatening those mighty beings??

“Too young, he’s too young and it shows. If he hadn’t threatened them, they might’ve taken things slowly. All they need now is a singular command from a child of an arcane beast king and they’ll all charge forward as one. They’ll kill all of the cultivators in a split second!” sighed Azure Scaled-Dragon.

The rest of the kings didn’t say anything, wanting to quietly observe the situation to see what that incredibly arrogant Champion Duke had up his sleeve. Just words alone would never cow arcane beasts.

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“ROAR!!” came a furious snarl as a beast sparkling with golden radiance walked out of the crowd. It was three hundred meters long and resembled a dragon, but wasn’t one.

“A Golden Armor Dragon Beast! It’s a child of the seventh step Golden Armor King! The blood of the dragons runs through its veins—if it can enter Dragonhollow Mountain, it’ll be baptized by the Dragonling Assembly and possibly evolve into a golden dragon!” murmured a young man among the cultivators. He looked greedily at the arcane beast.

Named Golden Dragon, the cultivator would be able to activate his own golden dragon bloodline if he could refine the arcane beast. As things stood, he was so much weaker than Azureclad that he was a completely insignificant being at the gathering. Lu Yun and Qing Ting hadn’t even taken note of his presence.

Lu Yun’s threat to kill all of the descendants of kings had been too great of a deterrent. If it wasn’t for that, the arcane beasts might’ve really charged them.

The duo’s figures were now firmly imprinted in everyone’s hearts, even more deeply than when they’d robbed Dragonsea City.

“I have yet to learn your names!” the reluctant Magma Beast suddenly called out.

“What, you want revenge later?” Lu Yun snorted with laughter. “Champion Duke of the Trueriver Sect in Multitude Region. This is Qing Ting of Coiling Dragon City.”

### **Chapter 1409: Nine Levels of Dragonhollow Mountain**

With only three thousand living souls still in contention, the rainbow bridge turned into a real bridge that fused with Dragonhollow Mountain. The mountain was called thus because it was a continent that hovered over the boundless Hongmeng Sea. While it looked to be separate from the realm, it was still part of the Hongmeng.

The Hongmeng Sea’s mighty waves reared endlessly, but it was just a massive lake compared to the rest of the third realm.

If all of the regions in the Hongmeng were combined, they would be far greater than the sea. Things were just as Hong had said—the realm was too big. The kings in the Hongmeng saw less than even the tip of the iceberg.

Rainbow colored light dazzled over the mountain, turning it into a mountain-shaped rainbow. It was divided into seven floors and climbed successively based on red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

Different dragons lived on different floors, and the higher one ascended, the more noble one's bloodline was. The lizard-dragon, a notable half step king in the Hongmeng, was just a resident of the lowest floor. Though it was of the dragon race, it wasn't a pureblood and thus could only live on the bottom. It couldn't even see the mountain in its entirety.

Now that the ancestor dragon had awoken and established the Dragonling Ranking, Dragonhollow Mountain was poised to influence the entire realm. Thus, the mountain revealed itself in full.

The rainbow bridge was solidly connected to the highest floor of violet. Everything on it set foot onto the mountain.

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"What do you make of it?" Miao asked Qing Yu in solemn tones.

"Stronger than Hopeless Major." Qing Yu frowned faintly. "It looks like there's seven floors, but there's actually nine. The last two are hidden in another void, and the mountain would be less than Hopeless Major without them. With them, Dragonhollow Mountain is stronger."

"Count me in!" Seven Slaughters piped up. "No one's been able to teach me since I reached half step king. Those kings were less than me when they were in my realm! If we were on the same level, perhaps some of the seventh step kings wouldn't be a match for me either!"

"But you're different, you're stronger than me and you can teach me!"

The other half step kings resonated with his words. After reaching their level, particularly the titled dukes, none of the kings were able to teach them anything anymore.

Rather than mindless pursuit of higher cultivation levels, these geniuses wished to continue tapping into their potential in the same realm. Only a genius like Hua Fengwen could teach them, and now there was also Lu Yun.

Flying again today, zzz.

#### **Chapter 1410: The World of Immortal Dao**

Lu Yun was naturally better equipped to teach his fellow cultivators than titled kings were.

Immense strength and high cultivation levels didn't automatically make for qualified instructors or teachers who could tailor their instruction methods for their pupils. It was one thing if a junior wished to follow in the king's footsteps, but that only meant that the king would turn out someone exactly the same as them, or even less than them.

Lu Yun was different.

He'd ascertained the true path of cultivation in the Army Pagoda. Not only did he use the soldiers to identify his own flaws and weaknesses, but he also sought out their weaknesses to defeat them in turn.

Having established the Dao Academy in the world of immortals and often holding lectures for his disciples, he was just returning to his old trade.

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The cultivators naturally possessed a deep understanding of Lu Yun's capabilities after all of them had been beaten into submission. Of course they wouldn't refuse his offer to teach them. Meanwhile, the herd of arcane beasts in front of them looked askance at each other, not knowing what the cultivators were doing.

"Forget the cultivators, this is the seventh floor of Dragonhollow Mountain and a place filled with dragon qi! Those of the mountain put us here so we can absorb the energy!" rumbled Golden Armor. "The dragon qi here isn't the energy of the dragon race, but the most fundamental life force of the Hongmeng and pure creation itself! The more we absorb now, the more likely that we'll be able to defeat that Champion Duke at the end of all of this!"

The other one thousand and six arcane beasts trembled before hastily shrinking themselves, crouching down, and swallowing large mouthfuls of energy from the surroundings. Since they couldn't cultivate, arcane beasts had to absorb the various energies of the Hongmeng if they wished to evolve and reach another level of existence.

No one knew how long they would remain on this floor, so they had to make the most of their time and absorb as much as they possibly could. This dragon qi was incredibly valuable to them.

As a result, more and more voices rose to question them.

The world of immortals now was the thirty-three layers that completed the world. They were the greatest rulers of the world and the immortal emperor had returned to being a ceremonial position.

This was the proper path of the world of immortals.

The inevitable collision of the two realms and philosophies wasn't something that Lu Yun and Qing Yu could prevent. The chaos had established a sacred land of immortal dao long ago and voluntarily joined the world of immortals by cultivating the immortal dao. Repeated chaos tribulations destroying civilization and creating it anew had headed off a collision between the two.

The Hongmeng, however, was too big. This kind of conflict was unavoidable. Everything that Dragonhollow Mountain did now was in anticipation of the world of immortals' arrival.