

The Ages 111

Chapter 111 - An Ingrate

Three years. It had been three years.

He was dressed in a dark blue robe, a mint scarf around his shoulders despite the summer season. Everyone's attention turned towards him as he stepped out of the Flameyellow Pagoda in his black boots.

Although the likes of Mo Lin and Xing Que were already considered handsome when compared with the rest of the disciples, they lacked the one thing that made Lin Xiaoting stand out. It was his demeanour, his aura. The way he smiled was as if he was the master of the world, a kind of temperament even the seniors in the sanctum lacked.

Three years had passed. The Lin Xiaoting now seemed more mature and composed, not to mention much more confident as well.

Ever since he revealed himself, the crowd was silent. Many of the disciples gazed at him with envy and longing. Like his name, he was cool and humorous, yet struck like a storm. His sudden appearance could be likened to a lightning bolt, stunning everyone assembled outside with his mere presence. Coupled with his dashing face and his slender figures, calling him 'one-of-a-kind' and 'unique' didn't seem that far off.

"Master, Chancellor." Out of all the seniors present, he only greeted Mu Yang and Wei Tianxiong.

Mu Yang waved his hand casually. "Don't dally."

Lin Xiaoting nodded and smiled at the girl bouncing towards him. Mu Qingqing ran into him and hugged the man that she had dreamt about for nights on end. But when she took her head out of his chest, the first thing she saw was Li Tianming's eyes. What were his eyes trying to tell? His calm exterior hid a suffocating killing intent, and Mu Qingqing could feel it wash over her. It wasn't a momentary impulse, but a festering, bloodthirsty hatred that had bubbled for three whole years.

But Li Tianming had done well. He wasn't one to lose his cool at the drop of a hat, even if his whole body burned just by seeing those two. He was stationary, Jiang Feiling's hand in his.

It's already been three years, what's a few days more? Don't worry. I'll take my time to enjoy this hunt. I'll skin you two, and watch the blood drain from your bodies.

Mu Qingqing's blood chilled at these eyes and the message behind them. Bloodshot eyes didn't scare her; no, what truly did was the visage of a determined killer. Lin Xiaoting was talking to her, but those eyes had rattled her to the point he noticed.

"What's wrong?" Lin Xiaoting asked.

"What about... you kill him here?" Mu Qingqing bit her lips, as a shiver ran down her spine.

"Where?" Lin Xiaoting released her from his arms. His eyes locked on to Li Tianming moments after following her gaze.

From his expression, Li Tianming could tell that Lin Xiaoting was not at all surprised about his return. Evidently, he was still aware of the world outside, even in seclusion. His lips curved briefly when he found Li Tianming.

“How lucky,” he exclaimed softly, although Li Tianming was not close enough to catch that.

Li Tianming smiled with equal placidity. But he hadn't forgotten the feathers those monsters had plucked out one by one, or that night's storm of blood and rain. Words weren't necessary to express Li Tianming's emotions, nor would they ever be sufficient. All that Li Tianming asked for was to do everything Lin Xiaoting did to Midas back onto him.

Lin Xiaoting too, shall be drenched in rain and blood. His own blood!

But Li Tianming had underestimated Lin Xiaoting. The latter walked towards him after releasing Mu Qingqing, his erstwhile lover.

“How unfortunate. I'm not a patient person. This revenge tale ends here.” He spoke without stopping his steps, and suddenly accelerated as he finished the last word, closing in on Li Tianming like a lightning bolt. Li Tianming had not only underestimated his personality, but also his power! That flash, though seemingly insignificant, was a mortal threat that could claim his life. Lin Xiaoting was true to his nature! He had planned to kill the moment he saw Li Tianming, and he did just that on the spot without any hesitation whatsoever.

Li Tianming, in that moment, understood what his next course of action had to be. No one could help him, since not even Mu Yang expected Lin Xiaoting to be this bold. He opened his left hand and used the Bewildering Eye. Lin Xiaoting might have been fast, but even he couldn't escape the Bewildering Eye as long as he could see and had a soul.

It was super effective! The moment the Bewildering Eye took effect, Li Tianming could see the traces of the punch that was infused with the power of lightning. In the nick of time, Li Tianming dodged back with his Flaming Shadow Flash and used his black arm to absorb the impact.

The two collided loudly and Li Tianming flew backwards for more than a hundred metres, blood streaming from the corner of his mouth. But he simply walked it off and snickered at Lin Xiaoting. “Seriously? Just this after three whole years, or did you not have lunch?”

The punch shook his innards, but it wasn't enough to deal any significant damage. It all happened in a flash, and public opinion at Lin Xiaoting's crudeness hadn't even fully formed yet when it was replaced by surprise at Li Tianming's survival.

Well, that was awkward.

Lin Xiaoting stood on the spot and stared at his own fist. That has to be an illusion, no? Why does his palm have an eye in the middle?

The eye gave off a feeling of sheer evil and menace, and as a result, his punch was five times weaker than it should have been. Otherwise, his prided punch should have killed Li Tianming! After all, the Lin Xiaoting three years ago could have killed Li Tianming in one hit, let alone the Lin Xiaoting today.

He frowned for a moment, but that didn't stop him from continuing. The next moment, he struck out towards Li Tianming again.

"Stop." But he didn't get a second chance, as Mu Yang was now standing in his way.

"Master, get out of my way. I need to kill him." Lin Xiaoting wasn't exactly the model disciple people expected him to be, and there was an odd glow in his eyes when he glared at Mu Yang.

"Unity?" Mu Yang asked indifferently.

"Yes," Lin Xiaoting replied in an equally indifferent tone.

That meant that Lin Xiaoting had satisfied Heaven's Elysium's criteria for him. He would soon be a disciple there.

"Your talent may earn you the right to be rude to me, but you are not killing him under my watch," Mu Yang sneered.

"Why should master oppose me for the sake of an old flame?" Lin Xiaoting smiled coldly too, and the crowd gasped.

That was definitely not the way Lin Xiaoting should be talking to Mu Yang, especially since the latter was his mentor that had been guiding him and helping him get to where he was today. Respect and filial piety were the most treasured qualities in Heaven's Sanctum. Lin Xiaoting's words, however, had crossed some untouchable lines. And yet, none stood against him, since a bright future in Heaven's Elysium awaited him.

"Oppose you?" Suddenly, Mu Yang slapped him right in the face!

Bam!

The crisp and clear slap sent Lin Xiaoting rolling onto the ground, smearing dust on his face.

"Get this straight. So long as you're not a member of Heaven's Elysium, my words are law. Is that how you address your mentor who has guided you for four years? With a personality like yours, what can you achieve even if you enter Heaven's Elysium?" Mu Yang was so fast that no one even saw his hand ripping across Lin Xiaoting's face. He too used to be the number one genius in Heaven's Sanctum back in his day, and Lin Xiaoting would need nothing short of another fifteen years to match him.

The turn of events took people by surprise, as everyone watched the show unfold before the Flameyellow Pagoda. But that being said, most were on Mu Yang's side. He was the mentor, after all, and it was a lowly move to taunt his mentor right after he obtained strength.

He might be a genius, but an ungrateful genius wouldn't earn him the respect of anyone. Even if Mu Yang didn't know Wei Jing, he wouldn't allow Lin Xiaoting to kill any disciple, let alone one who would be taking part in the Abyssal Trials. One shouldn't forget that he was the vice-potentate of the Sanctum.

But Lin Xiaoting had changed too. Instead of being mad or embarrassed, he started laughing, even clapping his hands. With a swollen face, he said, "Very well, this slap marks all that you have done for me in the past four years. Mu Yang, let it be known that when I return from Heaven's Elysium, you shall either bow at my feet, or I will pinch your head off."

He spoke in a casual tone, but there was no doubt the promise he made was a vicious one. But even Wei Tianxiong dared not refute him, since even he feared the day Lin Xiaoting returned!

Needless to say, none of the supernal mentors spoke up against him. Everyone knew he was being an ingrate right now and that he was in the wrong, but he happened to have the power to frighten everyone into keeping quiet.

“Tell me that when you return alive.” With another slap, Lin Xiaoting had returned back to the ground again, the other side of his face swollen.

“Get the hell away from me. From this day, I never had a disciple by the name of Lin Xiaoting. Threaten me all you want, but I will give you a slap for each word you say.” Mu Yang kicked his body and sent him rolling to one side.

“Let’s go.” Mu Yang called out to those attending the trials, and the four other than Li Tianming and Mu Qingqing silently followed after him.

Mu Qingqing dared not move at all, given that Lin Xiaoting was still on the floor right beside her. As for Li Tianming, he was back at Jiang Feiling’s side, watching the argument between Mu Yang and Lin Xiaoting silently.

This man really has some balls. Li Tianming couldn’t help but compare Mu Yang with that wimp of a father that Li Yanfeng was. The two slaps and one kick from Mu Yang was enough to make his blood boil and crave for more. Li Tianming and Jiang Feiling walked past Lin Xiaoting, who had just gotten up with the help of Mu Qingqing.

“Lin Xiaoting, if you are not a coward, you better not leave first. Wait for me to come back from the Abyssal Battlefield.” Li Tianming glanced at his swollen face. Although Lin Xiaoting could hardly be called handsome now, there was still a cold smirk on his face.

“And?”

“And I will wring every last drop of your blood over Midas’ grave,” Li Tianming said.

“That’s enough reason for me to wait for you.” Lin Xiaoting snickered.

“Don’t disappoint me.”

“Of course I won’t miss out on something so interesting.” With that, Lin Xiaoting patted Mu Qingqing’s back and signaled her to go ahead.

“Come on.” His smile appeared even more menacing with his swollen face.

“Qingqing, you only have one chance.” Lin Xiaoting added, to which Mu Qingqing nodded before catching up with the rest of the group. When she left him, Li Tianming could see how pale her face was.

Neither Mu Yang nor Li Tianming turned back to look at Lin Xiaoting, as they headed towards the bottomless pit. In front of the pagoda, no one dared to approach Lin Xiaoting either.

“Big brother, are you out of your mind? Why would you disrespect the vice-potentate?” Lin Xiaoxiao finally walked up to him, her tone clearly displeased.

“Get lost.” But Lin Xiaoting just pushed her off to one side, his eyes glaring at the direction Mu Yang had just left. When Mu Yang grovels at my feet... should I stab him in the heart? Or take his head off?

Chapter 112 - Lady Long

Flameyellow Continent was a magnificent land, and within its endless borders countless lives were born. Out of those born here, some were extraordinary beings, destined to achieve greatness...

High in the sky were three beasts frolicking within the boundless sea of clouds. Upon closer inspection, the three were actually mythical dragons swimming in the sky, or at least beasts that highly resembled dragons. Dragons were creatures only recorded in legends and myths. It was said that a dragon had antlers of a stag, head of a camel, eyes of a demon, neck of a snake, belly of a clam, scales of a carp, claws of an eagle, soles of a tiger, and ears of a cow. No one had ever seen an actual dragon, just like how no one had seen an actual phoenix before.

The three creatures in the sky had heads, bodies, claws and fangs of a dragon, making them very similar to those mythical creatures. The key difference, however, was that they each had a sharp, crimson horn at the top of their heads, like spikes. Their auras were also not as majestic as the actual legendary beasts.

In fact, those three creatures were lifebound beasts! It was already unimaginable for lifebound beasts to have bloodlines related to the mythical dragons, not to mention three identical ones! There was definitely something incredible about the beasts soaring through the clouds. The presence of lifebound beasts naturally meant that their beastmaster was here too. Atop the middle dragon was a girl in red, a red that matched the scales of these dragons. It was obvious that she had a graceful figure, but a black veil concealed her facial features, denying lucky spectators the sight of their lives.

Her eyes, however, weren't covered, showing off a piercing glint that would make others look away. A terrifying will lurked in their depths, seemingly hiding an entire world in them as they assessed the sights flashing past her. Only sovereigns would have such a demeanour; no one would expect a young girl like her to have it.

“Three Red-Horned Torch Dragons. Triplet beastmasters sure are impressive.” Behind the young girl, a middle-aged man in a black robe sat cross-legged on the beast. At first glance, his posture was off-balance and messy, but his body remained immobile despite their high-speed flight.

“Thank you for the compliment, Uncle Chen.” The girl's voice was emotionless. Did the compliment hit home? No one knew.

“That wasn't a compliment. I, Ling Yichen, had never seen anyone like you in my entire life. And you are just a young girl.” Ling Yichen smiled gently, and an exact replica floated onto the girl's face.

“Lady Long, before we return to Torch Dragon, we will first make a trip back to your hometown Yueling City, yes?” Ling Yichen asked.

“Yes, some people there have a debt to pay.” Her eyes lit up with a icy light.

Ling Yichen shook his head. “You left your hometown at the age of eight, and only returned at seventeen. While you were gone, your family suffered from a crisis. Yueling City is now Duanmu City.”

“From this day on, there will no longer be a Duanmu City,” the girl stated quietly.

Ling Yichen lowered his head. “Naturally. As Lady Long’s new servant, Ling Yichen will wipe out every last one of your foes.”

“Leave a few for me, I want to personally deal with them.” Her vision had already locked on to a giant city, around the size of Ignispolis, right beneath them.

“Those ants of the Duanmu Clan will never know that the girl who had left the Yueling Clan at the age of eight had returned today as Lady Long! They will never dream that you are the miracle of the Grand-Orient Realm, with talent unrivaled by anyone in the past few millennia! Lady Long, a day will come when the whole of Heaven’s Elysium calls out your name. They will be proud of you, and you will bring everyone to a glory like never before. As your faithful servant, it’s my honour to do anything for you!” Ling Yichen too stared at Duanmu city with a fervent zeal.

“Thank you for the compliment, Uncle Chen.” The girl’s reply was simple, the black veil continuing to mask her expression.

And with that, the three Red-Horned Torch Dragons swooped down onto the city, hovering above the Governor’s Mansion.

“A lifebound beast on top of Duanmu City? Tired of living, huh?!” A roar came from within the mansion.

“Duanmu Yang, Duanmu Feng, Duanmu Sheng. Bring out all one hundred and thirty six members of the Duanmu Clan, and be ready to receive your deaths.” The girl’s domineering voice rang through the mansion.

“Who dares to challenge the Duanmu Clan!” Chaos stirred in the mansion, and three men walked out of the building, their steps concealing incredible strength. They were brothers, and together, they controlled the lifeline of Duanmu City. Many members of the clan followed in their wake, staring into the sky coldly.

The leader of the clan, Duanmu Yang, found the girl and Ling Yichen, his brows frowning, “And who may you be? Are you disrespecting the laws of the Duanmu city, and the power of the Duanmu clan?”

Ling Yichen smiled briefly. “Know not who I am? Does Ling Yichen sound familiar?”

“Ling Yichen?” The three brothers exchanged glances, then blanched on the spot. Their next words were much more obsequious. “Inspector of Heaven’s Elysium! Mr Ling, there must be some misunderstanding. The Duanmu clan had always been loyal, and we never made a single mistake...”

Ling Yichen sneered. “There’s no misunderstanding. I’m here today on Lady Long’s orders. Your whole clan is to be executed. At. Her. Request.”

“What!” The three brothers’ faces paled even further, and they began to have trouble breathing.

“Lady Long? An elysium child!” Duanmu Yang said in disbelief.

“So you do know the positions of elysium children, eh? This Lady Long will be the strongest cultivator, even in the entire Grand-Orient Realm!” Ling Yichen’s words rang out loud.

“Greetings to Lady Long!” The three of them hurriedly slammed their heads onto the floor, prostrating towards the young girl, even though the rest of the clan were present.

An elysium child! How could someone of such magnitude deign to show up in a rural city like theirs! And how could they have possibly offended the elysium child? It was no different from a prince sentencing a housebound peasant to death!

The clan began to panic.

“But Lady Long, you must have made a mistake! The Duanmu Clan has never offended you in any way!” Duanmu Yang cried.

Ling Yichen snickered. “Really? Why don’t you ask Lady Long for her name?”

“Lady Long, may... may we know your name?” All the clan members were kneeling on the floor right now.

“Duanmu Yang,” Lady Long’s eyes shone with cold light as she pointed at herself. “During the nine years I was gone from here, you killed my mother, exiled my clan and claimed Yueling City as your own. Tell me, do you think you can make it out alive today?”

Her voice left the Duanmu Clan trembling.

“Yueling Xiao had a youngest daughter who went missing at eight. Her name... her name... it was ‘Yueling Long’.” The three brothers stared at the black veiled girl, terror written all over their face.

“No... How can a place like ours birth an elysium child... no way...” Many of the others had already burst out in tears.

“RUN!”

“HURRY!!!”

That was perhaps the best course of action. Against the inspector, they were but ants after all.

“Uncle Chen, kill every single one of them, and hang the three brothers’ heads on the city gate.”

“My pleasure.”

A tragic slaughter followed these words. On that fateful day, the river of Duanmu city ran red with blood. None escaped from the inspector, and none could fight him. Even the three Duanmu brothers, the overlords and the strongest of the city, fell in a single exchange. The girl stood on her beast, and looked down on the slaughter coldly. No one knew what she had gone through in the past nine years, but she had emerged alive. The moment she was crowned as an elysium child, nothing in this world could stop her ascent to greatness.

She witnessed the death of the three brothers, watched as each and every member of the Duanmu clan breathed their last. And yet, the light in her eyes flickered.

It didn’t take long before the clan was pulled out by its roots.

“Lady Long, there’s only a newborn left. Kill? Or...” Ling Yichen’s black robe was stained with blood, an infant in his hands. A birdling whimpered beside the infant.

“Hand him to me.” The girl picked up the infant. He was a cute little boy who didn’t know what had just happened, and only found it fun that he was in the clouds now.

Without any change in emotion, the girl let go.

The child fell to the ground, joining the rest of his family with a sickening splat. As for the bird, it was crushed to a pulp by the girl.

The girl threw one last glance at the hell below them and said, “Come on, Torch Dragon awaits.”

Ling Yichen swallowed the lump in his throat.

“Yes, Lady Long.”

The two of them set sail once again, leaving behind the land of corpses and a trembling city.

“So after Lady Long’s clan was evicted from Yueling City, they managed to evade capture by the Duanmu Clan and eventually arrived at the peninsula, where they settled in Torch Dragon?” Ling Yichen asked.

“That’s right.” The girl nodded.

“Speaking of which, is that Torch Dragon Nation perhaps related to your Red-Horned Torch Dragon?”

“The royal clan there is a branch of our Yueling Clan. But their blood is impure, and their so-called ‘Torch Dragons’ are just mongrels.”

“I see. So Lady Long came all the way from the Elysium this time to settle your family down properly.”

“That’s right.”

“Once that is done, Lady Long can finally cultivate in Heaven’s Elysium in peace. It just so happens that I’ll be picking up someone named Lin Xiaoting too. Also, the show that Lady Long had asked me to arrange is ready.”

Chapter 113 - Lightning Criss-Crosses The Sky; Calamitous Sun Hangs There!

This was Li Tianming’s first time at Heaven’s Sanctum’s Bottomless Pit. In preparations for the Abyssal Trials, the Bottomless Pit had been sealed off. They could only pass through the tight security with Mu Yang leading them. They crossed a wasteland and arrived at a mountain, where a pit, ten metres in diameter, lay at the peak. If one were to toss a pebble in here, it would take a nice journey to the Abyssal Battlefield.

When they arrived, Mu Yang looked at Li Tianming and Jiang Feiling. “Spiritual Attachment.”

Mu Yang was calm, having apparently forgotten the small interlude with Lin Xiaoting. However, anyone would be feeling depressed if a disciple they taught for years treated them like that.

“Yes, Vice-Potentate.” Jiang Feiling obediently transformed into a spiritual body that merged into Li Tianming.

“Remember, don’t come back out after you go in,” Mu Yang exhorted one last time.

“Don’t worry.” Li Tianming said. He knew how to act, and it was to cover up Jiang Feiling’s existence. The spiritual body completely entered Li Tianming’s body. That way, Li Tianming wouldn’t glow, so there was no visible difference to him. Now, even Mu Yang couldn’t tell someone was inside Li Tianming.

“Enter the Abyssal Battlefield.” Mu Yang was the first to jump in. He was the only one who could enter and wait for them in the Azure Domain. Without a sound, he vanished. The rest followed him in without another word. Li Tianming was the one with the least experience, as the rest had all entered countless times before. Before he went down, Li Tianming flashed a bright smile at Mu Qingqing. Her reply — a cold glint in her eyes — went unnoticed, as he had followed up immediately by jumping into the pit.

“The Bottomless Pit really is a wondrous place.” Li Tianming continued to accelerate downwards.

“I’ve been here before with Qing’er.” Jiang Feiling’s voice sounded like it was right beside his ear.

“I see. Ling’er, how did you know where the manna was that time at Red Twill Mountain?” Li Tianming asked.

“I’ve always been sensitive towards manna. When we come, I’ve always helped Qing’er obtain manna. Though, I’ve never found royal manna before.”

Royal manna could let lifebound beasts evolve to seven stars and become royal beasts.

“That amazing?” Li Tianming was surprised.

“Well, there is an element of luck to it.”

“Look, my Ling’er really is a treasure!”

“That’s true!”

As they interacted more, her style of speaking was starting to resemble Li Tianming.

“Is it one of your ten abilities?”

“Nope, I’ve only unsealed three so far.”

“How do you unseal more?”

“I’m not sure. However, I feel that as long as I stay by your side, these seals will continue to loosen.”

“Sir, stop, sir! You are under arrest on suspicion of having an illicit affair!” The little chick’s vulgar voice rang out from inside the lifebound space.

“Shush. Don’t play gooseberry!” Li Tianming said.

“Bastard!” Within the lifebound space, the little chick cursed. It rolled around for a few moments, and then picked up the shaking Primordial Chaos Beast egg gloomily. “Lazy thing, when are you coming out? I have to suffer through their flirting day after day. You have to come out to share the burden!”

The egg rattled noisily several times, before coming to a stop.

“Hmph! Do you believe big brother here will peck your dumb shell open?”

The rattling started again, but silence soon returned.

“I bet even if you do one day actually make it out, you’ll just be a lazy bum!” The little chick rolled its eyes and tossed it to one side. The crack that formed as it landed went unnoticed, and though small, it began to spread. From the looks of it, its birthday wasn’t going to be far away.

As for Li Tianming outside, he had already reached terminal velocity! The mountain walls around him seemed to have disappeared, as he fell through a void.

“This must be the midpoint between the Flameyellow Continent and the Abyssal Battlefield.”

He began to lose speed, his speed dropping towards zero. Li Tianming lifted his head. There, the sky of the Abyssal Battlefield greeted his eyes, which were filled with black clouds. The dense cloud cover hung low, like some massive beast. Lightning danced between the clouds, leaving thunder in their wake. This was an everyday sight for the Abyssal Battlefield. Furthermore, the lightning was black, making it hard to pick out from among the clouds. The black lightning was extremely dangerous, and many a disciple had died to it, and such incidents could only be explained away with ‘horrible luck’.

After all, unless you flew into these clouds, the chances of being struck by lightning weren’t that high.

Apart from the black lightning, the most spectacular sight of the Abyssal Battlefield was the ‘Calamitous Sun’. It was a pitch-black sun that didn’t radiate light, but instead absorbed it. The sky was already dark enough, but the unique qualities of the Calamitous Sun rendered it near-invisible with a casual scan. A long look at that sun would leave people palpitating in terror, as if it was an eye, an eye of a ghost god!

Li Tianming’s speed had already fallen to the lowest possible. He had finally reached the ground level of the Abyssal Battlefield. Scaling the mountain walls at the side with ease, he hopped onto the black ground of the Abyssal Battlefield.

Mu Yang and the rest had also arrived.

Finally, Mu Qingqing, the last person, jumped out from the pit.

“Let’s go to the Azure Domain.” The Azure Domain roughly corresponded to the region northward of Ignispolis. To the south was the Ginblue Domain.

After half a day, the group reached their destination. The Abyssal Battlefield was never a place of calm, what with the constant rumbling of thunder and the never-ending gales. Wildbeasts could pop up at any moment as well. Li Tianming had been to the Azure Domain before, but this time, there were some changes.

“What’s that?” Li Tianming noticed a nearly-unnoticeable transparent membrane right at the border of the Azure Domain.

“That’s a Heavenly Pattern Barrier. It’s created by a beastmaster of the Heavenly Will stage. It’s how Heaven’s Elysium sealed off Azure Domain. Only they can accomplish such a huge undertaking,” Mu Yang explained.

Heavenly Pattern Barrier?

Supposedly, the Heavenly Will stage was a miraculous stage with many things that needed to be understood. Among them included the heavenly patterns of spirit ores, spirit herbs and spirit hazards. The Flameyellow Rock's interactions with Li Tianming had made him aware of just how mysterious heavenly patterns were.

"You six can cross the Heavenly Pattern Barrier. Others can't. However, you can't come back out until the Abyssal Trials ends," said Mu Yang. "Once you cross over, I won't be able to help, as I'm also equally clueless to what's inside."

However, no one would choose to retreat at this point.

"The disciples of the other two Heaven's Sanctums need to come over from their countries. They'll have set out earlier, and may already be inside," Mu Yang said.

"Why did the three Heaven's Sanctums decide to use our Azure Domain as the venue?" Li Tianming wondered. It should be quite a distance from the nations of Torch Dragon and Aquamarine, since distances were a constant for both the Abyssal Battlefield and Flameyellow Continent.

"I'm not sure myself. Perhaps, it has to do with the uniqueness of the domain." Mu Yang looked at Li Tianming. After all, this was where he had found the Saintbeast War-Soul. He cast Mu Qingqing a glance too, as it was that soul that had caused them to walk two different paths.

Ironically, they now had to enter the Azure Domain together.

Only Heaven's Elysium would understand why the Azure Domain was chosen.

"The barrier has teleportation effects. After you go in, you will appear in different places inside. Hence, you won't be able to work together. However, you all still come from the same Heaven's Sanctum. Helping one another and fighting side by side is the best course of action. Understand?"

Everyone nodded. Still, without knowing the situation inside, perhaps they wouldn't even get the chance to.

"Go in." Mu Yang waved his hand.

"I'll go first." Mo Lin, the second of the Heavenly Leaderboard, was a straightforward person, stepping across the membrane without hesitation. The others began to enter at that sight.

"Li Tianming, remember my words!" Jiang Qingluan glared at him, before stepping in as well.

Mu Qingqing was the third to enter. She hadn't said anything for a while, but no one would overlook her fighting spirit this time.

Only Li Tianming was left.

"Tianming." Mu Yang called out. He wanted to say something, but hesitated. In the end, he simply waved him ahead.

Chapter 114 - Birth of Royal Manna!

The moment he crossed the Heavenly Pattern Barrier, Li Tianming felt an incredible force sweep through his entire body, as if he had been caught in a storm. The world whirled madly around him, turning his surroundings into a blur.

“So this is the power people at the vice-potentate’s level wield.” Li Tianming gazed at the power around him, longing written all over his face.

The focus on cultivation, up until Unity, was on beast ki, battle arts and spirit source abilities. Only at Heavenly Will would one begin to study the mystery of the heavens and earth as part of the cultivation process. At that point, the beastmaster would be the one leading his or her beasts in symbiotic cultivation.

Leading symbiotic cultivation... not many beastmasters in Ignispolis had reached that step. These were probably the only ones who could understand the intricacies of the Heavenly Pattern Barrier — not surprising, since all of them had decades of experience.

With the power of the mysterious barrier, all the disciples participating in the Abyssal Trials were sent into the Azure Domain, where they would be scattered around evenly.

Soon, Li Tianming landed on a stretch of ashen rocky hills, dark clouds and black lightning flickering above him. He wasn’t sure about his exact location in the Azure Domain, unlike the others from Vermilion Bird. This was an advantage the disciples of Vermilion Bird other than Li Tianming had, since everyone else entered the Azure Domain more than once.

The entire Azure Domain corresponded to the ‘Land of Thousand Lakes’, which was north of Ignispolis. Given that Abyssal Battlefield and the continent were meant to be reflections of each other, there were a thousand lakes in the domain as well, which was also how the domain got its name.

Ironically, there was hardly a trace of azure in the domain, since all of the lakes were ink-black. Although lakes dotted the area, its terrain could hardly be called even. Hills and chasms peppered the place, every single one of them inhabited by wildbeasts.

The concentration of spiritual energy in the battlefield was no less than that of the continent, just that it was far more violent, making it unsuitable for prolonged cultivation. In the same vein, the spiritual energy here had given birth to all kinds of spirit herbs, ores and hazards.

As such, the treasures buried in the Abyssal Battlefield was another point of conflict between the three nations on the peninsula. Many wars had actually taken place in the Abyssal Battlefield, and more than half of Lightning Manor’s Tempest Regiment was actually stationed on Vermilion Bird’s border within the battlefield. Simply put, there were actually two different regions in Vermilion Bird, the one in the continent and the one here.

Compared to Flameyellow Continent, all kinds of spirit hazards thrived in the Abyssal Battlefield, adding another layer of danger to it. The black lightning dancing in the skies was actually one such spirit hazard, with red heavenly patterns running through the middle of the clouds.

Li Tianming knew that from that moment on, there would be no rules, no hints, and no directions. The Abyssal Trials had officially started, and from now on there would only be blood and battle!

“Big brother, would you believe me if I said I found a trace of manna?” As soon as they landed, Jiang Feiling spoke in her spiritual form.

Was it a jackpot for them? Li Tianming had seen her manna radar at work before. Even though Jiang Feiling had no lifebound beast and could not cultivate, Li Tianming had faith in her odd abilities.

“I don’t believe you, unless you give me a kiss on the cheek,” Li Tianming teased.

“What a douche,” the little chick cursed, flying out of its lifebound space.

The Abyssal Battlefield was a broad and open space. Within the continent, cities and buildings were commonplace, which necessitated restrictions on the manifestation of lifebound beasts. Therefore, lifebound beasts were accustomed to cultivating in their lifebound space most of the time. However, there were no such restrictions in the Abyssal Battlefield, and Ying Huo could fly all it wanted here.

Jiang Feiling chuckled. “Nah, it’s not like the manna is any use to me. Since it is for Ying Huo, why not let Ying Huo kiss you instead?”

“That’s right, big brother Tianming, let me just give you a good, hard peck on your cheek!” the little chick hissed menacingly.

With a straight face, Li Tianming shook his head. “No, it’s fine. I’ll naturally believe Ling’er. How can I not trust the beautiful telepathic communication between the two of us?”

“Haha...”

With them around, it was going to be an enjoyable trip. The only thing that could distract him from his good mood was the thought that Mu Qingqing was somewhere in this Azure Domain.

Li Tianming’s eyes flashed at that thought. If she showed up, he would show no mercy. No matter how much he laughed right now, Li Tianming was the type that could slip into a murderous mood as and when needed.

“Which direction is it?”

“That way.”

Jiang Feiling had sensed manna the moment they entered, and that was enough for Li Tianming to believe that the Azure Domain was a place of fortune for him.

They walked for over ten miles in that direction till they reached a cliff, where all they saw beyond there were black fog and all kinds of venomous creatures.

An abyss looked back up at them as they stared down the cliff. The sounds of wildbeasts screaming and roaring seemed like it would never abate. Wildbeasts would only make noises when they were in desperate situations, since doing so would run the risk of attracting predators. That went to show that apart from the beastmasters hunting for wildbeasts, only the strongest wildbeasts would survive in this land!

The Abyssal Battlefield was packed with all kinds of dangerous wildbeasts, and Mu Yang had mentioned that beasts capable of rivalling even him could appear. It was definitely not a place where Li Tianming could let his guard down.

“Are you sure it’s within this abyss?” Li Tianming frowned, his instincts warning him about the danger lurking in the gaping dark maw. Forget the wildbeasts — the insects he spotted were already scary enough.

“I’m pretty sure, I can sense it getting closer to us.” Jiang Feiling replied, confidence in her words.

“Wow, Ling’er, it’s like you have a dog’s nose,” Ying Huo praised.

“Do you not know how to talk to girls? Little wonder you have no girlfriend...” Li Tianming rolled his eyes.

“Well, why don’t you give it a go.”

“Watch and learn: Ling’er must be the daughter of God, since only she can sense the manna that God blessed us with.” Li Tianming said with a straight face.

The little chick stared on, speechless, before begrudgingly admitting that Li Tianming had done a much better job.

According to the legends of Flameyellow Continent, all creation had come into being due to an almighty creator, who resided in the highest of heavens, the Firmament. His existence remained an enigma, a myth that many simply believed in. As for manna, no one could explain how they formed in the first place, so people just assumed that they were a blessing from God.

Clearly pleased by the compliments, Jiang Feiling said, “Big brother, this is something that I have never sensed before. If my guess is correct, this isn’t just any normal manna, but royal manna.”

“What?” Li Tianming was shocked. The most common manna was already worth a fortune, and royal manna would be worth at least thirty times the net worth of Flamehaven. But there was a reason for its high price.

Royal manna was a treasure that could evolve a beast to seven-stars! With that, Li Tianming could reach the level of the Heavenly Septuplets! It was something so desirable that Mu Yang and even the Vermilion Bird King would covet it. That one manna was enough to guarantee the superiority of their descendants’ talent!

History had proven that seven-star royal beasts were the basic requirement to exceed Unity and enter Heavenly Will — the top cultivators within the borders of Vermilion Bird. In fact, for people like Wei Tianxiong and Wei Zikun, their lifebound beasts were all seven-star beasts that had reached their prime. And, spoken of in whispers, was profound manna, an item that stood head and shoulders above royal manna. What that exactly did was anyone’s guess, but its mere existence would shake the nation.

The first thing they entered the Abyssal Battlefield, and Jiang Feiling already found royal manna? Li Tianming felt like he really struck the jackpot, not because of the manna but because of Jiang Feiling. With that ‘dog’s nose’ of hers, treasures would line up for them.

In fact, Jiang Feiling was the greatest treasure he could ask for. Not only did she have the ten abilities sealed within her fingernails, the 'treasure radar' she had was an ability unlike any other.

Li Tianming felt like he could wake up laughing even in his dreams. Not only did he have the ten Primordial Chaos Beasts as his own lifebound beast, but the number one beauty of Vermilion Bird, with all kinds of unique abilities, was also by his side. Surely no one could stop him from now on!

"Big brother, don't be that happy. It's just my guess, and it's not impossible that there's not even any manna there..." Jiang Feiling said softly.

"Whether there is or not, we'll find out for ourselves," Li Tianming replied.

"Aren't you afraid of the wildbeasts down there?"

"No worries, Ying Huo can take the lead. If there's any danger, it can help us distract the wildbeasts while we escape, and I will make sure nothing can harm Ling'er. We just need to make sure we can run faster than Ying Huo."

"..." The little chick's eyes twitched with disbelief.

"But that's so sad for big brother Ying Huo." Jiang Feiling smiled.

"Not my fault it's still single."

"..." It was super effective! Ying Huo fainted!

But of course, that was just a joke. If a fight really broke out, Li Tianming would naturally be the one at the front. With the help of Ling'er's attachment, Li Tianming was more suited for direct confrontation, while Ying Huo specialised in ambushes and flanks.

Besides, if it was really a royal manna, Li Tianming would be extra cautious.

With a simple effort, the Celestial Wings and the Temporal Field activated. While the Celestial Wings were initially quite bright, Jiang Feiling could in fact adjust its appearance, and they eventually turned transparent. In the dark, foggy abyss, the wings on his back were impossible to notice.

The corresponding place in the continent was called 'Chasm of Flora'.

Even if one stretched the definition of 'scary' to titanic proportions, it would be hard-pressed to describe the Chasm of Flora as such. It was a popular tourist location where the citizens of Ignispolis could picnic away with scenic views of waterfalls and forests.

However, inside the Abyssal Battlefield, this chasm looked like a living hell.

Chapter 115 - Butcher Three Thousand Hens!

Li Tianming could soar through the air with the help of Jiang Feiling's Celestial Wings, and even engage in aerial combat. Most beastmasters with avian beasts could achieve flight by riding them; in the past, Li Tianming could fly by sitting on Midas' back. Alas, the little chick was not even as big as his foot. No matter how powerful it was, mounting a little chick felt like physically abusing a baby.

Jiang Feiling's appearance had given Li Tianming another life-saving card. Furthermore, his aerial combat ability in such a state dwarfed that of beastmasters mounted on avian beasts. After all, riding a beast and having wings were fundamentally different, and as they continued to fly, Li Tianming became more and more familiar with the Celestial Wings. During Spiritual Attachment, his heart was also one with Jiang Feiling — a thought was enough to communicate their intentions to each other. And when Jiang Feiling used Spiritual Attachment on him, the fourth level Spiritsource Li Tianming could unleash the combat power of someone in the eighth.

Li Tianming plunged soundlessly into the black mist.

His vision was limited to three metres, which gave him no chance to react if he met danger. Fortunately, he had the third eye in his left hand, which was now exposed, since he didn't need to hide it in the Abyssal Battlefield.

With that, his vision was now unclouded.

"There's a fire in that cave, but the light it's giving off is dark green." Li Tianming noticed an area deep inside.

"I feel the manna is there," Jiang Feiling said.

"That unbridled, savage aura... it's probably a wildbeast," Li Tianming said.

"Big brother, it may be refining the manna right now, so its aura is leaking. That's why I could sense it from so far!" Jiang Feiling said urgently.

Li Tianming had seen Ying Huo refine manna before. It was rather anti-climactic — a gulp had ended it. However, for other wildbeasts and lifebound beasts, doing what Ying Huo did was just a creative way of suicide. Hence, they would instead slowly refine it, absorbing its power piecemeal. Their evolution would only begin when the refinement was complete.

"It only dares to go at it slowly. Otherwise, if the aura leaked is too great, other wildbeasts will be drawn over," Li Tianming said. The little chick and him were already creeping towards the cave slowly.

Judging by the dimensions of the cave, it was a rather big wildbeast. Li Tianming let his wings flap slowly, sticking to the cliff wall cautiously.

"Take a look and see what kind of wildbeast it is," Li Tianming said.

"Don't run off by yourself," the little chick said, worried.

"Hey, am I that kind of person?"

The little chick finally made its way in. With its diminutive stature, it returned without making any disturbance a short while later.

"What wildbeast is it?" Li Tianming asked.

"A dark-green eagle that's on fire. It's even bigger than the Eight-Winged Goldroc," the little chick said.

"What type of eagle is it?"

“How would I know?” The little chick stared at him, tilting its tiny head.

“Then, how many stars is it?”

“How would I know?”

Li Tianming realised it had zero knowledge of wildbeasts and all relevant information.

“Then why did you go in if you know nothing?”

“Sir, you asked me to go in. I just followed orders.”

“...”

Li Tianming gave up on the idea of scouting ahead, and directly entered, the little chick in tow. He saw a dark green eagle inside, with similarly-coloured demonic flames flickering on its body, giving it a sinister and strange air. However, despite being a bird, the eagle lacked feathers. Instead, its skin was a scaly coat that reminded him of snakeskin. Combined with its sharp beaks and claws, it gave off a ferocious air.

“Four-star wildbeast, the Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle. Innate ability: Jadedfire Armour. Combined with those scales, it has a tough, two-layered defence. It’s also fully matured. Very strong.” Be it lifebound beasts or wildbeasts, maturity was also an important thing to take note of. A young four-star wildbeast might not necessarily be stronger than an adult one-star wildbeast. Similarly, a one-star lifebound beast could be stronger than a seven-star lifebound beast that had just started cultivating. Hence, even though the little chick was the equal of a six-star lifebound beast, it might not be a match for this mature four-star beast.

“Big brother, it really is royal manna! I’ve seen it in a book before, it’s called the Fire Dragon’s Horn. It just happens to suit Ying Huo,” Jiang Feiling said excitedly.

Li Tianming had already seen the crimson, conical and sharp horn in the eagle’s beak.

It was currently emanating a scorching aura as it burned with fire. The power within was slowly being refined by the eagle.

“The manna’s almost perfectly whole. The eagle’s not even one percent into the process.” At the thought of royal manna, Li Tianming couldn’t help but get excited too. It would allow Ying Huo to unlock more bloodline shackles, thereby strengthening Li Tianming’s bloodline power and Aeternal Infernal Body.

“Are we snatching it or not?” The little chick was already drooling.

“What a dumb question.” Li Tianming’s Blazing Dragon Chain was already in his hand.

“What’s the plan?” the little chick asked.

“How about the same ol’ one? You lure it out and I steal it away?” That had been the plan they had used on the Razor-Backed Colossal Crocodile.

“What if I get eaten?”

“I’ll erect a tombstone in honour of Sir Chicken the Great. I’ll also slaughter three thousand hens and strip the feathers on them so they can follow you in death. That way, you finally won’t be alone!”

“Screw you, Li Tianming.” The little chick gave him the evil eye, before swaggering to the Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle.

Li Tianming hid behind a rock as he watched the little chick appear in front of the eagle.

The eagle’s eyes immediately turned frosty upon seeing something intrude into its cave.

Li Tianming hoped that since the little chick looked so harmless, it would be ignored. Alas, Li Tianming had underestimated a wildbeast’s intuition. High ranked ones like this may not have intelligence, but they were full of life experience. The bloodline pressure radiating off this little Aeternal Infernal Phoenix was enough to make it regard the little chick fiercely and seriously.

“Whatcha looking at, huh? I’ll descale you if you keep staring!” The little chick continued to swagger. It had assumed that the eagle would drop the manna and chase it down, like that crocodile in the past.

However, it guessed wrongly. Instead, the eagle turned its beak onto itself, tearing a bloody hole in its own body to stuff the manna inside. It was simply too ruthless. It didn’t choose to put it down on the ground or swallow it, as that would make it explode. Even though it was now bleeding, the coldness in the eagle’s eyes didn’t vanish.

Once done, it flapped its wings and rushed the little chick!

The plan had failed; a head-on battle was the only choice left. A commotion in this Chasm of Flora would definitely draw many wildbeasts over, possibly even five and six-star beasts! Li Tianming had to resolve it quickly.

“Get him, Ying Huo!”

Li Tianming rushed out from the side. His chain was wrapped around his right hand and his left black hand was already gloveless. He was ready for close quarters combat.

The Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle took the incoming threats seriously, choosing to immediately start with its innate ability, Jedefire Armour! The dark-green fire around it began to blaze even more wildly as it transformed into a layer of fiery scale armour. It looked exactly like its own scales, but now it could burn. It wasn’t just defensive in nature; it also lent all its attacks burn damage!

Chapter 116 - The Little Chick’s Second Spiritsource Ability

Having fought side by side for many times already, Li Tianming could synergise very well with the little chick. Their opponent was a wildbeast from the Abyssal Battlefield, which meant that this battle was a race against time, especially since it had royal manna. To make things worse, its spiritsource ability, the Jedefire Armor, was already activated.

“We need to get rid of its ability first, or we can’t even harm it!”

“How?”

“Try your Infernal Blaze.”

The Infernal Blaze was born from within the little chick's infernal source, and it was a terrifying flame that was surely superior to the Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle's green flames.

Before Li Tianming could even finish his sentence, the little chick had already released a blazing phoenix from its mouth. The phoenix projection took flight and dashed towards the eagle, the two of them meeting in mid-air a moment later. The Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle was a fire-type beast to begin with, and against an attack of the same element it did not even see a need to block it.

With an explosion, the blazing phoenix shattered in mid-air! But to the eagle's surprise, a layer of Infernal Blaze had caught onto its body, adding another crimson layer on top of its Jadedfire Armor. The greenish hue surrounding the eagle turned red, and the encroaching flames began to block out some of its vision. While the Infernal Blaze couldn't harm the eagle yet, it had covered the layer of Jadedfire Armor, nullifying any possibility of being burnt by the ability.

"Now's our chance! Get it!"

Since the Infernal Blaze would burn on forever, the Jadedfire Armor would only get thinner with time, meaning that the eagle would also become weaker and weaker!

Li Tianming and Ying Huo picked this opportunity to strike. The eagle had yet to realise that its spirit source ability was not functioning, its focus entirely on Li Tianming. With a piercing shriek, it flapped its wings and swooped onto Li Tianming with its swift claws and razor-sharp beaks. The force of its strike was strong enough to tear the cave down, let alone Li Tianming.

And yet, Li Tianming was just so much faster. Air parted as his chainblade struck out, wrapping and binding the eagle several times over. The Blazing Dragon Fang, however, failed to stab into the eagle, blocked by the Jadedfire Armor.

"What a thick-skinned bird!"

The Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle specialized in close-ranged combat, capitalising on its brute strength, and this strategy was further augmented through its tough armor. Throughout the battle, Li Tianming's Three-Spring Heavy Strikes and Ying Huo's Three-Spring Heavy Claws had landed onto the eagle multiple times, but nothing had happened. The Jadedfire Armor had absorbed all of their attacks, and if it wasn't for the layer of Infernal Blaze coating the eagle, the duo would have been scalded a few times.

Nothing seemed able to get past the eagle's defences. It would be a daunting task for any beastmaster at eighth level Spirit source to take down this wildbeast, and even Li Tianming's Blazing Dragon Chainblade couldn't shred its armor!

Perhaps the only good news was that the eagle was heavily reliant on its armor, meaning that it couldn't catch up with the duo's agility. Besides, most of its attacks were fire-typed as well, meaning that they were meaningless against the two fire-immune monsters.

It was no kick for the duo to fend off the eagle's attack, but what they were afraid of was attracting other combatants over from the commotion.

"About time!" Even though time was working against them, Li Tianming and Ying Huo didn't look like they were panicking at all. At that moment, the little chick let out a cold snicker, and only then did the

Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle realise that the layer of flame from the little chick had chewed a hole through its spiritsource ability!

The eagle screamed; an action born from a primal fear. At the same time, the little chick drilled through the hole in the Jedefire Armor, leaving the eagle's body exposed.

"Die!" Now nothing could stop it from killing the eagle! The eagle was forced to withdraw its ability, or it would actually hinder itself from trying to lose the little chick.

But that had also given Li Tianming more opportunities to attack.

"End it fast!" He appeared in front of the eagle, who was exchanging claw strikes with Ying Huo. Clang! Metallic shrieks rang through the cave as two sets of claws, one big and one small, clashed over and over.

"Look here." Li Tianming brought his left hand up directly in front of the eagle. The eagle that was still battling a split second ago was instantly distracted by the Bewildering Eye.

The Bewildering Eye had the power to daze even Lin Xiaoting, let alone a wildbeast. It was especially effective, since wildbeasts had an extreme weakness to illusory attacks due to their lack of intelligence.

Even though the Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle was only stunned briefly, that brief moment was enough for Li Tianming and Ying Huo to achieve a lot of things. First, the little chick struck forward, its Netherfire Ghostclaw tearing through the eagle's flesh and reaching straight for the royal manna. At the same time, Li Tianming's Blazing Dragon Chainblade pierced through the eagle's mouth, punching through the back of its head!

With one last dying shriek, the Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle took its final breath. For a creature with minimal intelligence, it was an admirable effort.

If the duo decided to just run off with the manna, the eagle won't let them go easily. This would compromise their locations; killing the eagle was the safest bet.

On top of that, Li Tianming was interested in the Jedefire Armor, considering how hard it was. He wanted to do an experiment, and test out if the little chick was a wildbeast or a lifebound beast, or in fact a mixture of both.

"Ying Huo, hide the manna. Give me a minute to refine its beast soul." Li Tianming didn't waste any time as he started on purgatory refinement.

"I will keep watch." Ying Huo was curious to whether it could refine the beast souls of wildbeasts into its own spiritsources. The Infernal Blaze was a product of its own bloodline, not obtained from wildbeasts like regular spiritsource abilities.

As the little chick guarded the entrance to the cave, Li Tianming focused on his purgatory refinement. It was a special technique that he had learned three years ago, and also an important technique that all beastmasters at Spiritsource would need to learn. With purgatory refinement, beastmasters could obtain the beast soul of wildbeasts and channel it into their own lifebound beast's spiritsource.

The Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle was killed by Li Tianming, and wildbeasts would always fear whoever killed them. Even death wouldn't change this deeply-etched fear, and more importantly, the stronger their fear, the higher the refinement's success rate was.

Another factor that determined the result of purgatory refinement would be the power of the beastmaster and the lifebound beast's bloodline, and there was no doubt that Li Tianming and Ying Huo had the strongest bloodline!

Slowly, a mysterious, glowing blob of ectoplasm had peeled off the beast's body, converging into a gaseous orb atop Li Tianming's hands. The orb's shape was constantly shifting, but one thing remained constant — it was a miniature figure of a Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle.

That ball was the beast soul. It was said to be a merge between a wildbeast's soul and its spirit-source ability. The few drops of blood, in the middle of the sphere, represented the bloodline of the wildbeast, while the ectoplasm was its soul. The beast soul could only sustain its form for less than a minute, before it would dissipate completely.

Once Li Tianming was done, he dashed straight towards the little chick.

"Open up."

The little chick eagerly opened its little beak and slurped the beast soul in, letting out a satisfying burp a moment later.

"Let's go, you can try to refine it on the go. Ling'er, you control the Celestial Wings, and let's get out of here first," Li Tianming instructed.

"Alright."

Jiang Feiling controlled the Celestial Wings and led Li Tianming and the little chick away from this chasm. The little chick rested in Li Tianming's palms as it performed the second half of purgatory refinement. This part would require the little chick to channel the beast soul into its infernal-source and convert it into its own spirit-source ability.

"Usually, the number of spirit-source abilities a beast can have depends on its stars and the number of spirit-sources. But it's different for you, since you only have one infernal-source and already had an ability. Normally speaking, you should only be able to have a single spirit-source ability, so I'm not sure how this will go," Li Tianming muttered.

"Just let me eat it." The little chick rolled its eyes. The method Li Tianming taught it was much more complicated and time consuming, and Ying Huo being the lazy thing it was, decided to take matters into its own claws. Without any hesitation, Ying Huo swallowed the beast soul and channeled it into its infernal-source, where the soul vapourised almost instantly. However, a mysterious power remained in its infernal-source.

Almost immediately, the little chick began to tremble, a newfound might leaking out of its body. Its origin was the infernal-source, which had taken in the beast soul. The sight of a flaming phoenix — the representation of the Infernal Blaze spirit-source ability — floating above the infernal-source was a usual one, lonely and mighty as it absorbed beast ki day in and day out.

But this solitude was about to end.

A small explosion rang out, and a crimson orb, around the size of the flaming phoenix, rose from the infernal source to join it.

The beast soul was like a catalyst, a trigger that enabled this absurd process. Although the beast soul's power was nothing compared to the little chick's, without it, this reaction would not have happened.

And yet, whatever the reason, whatever the cause, only one fact now mattered: a new spirit source ability had been born.

Chapter 117 - I am the Seventh Prince of Torch Dragon

The little chick had gained another ability apart from Infernal Blaze.

"This ability's creation is like a spirit source ability's, but it has its differences." Li Tianming was excited. This was the best possible answer for him.

"Big brother, what does that mean?" Jiang Feiling asked curiously.

The little chick was currently familiarising itself with this new ability.

Above the infernal source, the phoenix and crimson ball of fire were vying to be the brightest. The crimson ball of fire actually seemed like a sun.

"Usually speaking, beast souls from wildbeasts would make up eighty percent of a spirit source ability, while the remaining twenty percent will be covered by the bloodline of the lifebound beast. However, Ying Huo's is different! The wildbeast's beast soul only provides an opportunity, a model, making only an infinitesimal contribution to the ability. Most of it is made up of Ying Huo's own bloodline power."

This was a miraculous aspect of Primordial Chaos Beasts. Before this, Li Tianming had always had his doubts if it was a wildbeast or lifebound beast. Now, he had his answer. It had the properties of both. Hidden within Ying Huo's bloodline were terrifying abilities sealed up by bloodline shackles. However, the beast souls of wildbeasts were like a key that could open the gates, allowing it to unlock new abilities.

These abilities were both innate abilities and spirit source abilities! What the exact name was didn't matter.

All that mattered was its strength.

"From now on, manna can strengthen our bloodline and bodies. Our powers will soar, becoming more and more heaven-defying. Beast souls can let Ying Huo unlock the abilities hidden in his Primordial Chaos Beast bloodline. Of course, both manna and beast souls must be suitable, and this Abyssal Battlefield just so happens to be filled with them. Furthermore, Ling'er is here to help me find treasures. This was simply tailor-made for my rise!"

"I wonder if Ying Huo can refine the royal manna." That would make the current situation even more perfect.

While he was lost in thought, the little chick had already mastered its second ability.

“How is it?” Li Tianming asked.

“It creates armour, like the Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle’s ability. However, the fire used is instead the Infernal Blaze,” the little chick said.

“Giving it a try?”

“Naturally!” The little chick already couldn’t wait.

Flying towards Li Tianming, it belched out a giant fireball at him. However, Li Tianming didn’t feel any pain. The Infernal Blaze was incapable of harming his Aeternal Infernal Body. Instead, the fireball dissolved into a layer of armour-like fire that covered his body, giving his entire body a comprehensive protection. Immediately, the current Li Tianming seemed like a fiery war god!

The Jade-Scaled Flaming Eagle’s Jedefire Armour looked like scales. However, Li Tianming’s rendition of this ability was a plumage of fiery feathers.

“With that, your attacks have the power of my Infernal Blaze too,” the little chick said arrogantly. “Also, this Infernal Armour has mighty defensive power, even greater than that wildbeast just now.”

The little chick naturally made accurate assessments of its abilities.

While this ability worked similarly to Jedefire Armour, it had changed fundamentally. It wasn’t just stronger, but also possessed room to develop even further.

It could also be used on Li Tianming, which meant he technically had this ability too.

“Can you use it on yourself?” Li Tianming asked.

“Duh.” This time, the little chick didn’t need to open its mouth for a magnificent set of Infernal Armour to appear on its body.

“Not bad. I look like an awesome fiery war god, while you look like a fiery war chicken.” Li Tianming smiled.

“Fiery war phoenix, not chicken!”

Li Tianming laughed in response. This Infernal Armour could only be used by him and the little chick. Without the Aeternal Infernal Body, others wouldn’t be able to survive wearing it.

The Infernal Blaze was the little chick’s trump card, which had been invincible thus far. Now, this new ability made defense with it possible too.

“Does this mean if we keep hunting wildbeasts, we can unlock new abilities ad infinitum?” Li Tianming asked.

“Not necessarily. We just happened to meet a suitable type today. I changed a lot after becoming a lifebound beast, so I’m not sure. Still, things like growth should be done step by step,” the little chick said seriously.

“Oh. I guess I’ll keep this manna for now then.”

“Scram! I want to eat it now!” To the little chick, manna was even more attractive than beast souls.

Li Tianming laughed at the little chick.

For now, Li Tianming first extinguished his new armour as it was too eye-catching. They needed to find a safe place for the little chick to absorb the manna.

Li Tianming surreptitiously advanced for half a day before settling on a mountain stream without any wildbeasts around. Dense vegetation filled the area, which served to conceal them well. Only trees with strong vitality could grow here.

A vast, quiet lake lay in front of Li Tianming. He chose this from his experience with the lake in Red Twill Mountain. The lake back then had been completely pitch-black, and only his third eye could see in it.

Now, if he met any dangers, he could use this lake to escape. This made it possibly the safest place in the whole Abyssal Battlefield.

Li Tianming made some preparations. He dug out a small cave, sealing it with a rock after burying the little chick and the manna inside. Refining the manna would cause a commotion, but Li Tianming hoped to reduce it as much as possible. Anyway, digging a cave for Ying Huo wasn't very hard, given the little chick's size.

Once everything was ready, Li Tianming sat on a nearby tree and started casually chatting with Jiang Feiling. "Last time, Ying Huo took quite a while to refine that ordinary manna. Now that it's royal manna, I wonder how long he'll take."

"Ordinary people need a month or two. Ying Huo is scary enough as it is, I've never seen a beastmaster and beast with such strong bloodlines." Jiang Feiling sighed in amazement. With Spiritual Attachment, she was actually very clear on the condition of Li Tianming's body. The only thing she was barred from was the mysterious lifebound space.

Jiang Feiling had already long known Li Tianming was abnormal. However, unlike Mu Qingqing, she wouldn't tell anyone, even Jiang Qingluan.

Li Tianming spent his time polishing his Godsoul Canon and Soulless Seven Howls. He had already achieved great accomplishments with his Bewildering Eye, and the second stage could appear at any time now.

As for the Soulless Seven Howls, it was a supreme source-ranked battle art, but Li Tianming had found the knack to it. Hence, training it wasn't difficult.

All of a sudden, a male's cold voice rang out from nearby.

"Who's here!"

"Someone's here!" Li Tianming believed his hiding place was a great one, but he was still unlucky enough to run into someone.

The two discovered each other at the same time. Li Tianming jumped off his tree, standing a hundred metres in front of where the little chick was hidden to block the newcomer's path. The man was already so close that the minuscule aura leaking from the refining process was noticeable.

“A lifebound beast refining manna. To actually do that in the Abyssal Battlefield. Courage? Or stupidity?”
The man landed on the ground, scattering the fallen leaves that covered the area.

The young man was dressed in a set of red robes, and possessed long red hair. His arms were also very thick, longer than ordinary people by ten centimetres. Overall, he wasn't very good-looking, but instead rather ferocious.

His vicious gaze passed by Li Tianming to land on where the little chick was, and he couldn't resist a chuckle. "I see it. I suppose this means your lifebound beast must be some small and pitiful thing."

"Refining manna takes days at the least. If I were you, I would have hidden it away, not show it off like this and give others the chance to snatch it away."

Clearly, the young man wasn't aware that the little chick was refining royal manna. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been speaking so calmly.

"Speak your name. Are you from Vermilion Bird or Aquamarine? I assume Vermilion Bird, given the fire type." The young man's expression was disdainful. Aquamarine's territory mainly consisted of islands, so they didn't have much external conflicts.

However, Torch Dragon and Vermilion Bird had both been founded on fire, so much friction existed between them!

If so, this newcomer was likely from Torch Dragon.

"It's only polite to introduce yourself first," Li Tianming said.

"Ha! I am Ji Changyan, the seventh prince of Torch Dragon!" Ji Changyan sneered. As soon as he determined Li Tianming's identity, he would take action. It wasn't fear. It was simply to decide whether to go for the kill or just defeat him. If he had a high status? Defeat. If he had low status? Then kill! To him, anyone could be killed as long as they weren't a Vermilion Bird prince or of a Sanctum Potentate's direct line of descent!

"What do we do, big brother? Ying Huo is busy and the opponent definitely has a lifebound beast. Two versus one, and we can't let them touch Ying Huo..." Jiang Feiling was naturally worried with the odds stacked against them. In such a situation, there wasn't the slightest room for any mistakes.

Chapter 118 - The First One To Die Is You!

Ji Changyan had already drawn his weapon when he asked for Li Tianming's name. It was a fiery lance about two meters in length, its body covered by burning dragon scales. One look, and anyone would know that it was a top-tier grade five bestial weapon!

The weapon pointed at Li Tianming was called the Crimson Dragon Lance.

Ji Changyan was quite glad to meet such an opponent on the Abyssal Battlefield, especially one that was stupid enough to let his lifebound beast refine manna on the spot. That was no different from serving him the manna on a silver platter.

“Speak, what is your name!” Ji Changyan's eyes shone, ready to strike the moment Li Tianming replied.

While Jiang Feiling was still nervous about the impending fight, Li Tianming laughed out. "I'm your father, the Torch Dragon King. Son, do you not recognise your own daddy?"

Ji Changyan snickered. "Alright, that just answered the question of whether I should defeat or kill you."

In the Abyssal Battlefield, they were all rivals, opponents. The only problem was that no one knew what the rules were yet.

"Tian Zhu, come out." As the prince charged towards Li Tianming, a huge lifebound beast leapt out of his body. It was a huge snake, its body covered in blood-red scales! On closer inspection, the snake had talons, making it look more like one of those mystical dragons. The only thing lacking was a horn on its head, making it an incomplete picture.

"Ever heard of the 'Volcanic Torch Dragon' from the royal Torch Dragon Clan?" Ji Changyan sneered.

"What Volcanic Torch Dragon? I'm pretty sure that is not a real Torch Dragon, looks more like a Volcanic Drake to me." Li Tianming shrugged.

For any member of the royal Torch Dragon Clan, it was an insult to call their Volcanic Torch Dragon a lesser drake, and Ji Changyan flared up almost instantly.

"Your lifebound beast can't battle, so you may as well speak your last words now," Ji Changyan said.

Li Tianming frowned. "What for? None of us knows the rules yet. Killing me might be pointless. Besides, your lifebound beast is already seven-stars, so you have no use for the manna."

It was true that the Volcanic Drake was a seven-star beast, making it a menacing foe. However, Li Tianming did not mention that he had an royal manna, or their conversation might have just ended right there. All that Li Tianming wanted was to see if Ji Changyan knew anything more about the Abyssal Trials than he did, and to make sure that he wasn't the only one kept in the dark.

"Even then, I have my reasons to kill you, not just because it means one less competitor for me, but also because you are from Vermilion Bird!" For thousands of years, the two nations had not seen eye to eye, and many clashes had happened between the two.

"Prepare to die!" Ji Changyan leered, confident with a numerical advantage.

"Ling'er, don't worry, the two of us have nothing to fear." Responding to Ji Changyan's attack, Li Tianming drew his Blazing Dragon Chainblade and dashed forward. The chainblade resonated as it swung towards Ji Changyan, the screeching metallic sound enough to give people chills.

"Alright, big brother!" She was indeed worried at first, since she had never had to face such vicious people in her life before. But with Li Tianming by her side, she could pick up her courage and put her faith in him.

It was the Abyssal Battlefield, and each battle was one of life and death. She had been protected well in her formative years, and in such a scenario, she had to be terrified. Perhaps the only thing that could calm her down was the soothing, regular beat of Li Tianming's heart. She could feel his composure, his determination.

"Do as I say and use the Temporal Field!" Li Tianming said, before clashing with Ji Changyan.

“Alright!” Jiang Feiling activated her second ability, and an invisible sphere enveloped the region. The Temporal Field was as mysterious as the Spiritual Attachment, and Ji Changyan’s movements instantly slowed.

Ji Changyan could never imagine that there was a power to control time in this world. From his point of view, he and his torch dragon weren’t the slow ones, and instead, it was Li Tianming that was too fast. This was partially the case since Li Tianming was indeed faster now, not to mention that he was also boosted by the invisible Celestial Wings and his Flaming Shadow Flash!

Jiang Feiling was working at full power, with the Spiritual Attachment, Temporal Field, and Celestial Wings all activated at full blast! Ji Changyan thought it was a two on one battle, and it was true that if he was only against Li Tianming, then he didn’t even need his torch dragon to kill Li Tianming. But with Jiang Feiling here, things were different!

“Die!” With a twist of his hands, Ji Changyan used the ‘Soul-Piercing Draconic Lance’, an advanced source-ranked art. The flurry of piercing lances were like a cyclone, ki blasting out and striking at Li Tianming from all angles.

At the same time, the Volcanic Torch Dragon dug into the ground, and the land within fifty meters of it began to burn. It was one of its spiritsource abilities, ‘Scorched Earth’! It didn’t end there. The raging inferno began to converge, creating dragon-shaped flames that closed in on Li Tianming. It was its second spiritsource ability, the Volcanic Dragon Breath! With Ji Changyan’s identity, his seven-star lifebound beast probably knew seven different kinds of spiritsource abilities, making it a troublesome opponent!

And yet, Li Tianming was immune to fire. While that didn’t equate to being invincible to all of Ji Changyan’s attacks, Li Tianming was fearless when it came to fire attacks. He would still die if his opponent’s weapon pierced into him, but Scorched Earth felt like a tickle to him.

Just then, a fireball shot out from the ‘secret chamber’ behind him and wrapped around Li Tianming. It was Ying Huo’s spiritsource ability, the Infernal Armour. Even though the little chick was focused on refining the manna, it could still find a way to help Li Tianming. With the Infernal Armour on his body, Li Tianming was even less afraid of the Volcanic Torch Dragon, since most of its attacks were now useless on him!

“Thanks bro!” Li Tianming wasn’t even scared of Ji Changyan to begin with, but now that Ying Huo had given some help...

While Li Tianming was still trapped inside the Scorched Earth ability, Ji Changyan continued to attack from various angles, each of his stabs fierce and deadly! The torch dragon had also emerged from the ground many times to attack Li Tianming with its bestial arts, some of them narrowly missing Li Tianming.

What’s the point? We just met, after all. Li Tianming shook his head and asked, “Are you really planning to kill me?”

“I was planning on just defeating you and letting you live if you had a strong family background. But I’ve changed my mind!” Ji Changyan’s eyes were bloodshot.

“Why?” Li Tianming asked.

“Can’t you see? It’s called the Abyssal Trials, and only one person will live through the trials! One of us is not leaving this place alive!” Ji Changyan hissed. “Only the survivor has the right to go to Heaven’s Elysium! I’m not sure what the others think, but I’m not giving this chance to anyone else! I was born in Torch Dragon, and perhaps it’s my fate to stay there for the rest of my life. But this is my only chance to escape from that destiny! Therefore, I shall kill everyone else in this Abyssal Battlefield, until I’m the only one left alive in this Azure Domain! Once that happens, who else can the Elysium choose then?”

“You said that there are no rules to this game? Well, here are the damned rules!” Ji Changyan screamed hysterically as he continued to wave his lance at Li Tianming.

His coordination with the Volcanic Torch Dragon was superb, but for all their efforts, nothing could pierce through Li Tianming’s Infernal Armour! His attacks were already a lot weaker since elemental damage was ineffective, not to mention that his movements were also slower than usual.

“Ji Changyan, I know not what the rules to this game are, nor do I want to make random guesses or refute your argument. But I can tell you that if you want to kill every single person in this Azure Domain, then the first one to die will be you!” Li Tianming made a move as he finished speaking.

At this moment, the Volcanic Torch Dragon swam through the ground, leaping up from beneath and biting onto Li Tianming’s legs! But Li Tianming had the Infernal Armour, and it nearly scalded its own tongue.

At the same time, Li Tianming lowered his left hand, the Bewildering Eye on it facing the torch dragon. Beast ki flowed through the eighty-one spirit veins on the eye as he used it, and the effects showed immediately.

A ghost seemed to whisper in its ears a moment later. Combined with the illusion abilities of the Bewildering Eye, the torch dragon sank into a nightmare immediately.

Soulless Seven Howls, first stance!

The Blazing Dragon Chainblade ripped across the torch dragon’s body, tearing open its skin!

With a shriek, the Volcanic Torch Dragon plunged back into the earth like a worm, leaving behind a bloodsoaked patch of land.

“Just die already!” Ji Changyan approached from the side.

The Blazing Dragon Chainblade struck again with a wicked howl, the tip flying towards Ji Changyan. The body of the chainblade wrapped around the Crimson Dragon Lance, while the Blazing Dragon Fang stabbed into Ji Changyan’s arm!

“AHH!” Crying from the pain, Ji Changyan let go of the lance, which Li Tianming pulled and sent it flying into the air!

The next instance, the torch dragon reappeared, a stream of flame flowing out of its mouth towards Li Tianming. It was its third spirit-source ability, the Magma Blast!

Metal shrieked again. With another swing of the Blazing Dragon Chainblade, the sound of evil ghosts rang in the torch dragon's ears, renewing the mental torment. The torch dragon slowed for the briefest of moments, which was more than enough for the chainblade to prepare its next strike.

The moment the torch dragon opened its mouth to use the Magma Blast, Li Tianming's Blazing Dragon Chainblade plunged into the flames, into its mouth and down the throat! The torch dragon stiffened — the chainblade had pierced through its inwards.

With one last whimper, the Volcanic Torch Dragon collapsed onto the ground, lifeless.

Chapter 119 - Until He's Drenched In Blood!

When Li Tianming pulled out the Blazing Dragon Chainblade, he had yanked out all of the Volcanic Drake's internal organs as well. Of course, that meant that the remaining Magma Blast had splashed all over his body too. If it was someone like Wei Guohao was here, that would be fatal, but that candlelight was useless against the Molten Infernal Armor!

"Ji Changyan, still planning to kill me now?" Li Tianming walked out of the flames unharmed, like a devil from the depths of hell.

Li Tianming had his own principles. He wasn't one to pick a fight with others, but he would show no mercy if others were to provoke him first. Such were the rules of the martial world, where only the strongest survived. He was not strong enough three years ago, which resulted in Midas' death!

He never considered himself to be a merciful person, and in fact there were quite some people he had grudges with in Ignispolis. If it wasn't for his gratitude towards Sage Chen, Chen Yao and Xue Lan would be on his hit list.

"Tian Zhu!" Ji Changyan's face was distorted with anger, "I will kill you and shred your corpse to pieces!"

Ji Changyan's eyes burned red as he attacked once again.

"What for?" Li Tianming had thought that the death of his lifebound beast was enough to extinguish his will to fight.

"You know nothing! The Abyssal Trials is a battle of life and death, and none shall be spared from it! I don't know who you may be, but with your naivety you aren't gonna get far!"

"But I'm not the one who's going to die here," Li Tianming said.

"So what? I have come prepared, and I'm ready to die in this Abyssal Battlefield. I failed, because I underestimated you!" Even Ji Changyan's eyes were bleeding.

"Why?"

"I was born in Torch Dragon, with the rest of my life decided before I even reach twenty. This is not the life I want to live. I want to leave the country and explore the rest of Flameyellow Continent, even if I end up dying outside my hometown!"

Li Tianming remembered that Jiang Qingluan had mentioned something along these lines before. It appeared that royal heirs like them seemed to have a particularly strong longing for the outside world. He sighed. "Forget it, I will give you a chance. If you want to leave, I will let you go now."

"Ha! What makes you think I can't kill you by myself!" Ji Changyan sent his Crimson Dragon Lance flying forward once more.

That young man had gone completely mad. In that case, there was only one thing left for Li Tianming to do.

Li Tianming readied his Soulless Seven Howls as Ji Changyan recklessly charged up to him. Howls and cries echoed as the Blazing Dragon Chainblade pierced through Ji Changyan's body from an unexpected angle.

Blood flew.

Ji Changyan crumpled over, his eyes wide open as he stared at Li Tianming.

"What's your name?"

"Li Tianming."

"And which clan are you from?"

"Just a farmer."

"Ha! Just a farmer!" That was the last thing Ji Changyan said before he stopped breathing.

Li Tianming took a deep breath. His foe had chosen an inopportune time to fight, and yet, Li Tianming had still won. Ji Changyan had made a mistake by underestimating Li Tianming, and the price he paid was the premature end to his grand ambitions. That said, he couldn't find any joy from this astounding victory. He thought about what Ji Changyan said about the Abyssal Trials, and realised that he couldn't refute anything that the dead prince had claimed. What exactly was the purpose of the Abyssal Trials, and was it really a battle royale where only one person could remain standing?

"Big brother, is the Abyssal Trials really this cruel? Do you think Heaven's Elysium will arrange it such that only one person can live through this?" Jiang Feiling's voice trembled.

"That's not necessarily true, don't scare yourself." Li Tianming comforted her. It was to console himself as well, since he too wanted to avoid that terrifying idea.

"But, Qing'er... Qing'er is here too... I don't want her to die..." Jiang Feiling whimpered.

That was the thing that Li Tianming feared the most too. He could not give a damn about anyone else, including Chen Hao, Xing Que or Mo Lin. But there was simply no way Li Tianming could kill Jiang Qingluan. He would never let her die here!

"Don't worry too much about it. This guy probably just went crazy from his own speculations, and he's already dead because of it," Li Tianming suggested.

"Big brother, I think I understand now."

“What?”

“The scariest thing about this Abyssal Trials is not that only one person can make it out alive. It’s the fear of not knowing the rules. At this rate, more and more people will become like Ji Changyan.”

Li Tianming nodded in agreement. How long more will they have to struggle in the dark before eventually being consumed by the shadows like Ji Changyan did?

“Big brother, can we go somewhere else? I don’t want to see the body,” Jiang Feiling said.

“You don’t like it when I kill?”

“Not that.”

“Then?”

“I don’t know... Perhaps I’m too ignorant to feel others’ pain. But at least I can hear the voice in your heart. Even if I don’t like all the killing and fighting, I’m willing to put my faith in you.”

“Ling’er, I won’t let you down.” Li Tianming looked up into the sky. The dark clouds felt more depressing than ever, the rumbling thunder fitting his mood.

“This is a living hell for us, and many aren’t gonna leave this place alive... we are truly pieces on a chessboard. In that case, who are the players of this accursed game?”

Either way, that person needs to die!

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Li Tianming swiftly incinerated Ji Changyan and his Volcanic Torch Dragon, tossing the Crimson Dragon Lance into the bottom of the lake. A day later, the little chick refined the manna successfully.

With an explosion, Ying Huo emerged from its chamber.

Li Tianming looked at it eagerly, interested to see its new appearance. But sadly, Ying Huo was still Ying Huo, the size of his palm and looking tender as ever. In fact, the only difference was that a little horn shorter than a centimeter had popped out from the top of its head, making it even cuter.

He didn’t know what to say to its new appearance. What happened to the cool Primordial Chaos Beast that he was promised? How could anyone take him seriously with a lifebound beast like this?

“What? What’s wrong with me being forever young?” the little chick said with a tinge of guilt.

“Look at you, and you are still thinking of banging chicks every day? Do you know no shame?” Li Tianming laughed.

“Li Tianming! You may bully me now, but one day. One day!”

“One day?”

“My willy will be bigger than your head!” the little chick screeched.

“Haha...”

With a brother like this, no matter how cruel the Trials might be, Li Tianming found his confidence again. It was never his style to be pessimistic in the first place. All that mattered for now, was to protect his loved ones and kill his foes!

“Let me have a look.” He noticed that a new star had appeared in the little chick’s eyes. Furthermore, he could sense that at seven stars, the power from the little chick’s bloodline felt much stronger than regular seven-star beasts!

“Wanna find a place to cultivate and try it out?” Only through symbiotic cultivation could the benefits of this evolution be transferred over to Li Tianming.

The little chick turned its head away proudly. “Well, now you are begging me for my help? Who was the one laughing at me just now?”

“You coming or not?” Li Tianming flexed his left arm.

“Yes boss, right away boss.” And so, the little chick’s dictatorship ended, strangled in its cradle.

They found another secluded place before running their Aeternal Infernal Codex. It had been a while since Li Tianming last felt the bloodline of the Aeternal Infernal Phoenix empowering his own body. Not only did his beast veins strengthen, his infernalsource was bigger and more stable than ever. His Aeternal Infernal Physique had been enhanced, and even his mind felt clearer than ever!

Even though Ying Huo seemed to have just gained a little horn, the royal manna had brought its power to a new level, making it stronger than most seven-star beasts! Once they were done with the cultivation, their strength would defy their cultivation level by leaps and bounds. Ying Huo’s new ability was something worth mentioning too. All these further boosted Li Tianming’s confidence.

“We should prioritize finding Jiang Qingluan first. We’ll be a lot less worried with her by our side,” Li Tianming suggested.

“Yeah, I’m really worried that she might run into someone like Ji Changyan too,” Jiang Feiling said.

“Let’s go.” They departed, determined to explore and find Jiang Qingluan.

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Day six of the Abyssal Trials!

“What is that?” Li Tianming looked forward and saw a thin membrane that looked like the Heavenly Pattern Barrier.

“Have we reached the edge of the Azure Domain already?” Jiang Feiling asked. The barrier was set around the borders of the domain, and encapsulated the whole region.

“No, this shouldn’t be the border of the Azure Domain!” Li Tianming frowned. He stood three meters in front of the Heavenly Pattern Barrier and observed it quietly.

And then, two meters, one meter...

“The barrier is closing in on us,” he concluded.

The Heavenly Pattern Barrier was a huge sphere, where the top half of the sphere encapsulated the Azure Domain. But now, the barrier was closing in, suggesting that the sphere was gradually shrinking!

“If this continues, it means that the barrier will slowly shrink to nothing at all. Sooner or later, all of us will be forced to meet up at the center! This barrier works only on beastmasters and lifebound beasts, and won’t affect wildbeasts...” Li Tianming knew that at this rate, they would end up all together at the same place.

And when that happens, what would the rules of this game be? He didn’t know, but that would definitely be the last day of the Abyssal Trials.

After this new discovery, they continued their search for Jiang Qingluan. However, instead of Jiang Qingluan, they found two unexpected people instead. It was Chen Hao and Xing Que! The twins must have been really lucky to run into each other, since their fighting strength was now doubled.

When Li Tianming found them, the two had seen Li Tianming as well, which brought a smile to their faces. Two of them, against a single Li Tianming in the Abyssal Battlefield? It was like their birthday came early this year.

They probably wouldn’t kill him just yet, but at the very least, they would have Li Tianming banging his head at their feet, begging for mercy.

Until his head blew up from fear.

Chapter 120 - One Swing And Boulders Will Shatter!

“Coincidence, a coincidence indeed!” Chen Hao snickered. He was wearing a sky-blue robe, his handsome features clearly inherited from his father.

He approached Li Tianming threateningly, but his mind was full of the slap that his father gave him because of Li Tianming, a shame that he would never forget.

Furthermore, while Li Tianming was posturing in Heaven’s Sanctum, his mother had been throwing fits randomly. At the same time, his youngest brother had lost his will to cultivate, opting to waste away in the institute instead. If these changes weren’t due to Li Tianming, then no one else would be responsible.

“To think that you’ll offer yourself up! What good luck!” With his plate armour and bulky physique, Xing Que looked just like a general on a battlefield, ready to slaughter at a moment’s notice.

They were the heirs of the Xing & Chen Merchantry, born with silver spoons in their mouths. Therefore, both of them had weapons and armour that fitted their status. For instance, Xing Que’s robe was made of the toughest silvery threads, making it a grade five armor. If it wasn’t for the Elysium’s regulations, they would probably have equipped even better equipment.

As they spoke, the two of them closed in on Li Tianming, one from the left and the other from the right.

“To meet us here... you’re just plain unlucky.” Chen Hao’s eyes seemed to house daggers, the conflict between him and Li Tianming playing over and over in his mind.

“Li Tianming, your wings aren’t going to let you escape today. I promised to teach you a lesson you can never forget, and today is the day for that!” Xing Que spoke calmly, but his words were tinged with an authority that made him sound irrefutable.

“Brother, shall we?” Xing Que asked Chen Hao, who was on the opposite side.

“No, let me do this myself. There are some things I need to prove to my father!” Chen Hao’s eyes glowed oddly, as if that slap was still hurting him.

“Alright, I’ll keep a lookout for you.” That was necessary since they needed to watch out for other competitors, and also to ensure Li Tianming couldn’t escape from this.

With a golden glow, Xing Que’s lifebound beast leapt out of his lifebound space. It was a golden tiger, two meters tall, six meters long and sparking with starlight! The single, sharp horn on its head was the most eye-catching of all, the golden light it was giving off turning heads.

It was the low-tier seven-star beast, the Solar Horned Tiger, a star-type terrestrial beast! The Solar Horned Tiger symbolised the Xing Mansion, since it was with this beast that Sage Xing rose to the top of the nation by defeating many opponents. That was the reason why the Starry Sages were also known as the Lion and Tiger Sages. Right now, Sage Xing’s tiger was at its prime, while Xing Que’s beast was still a mere beastling. And yet, it was still a terrifying foe for the current Li Tianming.

As Xing Que rode the Solar Horned Tiger and sealed off Li Tianming’s escape route, Chen Hao’s lifebound beast appeared in front of Li Tianming. His brother’s Hex-Starred Clinquant Lion was brilliant enough, yet it was nothing compared to Chen Hao’s lifebound beast!

It was an even more magnificent lion, every inch of its fur glowing like starlight. Even more fascinating were the giant wings that grew out of the sides of its ribs, almost as big as the Eight-Winged Goldroc’s. It was the Hepta-Starred Winged Lion, another low-tier seven-star beast!

For everyone attending the Abyssal Trials, a seven-star beast was the minimum standard. Even if it was just a low-tier one, its power would still be far stronger than that of six-star beasts. For royal beasts, the difference between each tier was quite significant, and they would have been another level ahead if their beasts were mid-tier.

Even though the Hepta-Starred Winged Lion had wings, it was still a star-type terrestrial beast, a royal beast like the Solar Horned Tiger. Any royal beast that grew to its prime would join the top echelons of Vermilion Bird.

With Xing Que on his Solar Horned Tiger as back-up, Chen Hao pressed towards Li Tianming together with his Hepta-Starred Winged Lion. Apart from the sky blue robe he donned, a glaring longsword was in his hand, its hilt embedded with seven different gems and giving off an unyielding energy. It was one of the top grade five bestial weapons, the Hepta-Starred Arcane Sword. Infused with a rare spirit hazard known as the Hepta-starred Unyielding Energy, it was extremely destructive. In fact, a simple swing from the weapon was enough to shatter an entire boulder!

“Li Tianming, you’ll be crawling out of Azure Domain after this fight!” With a cold smirk, he dashed towards Li Tianming, the Hepta-Starred Arcane Sword looming over Li Tianming’s head.

“Done with your trash talk?” Li Tianming wasn’t interested in trading insults.

Unfortunately, Xue Lan isn't here to see me grind your face onto the ground!

But either way, if Li Tianming sent the two of them out with their faces completely swollen, Xue Lan and Yuan Yu would still see it. With that aim in mind, Li Tianming was not about to go easy on them.

"Ying Huo, Ling'er, make sure their faces swell up!" Li Tianming grinned.

"Been wanting to do that for ages!" The little chick took to the air and locked onto the Hepta-Starred Winged Lion.

If only I had such cool looks as well! Annoyed by its own 'cute' looks, Ying Huo decided to vent out all its frustration on the lion.

If Xing Que wasn't going to intervene, then Li Tianming could easily take them down one by one. He was glad that those two could still be this cocky against him now, especially since he was even stronger than when he had just defeated Wei Guohao.

This newfound strength was brought to him by the little chick's evolution, and its new spirit source ability was better than any robe or armor he could possibly ask for. At that very moment, Ying Huo shot a burning fireball in Li Tianming's direction, covering him in its Infernal Armour from head to toes.

The Infernal Blaze even entwined itself onto the Blazing Dragon Chainblade, turning him into a fiery god of war! At the same time, Ying Huo donned the Infernal Armour too, becoming a flaming chicken.

"Ling'er." Words were not necessary for Jiang Feiling to know what he wanted. The lion wasn't the only one to have wings, as she activated her own Celestial Wings. As Li Tianming took to the air, it was impossible for Chen Hao to chase him even with his winged lion, let alone Xing Que. But Li Tianming had no intention to escape.

Her Temporal Field followed, creating a sphere around Li Tianming. Shrouded in the Temporal Field, they couldn't feel time slowing down, only thinking that Li Tianming had become even faster as he dodged all of Chen Hao's strikes!

"Take this!"

Chen Hao's Hepta-Starred Arcane Sword continued to rain down on Li Tianming, each of the strikes accompanied by seven beams of Hepta-Starred Unyielding Energy, shattering everything in its way. With his special movement art, a star would appear to boost his speed every time he touched the ground.

He was using the Cosmic Brilliant Sword Art, a supreme source-ranked art. It was also his strongest battle art, which demonstrated just how much he wanted to defeat Li Tianming. Similarly, the lion was using its beastial arts too. Though colossal, it was swift and nimble, defying conventional logic.

"Our turn now." With a sudden burst of strength, Li Tianming and Ying Huo swapped their target after a brief exchange of thoughts. The little chick shot towards Chen Hao like a bullet, while Li Tianming leapt up into the air, appearing on top of the Hepta-Starred Winged Lion! The lion was taken by surprise, not expecting Li Tianming to fly just as it did, especially at such a speed!

With a buzz, Li Tianming immediately used his Bewildering Eye! It was his favorite trick against lifebound beasts, and had never failed him before. Even though lifebound beasts were more intelligent than

wildbeasts, their resistance against the Bewildering Eye was still much weaker than that of beastmasters.

As the illusion struck the lion, Li Tianming had already swung out his Blazing Dragon Chainblade, the first stance of his Soulless Seven Howls parting the air and ripping its wings!

The lion crashed into the side of a cliff with a sonorous explosion, sliding down the cliff wall to land on the ground a moment later.

“Don’t you dare!” Chen Hao stabbed his longsword into the air, the sword ki going straight for Li Tianming.

Li Tianming promptly commanded his Celestial Wings to get out of harm’s way. The little chick, covered in its own Infernal Blaze, now caught up with Chen Hao, forcing him to deal with it. That got Chen Hao off Li Tianming’s tail, allowing him to attack the lion once more.

The truth was, with Li Tianming’s Celestial Wings, Chen Hao was heavily handicapped, especially in aerial battles. That extended to almost all other beastmasters, since only Li Tianming was lucky enough to have Jiang Feiling by his sides.

The Celestial Wings might look tame before her other abilities, but it was most practical when it came to combat.

On the other side, the Hepta-Starred Winged Lion was already enraged, having crashed into the cliff. Once it got back onto its feet, it locked onto Li Tianming’s direction, its wings now a bright purple. The next second, its two wings touched, releasing a dazzling purple beam!

This spirit-source ability, the Hepta-Starred Cosmic Beam, was more than enough to kill Li Tianming in one shot. Trouble was looming!