

The Ages 101

Chapter 101 - Daylight Aurora Sword Art!

As expected, Wei Lingxuan had been waiting for him for quite a while, blocking his way back to the Wei Manor. It wasn't just Wei Lingxuan — most of the younger generations were there too, including Wei Tianxiong's third son, Wei Guohao. Other than the two children of the Flameyellow Chancellor, there were also Wei Zikun's son, Wei Qingyi, and other disciples from the Wei Clan.

The Wei Manor itself was located at a secluded corner of the sanctum where hardly anyone visited, unlike the Flameyellow Pagoda, making it the best place to accost Li Tianming and make him pay the price for his transgressions.

To approach the manor, one must first cross over a stone bridge, the only path available. Youths of the Wei Clan were already blocking his way when Li Tianming arrived at the bridge.

And at the forefront of the motley crew was none other than Wei Lingxuan. Today, she wore a chainmail to protect her vitals. It didn't look heavy, but from the faint blue heavenly patterns running across its surface, it was clearly a grade five beastial armour. In fact, armours were even rarer and more expensive compared to regular weapons, since they required more raw materials and greater workmanship.

For her to bring out such a treasure...she was sure fixated on her vengeance.

"How nice to be that rich," Li Tianming muttered darkly. If he had been raised here, he would have that much money too.

For Wei Lingxuan, the sight of Li Tianming's face was enough to remind her about that 'glorious' act of licking his boots. That was enough to rile her up immediately, a menacing look twisting her pretty face.

This wasn't the Flameyellow Pagoda! Those standing behind her were all disciples of the Wei Manor, supporting her and backing her up. Furthermore, Wei Guohao, one of the best students in the entire sanctum, was with them too!

To Wei Guohao, Li Tianming was probably just another one of those mundane disciples. Perhaps the only thing worth mentioning about him was the fairy-like girl always by his side.

"Li Tianming! My third brother and I have decided that you aren't walking out of here today with your legs intact. From this day on, you'll have to crawl around the sanctum." Wei Lingxuan drew her Goldfault Sword — the one that Wei Tiancang gave her for her birthday — and pointed it at Li Tianming's throat.

"Sis, leave a leg for me. I wanna try too," Wei Qingyi snickered.

"Guess I'm left with the third leg then." Wei Guohao cracked a joke, sparking laughter from everyone but Wei Lingxuan, who was too fixated on her anger.

"Surely this is not the most fitting way to treat a relative?" Li Tianming answered lightly, defying the expectations of everyone present.

"In fact, y'all should call me elder cousin, and then show your elder cousin some respect," Li Tianming continued, his audacity enraging Wei Lingxuan even further.

“How dare you still call us your relatives!” As she spoke, her Six-Winged Goldroc appeared beside her. It was the same species as the beast that Wei Qingyi owned, except that hers was even bigger and fiercer. Its sparkling golden eyes had already spotted Li Tianming and Ying Huo, its killing intent obvious.

“Wei Lingxuan, watch your mouth. If not, I don’t mind educating you on behalf of your father and teach you how to respect an elder brother.” Li Tianming continued to smile.

“Do you really think you can defeat me with your current level of cultivation? Or you are counting on Princess Ling’s attachment to give you enough power to overcome me? What a shame, because from now on, you will be crawling around this place, and I will make sure you clean my boots every day. Every. Single. Day!” Wei Lingxuan ran out of patience. For her, the faster she could defeat Li Tianming, the faster she could erase him from her mind completely.

With that, she unleashed her sixth level Spiritsource beast ki completely. With the Goldfault Sword in her hands and clad in the ‘Silver Seraphic Armor’, she began her assault, together with her goldroc.

Behind her, the group of Wei disciples led by Wei Guohao all had their arms folded, ready to watch a good show. Even though they were here to support Wei Lingxuan, they didn’t need to dirty their own hands.

The sword ki approached Li Tianming within moments, its scope of attack not just Ying Huo and him, but also Jiang Feiling. Ling’er was just an ordinary person, and probably wouldn’t even survive a single hit from Wei Lingxuan’s attack!

This viciousness of hers could only be a result of her pampered upbringing. It would take a good beating to re-educate this kind of person properly!

Right before the attack struck, Li Tianming grabbed onto Jiang Feiling and leapt a dozen meters backwards, evading the attack.

“Trying to escape? Dream on!” With a smirk, Wei Lingxuan kicked off from the ground and closed the distance once more. In the air, the Six-Winged Goldroc spread its three pairs of giant wings, ready to swoop down any second.

“Ying Huo, go and show your sister-in-law what you are capable of.” Li Tianming grabbed the little chick from the top of his head and tossed it towards Wei Lingxuan and the goldroc.

“Is it my turn? Ying Huo is here to save the day!” The little chick was hyped up at finally having a chance to try out its abilities.

To an outsider, Li Tianming had just used his lifebound beast to block his opponents’ attacks, so that he and Jiang Feiling could escape from harm. Such a cowardly move immediately drew contempt from the crowd.

The next second, the little chick was completely enveloped by the Daylight Aurora Sword Art that Wei Lingxuan was casting with her Goldfault Sword. Unless something extraordinary happened, it would be shredded within seconds.

“I will let your lifebound beast die once more then!” Wei Lingxuan’s face contorted once more, diverting her hatred for Li Tianming towards the little chick.

“Sorry, but I’m not interested in flat women.” The little chick laughed it off and disappeared in a fiery shadow. With its puny figure, it had completely disappeared from Wei Lingxuan’s sight.

It was the Flaming Shadow Flash, an advanced source-ranked movement art that superior to the Confounding Mirage Walk! Given Ying Huo’s size and ability to fly, it was much more suited for the art compared to Li Tianming.

“Where did it go?!” Wei Lingxuan’s Daylight Aurora Sword Art struck nothing but thin air.

However, her question was only greeted by the goldroc’s cry of agony. She looked up, and was stunned to find a tiny fireball charging towards the Six-Winged Goldroc, which was a few hundred times its size.

Three-Spring Heavy Claws, first stance!

It was the bestial art version of the Three-Spring Heavy Strike. The Aeternal Infernal Phoenix was a talented little creature, and had learned quite a lot about the move during its time cultivating with Li Tianming. Even though its claws looked no thicker than toothpicks, it still tore off a large patch of flesh from the goldroc’s body.

“One more!” Two claws alone had left the goldroc shrieking, and it fell from the sky shortly afterwards. The second claw had fractured one of its wings. The bloodied beast landed right in front of Wei Lingxuan, nearly crushing her under its body!

That was no battle. That was a one-sided beatdown, from one lifebound beast to another!

Looking at Ying Huo’s performance in battle, Li Tianming had a rough gauge of his improvement after the encounter with the Flameyellow Rock.

When his infernalsource had first appeared, it was almost equivalent to that of beastmasters with seven or eight regular spiritsources, perhaps even nine. Coupled with the nature of his Aeternal Infernal Beast Ki and his unique physique, he could match those at fourth level Spiritsource when he was just in first! This was also how he defeated Lin Xiaoxiao, the twin beastmaster.

Now that he had reached fourth level Spiritsource, his beast ki was unlike anything seen in his level, be it in terms of quality or quantity. If beast ki was the only factor considered in battle, then he could easily fight someone at seventh level Spiritsource!

As for Wei Lingxuan, she was sixth level Spiritsource at the age of eighteen. While she might have been a looming obstacle that he couldn’t overcome days back, right now she was doomed to be crushed by Li Tianming.

Scrap that, because Ying Huo alone was enough to crush BOTH her and her lifebound beast!

Wei Lingxuan had not time to exclaim or to be shocked, because the little chick had already appeared in front of her with a smug smile.

“Babe, did you really think your armour could protect you from ME?”

Chapter 102 - The King of Lifebound Beasts!

The Six-Winged Goldroc was defeated by the little chick before it could even use its spirit source ability! Needless to say, that was enough to traumatize Wei Lingxuan, and before she could even fully process that, the little chick had already disappeared in a flurry of fiery shadows, charging towards her.

“Lingxuan, watch out!” Even Wei Guohao and the rest could no longer keep their cool.

“Die!” Her eyes turned bloodshot as she entered a state of hysteria from having her lifebound beast defeated. She refused to believe her eyes! She knew what Li Tianming was capable of, and it was only with Princess Ling’s attachment that he managed to defeat Wei Qingyi back then. Yet, the princess wasn’t attached to him now, but her goldroc was still beaten down solidly. The more she tried to deny her utter defeat, the more emotional she became. With the Goldfault Sword in her hands, she used her Daylight Aurora Sword Art once more. Launching a total of eighteen strikes, she struck at the little chick.

Surely there was no way the beast could counter that!

Ying Huo swooped down like a meteor, the momentum empowering its claws even further. With its agility and the destructiveness of its claws, it was no doubt Wei Lingxuan’s worst nightmare. The eighteen strikes seemingly hit the little chick, and yet, each and every one of them had passed through thin air! This was her proudest martial art, one that even Wei Tiancang had praised before! Rooted to the ground, she watched in terror as the little chick appeared in front of her.

“We don’t welcome flat-chested girls here!” With a vulgar battlecry that bordered on fowl play, Ying Huo struck Wei Lingxuan’s chest with its claws.

With a horrendous metallic screech, the chainmail sank in towards her body. While it wasn’t broken, the impact was enough to send the girl flying back into the group of Wei disciples. Even with the Silver Seraphic Armour, her internal organs had been injured enough to the point that she was coughing out blood. It was possible that without the armour, she would have probably died from that claw!

“Lingxuan!” The watching disciples quickly helped Wei Lingxuan up. They were not just furious, but also shocked. Who would believe them if they said Wei Lingxuan and her beast were defeated single-handedly by Li Tianming’s beast, without being able to even resist meaningfully? If it wasn’t because he had witnessed it for himself, Wei Guohao wouldn’t have believed it even if Wei Tiancang told him that. But what had happened right in front of their eyes was clearly no dream. Who would have thought that just minutes ago, they were joking about breaking Li Tianming’s third leg?

The most shocked of them all was still Wei Lingxuan, who was suffering from both physical and mental trauma.

“Xuan’er, are you alright? Xuan’er!” Wei Guohao’s eyes were likewise bloodshot as he looked at the blood flowing out of his sister’s mouth, but that couldn’t hide the trembling in his body.

“But how! How is he this strong?!” Wei Qingyi had an even weaker mentality, and he was already on the edge of crying right now. Fear completely overwhelmed him within the next few moments, Li Tianming’s figure becoming a phobia of his. Wasn’t he just some cripple from the countryside, doomed to fall behind the geniuses of the sanctum? How could he have overcome them? Wei Qingyi wished to intimidate Li Tianming with some threats, but he realised that he couldn’t even produce a single peep.

“That’s for disrespecting your elder cousin. Next time, don’t think you can get away this easily.” Li Tianming’s casual remarks floated into their ears, angering them even further.

In fact, Li Tianming had been emphasising his relationship with the Wei Manor and his ‘cousins’. There was no need for that at all, all things considered. It was all part of his plan to save Wei Jing. Mu Yang once mentioned that the lack of capable juniors had always been something Wei Tiancang was worried about. If Li Tianming could provide a cure to this problem, then the chances of Wei Tiancang curing his mother would be much greater too. The best way to solve the problem would be to integrate into the Wei Clan, and announced to the world that he, Li Tianming, was a member of the Wei Manor. Only then would his grandfather recognise and acknowledge his achievements.

“Li Tianming, don’t you think you can leave here intact today!” Wei Guohao’s face was blue from seeing his sister’s injury. He was different from Wei Lingxuan. Barely three months younger than Li Tianming, he had been given all the resources he needed from young. He was eighth level Spiritsource, one of the Heavenly Septuplets, and also the star of the Wei Manor’s younger generation!

As the fifth place on the leaderboard and one of those carefully selected by the sanctum to participate in the Abyssal Trials, Wei Guohao was a cut above Wei Lingxuan. How could he let Li Tianming beat up his sister and then leave scot-free?

He had of course heard of the promise between Mu Yang and Li Tianming, that if Li Tianming could beat him then Mu Yang would accept Li Tianming as his disciple. Wei Guohao himself had always languished over the fact that he was not able to inherit the position as the next Potentate from Mu Yang. He couldn’t blame Mu Yang for that, since it was actually Wei Tiancang who didn’t allow Mu Yang to accept him.

In fact, Wei Guohao had always been quite indifferent towards this promise Mu Yang had made. Everyone knew that it was just an empty promise, considering that it was impossible for Li Tianming to ever accomplish it. Therefore, he had shrugged it off as a joke and never thought about it.

But now, he could no longer take it as a joke.

“Didn’t the Vice-Potentate make you a promise that he would accept you as his disciple should you defeat me? Well, now is your chance.” Wei Guohao squeezed the line through the gap of his teeth.

Li Tianming laughed. “You sure about that?”

“Of course.” Wei Guohao handed Wei Lingxuan over to Wei Qingyi and the rest, his eyes letting off a golden radiance that locked on to Li Tianming.

“Third brother!” Wei Lingxuan had finally recovered enough to be able to speak, though her face was still as pale as paper.

“Yes, Xuan’er.” Wei Guohao’s heart hurt just looking at the state his sister was in.

“His improvement is tremendous. I really didn’t expect him to be this strong today...” Wei Lingxuan bit her lips. She just couldn’t allow Li Tianming to get away with this.

“So?”

“So today is your best chance to cripple him! If you don’t do it today, perhaps even you wouldn’t be able to in the future! Promise me that you will break his legs and make sure he can never stand straight again. Promise me, third brother!” Wei Lingxuan cried with teary eyes.

“Third brother, we need to get rid of this threat once and for all before he gets any stronger with the Flameyellow Rock. His presence is a blight upon us all, and both he and his mother would just shame the clan. Since he’s so cocky about it today, just do as what sis Xuan told you!” Wei Qingyi added in a panic. For a normally egoistic person, he looked like nothing but a coward right now.

“I don’t need you to tell me that. Even though I don’t think he will ever be able to catch up with me, I might as well get rid of this threat today.” Wei Guohao’s lips curved. He had a bulky build, and his muscles bulged with power. Compared to Wei Lingxuan or Wei Qingyi, he looked much more like a metal-type beastmaster! It was as if Li Tianming was facing the Vajra Ape.

“Li Tianming.” He was much calmer already than the hysterical Wei Lingxuan. Yet his eyes were so red as if they would drip blood any second.

“You mean, cousin?” Li Tianming smiled at Jiang Feiling and held her hand, before facing Wei Guohao.

“Do you want to break your left leg first? Or your right?” Wei Guohao asked.

“Why are you so interested in my leg, do you intend to put it on display somewhere? Or perhaps you want to take it everywhere with you, so your sister can lick it anytime she wants to?” Li Tianming was never scared of them.

“Since you like to talk so much, then I shall cut off your tongue first!” Wei Guohao stepped forward towards Li Tianming, and the entire stone bridge trembled from his physique. With another step, his lifebound beast soared out of his lifebound space into the air, illuminating the land around them!

Li Tianming knew that Wei Guohao’s beast was seven-star, as per the case for the Heavenly Septuplets. Seven-star beasts were known as royal beasts, crowning them as the king of all lifebound beasts! They were born to rule over other lifebound beasts, and their aura alone were enough to frighten those of lower stars.

The royal beast that took to the air from Wei Guohao’s body was a goldroc, one even bigger compared to Wei Lingxuan’s! It was the low-tier seven-star lifebound beast, the ‘Eight-Winged Goldroc’! Li Tianming’s own Four-Winged Goldroc would have needed two evolutions to be able to reach that form. It didn’t just have two more pairs of wings than Midas, but was also far superior in terms of bloodline.

As the magnificent beast hovered in the air with its four pairs of wings, Li Tianming would soon learn why no one ever imagined that he could possibly defeat Wei Guohao.

Chapter 103 - Nine-Profound Mountain-Cleaving Fierce-Sabre

Mu Yang had once said that although Wei Guohao didn’t meet Wei Tiancang’s standards, he was still a peak Li Tianming couldn’t overcome.

Under the scorching sun, Wei Guohao’s body rippled with a golden sheen, a product of both his imposing aura and rugged muscles pulsating with beast ki. As for the overbearing and fierce Eight-

Winged Goldroc, its feathers reminded viewers of sharp blades that somehow invoked an image of impervious armour at the same time.

With such an overbearing combination, Wei Guohao was indeed one of the Heavenly Septuplets.

Wei Guohao's light-gold eyes locked onto Li Tianming. By the time the stone bridge vibrated, he had already transformed into a golden flash, all his beast ki concentrated on his fist as it hurtled towards Li Tianming.

It was an advanced source-ranked battle art, Vajra Fist. Wei Guohao's seven-star lifebound beast gave him seven spirit sources, and combined with his violent eighth level Vajra Beast Ki, gave his fist enough power to shake the air as it passed. His fist was too fast and gave no chance for Li Tianming to retaliate adequately. His right hand wrapped around Jiang Feiling's waist, while his left, shot up to block the fist. A sonorous collision rang out a moment later, as if both hands were made of metal.

"It's broken!" Wei Guohao had never expected Li Tianming to be so daring as to use his own hand to block. With this, Li Tianming's arm had to be broken. However, the only thing that evidently did was to send Li Tianming spinning through the air, with a beauty in his arms. He landed a moment later, the picture of utter stability and grace, having bled off most of the force behind that blow.

"Big brother, are you okay?" Jiang Feiling asked.

"I'm fine. But damn, it tickles!" Li Tianming smiled back.

However, how could such violent power be so easily dismissed? Although the left hand itself remained unharmed, the impact had shaken Li Tianming's organs. Li Tianming had almost been embarrassed in front of a beauty.

"Ling'er, help me." Li Tianming frowned. He expected he needed another level to be able to beat Wei Guohao. While using Spiritual Attachment to win didn't fall under Mu Yang's requirements, he didn't have a choice now that his opponent was suppressing him. Wei Guohao continued to press the attack, while his goldroc circled around Li Tianming to flank him. They were not intending to let him escape.

"No problem." For Jiang Feiling, being in Spiritual Attachment was safer. A moment of carelessness might lead to her death otherwise. She was too fragile, after all. As usual, when Jiang Feiling attached herself to him, the explosive and rejuvenating sensation coursed through him again.

"So strong!"

A similar feeling coursed through the little chick too. However, the boost to it wasn't as large as Li Tianming. If the two were to fight, the little chick wouldn't be Li Tianming's opponent.

However, it had its infernal source ability, and the power of Infernal Blaze was very terrifying.

"Wei Guohao, I have to actually thank you! See this sweet new weapon? I got it from the Vice-Potentate only because you broke my Thunderfire Chain." Li Tianming took out his grade five weapon, the Blazing Dragon Chainblade, and flaunted it for a while. It was a qualitative upgrade over his old weapons, due to a myriad of factors. One of them, in particular, was the sharp Blazing Dragon Fang at its tip, which allowed him to pierce through opponents. With it, Li Tianming now had more options in battle, beyond his original choices of constricting and whipping the opponent. Mu Yang had once said that this weapon

was actually the combination of two individual weapons attached together. In fact, the Blazing Dragon Fang could be taken off to use as a dagger. Li Tianming had used the Crimson Blood Dagger before, so his ability with the Blazing Dragon Fang was rather terrifying too.

Daggers and chains were now Li Tianming's favoured weapons.

Malevolence flickered in Wei Guohao's eyes when the chainblade appeared. He had heard Mu Yang treated Li Tianming well, but to see it in action...it left quite the sour aftertaste, to be sure.

All these years, Wei Guohao had felt that Mu Yang hadn't showed him enough concern, even if Mu Yang said it was because of Wei Tiancang's opinion. And he definitely hadn't gifted him with any weapons!

And yet, some outsider with a horrendous reputation had been bestowed an item.

What Wei Guohao felt wasn't envy. Weapons and spirit jades were something he had never lacked.

With Wei Guohao's identity, he should have become the future successor of Heaven's Sanctum, surpassing Wei Tianxiong, his father. However, as time passed, what should have been rightfully been his had gotten further and further away. Hence, the sight of the Blazing Dragon Chainblade had dredged up all the gloom that had always been in his heart. This, combined with the beating Wei Lingxuan had suffered, made his vision redden.

His emotions infected his Eight-Winged Goldroc, turning it more savage.

"If I can break your weapon once, I can naturally do it a second time," Wei Guohao said coldly. He took out his own weapon, which was also a grade five bestial weapon that wasn't any inferior to Li Tianming's own.

It was a golden sabre covered in green heavenly patterns, shaped like a golden feather. It gave off a golden lustre under the sunlight, and its oppressive might could be felt even from a distance. Ordinary people twenty metres away would feel a stinging pain on their skin. Called the Cryptic Goldfeather, it was made from a combination of metal-type spirit ore as well as a metal-type spirit hazard known as cryptic unyielding energy. Cryptic unyielding energy was powerful and sharp, capable of rending flesh with ease.

Wei Guohao hefted his Cryptic Goldfeather, bubbling with killing intent.

"Li Tianming, Wei Clan blood may flow through you, but you're still trash!" Wei Guohao roared, killing intent soaring as he wielded his Cryptic Goldfeather.

The stone bridge shook again as he launched himself at Li Tianming, unleashing the battle art, the Nine-Profound Mountain-Cleaving Fierce-Sabre. This fierce sabre art was capable of cleaving apart a mountain, a good fit for Wei Guohao. At the same time, the goldroc above him unleashed its spiritsource ability, and a golden spherical shield enveloped Wei Guohao.

Li Tianming had investigated Wei Guohao before. Generally, he made it a habit to have a certain amount of understanding about his potential opponents.

The translucent golden shield covered Wei Guohao's entire body, and its surface looked rather like a cicada's wing. The ability was called the Golden Cicada Shield, and was refined from the Golden-Shield Cicada, a wildbeast. As a seven-star beast, the Eight-Winged Goldroc could use seven spiritsource

abilities, all of which were mighty. After using the Golden Cicada Shield, the goldroc turned into a whirling golden cone and charged at Li Tianming. This was another spirit-source ability: the Golden Drill!

Wei Guohao's style of attacking was actually quite effective. A slight slip in concentration would be enough for the defender to be suppressed and killed. However, with a beauty inside him and a brother beside him, Li Tianming was feeling incredibly hot-blooded now. What else did he need in life? He wasn't walking this path alone!

"Ying Huo, what do we say now?"

"What do we need to say? Let's get 'em!"

"Beat them up!" Li Tianming's eyes burned with passion.

The little chick and him charged at the opponents that were much stronger than them.

"Courting death!" Wei Guohao's Nine-Profound Mountain-Cleaving Fierce-Sabre and his lifebound beast's Golden Drill both targeted Li Tianming. They'd ignored the little chick, as it was on the small side, which made it hard to land hits on.

"Ying Huo, I'll tank it. Look for an opportunity!" Li Tianming knew with Ying Huo's specialties, it would have more destructive power if it waited in the wings for a good chance.

"Just don't die!" The little chick used the Flaming Shadow Flash to make itself even harder to track. Its small size was definitely an edge.

When coordinating together, a good strategy was needed.

Li Tianming endured the frenzied assaults of the enemy, remaining calm as Wei Guohao's cryptic unyielding energy burst out. The chainblade danced, ready to block his foe's onslaught, clashing loudly with the incoming sabre a moment later, the resulting sound likely to alert many other people.

The Golden Drill arrived a moment later.

Chapter 104 - Devilblue Incantation!

Li Tianming threw himself to the side using his Flaming Shadow Flash, avoiding a fatal attack. At the same time, his black arm whipped out, unleashing a One-Spring Heavy Strike on the passing Eight-Winged Goldroc's head.

Unfortunately, the seven-star beast was a nimble one. Dodging Li Tianming's attack, it retaliated with another spirit-source ability, Hell of Blades. Its eight wings suddenly turned into eight massive sabres, hacking away at Li Tianming in unison.

Under a two-pronged assault, Li Tianming found himself on the backfoot within moments.

"Ying Huo!"

Still, solely focusing on Li Tianming wasn't the smartest strategy. Somehow, Ying Huo had soundlessly appeared on the goldroc's head, striking out three times at the goldroc's eyes. One-Spring. Two-Spring. Three-Spring Heavy Claw! The little chick wasn't unable to conceal the savagery inherent to Primordial Chaos Beasts. Mercy and honour meant nothing in a fight; weak points were its favourite target! With its

entire body covered in golden feathers, its weak spots were limited to a few spots on the goldroc's head.

The goldroc was busy attacking Li Tianming when this sudden assault appeared out of nowhere. In a hurry, it tried to dodge, before spewing out a streak of golden light at Ying Huo. However, it might dodge one attack, but all three under such circumstances? Impossible! The little chick's third claw attack found purchase, directly gouging out the goldroc's eye.

Baptised by a shower of blood, Li Tianming wasn't about to lose out in savagery either. He dodged the incoming sabre strike, before using his left arm to fend off Wei Guohao's sabre. A heartbeat later, the Blazing Dragon Chainblade soared skywards, like a dragon leaving its lair, snaking right into the goldroc's eye that the little chick had attacked. The Eight-Winged Goldroc shrieked miserably, before fleeing from the battlefield wretchedly.

Honestly, Li Tianming could have killed Wei Guohao's lifebound beast then and there. However, he didn't do so, as they were still cousins in the end. Still, he was clear that this wasn't going to gain him any gratitude from Wei Guohao, serving to rile him up further instead.

"He actually used his left hand to block me? Even if he has armour underneath that cloth, the impact should still have broken it!" Wei Guohao could see some black scales under the cloth, but he took it as armour. Just as he was feeling gloomy, the little chick appeared to attack him. Wei Guohao was furious, but he didn't let it hinder his judgement.

Now that the goldroc fled, the little chick and Li Tianming focused on Wei Guohao. The crux of fighting was to not give the opponent any chances.

"Go!" Li Tianming and the little chick attacked together. The little chick belched out a gorgeous phoenix made of fire. The air shimmered as the Infernal Blaze closed in on Wei Guohao, landing squarely on his body. With the Flaming Shadow Flash, Li Tianming was just slightly slower than the phoenix. As the conflagration engulfed Wei Guohao, Li Tianming smoothly punched out three times.

One-Spring. Two-Spring. Three-Spring Heavy Strike!

"Break!" Wei Guohao still remained fearless as he slashed out with another sabre art, intending to tear apart the Infernal Blaze. However, he was fated to be disappointed. The Infernal Blaze was inextinguishable. Cutting it into two didn't stop it from landing on him. As the terrifying flames burned, even his skin that was like metal began to char, drawing shrieks from Wei Guohao. Li Tianming's three punches landed on his chest a moment later, sending him flying.

However, he was still on fire, so Wei Lingxuan and the rest didn't dare to catch him. He was left to crash heavily on the ground, rolling around as he shrieked.

Li Tianming heaved a sigh of relief. The battle was over. This battle was the best display of coordination between Ying Huo and him thus far. More such battles would be very helpful to Li Tianming's path of cultivation. Being in sync was an important factor for the battles of beastmasters. Li Tianming and Ying Huo were at quite the high level now. They didn't need words to understand the other's intentions.

"Cousin of mine, do you admit defeat? If so, I can get rid of that fire." Li Tianming chuckled casually, as if nothing had happened.

"I concede!" Wei Guohao shrieked, that anguished cry giving the others around him a bad fright. He was on the verge of becoming charcoal, after all.

During this time, Wei Guohao had even jumped into the lake, but it hadn't helped at all!

"Good, good, there's a good little kid!"

The little chick inhaled the Infernal Blaze back in, giving a satisfied burp afterwards. Under the gazes of the spectators, Wei Guohao's charred visage was revealed. Dried blood hung off his lips, and from how he was moving, a few ribs were probably broken. Wei Guohao had never lost so handily before in his life. Even now, his goldroc was wheeling through the air in confusion. Pitiful wails continued to fill the air. Its injuries were even more serious, and it would probably be one-eyed for the rest of its life.

Li Tianming didn't have much of a choice. Wei Guohao wasn't weak. If he didn't go for a weak spot and be crueller, he would be the one on the ground now. Wei Guohao was struggling to get back to his feet, still embroiled in a state of panic and shock. He didn't need to look to know the youths of Wei Manor, like Wei Lingxuan and Wei Qingyi, were staring at him in terror. Everyone in Ignispolis had only been all too aware of how strong Li Tianming was when he defeated Lin Xiaoxiao not too long ago. Not too long ago.

Now, one of the Heavenly Septuplets, Wei Guohao, was whimpering at his feet.

The killing intent that they were holding on to gave way to fear as the crowd collectively understood the implications.

Wei Lingxuan and Wei Qingyi hadn't noticed the trembling of their legs. Wei Lingxuan, in particular, would have believed that she was in a dream if not for the pain that wracked her body. Ten days ago, Li Tianming had defeated Wei Qingyi by relying on Princess Ling's help. Only a demon could progress so much so fast! The disgrace of Wei Manor? The mother-son pair was an embarrassment? All the things that had let her look down on Li Tianming had vanished, leaving behind terror.

Li Tianming smiled as he recalled something from a few days ago.

"Oh right! Since the gang's all here, you all can do another performance of how 'shocked' you are!" Li Tianming clapped his hand together, before pausing to examine them critically. "Cousin Wei Lingxuan, you definitely have the chops for acting. But erm, please don't learn from Wei Qingyi. It won't be good for a girl to piss themselves in fear."

Li Tianming's words were like a nightmare for Wei Lingxuan. She didn't dare to respond, instead retreating in a panic.

"What, not going to say things like you're going to humiliate me or break my legs?" Li Tianming asked.

"No... no." Wei Lingxuan trembled.

"You're someone with an awesome background. If you lack the courage so much, go back and get daddy and mommy to punish me then," Li Tianming said.

"LI TIANMING!" Wei Guohao finally got back to his feet, eyes bloodshot. "No one expected you were this strong. But if you think that's enough for you to strut around, big mistake!"

“Hey, I was just returning an eye for an eye! Let me tell you this. If I grew up here, I’d already be the Junior Potentate by now. Let’s be frank here, shall we?” Li Tianming paused for theatrics. “You used so many resources, but yet you’re still trash!”

Perhaps this was what it meant to go in for the kill. Wei Guohao staggered back three steps, all his hair trembling in humiliation.

“I’m not surnamed Wei if I don’t kill you today!” Wei Guohao clenched his fists and narrowed his eyes, glaring at Li Tianming.

Li Tianming spread his arms. “Ready when you are!”

“Third brother, don’t...” The rest of the Wei Manor youngsters didn’t dare to say anything. Only the uninjured Wei Qingyi tried to pull away Wei Guohao.

“Get lost!” Wei Guohao flung him away.

The next moment, Li Tianming saw Wei Guohao’s eyes take on a purple hue, seemingly demonic and strange, cruel and bloody.

“Invert bloodflow and dye it blue; devils descend onto the world!” Wei Guohao uttered those words, a queer tone wrapping around every syllable, and his body began to transform!

“Third brother, don’t! The Devilblue Incantation will destroy you!” Wei Lingxuan seemed to think of something, and her face paled as she fell into a panic.

Chapter 105 - Not Bad At All, Huh?

Sadly, Wei Lingxuan’s words fell on deaf ears, as Wei Guohao had already channeled his Devilblue Incantation. The flow of his blood reversed, and his veins turned from red to a dark blue. The change had not only empowered his aura, but also shrouded him in a devilish ki.

“What on earth is that?” Li Tianming could tell that it was some kind of a special technique, unlike any battle arts or cultivation technique he had seen before. In fact, it reminded him of his own Godsouled Canon.

“It’s the Devilblue Incantation, a taboo technique. Stop him, it’ll harm him greatly when he uses it!” Wei Lingxuan screamed in tears. Even Wei Qingyi was ignorant of what was happening; clearly, only the siblings knew about this.

Li Tianming had no idea how to stop it. He had heard of taboo techniques though, and they were a type of forbidden special techniques known to be extremely cruel or had unforgiving side-effects. Clearly, it shouldn’t have been used since it was forbidden, but Wei Guohao had used it anyway. As a member of a reputable clan, he shouldn’t have possessed such a technique in the first place. What the Devilblue Incantation did was to strengthen Wei Guohao, like how Ling’er strengthened others with her Spiritual Attachment. But unlike the attachment, Wei Guohao would suffer from the aftermath of using this technique.

Li Tianming could sense that with Wei Guohao’s skin turning dark blue, his killing intent had increased by an entire order of magnitude!

“Haha, Li Tianming. Today, you die!” Wei Guohao’s blue face wrenched into a distorted laughter.

“For what? Losing is part of life, and it’s not like I have any animosity with you. If you choose to destroy yourself just to defeat me today, it only goes to show that you are not worthy of this victory!” Li Tianming frowned. Wei Guohao’s actions only made Li Tianming scorn him even further. He was twenty years old, yet he had no idea how to be responsible for himself? It was no wonder why Wei Tiancang felt that the junior generation was inadequate. Cultivation levels aside, their mentality and their attitude just didn’t make the cut.

“I just want you dead.” Wei Guohao grinned. He was no doubt aiming to kill! Under the influence of the Devilblue Incantation, the devilish ki that Wei Guohao was now exuding was unlike Li Tianming had ever felt before. If they were to engage directly, then Li Tianming might even die from this battle. Wei Guohao was as strong as a ninth level Spiritsource right now!

“Die!” Wei Guohao struck towards him once again as the stone bridge trembled, almost shattering under the tremendous force!

But at the very next second, Wei Guohao collapsed onto the floor, a stone-faced elder in white robes appearing right behind him. Li Tianming heaved a sigh of relief. The elder was giving off a powerful aura, and his icy-cold expressions couldn’t hide the stubborn look he was showing. He was Li Tianming’s grandfather, the Potentate of Heaven’s Sanctum, Wei Tiancang! Who would have thought that the fight right outside the Wei Manor had caused him to intervene? He hadn’t spoken a single word, but his expression was enough to make Wei Lingxuan and the other Wei disciples kneel on the floor, while trembling the whole time.

“Grandpa, please save third brother. He obtained the Devilblue Incantation in the Abyssal Battlefield, and he told me not to tell anyone about it...” Wei Lingxuan was in tears, knowing that they were in trouble.

Wei Tiancang didn’t utter a word. He picked up Wei Guohao, propping him against the pillar of the bridge as he began to channel his own power. A mysterious power made up of countless white threads began to flow into Wei Guohao’s body from his hand. The seething devilish power began to still, and the blue colour on Wei Guohao’s skin also began to fade gradually, although quite some time would be needed before the ominous blue would recede entirely.

“What’s going on?!” Just then, another group of people emerged from the Wei Manor, which included the Flameyellow Chancellor Wei Tianxiong, the Hall Overseer Wei Zikun and the Guardian of Sanctions Wei Qing. Evidently, the outburst of devilish ki had caught everyone’s attention.

The first thing they saw was a gravely injured Wei Guohao, a bleeding and crying Wei Lingxuan, and a bunch of traumatised juniors.

“Guohao, what happened to Guohao!”

“Devilblue Incantation? But how would he know that?”

Wei Tianxiong was taken aback too. He dared not disturb his father, so he could only look towards Wei Lingxuan. He had just arrived and didn’t know about the events that had just transpired. That was true for Wei Qing and Wei Zikun as well. The latter had also spotted Li Tianming and Jiang Feiling, who had

ended the spiritual attachment and was looking on nervously. The Wei Clan weren't exactly looking all that friendly, and she was afraid they might punish Li Tianming.

On the other side of the stone bridge, many supernal mentors had been startled by the commotion and arrived as well. Vice-Potentate Mu Yang was the fastest of them all, as he had just sent off Sage Chen when he noticed the events here. There were seven supernal mentors here, including Qin Shi, Liu Xueyao, Zhao Tianchen, and Feng Wuguang. Out of them, Zhao Tianchen was Wei Guohao's mentor, and his expression had changed the moment he saw Wei Guohao's injuries. However, after realising that Wei Tiancang was tending to his disciple, he could only stand at one side.

"Lingxuan, what happened?" Mu Yang knew that they were waiting for Li Tianming here, but it was normal for juniors to get into fights anyway. However, he didn't expect Wei Guohao to make such a mistake.

"I..." With everyone's sight on her, Wei Lingxuan tensed up.

"Third brother got the Devilblue Incantation from the Abyssal Battlefield, and he said he would only use it in life-threatening situations. He didn't let me tell anyone... wah..." Wei Lingxuan broke down in tears towards the end, but it was enough for the onlookers to know that the devilish ki came from Wei Guohao's Devilblue Incantation.

"The Devilblue Incantation is a forbidden technique that brings no one any good, and it is the last thing anyone should be using," Mu Yang said.

"Why would Guohao use the Devilblue Incantation here?" The chancellor was puzzled, especially seeing that both his son and daughter were injured.

"Third brother... third brother was defeated by him, and he also insulted third brother. Therefore, third brother couldn't tolerate him..." Wei Lingxuan pointed in Li Tianming's direction, but dared not look towards him.

"Are you out of your mind?" Wei Tianxiong spat. Wei Guohao defeated by Li Tianming, and even resorted to the Devilblue Incantation? Were they all hallucinating en masse?

"Lingxuan, what are you even talking about? Li Tianming can only bully fifteen-year-old kids, how could he possibly overcome Guohao?" Wei Zikun frowned. He was already in a bad mood recently since Mu Wan had just rejected his proposal. If Mu Yang wasn't the vice-potentate, then he could probably be more forceful about it, but...

Anyway, Li Tianming was no longer within his jurisdiction ever since he entered the sanctum. Even if the boy had perfect synchronization, Wei Zikun knew what Li Tianming was capable of and what he wasn't.

"No, father. His lifebound beast took down sis Xuan, and when brother Hao tried to intervene, he defeated brother Hao as well. Brother Hao had no choice but to use the Devilblue Incantation..." Wei Qingyi added.

"What rubbish..." Wei Zikun was taken aback.

"Uncle Kun, Qingyi speaks the truth."

"We don't know how he managed to defeat brother Guohao either."

“It must be because of Princess Ling’s Spiritual Attachment...”

Even if no one would believe Wei Lingxuan at first, when all of the juniors validated her point, the bridge fell into a dead silence. Li Tianming could feel the pressure as all the seniors turned their eyes to him.

“You can’t blame me for that. It’s his fault that he’s too weak. Besides, it’s not like he showed me any chance when he was laughing at me, and how was I supposed to know he had that whatever Devilblue Incantation thing?” Li Tianming pouted as he insisted his innocence. However, he did not deny the part about him defeating Wei Guohao.

“How did you do that?” Zhao Tianchen, who was Wei Guohao’s mentor, asked.

“Not me, it was my brother who did it. Oh, and also Ling’er, since without her I would be beaten to a pulp. If you wanna seek the culprit, look for the two of them...” Li Tianming pointed at Jiang Feiling and the little chick.

“Ha, even you got sold out this time.” The little chick threw a pitiful look at Jiang Feiling, before it turned its angry gaze to Li Tianming.

Everyone knew that Jiang Feiling’s Spiritual Attachment could make Li Tianming stronger, but even that had its limits. To defeat Wei Guohao, who was eighth level Spiritsource with a seven-star beast, Li Tianming needed to be at least seventh level even with the help of Spiritual Attachment!

But just half a month ago, when he had first entered Heaven’s Sanctum, wasn’t he on par with Lin Xiaoxiao? Wasn’t this a bit too overblown for a miracle?

“Don’t listen to his bullshit, the Flameyellow Rock gave him an opportunity today and he improved by two levels,” Mu Yang said calmly. But as he looked towards Li Tianming, Li Tianming could see the wink and the thumbs-up covered by his sleeve.

That’s a good sign. Mu Yang should settle the rest for him, and at least the Wei Clan shouldn’t be looking for trouble with him. But what he didn’t expect was the seniors’ change of attitudes towards him.

“This Li Tianming really improved a lot.”

“Remember when no one wanted him back at the Hall of Ancestry? Looks like he really is going to become the Vice-Potentate’s disciple now.”

The sulkiest of them all was still Zhao Tianchen. He even mocked Li Tianming back then when he found out about Li Tianming’s perfect synchronization, and Li Tianming had promised to make him take back his words. Now, just half a month later, his prided disciple was defeated.

“Supernal Mentor Zhao, who was it that called my bloodline trash and unworthy? Guess your own disciple isn’t much better.” The little chick did not resist the urge to chip in.

Zhao Tianchen didn’t know how to retaliate to that, so he could only stare at Li Tianming and say, “Mind your own lifebound beast.”

“Haha, sure.” Li Tianming replied with a cold smile.

Other than the moody Zhao Tianchen, Wei Zikun was equally sullen. Ever since he found out Li Tianming was Wei Jing's son, he had regretted bringing Li Tianming into Heaven's Sanctum. Now he just felt like he had shot himself in the feet.

As for the crowd, they just stared on in disbelief. "Why would the Flameyellow Rock bless him with such an opportunity?"

Wei Guohao's father, Wei Tianxiong, took a deep breath. "Not bad, Li Tianming."

"Not bad at all, huh?" Li Tianming smiled, evoking further grunts from the juniors, a clear indication that they no longer dared to provoke him now.

"You now have abilities that match up to your age, and to our Wei Clan bloodline." Wei Tianxiong squinted his eyes.

Was this supposed to be a compliment? Everyone here, the supernal mentors included, knew that Li Tianming was Wei Jing's son. What could Wei Tianxiong's words imply?

Mu Yang glanced at the side. While everyone was talking about Li Tianming, the Potentate Wei Tiancang was still healing Wei Guohao with his head lowered.

"Did he hear all of that?" Mu Yang knew this was Li Tianming's best chance.

The best chance for Wei Jing to live.

Chapter 106 - The Clan is Incompetent; An End of Legacy!

One had no choice to be impressed sometimes. So said the ancients, and so it was now.

"Originally, I thought he wouldn't be able to catch up even with perfect synchronisation given how far behind he was. Yet, the Flameyellow Rock gave him such a lucky break."

"Now, he can count as one of our premier geniuses even though he's twenty."

"The Wei Clan bloodline really is great. It didn't matter that he grew up in a remote city."

The supernal mentors all discussed in low voices, each and every one of them obviously filled with regret for not accepting him as a disciple.

"With how highly the Vice-Potentate regards him, he'll accept him when Li Tianming truly reaches eighth level Spiritsource," Qin Tao said.

"Then, he'll become the Vice-Potentate's fourth disciple; he might even become the Sanctum Potentate in due time," Feng Wuguang added on.

"It'll depend on the competition between him and Lin Xiaoting. They definitely won't be able to coexist with each other," said Qin Tao.

"That's not necessarily true. Lin Xiaoting's already picked by Heaven's Elysium and will leave soon. Being the Potentate might not appeal to him anymore."

"Li Tianming will definitely despair when he finds out," Qin Tao replied.

“Well, it can’t be helped. Honestly, his performance has been shocking. I have to admit I was blind. Still, Lin Xiaoting is on a different level from the rest of Heaven’s Sanctum. It’s not something an ordinary person can catch up with,” Feng Wuguang said.

“Yes, and the gulf will only widen when he enters Heaven’s Elysium.” Qin Tao shook his head. “And one day, one will have soared to the heavens while the other will still be bound to the earth.”

The supernal mentors felt admiration for the current Li Tianming, but also some pity.

Now that Wei Guohao had been beaten so horribly, it was definitely embarrassing for the Wei Clan. Wei Tiancang’s expression was cold as he suppressed the aftereffects of the Devilblue Incantation. Wei Guohao recovered slightly, and slowly began to wake up.

“Grandfather!” Wei Guohao felt his scalp numb. Now that he had calmed down, he was aware that he’d committed a grave mistake.

“Shut up.” Wei Tiancang gave him an indifferent look.

Wei Guohao knew he was in trouble. Wei Tiancang had always cared about his face the most. And yet, his grandson had resorted to the Devilblue Incantation after an abject defeat, stirring up a huge commotion. With this, his face had been shredded into tiny pieces. And furthermore, all of the upper echelons of Heaven’s Sanctum were here.

“Father, how is Guohao’s condition?” Chancellor Wei Tianxiong stepped forward, while signalling Wei Guohao to keep silent.

“If he hadn’t used the Devilblue Incantation, five days would be enough to recover. But since he did, he’ll be bedridden for three months.” Wei Tiancang spoke in a disinterested tone. Those familiar with him would know this was a sign of his disappointment.

“Guohao, you’ve made a big mistake this time!” Wei Tianxiong chided.

“You too, shut it.” Wei Tiancang cast Wei Tianxiong a glance.

“Yes, sir.” As his son, Wei Tianxiong understood Wei Tiancang the best. He knew that after this event, Wei Tiancang would no longer have any expectations for Wei Guohao. None of the Wei Clan’s younger generation, including Wei Lingxuan and Wei Qingyi, had met his standard. Wei Tianxiong felt rather depressed, and would very much have wanted to give Wei Guohao a smack if he wasn’t already so injured. All of the upper echelons exchanged a look when they heard about the three months Wei Guohao would be bedridden for.

“Ok, show’s over! You can disperse.” Wei Tiancang waved his hand, preparing to take his leave as he did not want to stay any longer.

“Master, with Guohao bedridden for three months, what do we do with his slot for the Abyssal Trials?” Mu Yang asked. However, Li Tianming hadn’t told him of his desire for the spot.

“What about it? Cancel it! My Wei Manor won’t participate, just five people will go.” A portion of Wei Tiancang’s resentment leaked into his words, and the supernal mentors all lowered their heads in response.

“Understood. Disperse, and watch what you say when you return.” Mu Yang said. A Wei Clan disciple using the Devilblue Incantation was even more embarrassing than Wei Guohao losing to Li Tianming. Not making that public was for the best. The supernal mentors asked to be excused by Wei Tiancang, and then turned to leave. Wei Tiancang turned around as well. The entire time, he never looked at Li Tianming.

“Potentate, I’ll like to take part in the Abyssal Trials.” Suddenly, an unexpected voice rang out. All the supernal mentors and Wei Clan members turned to the source.

“Li Tianming, you don’t have the right yet! Without Jiang Feiling, you’re only embarrassing our Vermilion Bird Heaven’s Sanctum if you go!” Wei Lingxuan had never expected Li Tianming to be daring enough to even covet the slot. One needed to be qualified in multiple areas, from identity to power, in order to be a representative. However, no one was listening to what Wei Lingxuan had to say. All the upper echelons of Heaven’s Sanctum, including Wei Tiancang, were focused on Li Tianming.

Wei Tiancang gazed at Li Tianming indifferently, while Li Tianming met his gaze fearlessly, just like the previous time.

“Potentate, I wish to fight for the Wei Clan’s glory,” Li Tianming said, eyes blazing with passion. The crux of his words was that he had said Wei Clan, not Heaven’s Sanctum. There were already several going there to fight for Heaven’s Sanctum’s glory. However, the Wei Clan’s representative, Wei Guohao, had asked for it by using the Devilblue Incantation. Now, he was bedridden for three months and his slot was empty.

“If Wei Guohao doesn’t have the ability to seize such an important chance, then I’ll do it for him. In the Abyssal Battlefield, I shall fight for the Wei Clan’s glory!” Li Tianming didn’t back down in front of Wei Tiancang’s gaze.

“Don’t sound so righteous. Our Wei Clan doesn’t need an outsider like you to fight for our glory.” Wei Zikun was on the verge of beating Li Tianming up. The youth’s arrogance was very displeasing.

“No. The Wei Clan needs it, and so do I.” Li Tianming stressed each and every word.

“Mu Yang, bring him away.” How could Chancellor Wei Tianxiong feel happy at this point? After what happened to his son, now Li Tianming had popped up and talked about fighting for the Wei Clan. This was simply an utter trampling of Wei Guohao’s dignity.

“Let’s go, Tianming.” Mu Yang came over.

“I’m not going. Potentate, please give me a reply. I can swear a vow to go through hell or high water, if I can go to the Abyssal Battlefield. If I embarrass our Wei Clan, I’ll cleanse my sins on this very stone bridge. Please, Potentate!” Every word he spoke rang clearly in everyone’s ears. From start to finish, they held unwavering dedication.

“How do you qualify to represent us?” Wei Tiancang finally spoke.

“As Wei Jing’s son.”

“It has been twenty years since she was chased out from the clan. She’s not one of us anymore,” Wei Tiancang said.

“It doesn’t change the fact that my blood can be traced back to the Wei Clan.”

“The only reason you want this connection is solely because you want to save your mother. I can tell you now, there’s no chance it’s happening.”

“If there’s no chance, I still want to create one! Otherwise, what? Let all of Vermilion Bird laugh at how the Wei Clan of Heaven’s Sanctum couldn’t even dispatch one youth to the Battlefield? How humiliating would that be!” Li Tianming’s voice boomed.

“Tianming, don’t speak out of hand.” Mu Yang’s head was starting to hurt, because Li Tianming’s words were getting more and more offensive to Wei Tiancang.

“You’re overthinking it. We’re a hidden clan. No one even knows about us.” Wei Tiancang said disinterestedly. However, was he really disinterested?

Li Tianming chuckled. “I see. So the term ‘hidden clan’ is for covering up when the clan is incompetent and its legacy ends!”

Immediately, emotions exploded.

“How dare you!” Wei Zikun was the first one to step forward, delivering a slap towards Li Tianming.

“Mu Yang, take him away. Away from Ignispolis!” Wei Tianxiong’s eyes turned frosty. Li Tianming’s words were scolding everyone below Wei Tiancang! If Wei Zikun hadn’t stepped forward, he would have done so himself. Likewise, the rest of the Wei Clan were all cursing up a storm at Li Tianming.

“Zikun.” Fortunately, Mu Yang blocked Wei Zikun. Otherwise, Li Tianming would have to join Wei Guohao in being bedridden for three months.

No one had expected Li Tianming to go down this route. However, they couldn’t deny their amazement at his guts. However, Li Tianming didn’t feel he had said anything wrong. Even ignoring power, just in their ability to handle matters, how could Wei Tianxiong hold a candle to Mu Yang? How did Wei Guohao compare to Li Tianming himself? The Wei Clan was the core of Heaven’s Sanctum, but how was their performance even up to standard?

So, how was he wrong?

“Mu Yang, don’t you shield him because of Wei Jing!” Wei Zikun was furious to be held back by Mu Yang.

“Let Master speak,” Mu Yang said.

The one to decide how to punish Li Tianming would be Wei Tiancang.

Honestly, Wei Tiancang never expected Li Tianming to dare to publicly challenge Wei Manor. Of course, it was just stating a fact. The very fact that he most disliked.

“Well, aren’t you the gutsy one.” Wei Tiancang’s words exerted pressure.

“Many thanks for the Potentate’s praise. I’ll definitely continue on if you let me go to the Abyssal Trials,” Li Tianming said.

“If that’s the case, I do think we can have a deal.” With these words, which made the Wei Clan gape, Li Tianming could see some light.

Chapter 107 - A Life Decided By Fate

“Father...” Wei Tianxiong knew that by giving this slot to Li Tianming, they were effectively admitting how useless they were! The Wei Clan would surely become a laughing stock if the news were to spread outside. But Wei Tiancang simply waved his hand, signalling for Wei Tianxiong to stop talking.

“Yes, Potentate. What’s the deal?” Li Tianming was more eager about this than anyone else here.

“Before that, there’s a prerequisite,” Wei Tiancang said.

“Which is?”

“From now on, don’t mention your relations with the Wei Manor, and don’t you talk about the honour of the Wei Clan. No one will believe you, and you have no right to fight in the Wei Clan’s name as well. You represent yourself, and yourself only!” Wei Tiancang said.

That took Li Tianming by surprise, since according to Mu Yang, he was supposed to gain the acceptance of Wei Tiancang through his performance.

“No problem, Potentate. Just tell me the deal.” Li Tianming casually agreed, since he wasn’t interested in the Wei Clan’s honour in the first place.

“It’s not so much of a deal as to a chance I’m giving you. I will permit you to participate in the Abyssal Trials, and should you emerge victorious, I will let your mother live,” Wei Tiancang said.

That was enough to elate Li Tianming. It had taken years, but he had finally found a way for Wei Jing to live! He never imagined that Wei Tiancang would give him such a chance, and that possibility alone made his eyes water. Everyone knew how difficult it would be to attain that prize offered by Heaven’s Elysium. The Abyssal Battlefield was a dangerous place, not to mention that the Abyssal Trials was something that had never been organised before — even Wei Tiancang himself didn’t know the meaning behind it.

“But, if you are not the victor, then your mother will remain the way she is now for the rest of her life. No matter what you do, or what you say in the future, my stance is firm. Everyone here shall be my witness!” Wei Tiancang finished with a solemn promise.

For a good while, no one on the stone bridge uttered a word. None of them expected Wei Tiancang to really give Li Tianming a chance to save his mother, and Mu Yang was as excited about this as Li Tianming was. Still, it was too early to celebrate. None of them knew what Heaven’s Elysium’s purpose of holding this Abyssal Trials, or its rules, were. They didn’t even know what kind of competitors they would be facing from the Heaven’s Sanctum of the two neighboring nations.

What dangers awaited them in the Azure Domain? What were the odds that Li Tianming could possibly enter the Elysium, just like Lin Xiaoting?

If it was that easy a decision, surely the sanctum wouldn’t have taken so long to pick out the participants. The seniors treasured this opportunity as much as they feared it. Once their children entered the Abyssal Battlefield, their survival would be up to fate, and no one would even know if they

died inside. Therefore, it seemed like Li Tianming's odds of winning were infinitely close to zero. Once this chance was lost, everything would end.

"Remember, Li Tianming. Once we seal the deal, you will never bother me about your mother ever again if you lose. Promise me that, and I will let you go."

Li Tianming might be rejoicing, but Wei Tiancang's request was no doubt asking him to dance on a razor's edge. This was the final chance that he had, and no matter what he did in the future, Wei Tiancang would reject him based on the promise they had today. That was crude, sure, but there was still that slim chance for Wei Jing at the very least. Perhaps one could even call it a reward for Li Tianming for his performance today!

"Deal? Or no deal?" Wei Tiancang was calm, as if everything was within his control. He expected Li Tianming to hesitate, to back off from this impossible challenge.

"Deal." But no, Li Tianming was way calmer than the old man thought when he accepted the challenge.

"Prepare what you need. Eight days later, Mu Yang will bring you into the Abyssal Battlefield!" With that, Wei Tiancang cast one last glance at Li Tianming before turning to leave. From now on, Wei Jing's fate was decided by the Abyssal Trials. Life or death would depend on this one battle.

"Remember to keep to your words. When you return from the Abyssal Battlefield, spend the time to accompany her for the last days of her life." Wei Zikun sneered, before following Wei Tiancang's steps together with the rest of the Wei Clan.

"Li Tianming, you and Jiang Qingluan can help each other out when you meet on the Abyssal Battlefield," Supernal Mentor Qin Shi said.

"Definitely." Li Tianming nodded.

"Then good luck to you." Qin Shi left with the other supernal mentors. Li Tianming saw Liu Xueyao in the group too. He knew that Mu Qingqing would be entering the Battlefield, while Lin Xiaoting would be waiting outside.

"Vice-Potentate, the Azure Domain would be sealed up by Heaven's Elysium, so no one would find out if anyone is murdered there, right?" Li Tianming asked.

"No one will know, which is why it is far more important to make it back alive. The ticket to Heaven's Elysium is so vague and distant, it almost seems like a trap." Mu Yang shook his head. He hadn't expected this seemingly-normal day to take such a drastic turn.

Was it a good thing or bad? He couldn't tell.

"You should have discussed this with me beforehand. There are many strange parts about the Abyssal Trials that you do not know. Most of us here don't consider it to be good news, since we have no right to intervene. We can't even spectate the Trials," Mu Yang explained.

"No matter what, I want to give it a try." Li Tianming was determined. He had two goals right now. First, he needed to stop Mu Qingqing from joining Lin Xiaoting in Heaven's Elysium, and the Abyssal Battlefield was the perfect place for killing. And secondly, this was his only chance of saving Wei Jing.

And yet, now he needed to just do one thing to accomplish them both. How easy was it? At any rate, nothing could stop the burning passion in his heart right now.

“Once you enter the battlefield, your life will be decided by fate. Whether you emerge as a hero or as a corpse is up to you,” Mu Yang sighed.

“Decided by fate?” Li Tianming curved his lips.

“You still have eight days to prepare, but more importantly, you need to be mentally ready. No one can tell what will be happening next. Just remember, don’t keep your mother waiting, she doesn’t have much time left.” Mu Yang stared at the youth standing before him. He could see the dedication in the youth’s eyes and the fighting spirit burning in his eyes. Even though Mu Yang was pessimistic about the Trials and felt that it wasn’t just a competition of who was stronger, he didn’t want to discourage Li Tianming.

“When you see your mother later, just tell her the Abyssal Trials is nothing much. Don’t worry her too much,” Mu Yang instructed.

“Noted.” Li Tianming nodded his head.

Eight more days before he entered the real battlefield! The ranking test and fighting with cousins were nothing compared to that. The Abyssal Battlefield was a place where a single decision could mean life or death. The last time he was there, he obtained the Saintbeast War-Soul. For a while, he thought he was the chosen one, but he ended up paying a price for his naivety.

“Vice-Potentate.”

“Just call me Uncle Yang. You have yet to defeat Wei Guohao by yourself, and before you return from the battlefield, you aren’t my disciple. If you succeed, you will become a member of Heaven’s Elysium and won’t need my mentoring. If you fail, however, then I’m willing to guide you in the future. My only concern is if you die there.” Mu Yang had always been quite the optimist, but he just couldn’t say that about the Abyssal Trials. Heaven’s Elysium was outside his control, and that meant that even he couldn’t protect the disciples of the sanctum.

“Alright Uncle Yang, what do you think about the Abyssal Battlefield?”

“The battlefield?” Mu Yang pondered for a moment. “Even I don’t know much more than any of you do, considering how mysterious the place is. Within Vermilion Bird Nation, there are nine passages to the Abyssal Battlefield, one of which is in the institute, and another in our sanctum. The passages are in fact bottomless pits. When you jump down the pits, you will gradually fall, until a certain point where you slow down and rise up again. Once that happens, you’ll reach a world that seems to be a complete reflection of Flameyellow Continent.”

“That world shares the same landscape as our continent, and we suspect that it should be just as large. For example, we have a Mount Verm in our borders, and you will find a similar mountain in the exact same spot on the Battlefield. Other than man-made structures and damage, all else remains the same. However, there is no sun in the Abyssal Battlefield, and instead there is a black ‘Calamitous Sun’. It doesn’t give off much light, which is why it is generally quite dark in the battlefield. Other than spirit herbs, normal flora won’t grow there, and the place is covered in rocky or sandy plains. The

concentration of spiritual energy in the air is about the same as in our world, but it is much more violent and not suited for normal people. Only beastmasters can walk inside there safely.”

“If one considers Flameyellow Continent to be ruled by beastmasters and lifebound beasts, then the Abyssal Battlefield is the playground of wildbeasts. You’ve seen the beasts there before; it’s a cruel world where only the fittest survive. Even in the Vermilion Bird Domain of the Battlefield, you may find wildbeasts even stronger than me, and that’ll be it for you. In comparison, areas like the Giblu Domain and the Azure Domain had been cleared by us before, and are considerably safer. Other than these allocated domains, you won’t be able to survive anywhere else. In the institute, we often organize disciples to enter the Battlefield in groups. This is to refine beast souls from wildbeasts, and obtain spiritsource abilities for their lifebound beasts,” Mu Yang explained.

Li Tianming knew about that. When he and Midas first entered Spiritsource, he was qualified to enter the Abyssal Battlefield to slay wildbeasts and select spiritsource abilities for Midas. He was quite bold back then, entering the Azure Domain alone and somehow obtaining the Saintbeast War-Soul. That was the only time he entered the Abyssal Battlefield. When he had first seen the black ‘Calamitous Sun’, his heart had skipped a beat back then.

Throughout the course of history, corpses piled plains of the Abyssal Battlefield. Wildbeasts, lifebound beasts, and even beastmasters. Who could imagine the number of lives that had been lost there?

Chapter 108 - Charcoal Grilled Chicken

“The Abyssal Battlefield is, bluntly put, the reflection of our Flameyellow Continent, filled with darkness and slaughter. I expect there to be countless entrances through the whole continent. Your acquisition of a Saintbeast War-Soul is a testament of how many secrets lay hidden there. There are no rules or laws, only endless slaughter and priceless treasures. Manna. Spirit ores. Spirit herbs. Spirit hazards. After all, the treasures that were in our continent were more easily unearthed.”

However, Mu Yang didn’t know that as he illustrated the terror that was the Abyssal Trials, Li Tianming’s expectations just kept mounting.

“Alright, go and visit your mother. Remember, don’t make her worry!” Mu Yang said.

“Yes, Uncle Yang.”

“If you have any doubts, come find me at Mu Manor. I’ll try to prepare some things for you over the next few days.”

“Many thanks.”

“No need. Surviving will be the best thanks you can give me,” Mu Yang said.

“I really wish I was your son instead. Li Yanfeng and you are worlds apart,” Li Tianming chuckled helplessly.

Logically speaking, Mu Yang should neither have liked him nor taken care of him. However, he still treated Li Tianming well, and was the only one who had unconditionally given him his support in Heaven’s Sanctum. There was no way Li Tianming wouldn’t be grateful to him.

“Don’t say that, you’ll stroke my ego like that.” Mu Yang chuckled to that and gave Li Tianming a pat on the shoulder. He actually had a lot of things he wanted to say, but he held himself back to a simple, ‘Go’.

Jiang Feiling and the little chick had been waiting for Li Tianming. This might be his goodbye to his mother, so it was a good thing Jiang Feiling was coming along. Li Tianming had always intended to go to Wei Manor today; Wei Lingxuan’s interception had merely delayed his visit. When he entered Wei Manor, Li Tianming cast aside all thoughts of the Abyssal Battlefield. The only things that remained was a smile, Jiang Feiling, who was holding his hands, as well as Wei Jing.

The members of Wei Manor naturally saw his arrival. Even though he was walking hand in hand with Princess Ling, that didn’t stop the snide remarks.

‘It’ll be for the best if he dies in the Abyssal Trials.’ Wei Zikun was standing at a faraway building, his gaze icy as he looked at Li Tianming.

“You hate him that much?” Wei Tianxiong asked.

“You don’t? Even ignoring the embarrassment Wei Jing wrought on father, Li Tianming is obviously unfilial to the clan. Furthermore, we can see what kind of person he is from what happened three years ago,” Wei Zikun said.

“Three years ago? I’m afraid that matter isn’t so simple,” Wei Tianxiong said.

“What do you mean?”

“It’s not important. Actually, father giving him hope also goes to show father has softened his stance.”

“You mean he had harboured thoughts of saving Wei Jing?”

“There definitely is. He’s father in the end. How could he be that cruel? Today was actually for the best. If Li Tianming didn’t force him, he may have been unable to resist doing it. However, by forcing him like this, father now has a clear conscience in ignoring Wei Jing,” Wei Tianxiong said indifferently.

“And if Li Tianming succeeds?”

“Oh please. You think that’ll happen?” Wei Tianxiong gave him a look.

“Impossible. In fact, no one may succeed in all three countries.”

“Correct. It’s obvious we have no disciples here that meet Heaven’s Elysium’s requirements, apart from Lin Xiaoting. That’s why I believe there are some issues with the Abyssal Trials this time.”

“If so, then Li Tianming is talking a fool’s dream.”

“He got some lucky breaks and thinks he’s a big deal now. He even dares to disrespect us. How far do you think someone like that can go?” Wei Tianxiong snorted.

“Something must be wrong with Mu Yang. Why is he still thinking of Wei Jing fondly the way she is now? And he even likes to take care of her son like he’s the dad? What a moron.” Wei Zikun couldn’t stop himself from cursing.

“What a pity. Nonetheless, he is still the future potentate,” Wei Tianxiong said gloomily.

“Hmph.” Wei Zikun sneered. However, whether that sneer was born from mockery directed outwards or inwards, no one knew.

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“Mother, look who I brought!” When Li Tianming entered Rainforest Pavilion, he saw Wei Jing lying languidly in the courtyard, sunbathing.

“Hello, auntie.” Jiang Feiling was more nervous, and positioned herself behind Li Tianming.

There was no reaction.

It turned out that Wei Jing was napping.

“Oh no, get up! Someone’s stealing your money!” Li Tianming gave her a pat on the shoulder.

“What!” Wei Jing shot awake, before realising it was Li Tianming. Her expression changed, and she prepared to scold him. However, her attitude took a hundred and eighty degree turn when she saw Jiang Feiling.

She switched to a smile. “Oh, Princess Ling has come to visit!”

Wei Jing had seen her before in the ranking battles.

“Hello auntie. Just call me Ling’er.” Jiang Feiling smiled radiantly.

Wei Jing nodded, inwardly giving Li Tianming her approval.

“Go and make food,” Wei Jing said.

“Excuse me?”

“Go and make food. A girl is visiting, and you want her to go hungry?” Wei Jing said.

“Fine. I’ll let you all try my fantastic cooking,” Li Tianming smiled.

Li Tianming knew Wei Jing was waiting for him to leave so she could have a private conversation with Jiang Feiling.

In the kitchen, Li Tianming relaxed, having heard laughter and chatter. “It’s good there’s no conflict between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.”

Dinner was quickly prepared. Li Tianming had been independent since young, so making a meal wasn’t anything difficult.

“Here are the green pepper chicken drumlets.”

“This is some chicken soup I stewed. It’s good for the body.”

“These are some pickled pepper chicken claws. Ling’er, try some. Are they too spicy?”

“And these are stir-fried chicken gizzards. Not bad, right?”

Li Tianming was quite pleased with his cooking.

“Why are there no vegetables, only meat? How is a girl supposed to eat this?” Wei Jing scolded.

“What? Of course there’s vegetables. I’ll be right back.” Li Tianming went in, and soon brought out another plate, announcing, “Here, cabbages in chicken soup. It’s tasty, do try it.”

“Ying Huo, what are you doing?” Li Tianming suddenly whispered in its ear, and the chick jumped three metres from sheer fright. “Are you scared? Don’t worry, we don’t have mushrooms today, so you’re safe for now.”

“Hmph, why would I be scared? I’m a phoenix! Eat, eat up!”

Laughter echoed out for a while, as if they were a normal family with the normal bliss that entailed. If only this could last forever...

He could tell Wei Jing was rather happy today, which was a good thing, for she hadn’t been this happy for a very long time.

“Mother, I’ll be gone for a month or so. While I’m away, Uncle Yang will take care of you. You also have to take care of yourself,” Li Tianming said casually, when night had fallen.

“Is it dangerous?” Wei Jing asked.

“Nope, it’s something easy,” Li Tianming spoke unconcernedly.

“Will Ling’er be going with you?” Wei Jing smiled.

“I...” Jiang Feiling hesitated.

“She won’t be,” Li Tianming answered.

Jiang Feiling lowered her head and didn’t say anything.

“It’s up to you. Just remember to come back. Also, don’t flirt with any women outside and let down Ling’er,” Wei Jing urged.

“Of course not. I’m not a fool. With Ling’er, all other other women are nothing to me now,” Li Tianming said.

The sky had darkened entirely; it was time to send Ling’er back. Hence, Li Tianming got up and bade farewell to his mother. As he was about to leave, he noticed Wei Jing looking at him, dazed.

“What is it, mother...” Li Tianming felt pained.

“Come back alive,” she said.

“I will.” Li Tianming knew Wei Jing had seen through his facade when he had acted casual just now. She knew that the danger he would face was inversely proportionate to his degree of casualness. Therefore, she was still worried in the end. Knowing that no number of guarantees were enough, Li Tianming kept it to a smile.

“Goodbye, beautiful,” Li Tianming said.

“Goodbye.” Wei Jing waved.

For Li Tianming, that moment of turning around was a moment of great courage. Was this the last time he would see her? He didn't know.

All he could do was leave it to fate.

"Big brother." Not long after they left, Jiang Feiling stopped. Under the red lanterns of the manor, her fair skin looked particularly mesmerising. Her eyes were misty, evoking a sense of sympathy upon gazing at them.

"What is it?" Li Tianming asked.

"I want to go to the Abyssal Trials with you," she said earnestly.

"No need for that. I can take care of myself. But, it's too dangerous for you." Li Tianming smiled.

"No." Jiang Feiling beckoned him forward.

Li Tianming came forward, and she grabbed his hands, placing them in front of her eyes. Her hold was tight, and within her ten fingernails, incomprehensible power flowed.

"Firstly, I can't not worry about Qing'er. It's too dangerous for her to be alone. I was already trying to think of the ways to help her. She's actually not that brave. We've never been separated for so long in all our years. If I don't go, the guilt will torment me." Jiang Feiling strengthened her grip, and her tone became more serious.

"And secondly?"

"Secondly..." Jiang Feiling paused, and lifted her head, her eyes meeting Li Tianming's own. "In this life, I will share life and death with you."

Li Tianming felt like he had been struck with lightning. His body shook as he heard words he had never imagined a girl saying to him.

Share life and death! They were four simple words, but they were enough to make a man tremble. It wasn't from fear, but instead from being caught unprepared. Li Tianming was aware that he should have been saying these words, not her.

"Big brother, can I go to the Abyssal Battlefield?" Jiang Feiling looked at him with eyes filled with hope. She grabbed Li Tianming's fingers tightly, as if she was fearful that Li Tianming would pull away if she didn't use enough force.

"Yes." Li Tianming actually had much, much more words he wanted to say. He could have sworn all sorts of oaths to protect her. But somehow, they all got stuck in his throat. All the things he wanted to say were condensed into one word.

Yes.

The only thing Li Tianming wanted now was to give her a hug. He gently extricated her fingers. Under the lantern light, he gently hugged her. It wasn't an excessive or rude hug, but he could feel her warmth.

"From now on, we'll be together forever, ok?" Li Tianming whispered into her ear.

“Alright.” She bit Li Tianming’s collar, her face reddening.

Her bashful expression was shockingly charming. Li Tianming felt that perhaps, he would never spare another girl a look after today. That was because no girl could exist that was as beautiful as Jiang Feiling was at this moment. It would have been perfect if time stopped here.

Alas, he had forgotten the existence of one certain living thing around.

Ying Huo, who was currently irritated over Li Tianming’s chicken banquet.

How could it not act to break up this beautiful scene? Leaping at Li Tianming, it said with a sickly-sweet voice, “Big bro~ Mhm, I wanna share life and death with you too! Gimme a hug and kiss!”

“I’ll rather give all your ancestors a kiss!” Li Tianming pinched it, and made a crucial, life-changing decision a heartbeat later: supper was going to be charcoal grilled chicken.

Chapter 109 - Li Yanfeng, Master of Flamehaven

If there was one thing that Li Tianming didn’t expect, it was that news of his battle with Wei Guohao on the bridge, as well as his participation in the Abyssal Trials, had spread across Ignispolis. As the fateful day approached, the event that was originally meant to be a secret was now gossip for many in the capital. The rich and famous of Ignispolis knew how big the continent was, as well as how powerful Heaven’s Elysium was. It was the headquarters for countless sanctums across the continent, who then built the Flameyellow Scions Institutes. It was thanks to them that disciples were imparted with knowledge and power, and martial arts could be learnt by many.

Most of the people here had never left Vermilion Bird in their life, but they knew about the creation of Flameyellow Scions Institutes in every nation on this continent. The institute in Vermilion Bird was just one out of many of those. People feared and respected Heaven’s Elysium, and they knew how important this ‘Abyssal Trials’ was. The peninsula was too far away from the center of the continent, and the Elysium had almost never stepped foot here before. As such, thousands of years had passed without youths in these three nations obtaining such an opportunity. At the same time, the news of Lin Xiaoting being admitted to the Elysium had spread too, gaining the envy of many. Even the Lightning Manor seemed to have benefited from these rumours, their reputation now casting even the Occult Athenaeum in shadow.

Lin Xiaoting himself had become a legend of the nation.

“If Lin Xiaoting were to make a name for himself in the Elysium, then surely our nation will also benefit.”

“Imagine if those other six in the sanctum could obtain another position in the Elysium. If that happens, we’ll soon be the ruler of this peninsula.”

The members of the public discussed such matters fervently, most of them optimistic about the nation’s future. Speaking of the six other contestants, Li Tianming was no doubt the strangest member on the leaked list. Many had initially dismissed it as fake news. But as details of the battle at the bridge spread, and members of the institute clarified things, people came to a realisation. The Li Tianming that they had laughed about had earned the blessings of the Flameyellow Rock, miraculously becoming one of the top geniuses in the sanctum! Apart from the blessing he received, opinions about Li Tianming were mixed. Many questioned his morality, but voices judging his talent were a lot quieter. At most, people

could dismiss him for the fact that his lifebound beast was not a seven-star royal beast, making him inferior to the other five participants. Then again, the decision was made by the Sanctum Potentate himself, so no one could question that.

Thus, the hottest topics in Ignispolis right now were none other than Lin Xiaoting and Li Tianming. Coincidentally, these two had a shared history from three years ago, which was being brought up again. Now, people were looking forward to the impending clash between the chosen genius and the tarnished challenger. That being said, Lin Xiaoting was on the moral high ground and doubled as the face of Ignispolis; few would therefore support Li Tianming.

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In the western district of Ignispolis, the Xing Mansion and the Chen Chateau stood as the fanciest properties. Even normal servants from the Chen Chateau were exotic beauties selected from various parts of the nation. Within the Daybreak Snow Pavilion, madam Xue Lan and madam Yuan Yu sat side by side by a table. Sitting opposite them were Chen Hao and Xing Que. There was a younger boy sitting at the corner of the table, looking rather lifeless. He was the Chen Yao that was defeated by Li Tianming during the ranking test, and was now just an ordinary member of the Hall of Manibeasts.

It was evident that none of them were in a good mood. This was especially true for madam Xue Lan, whose pretty face was twisted with anger.

“So, you are telling me that Li Tianming is such a big-shot right now that even the Potentate has to show him some face?” Madam Xue Lan gritted her teeth.

“Pretty much. At least, Vice-Potentate Mu Yang has been very helpful to him and his mother.”

“Mu Yang is stooping real low for his identity.”

“Wei Jing rejected him twenty years ago, and even now he wouldn’t give up. Is he retarded?!” Xue Lan smashed her fist on the table.

“Mother, please calm down.” Chen Hao’s head was lowered.

“That means the old hag still has a knack for flirting with men.” Madam Yuan Yu rolled her eyes.

“Rats like her never change,” Xue Lan added.

“But brothers, how did Li Tianming get such an opportunity? He got his lifebound beast through a blood pact and was about the same level as me just a month ago, so why can he go to the Abyssal Battlefield with you two now?” Chen Yao was the most confused. How could someone who was on par with him less than a month ago be in a completely different world now? Is he really still a genius of Ignispolis? That thought alone even made Chen Yao lose confidence in cultivating.

“It’s all because of the Flameyellow Rock and his perfect synchronization,” Chen Hao said.

“He just got real lucky,” Xing Que added.

“But he’d be looking for his own doom in the Abyssal Battlefield, since he only managed to defeat Wei Guohao with the help of Princess Ling. He is in fact just a little stronger than Wei Lingxuan, and we can easily cripple him should he run into us,” Chen Hao explained. The slap that Sage Chen gave him back at

the Flameyellow Pagoda still stung. He wouldn't forget the shame, nor would he forget his father's promise of an apology if he took first in the Trials.

"Then make sure you cripple him, make sure he doesn't succeed. I won't accept it if Wei Jing survives this!" Excitement twisted Xue Lan's face.

"Sister, no need to waste your anger on people like her," Madam Yuan Yu consoled her.

"Mother, don't you worry. If he's unlucky enough to meet us, there's no way we will show mercy to him." Chen Hao puffed out his chest.

"That's right, godmother. How could it be so easy to gain the recognition of Heaven's Elysium? I will bring you my own head if Li Tianming can succeed," Xing Que added, and madam Xue Lan finally let her pent-up tension dissipate.

Xing Que and Chen Hao glanced at each other, puzzled. Why did Xue Lan want that woman dead no matter what? That said, nothing wouldn't change their opinion either, since they too didn't want to let Li Tianming go, especially after that slap at the Flameyellow Pagoda.

"Mother, is there any story between you and that woman?" The youngest son, Chen Yao, asked at one side.

"Don't be a busybody." Xue Lan glared at him. Of course, she couldn't say it was all out of sheer envy, but envy alone was enough to turn her into a devil. "Just cripple Li Tianming, and send him and his mother back to Flamehaven where they belong!"

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Because of the Abyssal Trials, even the streets outside of the Flameyellow Scions Institute seemed livelier than ever. Passing residents would occasionally throw a curious glance as they wondered what would happen there in a few days' time. In an inn opposite the institute, a middle-aged man dressed in a red and black patterned robe relaxed on one of the window seats on the third floor. He stared at the traffic going in and out of the institute with a drink in his hand, his eyes hiding his true thoughts.

"Yanfeng." A honeyed voice called out to him. Many in the inn looked towards the direction of the voice as a lady walked up the stairs. She had a hot and seductive figure that could invoke many thoughts within men. Walking behind her was a boy about the age of sixteen, his head lowered as if he was deep in thought.

Li Yanfeng beckoned. "Have a seat here."

With a smile, Liu Qing tugged at Liu Qianyang's hand as she walked towards the table and sat opposite Li Yanfeng. Her seated posture accentuated her curves even more, somehow.

"Yanfeng, how long has it been since Xiaoxiao went in?" Liu Qing asked.

Li Yanfeng's job was to protect Lin Xiaoxiao, but the institute was a safe place. Thus, he would always be waiting in this inn when she was cultivating in the institute. It wasn't much of a difficult task, but it was inconvenient as he had to stay in the inn all the time, affecting his newlywed life. He even had to keep an eye out when doing that with Liu Qing, just so that Lin Xiaoxiao didn't leave the institute in the middle of the night without him noticing.

"It's been a few days. I reckon that she won't be leaving until Mu Qingqing enters the Abyssal Battlefield," Li Yanfeng said.

"I see, then I shall join you tonight." Liu Qing's face blushed slightly.

"Just stay here, I'm quite bored," Li Yanfeng suggested.

"But sister needs to help with my cultivation..." Liu Qianyang stuttered.

Liu Qing frowned. "Just learn it yourself at the institute, I have little left to teach you."

"Alright." Liu Qianyang lowered his head again.

Li Yanfeng looked at Liu Qianyang, but it was another boy that was on his mind.

"Yanfeng, you must have heard about his story?" Speaking of that person, Liu Qing's voice trembled slightly.

"I did. Sounds like a fairy tale." Li Yanfeng shrugged with a mixed look on his face. Although he hadn't seen Li Tianming personally, he did hear more and more stories about that boy. Who would have thought that after being abandoned by him, Li Tianming had made a name for himself as a rising genius?

"Then do you regret giving up on this son and turning to the Lightning Manor..." Liu Qing's voice trailed off.

"What are you thinking? He wasn't related to me to begin with. You're the one who matters the most to me now," Li Yanfeng said earnestly.

"Aren't you afraid he will come back for you in the future?" Liu Qing asked, only to be answered by his laughter,

"What do you mean, Yanfeng?"

"I didn't expect Mu Yang to help him, nor did I expect the blessing from the Flameyellow Rock. But I do understand the Potentate of the sanctum." Li Yanfeng narrowed his eyes.

"You mean...?"

"That stupid old man is as stubborn as hell. If Li Tianming decides to bet everything on this event, then based on my understanding of the Abyssal Trials, he will have a really bad time," Li Yanfeng explained.

"Will you be sad if he dies?"

"Not at all." Li Yanfeng stared outside the window coldly.

"You've been practicing the Heavenly Will techniques for some time. How long more do you need before you can breakthrough?" Liu Qing changed the topic.

"Can't you see it?" Li Yanfeng grinned.

"What?" A smile crawled up Liu Qing's face too.

"I made the breakthrough last night," Li Yanfeng said.

“Wow, that means you are finally in the same league with the strongest cultivators in Ignispolis!” Liu Qing said excitedly.

“Nothing to be excited about.” Li Yanfeng reached out and patted her on the shoulders.

“I guess this definitely calls for some rewards tonight.” Liu Qing lowered her head, her face blushing a ripe red.

“Sis, I will take my leave first!” Liu Qianyang rose from his seat and ran off without looking back.

“He’s not a kid anymore, show him some distance,” Li Yanfeng said sternly.

Liu Qing nodded. “Yes, definitely.”

Chapter 110 - Lightning Manor, Lin Xiaoting

Eight days passed in a flash, while Ignispolis boiled in anticipation for the upcoming Abyssal Trials. In fact, that was the case for all the three nations. But within Heaven’s Sanctum itself, things were surprisingly quiet. Aside from the disciples’ discussions, the actual participants were engrossed in some final cultivation. In the depths of the sanction laid the ‘Xueyao Pavilion’, where Supernal Mentor Liu Xueyao resided along with her disciples, and of particular interest was the ‘Xiaoqing’ Residence.

In its middle was a serene lake, where lotus flowers would bloom during summer. A small hut stood at the heart of the lake, and inside it was an intricate guqin that sat on a table. Right now, however, the guqin’s owner wasn’t the one sitting in front of the table, but rather, Lin Xiaoxiao. Her back slightly slouched, she cupped her chins as thought after thought ran through her mind. A door creaked, interrupting her thoughts, as a girl walked out from within the residence.

“Xiaoxiao, sorry to keep you waiting,” Mu Qingqing said gently.

“Big sis Qingqing, I knew that you were trying for a bit of last minute cultivation, so I dared not disturb you,” Lin Xiaoxiao replied.

“Well, I’m pretty much done. One hour remains before we need to gather in front of the Flameyellow Pagoda.” Her expression was placid — the upcoming Abyssal Trials didn’t seem to affect her much.

“Big sis Qingqing, I was worried about you. Have you heard about Li Tianming? He even managed to defeat Wei Guohao.” Lin Xiaoxiao sounded slightly tense.

Mu Qingqing smiled. “Of course I did.”

“And? Aren’t you afraid he will seek revenge on you after following you into the Abyssal Battlefield? From what I know, Wei Guohao ranks higher than you on the leaderboard,” Lin Xiaoxiao said.

“Once you enter the sanctum, you will learn that rankings mean little in battles of life and death.” The confidence radiating off Mu Qingqing strengthened.

“Are you saying that you can defeat Li Tianming?” Lin Xiaoxiao asked, but Mu Qingqing shook her head with a smile.

“Then what do you mean? Even if you have forgiven that fiend, with his personality, he’s definitely going to attack you for getting his beast killed. Traps, schemes... he won’t hold back,” Lin Xiaoxiao said with a hint of exasperation.

“It can’t be helped. I just need to exercise more caution. Relax. I have my own trump cards too. If he is going to seek trouble...” Mu Qingqing consoled the girl younger than her.

“Then I have less to worry about. Make sure not to believe a single word that scumbag says.”

“Of course I won’t.”

“If you have the opportunity, subdue him. Don’t let him take you by surprise. And definitely don’t let your kindness disadvantage you.” Lin Xiaoxiao carried on with her nagging, overcome with worry. No matter what she said, however, Mu Qingqing would simply nod and smile in reply.

After a while, she rose to her feet. “It’s about time. Xiaoxiao, why don’t you send me off at the Flameyellow Pagoda?”

“Alright, big sis Qing... Sister-in-law.” Lin Xiaoxiao used a term of address that she wasn’t used to yet.

“Mhm.” Mu Qingqing nodded her head, satisfied with the way Lin Xiaoxiao addressed her.

“Big brother is on the third floor of the Pagoda; do you think he will come down to send you off?” Lin Xiaoxiao asked.

“Perhaps,” Mu Qingqing answered.

“I really hope so. Then once you win the trials, the two of you can depart for the Elysium together,” Lin Xiaoxiao said earnestly.

“Xiaoxiao, believe in me.” Mu Qingqing gave her a hug and said in her ears, “This is the most important event in my life, and I’ll never let you two down. No one will ever look down on me again. Ever.”

“Big sis, of course I believe in you!”

The two got up and left. It was worth noting, however, that Mu Qingqing’s smile had never abated, from start to end.

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It was about time. Li Tianming, under the eyes of an attentive audience, got up casually and left the Flameyellow Rock.

“Big brother, this way.” The moment he stepped out of the rings, Jiang Feiling called out to him from the pagoda’s entrance. The sunlight worked together with her blue dress to make her look extra-lively.

There was another girl standing beside her. But today, that girl wore a black chainmail that protected all her vitals. It was evident that this chainmail wasn’t a run-of-the-mill armour, but a top-quality, grade five bestial weapon. This masterwork, however, also served to accentuate her honed, enchanting figure, a product of arduous training.

There were certain rules to the Abyssal Trials. Heaven's Elysium had decreed that no bestial weapons of grade six and above were allowed in, or the disciple would be disqualified.

"Ling'er, have you and father talked about this?" Jiang Feiling had returned to the palace the past eight days just to convince the king.

"I did. He agreed to let me go with you all," she answered merrily.

"Li Tianming, let me put it straight. Before we meet in the battlefield, you are the only one who can protect Ling'er. I'll bury your whole family if anything happens to her," Jiang Qingluan hissed.

He snickered. "Are you not aware of who is in my family? You, taking down the Wei Clan... I want to see you try."

"Not like they ever admitted you to be part of the clan."

"Yeah, yeah. Ling'er is more important than my life; I can't not protect her." Li Tianming said.

"Nonsense. I didn't say you two could be together, did I?"

"What, are you my mother-in-law? Annoying!"

"Li Tianming, I am your mother!"

"Huh?"

"Whatever, no point arguing with a farmer." Jiang Qingluan rolled her eyes. She'd nagged at Jiang Feiling enough times on their way here.

A good crowd had gathered by the time the three of them walked out of the pagoda. Almost all of the sanctum's mentors and disciples were there, led by Vice-Potentate Mu Yang and Chancellor Wei Tianxiong. Five of those chosen for the Abyssal Trials were already there, the five being Li Tianming, Jiang Qingluan, Mo Lin, Chen Hao and Xing Que.

The crowd's attention turned to Li Tianming as he joined the line with Jiang Feiling. Details of the fight on the stone bridge were no secret, and discussions had run wild in the sanctum. As for Jiang Feiling's appearance, it was of no surprise to anyone. Since the Vermilion Bird King had agreed to it himself, the sanctum would naturally not oppose it. However, the condition was for her to be attached at all times, and not be spotted by the supervisors from the Elysium. Otherwise, they might get into trouble. Mu Yang had told Li Tianming about this, and instructed that she be attached before they entered the bottomless pit.

These bottomless pits were the passages to the Abyssal Battlefield. Once a person jumped into the pit, he would accelerate downwards until a certain point, beyond which they would start rising. From there, the ascension would gradually slow until the person left the pit and came out from the other side. This was also the reason why people claimed the Abyssal Battlefield to be a reflection of Flameyellow Continent. In the imagination of the masses, the world they resided in had two sides to it, the top being the continent they lived and the bottom being the Abyssal Battlefield.

Mu Qingqing arrived a while later than the rest, followed by Lin Xiaoxiao. Lin Xiaoxiao had been shooting threatening looks at Li Tianming the moment she arrived, the sparks in her eyes a clear warning. But to

her dismay, that person who used to be her rival just a month back was already Mu Qingqing's opponent now, while she herself hadn't improved much. Their eyes met for a moment, and shivers ran down her spine. Li Tianming had changed. He was no longer someone to be taken lightly.

But Li Tianming's eyes didn't stay on Lin Xiaoxiao for long, as it fell on Mu Qingqing moments later. They had been lovers just a few years ago, but now, they were total nemeses. A casual smile adorned his face, but the emotions beneath that smile could not be read by anyone else. Similarly, Mu Qingqing smiled and nodded at Li Tianming, as if to congratulate him on his achievements. It was almost as if they were still the couple they were a few years ago, with no animosity between them. Perhaps, only Jiang Feiling knew that one of them wasn't going to walk out of the Abyssal Battlefield alive.

At that point, everyone had arrived. With a serious expression, Mu Yang cleared his throat and announced, "So many days have passed. Yet, the rules behind the Abyssal Trials, and how one wins... I know everyone present must have their questions. Alas, I must disappoint you today."

Everyone else looked at him, puzzled.

"Up until now, no rules or updates have come down from Heaven's Elysium. The only information we had was to pick out disciples to enter Azure Domain, and that disciples were not allowed to hold weapons of grade six and above," Mu Yang continued. "Therefore, what awaits everyone in the battlefield remains unknown. It may be that only after entry will the rules be made known. Once we enter the Abyssal Battlefield, I will send everyone into Azure Domain and wait outside. All that I can do from there on is to pray for the best, and hope that you lot will treasure your life more than the victory."

Survival over victory — that was Mu Yang's stance on the Abyssal Trials. But that wasn't something Li Tianming could do. Wei Jing's life was on the line, and it was enough reason for him to do anything for the victory. Besides, he also wanted to stop Mu Qingqing from obtaining first place. A place in Heaven's Elysium was the least of his concerns.

"Prepare to depart." With that, Mu Yang prepared to bring the six of them towards the bottomless pit.

"Vice-Potentate." Mu Qingqing suddenly stopped halfway.

"What?" Mu Yang asked.

"Please give me a while. He is here," Mu Qingqing said.

Everyone knew who that 'he' Mu Qingqing referred to was. Sure enough, a young man wreathed in lightning had walked out of the Flameyellow Pagoda.

Li Tianming always knew that he was in seclusion in the Pagoda, but didn't expect that he would appear at this very moment.

It's been a while, Lin Xiaoting...