

The Ages 131

Chapter 131 - Can The Young Grass Ever Repay The Spring Sun's Kindly Rays?

Yue Lingji mounted her Blizzard Dragon, wind and snow swirling around her. She had but one motive, to wait for the trials to end. No one here was able to withstand her anyway.

"Too easy." She pursed her lips.

Just as she finished that sentence, she felt a burning sensation from behind her. Yue Lingji turned around to find a youth clad in flames.

She sneered. "It's you!"

The previous time they met, not only did he manage to escape her, he'd even saved her would-be prey. That was the only time things did not go her way in the trials. Him having the audacity to fight for the manna was more than enough to fill her with an urge to kill.

"Nine is the number for emperors. Not a bad idea to kill you and clock my kill count to nine. You must be from Vermilion Bird, what's your name?" The way she looked at Li Tianming was full of arrogance.

"Me? My name is Yo Diedi." As he spoke, his Aeternal Infernal Beast Ki was already burning fervently.

"Yo Diedi? What an odd name. Not that it matters, since that name belongs to a dead man now." With a smirk, she and the Blizzard Dragon swooped down onto Li Tianming.

The little chick faced them with no fear, an equally evil smirk appearing on its face.

"Ooo, what a pretty dragon. That's one I wanna ride." It grinned.

"Go ahead then, if you can," Li Tianming replied idly.

Yue Lingji was definitely going to be a tough opponent, and she would be the strongest obstacle between him and saving his mother. This was the only chance for Wei Jing to survive, and even death would not stop him!

Li Tianming knew how his mother had suffered from her Lifesbane, and it was his greatest wish to see her healthy and young once more. After twenty years of pain and torment, Wei Jing definitely wouldn't want her life to end on such a miserable note.

For Li Tianming, Wei Jing who gave him his life, and everything else he ever had. There was no way for him to repay her for what she had done for him, just like how there was no way the young grass could ever repay the spring sun's kindly rays. For Wei Jing, Li Tianming would fight till his last breath, opponents be damned.

His burning passion and fervent spirit were enough to even scare Yue Lingji, such was his determination.

Yue Lingji suddenly came to a realisation. Yo Dadi... Daddy? Did this punk try to play me?

"How dare you!" Realising that Li Tianming had tricked her, killing intent radiated off Yue Lingji.

With her two grade six weapons, the Wind Cometh Blade and the Snow Fall Blade, pointed towards Li Tianming, she closed in on Li Tianming. The Blizzard Dragon froze the lake surface solid with a single breath, letting Yue Lingji fight as if she was on land.

It was the dragon's spirit source ability, the 'Blizzard Breath', capable of freezing anything within three kilometres. The ambient temperature around the Lake of Islands dipped suddenly, turning the already-hostile climate inhabitable for almost every living thing around the region.

Li Tianming clenched his left arm tightly, the power in his arm almost ripping the bandage into pieces. In his right hand, the Blazing Dragon Chainblade curled around his arm, like a flaming dragon.

"You blessed me with life, and I would never be able to come back from those three years without you. Mother, I can never repay you for everything that you have done for me, so at least let me fight for you this time! Yue Lingji, DIE!" Li Tianming roared, his fighting spirit making the whole world tremble under his feet!

This was the first time he had fought ever since he entered fifth level Spirit source. Even though his level wasn't high, his actual strength was enough for him to deal with Yue Lingji. Furthermore, he had Jiang Feiling's help, allowing his Aeternal Infernal Beast Ki to run wild through his body!

Given that Jiang Feiling was attached to him throughout the trials, they had long learned to work well as a group of three. The Celestial Wings gave Li Tianming a tremendous advantage in aerial combat while the Temporal Field helped him to suppress his enemy in terms of attack and movement speed.

The little chick was also doing its part, as a set of Infernal Armour was swirling around Li Tianming the moment he moved out. Not only was he covered in an armour of flaming feathers, Li Tianming was also enveloped by a layer of Infernal Blaze!

The barrier was shrinking fast, and he didn't have much time left! Even Mo Lin's group was forced to move, concealing themselves on an island closer to the centre.

An explosion marked the battle's first exchange, but Li Tianming's burning fist was not aimed at Yue Lingji, but at the frozen lake. The punch, infused with the Infernal Blaze, instantly shattered the frozen layer of ice. Li Tianming was not going to let her fight on ice, since it was an arena that she was familiar with. In comparison, fighting on water would impact her agility, but Li Tianming wouldn't be affected since he had the Celestial Wings.

"What a spoilsport." Yue Lingji sneered, as she stepped on the broken ice to strike at Li Tianming. In her left hand, she executed the Whirlwind Nine Strikes with her Wind Cometh Blade, her right using the Glacial Squall Sword Art with the Snow Fall Blade at the same time.

Both were supreme source-ranked arts that controlled the power of wind and frost respectively. To use two arts at the same time was an impressive feat, one that required incredible talent from the user. The Blizzard Dragon beside her held all kinds of powers too. Under its influence, not only did the lake continue to freeze, but even the water vapour in the air was solidifying into tiny icicles.

"Of course a clown wouldn't know his place. Who are you to take something that never belonged to you in the first place? The draconic water obelisk was mine from the start!" She swung her swords towards Li Tianming, her eyes full of disdain.

However, Li Tianming could tell that her words had other implications. As he dodged the incoming attacks, he frowned and asked, “Are you saying that first place was decided before the trials even began? Was that why you used grade-six weapons?”

It was quite unbelievable to think that Heaven’s Elysium had secretly decided a winner after arranging for such a grand event. Li Tianming had rejected that possibility before, but hearing what Yue Lingji had said gave him second thoughts. Furthermore, that manna was the exact same type as her dragon. No matter how he looked at it, this prize was pretty much intended for her.

The idea was an insult to the image of Heaven’s Elysium that he looked up to. But as someone who was no longer naive, he acknowledged that possibility. Within the Elysium, the law of the jungle probably existed too, allowing people with power to make things go the way they wanted.

Like sending specific individuals into the Elysium, for instance.

That was something that Li Tianming could not accept. After all, Wei Tiancang had already decided that Wei Jing could only be saved if Li Tianming was victorious in the trials!

“That’s just your hyperactive imagination. Are you trying to deny the fact that you can’t defeat me in battle, coward?” Yue Lingji’s face was expressionless, but her attack speed increased by a notch.

“Pray tell, then. Why are you holding grade six weapons?” Li Tianming smirked.

“They are just grade five.”

“Grade five weapons with blue heavenly patterns?” Li Tianming laughed mirthlessly at the blatant lie.

“Cut the crap, I can still defeat you without using these weapons. I’d have handed the manna over if you had defeated me, but since you chose to accuse me instead, I have to shut you up permanently!”

With those words, the Blizzard Dragon used its ‘Frost Tornado’. A column of water spiralled towards Li Tianming and the little chick, backed by a fearsome might.

“Die!” From the side, Yue Lingji’s swords went straight for his throat!

“Remember what you have said! If you lose, you better hand over the manna!” Li Tianming snapped back at her.

“Sure, if you still have your head by then!” With a terrifying strike, the Snow Fall Blade closed in on Li Tianming’s neck — his head would fall off any moment now!

Instead of the sound of blood spurting out of his neck, a metallic sound rang through the air. She stared in disbelief at the fact that Li Tianming had blocked her sword with his left arm! The Snow Fall Blade barely scratched his arm, but it did tear off the layer of bandage, revealing the hexagonal black scales that had blocked her weapon!

Before she could feel surprise, the little chick, which had been hiding behind Li Tianming, blew out some Infernal Blaze at her. Enveloped in flames, she was blown back from that attack. Fortunately, the Blizzard Dragon had frozen her into a ball of ice before the Infernal Blaze could touch her skin.

The ice exploded into shards a moment later, taking the Infernal Blaze along with it to reveal an unharmed Yue Lingji. But what happened just now was enough to shock her.

“What the hell is wrong with his arm?!”

But there was no time to ponder on that question. While she was reeling from that attack, Li Tianming and the little chick had turned on the Blizzard Dragon. The latter, in particular, had lunged towards the dragon with an evil grin.

It was going to ride a dragon, and nothing was going to get in its way.

Chapter 132 - The Little Chick Rides A Dragon Into The Heavens!

With Jiang Feiling around, Li Tianming could tap on her Celestial Wings to fly. In contrast, Yue Lingji had to make do with jumping, so she couldn't fight in aerial combat.

Furious, the Blizzard Dragon unleashed a spirit-source ability, Razorwind Storm. Violent gales immediately engulfed the world as countless blades of wind rushed at Li Tianming.

However, under the Temporal Field, the speed of the wind blades dropped perceptibly. With the Flaming Shadow Flash, the little chick and him shuttled back and forth between the blades and arrived in front of the dragon.

Yue Lingji arrived at this moment. Sword ki surged out, one that combined both tempestuous winds and a biting frost, attempting to swallow up Li Tianming.

“Descend!” At Li Tianming's order, Ying Huo charged forward to block Yue Lingji's sword ki, expanding his Infernal Armour as he did so.

With an explosion, the Infernal Armour shattered. However, the little chick had already bought Li Tianming the time he needed.

The dragon blew out snow once again, causing the world to freeze over. It was another spirit-source ability, Land of Ice.

Alas, it was incapable of freezing Li Tianming, because his Infernal Armour was, at its core, formed by the blazing Infernal Blaze. The Blazing Dragon Chainblade proceeded unimpeded, wrapping around the Blizzard Dragon's head.

“Up we go!” The next moment. Li Tianming shot upwards, dragging the dragon with him in a shocking display.

That was a dragon! A dragon!

He smirked. “Don't even think of moving!”

The reason behind why this feat was possible was simple: the chainblade was just too sharp. It wasn't made from metal links, but from blades in the shape of dragon scales. If the Blizzard Dragon tried to resist, it might very well take off its own head from simply flailing too much.

It could only follow Li Tianming upwards, most of its spirit-source abilities now useless. The wind-type ones, Li Tianming could dodge, and the frost-type ones had no effect on him.

After blocking Yue Lingji, the little chick turned and followed the two skywards.

Everyone could fly, except for poor little Yue Lingji. She didn't need to be a genius to know that once they hit a high enough altitude, she would only be able to watch from the ground. Fury flashed through her eyes. "You're courting death!"

She leapt up. As long as she reached the Blizzard Dragon, she would be able to participate in aerial combat with its support.

However, Li Tianming had the Temporal Field. The little chick spat out a fiery phoenix as she tried to jump, forcing her to stop halfway one more. When she was forced to drop back to the ground, Li Tianming had already dragged the dragon more than two hundred metres up.

Yue Lingji was stunned. She had never seen such tactics before. Previously, she had assumed she could easily crush Li Tianming. However, she could only watch with astonishment from the ground. She would never have expected an opponent to be some kind of flying birdman!

"Muse, come back down!" Yue Lingji's body shook in frustration.

The dragon bellowed as it struggled mightily, but that just made the chainblade bite deeper into its body. In the meantime, Li Tianming, who was practically dancing around in mid-air, added a few more loops of the chainblade around its body for good measure.

The little chick arrived a moment later. "I, Ying Huo, shall take to the skies on my trusty dragon steed! Giddyup!"

As Li Tianming bound up the dragon in a nice and tight bundle, the little chick used the Three-Springs Heavy Claw to rip off scales and flesh from the dragon's back. "Hey, you! Show me where your tendons are!"

The dragon trembled at these words. If its tendons were torn out, it would be crippled.

"I'm warning you! No matter who you are, you're a dead man now! Come back down if you have the guts!" Yue Lingji could only shriek from below helplessly.

Li Tianming snorted in response. The crux to winning was about exploiting your advantages, so why should he resort to some life-and-death battle with her when he could just do this? That would be just moronic.

"Watch this! Three-Strikes of the Farmer!" Li Tianming remembered Jiang Qingluan had once mocked him for a farmer. Today, he would let this Blizzard Dragon experience his Three-Strikes of the Farmer!

Of course, it was actually just his Three-Spring Heavy Strike.

The little chick had already ripped off dozens of scales, and the dragon twisted madly in pain. Its domineering presence now completely lost, Li Tianming proceeded to unleash his three punches on its head!

The sounds of flesh smashing flesh filled the air, and strength drained from its body as Li Tianming unleashed another round of physical abuse on it.

“Lion? Dragon? All will yield!”

The dragon cried out pitifully. Now on the verge of death, its entire blood-covered body to shake. It had suffered the same treatment as Chen Hao’s Hepta-starred Winged Lion.

At the sight of her dragon hanging from Li Tianming’s chain like some dead fish, Yue Lingji began to jump up and down on the spot, cursing him madly. It was unfortunate, all things considered. It was her fault for being born with short legs, and not being able to fly like Li Tianming!

“What, Yue Lingji? Unconvinced?”

Li Tianming didn’t go as far as to kill the Blizzard Dragon.

Firstly, this battle may be under observation, so killing people might bring problems down the road. Secondly, if Yue Lingji was the internally decided candidate, killing her lifebound beast would likely cause problems.

Li Tianming only needed first place and the profound manna. Killing someone wasn’t his goal.

“I’m not! Trash like you could only defeat me because you used such a shameless method to beat my lifebound beast!” All of Yue Lingji’s earlier contempt was now gone, replaced with fury.

However, she couldn’t do anything to Li Tianming.

“Heh. What a hypocrite, aren’t you using grade six bestial weapons? Since you’re not convinced yet, I’ll hit you till you are!”

Li Tianming flicked his chain, and sent the dragon’s massive body tumbling towards Yue Lingji. It was already heavily injured, and had no chance of continuing to battle. Hence, Yue Lingji had no choice but to bring it back to her lifebound space. The environment there had special properties that would slow down the worsening of its injuries. It would also give the dragon a chance to use its great regenerative abilities.

Surviving wouldn’t be a problem as long as they didn’t continue to fight.

However, that left Yue Lingji alone to face Li Tianming and his beast!

“I know who you are. A little chick as a lifebound beast... you’re Li Tianming!” Yue Lingji’s eyes narrowed, her gaze chilly.

“Smart.” Li Tianming chuckled.

“Someone shameless like you would only dare to surround my lifebound beast. You don’t have qualifications to fight me. Now even if you beat me two on one, I’ll refuse to admit you beat me!” Yue Lingji said.

“Who said I surrounded you? Pick up your grade six weapon, I’ll have a go with you. That way, you won’t be whining so much after you lose!”

“For real?” Yue Lingji’s eyes shone.

“If not?”

“Hah. You’ll regret this. You missed your best chance,” Yue Lingji said sinisterly.

“Ying Huo, go play at the side.” Li Tianming didn’t reply to her and instead spoke to Ying Huo.

“Give her ass a good beating for me.” The little chick smiled like a wolf. As of now, the Infernal Armour was still burning on Li Tianming, so the little chick was still technically helping.

For this sort of person, Li Tianming had to beat her convincingly for her to hand over the draconic water obelisk.

Even if it wasn’t suitable for himself, there would be chances to exchange it for something else in the future. There was bound to be someone with a water-type lifebound beast but with a fire-type manna.

Yue Lingji was currently anxious to exact her revenge on Li Tianming and kill him.

However, from another point of view, her daring to flagrantly kill people was proof of her having special privileges. She was a dangerous person, not because of who she was, but rather, her backer. However, Li Tianming had no choice because of Wei Jing. Otherwise, for someone like this for whom murder was second nature, he would have killed her Blizzard Dragon, then kill her together with the little chick!

Yue Lingji’s Whirlwind Nine Strikes and Glacial Squall Sword Art combined perfectly as they bore down on Li Tianming.

However, Li Tianming suddenly moved to the side, his speed blindingly fast in the Temporal Field.

“Open your eyes!” Li Tianming unleashed the Bewildering Eye,

The Soulless Seven Howls followed a moment later.

First stance...

Second stance...

Third stance!

Strange and mournful howls of ghosts began to assault her ears, in a manner similar to sound-type beastmasters. It was much more treacherous when paired with the bewildering eye, combining to form a two-pronged attack on the ears and eyes.

Fourth stance.

Fifth stance...

Sixth stance!

Each of the seven whip attacks of the Soulless Seven Howls was also stronger than the previous. The six consecutive attacks, now that they had been released, left Yue Lingji pale and on the back foot. Her killer sword arts could only be used to defend herself now.

The grade six weapon weathered the storm of attacks.

Seventh stance!

This seventh stance contained the essence of the Soulless Seven Howls. Like a dragon leaving its lair, the whip snaked out and pierced through the sword art!

Yue Lingji shrieked as she was sent flying and her weapons left her hand. When she raised her head again, Li Tianming was right in front of her!

Chapter 133 - I Want You DEAD!!

Air parted with a howl as the Blazing Dragon Chainblade wrapped itself around Yue Lingji's waist, the tight restraints emphasising the curves on her body. Li Tianming dragged her over, across the ground, and blood left her lips as Li Tianming reached into her cloak for his prize.

"That profound manna is mine now!" Given that two large, uh, obstacles were in his way, it was a considerably tough task, and it took him a while to finally dig out the draconic water obelisk. That was surprisingly easy for a treasure with equal value to the Saintbeast War-Soul, and Li Tianming couldn't be more elated.

"Big brother, what were you groping just now?" Jiang Feiling's voice, which now had the aroma of freshly-opened vinegar, echoed in his ear. So that's how she sounded like when she's displeased.

"Of course I was looking for the draconic water obelisk!"

"I'm pretty sure what you touched was the Heavenly Pattern Barrier!" Jiang Feiling snapped back.

Heavenly Pattern Barrier? Is it a reference to the shape? Something that was shaped like a hemisphere...

"Wait, that was an accident! The manna is quite small you see..." Li Tianming didn't know whether he should laugh or cry. Only the heavens knew that that was definitely not on purpose.

"Yeah, like I will buy your excuses!" She still sounded rather annoyed.

"Ling'er, don't be angry. It was really coincidental. Besides, the only Heavenly Pattern Barriers I'm interested in are yours!" Li Tianming hurriedly explained.

"..." Even though she wasn't talking, Li Tianming could tell that she was being shy.

Heavens, Li Tianming was absolutely, positively certain that he wasn't thinking dirty when he looked for the manna!

Hmm. But in hindsight...was he? He wasn't too sure. Ahem.

"Now that I have the draconic water obelisk, the winner for the Abyssal Trials must be me, right?" Li Tianming looked up and found that the barrier was already eating into the Lake of Islands. The Heavenly Pattern Barrier would disappear in half a day.

Heavenly Pattern Barrier... ugh. Simply saying these words makes me feel like a pervert now. The only thing preventing himself from digging a hole and jumping into it was the fact that Ying Huo couldn't hear their conversation. If it did, given its personality, he would never hear the end of it.

Li Tianming desperately needed to get rid of that awkward atmosphere between him and Ling'er, so he turned to the angry, bound Yue Lingji.

“What do you have to say, now that I defeated you fair and square?” Li Tianming put on his serious face and asked.

“If not for those filthy tricks, you’d never have defeated me! Your lifebound beast is just useless!” Yue Lingji barked back at him.

“Whoa, whoa, I was eating popcorn the whole time.” Ying Huo rolled its eyes.

“Whatever, the draconic water obelisk is mine now. Whether you’re convinced or not I don’t really care.” Li Tianming had no intention to argue with her.

Li Tianming carefully kept the manna. Now that he had defeated Yue Lingji and taken the manna, could the Elysium still declare her as the winner? He even had the other contestants as his witnesses.

“Hmph. Let me go, I will leave now.” She stared coldly at Li Tianming.

Li Tianming glanced at the girl that he had defeated and even shamed. Since he’d already snatched the draconic water obelisk and wasted her lifebound beast, not provoking her now was for the best. Wei Jing’s life was his priority, and his victory should be imminent with the manna in his pocket.

He knew that the rest had all seen him defeating Yue Lingji. Unless Heaven’s Elysium could kill everyone else and only let Yue Lingji walk out of the Azure Domain alone, then surely he was the clear winner. With that in mind, he loosened Yue Lingji’s bonds.

“Haha.” Yue Lingji snickered yet again as she got back to her feet.

“Still trying to act haughty now?”

“Li Tianming, you will regret this.” With that, Yue Lingji hopped onto the lake without a second look. Even though the barrier had shrunk to the point that it now only contained the Island of Lakes, there were still plenty of places where people could hide.

“Regret?” That made Li Tianming narrow his eyes. The trials weren’t over yet — could a new development arise? Although Mu Yang had told them to prioritize their own lives instead of the victory, who else could stop him now that he had defeated Yue Lingji?

“Half a day more and we will find out.” All that he needed to do was to wait for the barrier to bring everyone to him.

He looked towards Mo Lin’s direction, knowing that the three of them must have seen the battle. With this battle, Xing Que and Chen Hao would have lost their will to fight. Xue Lan would hear about their ignominious defeat, and how Li Tianming brought back the greatest glory in the trials.

He was looking forward to seeing her face.

Only one uncertainty remained, and that was Jiang Qingluan. Now that he wasn’t afraid of being discovered, Li Tianming shouted, “Jiang Qingluan, are you there? Come and find me!”

His voice echoed within the barriers. Both him and Jiang Feiling anxiously waited for a reply, since a lack of one could only suggest that Jiang Qingluan was dead.

Seconds slipped by, but there was no answer.

Their hearts pumped faster than ever, and even their fingertips were trembling. Li Tianming thought of the girl who so often argued with him. Even though they never seemed to get together that well, he had always treated her as a good friend.

But now the possibility that Jiang Qingluan was dead was looming over them! It was a result that neither Jiang Feiling or Li Tianming could accept.

His call was greeted by nothing but silence, which persisted for a while more, only to be broken when the voice of another girl replied to his question.

“Jiang Qingluan? You wouldn’t be seeing her anymore.”

Li Tianming spun around. It was a voice that he was just too familiar with! Even if it sounded rather coarse, weaker than it normally was, Li Tianming recognized the owner of that voice at once. He would recognize it even if it was a croak!

Mu Qingqing! Li Tianming had been looking for the chance to kill her ever since the start of the Abyssal Trials, and his chance had finally arrived! Seated at a corner of the lake was the white-clothed girl, her legs dangling off the rock she was on. Her face was a ghastly white, her body unnaturally thin. Even so, the purple pattern on her forehead was shining radiantly, visible even from miles away.

“Li Tianming, did you hear that? She’s dead, and I killed her. She’s as dead as that Midas I told Lin Xiaoting to kill.” She rose to her feet, looking like a madwoman.

“Qing’er!” That announcement was enough to overwhelm Jiang Feiling!

Li Tianming could feel that she was panicking, and her spiritual form now extremely unstable. The Spiritual Attachment enabled Li Tianming to enter a berserk state, and now that she too was in such a state, Li Tianming could feel the power in his body boiling!

“Ling’er, wait. She’s not necessarily telling the truth!” Li Tianming could only console Jiang Feiling since they have yet to see the body, and also because he knew Mu Qingqing to be a fox through and through.

Even then, the odds of Jiang Qingluan being safe was slim. Such were the rules of the Abyssal Trials, and Jiang Qingluan herself should have been prepared to not leave this battlefield alive the day she chose to join the trials.

For now, Li Tianming needed to comfort Jiang Feiling before she broke down. He knew exactly how she felt, since his own brother had died to this woman three years ago! And now, this same woman was saying that she had killed Jiang Qingluan too!

To Jiang Feiling, Jiang Qingluan was closer than a real sister, and she’d taken the risk to enter the battlefield with Li Tianming, just to make sure nothing happened to her. Mu Qingqing’s casual claim that she’d killed her had made him see red.

Blood gushed into his head, his desire to kill flooding his mind. A similar feeling had appeared when he was fighting Yue Lingji, but he managed to hold back at that time. But against Mu Qingqing, with old grudges and new hatreds piling together, he was no longer able to control himself.

The events of that fateful, stormy night flashed through his mind again. Midas, who was drowning in a pool of blood, with all its feathers pulled out. Mu Qingqing, who was in Lin Xiaoting's arms, that damned emotionless expression she had on her face, as she looked at him and Midas.

Li Tianming thought about Jiang Qingluan, and the days the three of them had spent together. Back when they first met, Ling'er could sense his hatred and his agony when she first attached to him. It was his turn now. Her devastation, her misery, her sense of loss... everything she now felt he now could feel. His emotions began to run amok with his new feelings, and the volcano that had lain dormant for three years began to erupt.

He had been waiting for this day for way too long. His emotions, bottled up for three years, finally broke free. And there was only one reply Li Tianming could give, as he faced that white-clothed girl with her disgusting smile.

"Mu Qingqing, I want you dead! I. Want. You. DEAD!"

Li Tianming didn't know why she still had the confidence to fight after seeing the battle he had with Yue Lingji. All he saw was her cold indifferent stare, as well as that purple pattern giving off an eerie glow on her forehead.

"Li Tianming, clearly the draconic water obelisk is not suited for you. Don't you think that it's destined to be mine?" She tilted her head slightly with a trace of arrogance. He narrowed his eyes. How could someone who could barely stand have such confidence?

"Big brother, she is using a taboo technique called the Purple Blood-Imprint. Have you heard of it before?" Jiang Feiling was running out of patience too.

"I have. Blood to control wildbeasts, right? She must be mad. But that's how she was from the start! She'll do anything to achieve her goals! She would place her ambitions before anything else in this world!"

Li Tianming knew her better than anyone. The Purple Blood-Imprint was nothing for her, and if Heaven's Elysium told them to kill everyone to win the Trials, then she would do it with zero hesitation. The way she hired the Bloodflower Chamber when he returned to Ignispolis was a perfect example of her malice and her decisiveness.

No one had imagined that she owned such a taboo technique, and neither did anyone expect her to use it here. The seeming lack of regulation over these trials was probably why she dared to face Li Tianming in such a fashion.

"Li Tianming, you are in my way again. If I can destroy you once, I can always do it again!" With that, the Rage-Dragon Whalelord leapt out from the water, its dazzling blue dragon scales dazzling.

The whalelord was the biggest beast around, and it was followed by a group of wildbeasts that were all staring at Li Tianming menacingly.

At the same time, a storm began to gather, a black sea of clouds forming above everyone's heads. And within Li Tianming's lifebound space, a black egg began to hop around, its surface covered in cracks.

Chapter 134 - Through Thick And Thin!!

Other than the Gold-Plate Barbed Turtle and the Purple-Scaled Flood Dragon, two other beasts followed Mu Qingqing. Once lifebound beasts, the Torrential Theo-Toad and the Rainbow Regina Jellyfish were now under Mu Qingqing's control, which could only mean that their original beastmasters had fallen at her hands.

However, the Bluefire Vermilion Bird was not within the group, which was rather telling. After all, if Mu Qingqing could kill beastmasters and enslave their beasts, claiming the Bluefire Vermilion Bird after killing Jiang Qingluan was a given.

The Torrential Theo-Toad and the Rainbow Regina Jellyfish belonged to Li Qingcheng and Gu Suyu of Aquamarine respectively. The jellyfish, in particular, was a target worth noting. As it was a mid-tier seven-star beast, Gu Suyu had been highlighted as the strongest contestant before the trials. But now, in a cruel twist of fate, her body was probably feeding the fishes now.

But all these fell in line with Li Tianming's understanding of Mu Qingqing. Her current position was obtained through vicious acts. Otherwise, the thought of entering the Lightning Manor with Midas as a sacrifice wouldn't have even crossed her mind. Hell, she would even use the Purple Blood-Imprint that was currently draining her life away, just to make it into the Elysium to join Lin Xiaoting! Considering the number of times she used the taboo technique, it wouldn't be a surprise if she needed half a year just to recover from that.

What a maniac. Yet, this was the woman who acted like a lotus flower in front of the rest of the world.

Now, with the Rage-Dragon Whalelord included, five beasts were now targeting Li Tianming. Though he was slightly relieved at the Bluefire Vermilion Bird's absence, his killing intent did not reduce by the slightest. In fact, it only got stronger with every second he spent near Mu Qingqing!

He took a deep breath, but it was a mess inside his body. That was because Jiang Feiling had gotten emotional. She was enraged, and she too had the intention to kill. Their rage only grew as her feelings harmonised with his.

To his surprise, Li Tianming found that his strength had abruptly grown. If the Spiritual Attachment he was used to was called perfect, a full score, the degree of attachment right now was off the charts. It could be thirteenth-grade, even fifteenth! Was Jiang Feiling really a normal human with no lifebound beast? Li Tianming knew that wasn't the case, as she had blessed him with power that even he couldn't fully control.

"Once I get rid of you, I will go to Heaven's Elysium and explore the rest of the continent! I have you to thank, Li Tianming, for saving me back then. Thank you for changing my life, and letting me become Lin Xiaoting's woman."

"And once again, thank you for being my stepping stone to the Elysium! I will never forget you even after you die, since you'll be the most important person in my life for all eternity! Rejoice, for you matter much more to me than even Lin Xiaoting," said Mu Qingqing, one hand covering her sickly smile. "You are truly my greatest benefactor."

How could someone like her even exist in this world? Before this, Li Tianming still had questions for her abrupt betrayal. Why would she betray him after everything he did for her?

But now he knew. The only reason was because Mu Qingqing was rotten to the core!

“A pity you never understood me properly. You told me that you loved me, but you couldn’t offer me a sense of safety. Do you know how important that was to me? Anyone could shame me, push me around. So it was then, and so it was now. I have had enough of that long ago; I’ll kill everyone who ever shamed me, now and forevermore! And I will gain the power to do so...” She stood up, swaying left and right in the wind, as if she was dancing a mad caper on the rock.

“One day! Everyone will bow before me! Even Lin Xiaoting!” A tranquil silence fell, now that she’d let loose her emotions.

“But for that future to come to pass, you must die today!” With that, the five beasts pounced at Li Tianming, controlled by her Purple Blood-Imprint.

“Midas.” Li Tianming closed his eyes for a moment. When he next opened them, his vision was now tinted with red. He didn’t need a mirror to know his eyes were bloodshot. “Today is the day I exact vengeance for you. This is the first. Another reckoning will follow. It won’t take long, I promise. I can only hope that you’re watching me, for the moment has arrived!”

The five beasts appeared in front of Li Tianming a moment later. Under the influence of the Purple Blood-Imprint, death didn’t matter to them, turning them into terrifying bloodthirsty creatures. Even Yue Lingji would not survive the onslaught of the five beasts.

But Li Tianming had already turned into a ruthless demon. He would be the master of life and death in this battlefield, and nothing could possibly stop him. A horrifying roar erupted from his mouth, and with Ying Huo at his side, he charged towards the beasts.

Who were the wildbeasts here? Was it the five beasts in front of him? No. The real beast was him, Li Tianming! He would teach Mu Qingqing regret. He would teach her that underestimating him was her biggest mistake. Thanks to her, he was no longer the fool he was three years ago.

“Midas!” In the first drop of blood that spurted out of the Purple-Scaled Flood Dragon’s body, Li Tianming saw the shadow of his dead brother. “I promised to go through thick and thin with you, and yet, I failed to live up to that promise. But you must understand, I lived not because I fear death, but because those bastards must pay! What they did to you back then, I will return ten-fold! And today will be the beginning of their suffering!”

It had turned from a battle to a slaughter. There were no rules, only a thin line between life and death. Li Tianming would dominate all others in this battlefield!

His black arm was almost completely exposed. With a ear-piercing shriek, he had wedged it into the Purple-Scaled Flood Dragon’s jaws, preventing them from closing.

“DIE!” The Blazing Dragon Chainblade went through its throat and pierced through all of its innards. Ignoring its final struggle, Li Tianming pulled out the chainblade cruelly, dragging out shards of organs and fleshy pulp with it. Blood and fragments of the beast rained from the sky, dyeing Mu Qingqing’s white shirt bloody red!

“One down!” Li Tianming’s icy voice echoed in her ears. She could see the blurry image of that teenager drenched in blood, fighting off those beasts all by himself.

Was that how fighting against fate looked like? Everything I've done, it was to overcome destiny, to protect my dignity...but was I wrong?

"No, NO!!" She shook her head violently, dissipating those thoughts. Mu Qingqing gritted her teeth; letting Li Tianming affect her was a death sentence.

"Use your abilities!" She shrieked at the beasts. With the Purple Blood-Imprint still draining away her blood, her head was spinning and she could barely stand straight.

"I must hang on! I must not fall! As long as I supply my blood, there's no way he can win. I don't want to stay in Lightning Manor, and I don't want to wait for him to return for the rest of my life!" she roared voicelessly.

When she looked up again, Li Tianming was still dancing in the rain of blood. His left hand was as black as ink, a beast claw that had pierced straight through the Gold-Plate Barbed Turtle's skulls to crush its eye!

"What on earth happened to him..."

He had returned three years later, a different man. But what did not change was his sincerity, his determination and his spirit! She had always laughed at him, thinking that he was naive and stupid, but was that really the case?

Or was it because he had loved her whole-heartedly...

"No, I cannot let his spirit overcome mine. Kill him, kill him!!" A clammy sensation gripped her spirit, and for the first time, she was truly afraid.

Under her command, the rest of the beasts retaliated with their spirit-source abilities. The Torrential Theo-Toad used its 'Acid Wave', spouting out a torrent of deadly poison that turned water in the region an unnatural blue.

But even that poison could not chew through the Infernal Armour. Furthermore, with the little chick there, whatever surface damage the Infernal Armour took was repaired moments later. Ying Huo's Infernal Blaze fell from the skies immediately afterwards, charging into the toad's mouth, and the beast promptly came apart in a red mist with a muffled explosion.

"Die!" The Gold-Plate Barbed Turtle died at the same time; Li Tianming had forced the Blazing Dragon Chainblade through the turtle's head, ending its life instantly.

The turtle was dead too! No one could stop him from this carnage!

Both him and Jiang Feiling were pulsing with rage, their fury like that of an erupting volcano. They were at seventeenth-grade Spiritual Attachment! Perhaps they would never reach such a level again in the future, but that was more than enough for them.

A dazzling seven-coloured light forced Li Tianming to close his eyes. The Rainbow Regina Jellyfish was using its abilities, 'Rainbow Daze' and 'Purifying Beam'! The Rainbow Daze was a wide-area attack that released a scorching light, particularly effective at injuring one's vision. As for the Purifying Beam, it could dampen one's spirit. Victims of that attack would eventually lose the will to resist, making it more potent than most illusion-type abilities.

But Li Tianming had his third eye! He closed his eyes and felt the power running through the eighty-one tiny veins. The Rainbow Regina Jellyfish could see, and it too could succumb to the Bewildering Eyes!

In fact, beasts under the effect of the Purple Blood-Imprint were more susceptible to the Bewildering Eye. With their intelligence already destabilised, the Bewildering Eye would inflict far greater damage than normal.

Mid-tier seven-star? Who cares! With his Three Spring Heavy Strike, Li Tianming tore the jellyfish into pieces, the whole time his infernalsource making up for whatever energy he'd lost thus far. The him right now was unbelievably strong; Jiang Feiling had harmonised with him to the extent that their Spiritual Attachment was probably twentieth-grade now.

Li Tianming finally approached the Rage-Dragon Whalelord, ready to reap its soul.

"Blueshine, are you still on her side?"

Chapter 135 - Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend!

The Rage-Dragon Whalelord responded with a furious glare.

"To think you've changed too, what a pity. Since you've made your choice, then die with her!"

Li Tianming punched out once more, shattering the whale's spiritsource ability, 'Azure Sea'. The whale immediately fled into the water.

He raised his head a moment later. Other than that shivering pale girl, everything else had faded away. The whale reappeared in the water next to her. "Flee!"

However, Mu Qingqing didn't leave, breaking into crazed laughter instead.

Using the Celestial Wings, a bloody Li Tianming landed in front of her.

"What's so funny?" Li Tianming's voice was colder than that of a demon.

"I'm laughing because no matter how strong you are, you'll still die. It doesn't matter if you can make me tremble, regret or cry. How pitiful," Mu Qingqing sneered.

"Where is this courage coming from? Even at death's door, you're still dreaming? Do you think I'll pity you and let you go if you act like this? Wrong. In my eyes, you'll forever be some poison I need to eradicate!" Li Tianming stared at her intently, already trying to figure out how to best kill her to reduce the hatred in his heart and appease Midas in the afterlife.

Should he cut off her skin piece by piece, or skewer her full of holes? Decapitate her, or feed her corpse to the fishes? But nothing he came up with was enough to resolve his hatred.

"Tianming, could it be that you think you've won? Sorry to disappoint, but you're going to lose. Let me tell you why. You don't understand that this is a world where only the merciless will survive. You place too much emphasis on relationships. I indulged in that before myself, but I'm much smarter than you. Everything that happened was proof that your lifebound beast and you will die because of relationships again." She smirked. "Still don't understand? Look behind you."

Li Tianming could already sense it. A hulking black beast rose out of the lake's depths as he turned around — it was the Hecatoncheires Black-Devil. It had a hundred spines, each of them boasting tens of cruel barbs. Ninety-nine of them were currently wrapped around a Bluefire Vermilion Bird. The bird was clearly poisoned and immobile, injured to the point that death wasn't too far from it.

Its final spine was wrapped around an unconscious Jiang Qingluan, her skin a faint green hue. Evidently, she was badly poisoned; without the faint aura around her, she would have passed as a corpse.

Li Tianming should have seen this coming, all things considered. Even if Mu Qingqing defeated her, she wouldn't kill her just yet — Jiang Qingluan was a valuable card. She'd made the right moves.

"I wasn't wrong, was I, pitiful bug." Mu Qingqing smiled lightly. "You're too inexperienced to even think of challenging me."

"Qing'er..." Jiang Feiling became even more short-tempered, a far cry from her usual gentle self.

"Don't worry. This is actually good news, she's not dead yet," Li Tianming said softly. This situation was better than not knowing her status.

"Right, right... she's still alive..." Jiang Feiling finally calmed down somewhat, comforting herself with those words.

Still, it was troublesome when Mu Qingqing was in control of her life.

"Two choices. She dies, or you die. Since relationships are so important to you, you should kill yourself. Li Tianming, aren't you very manly? Live up to it. Your life, for hers." Mu Qingqing tried her best to stand stably as she said coldly.

"Use your chainblade to slit your throat and I'll free her." With everything under her control, Mu Qingqing began to laugh. She was practically relishing her victory now, that triumphant laughter of hers echoing into the lake and beyond.

"You'll choose death, right? I know you too well!" As Mu Qingqing spoke, the Black-Devil tightened its grip, the thorns digging into Jiang Qingluan's flesh. Given its strength, ripping her to pieces would be an easy feat.

"I'll be kind, and give you ten seconds to decide."

"Ten!"

"Nine!"

"Eight!"

Despite not being very loud, each of her words seemed like it came from a nightmare. The Hecatoncheires Black-Devil continued to exert more and more force with every utterance from her.

Honestly, given her strength, Mu Qingqing had done impressively well to back Li Tianming into such a corner.

However, her mistake was that she didn't have a truly clear picture of how much Li Tianming had changed this time he had returned, both in power and heart.

As the word 'eight' left her mouth, an egg appeared in Li Tianming's hands. The egg was riddled with dense cracks, black lightning dancing on its surface.

"Look at this, Mu Qingqing." Li Tianming extended his hand and showed that unfathomable and terrifying egg to her!

The moment Mu Qingqing looked at it, thunderclaps rumbled in the heavens, so fierce that Mu Qingqing stumbled and fell. She subconsciously lifted her head, only to see black lightning weave themselves into a net above them, turning the skies into a sea of lightning!

When had such a terrifyingly bizarre sight ever appeared in the Abyssal Battlefield?

Other than Mu Qingqing, no one else saw the egg in Li Tianming's hands, which blew apart a moment later.

The world trembled as countless lightning bolts came pouring down in response, the sea of lightning having found a storm drain in the form of Li Tianming.

Perhaps to an outsider, Li Tianming might seem like a heinous sinner finally getting his comeuppance, but the lightning didn't strike him, homing in on the egg instead. Mu Qingqing and the Rage-Dragon Whalelord were sent flying by the shockwaves. Of the two, the whale fared the worst — it was reduced to ash on the spot.

Just like that, Mu Qingqing's lifebound beast was wiped out from existence.

However, this shocking scene was but one of many. Another pillar of lightning had descended on the Hecatoncheires Black-Devil, which too transformed into ash. Strangely, the Bluefire Vermilion Bird and Jiang Qingluan were unharmed, instead enclosed in a sphere of black lightning.

"BLUESHINE!" Mu Qingqing shrieked, her body finally losing the last bit of colour it had left. "How could Li Tianming control lightning?!"

She had suffered a complete and utter defeat, with all her hopes scattered to the winds. She had lost everything. Her lifebound beast was now ashes. Her trump card had been wrested away. And most of all, her nemesis was now baptised by lightning, his appearance that of a god as Li Tianming underwent tremendous changes.

"Impossible... How..." She crumpled to her knees, shaking in sheer terror at the young man she had disdained and detested three years ago.

Tens of thousands of lightning bolts had struck him, and yet... yet!

How can I lose so easily?!

"Mu Qingqing, give me a few moments. When I'm done, I'll have all the time in the world to slowly play with you. I need to figure out how to clear this debt you owe me. Even if you want to die today, you'll have to ask me first." Li Tianming's voice, imperious and dignified, shook her mind.

Mu Qingqing felt like her soul had left her body from the fright.

She was now a cripple Li Tianming could casually exterminate with a single gesture. Hence, he shifted all his attention to his hands.

The lightning continued to fall endlessly. Before his eyes, the tiny thing continued to guzzle down the lightning. It didn't take a stroke of genius to know what that little fellow was; it was his second Primordial Chaos Beast. That lazy thing had finally hatched.

The disturbance it made when it hatched was far more awe-inspiring than when the little chick had been born. It had killed both the Rage-Dragon Whalelord and the Hecatoncheires Black-Devil with its birth. It had been the one to suggest to Li Tianming to use its phenomenon of emergence into killing the Black-Devil by controlling the black lightning. While it was at it, it had executed the whale too. This phenomenon of emergence would only happen once at birth. As for the little chick, it had been born in Flamehaven without any fire-type spirit hazards around, so nothing untoward had happened. However, this was the Abyssal Battlefield, which was filled with an endless amount of lighting-type spirit hazards!

That was how it had caused all this as soon as it hatched.

"How dare you show off! Listen, let's be very clear on this. If I were to hatch somewhere with tons of fire-type spirit hazards, the world would burn! It'll be way better than you, understand?" The little chick crossed its wings, miffed.

While most of these lighting-type spirit hazards were only with red heavenly patterns, the sheer quantity made them extremely useful to this newly born thing. The amount used to kill the two beasts and protect Jiang Qingluan was negligible. All of the rest was absorbed into its tiny body, helping it kickstart its cultivation journey.

Li Tianming had been waiting a long time for it. The little chick had already said it itself. It was a fierce tiger, and just the way it hatched was enough to show how impressive it would be. Li Tianming's heartbeat was now a drumroll, as the coolness he sought was now in reach.

"Young Primordial Chaos Beast, speaketh your name," Li Tianming said solemnly.

"I am... the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend! Meow."

Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend!

Genesis? Very ancient feel, nice!

Chaos? As expected of a Primordial Chaos Beast!

Thunderfiend? A fiend of thunder, very badass!

It was a peerless and domineering name, one that fitted the fierce tiger it was.

Still, what's with that 'meow' at the end...?

Chapter 136 - All Life Trembles!

The birth of the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend was a fancy sight, fancier than any explosion or firework. It had summoned an endless sea of black thunderclouds in the Abyssal Battlefield, which had proceeded to fall like heavenly punishment to strike every corner of the lake.

At the center of the ordeal, Mu Qingqing remained untouched. If Li Tianming didn't want her to die so easily, the girl, who had been weakened by the Purple Blood Imprint, would have been reduced to drifting ash.

In Ying Huo's words, what that had just happened was the phenomenon of emergence. That would explain why the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend, despite having cracks on its egg, had taken so long to hatch. While it being lazy was one reason, the key factor was that the birth of the other Primordial Chaos Beasts required specific conditions.

For the past few days, Li Tianming had talked about it with the little chick, with their 'second brother' making more and more noises in the lifebound space.

"While we do not know why the ten Primordial Chaos Beasts would appear in your lifebound space as lifebound beasts, it is clear that we have all integrated into the same system as you. I was the first to be born, and furthermore, you were starting from zero back then, so it was much easier for us to cultivate from the beginning. But from now on, things would be more complicated for the rest of them. We've already come a long way in the path of symbiotic cultivation, having reached fifth level Spiritsource," the little chick had explained.

"So what will happen to me when the second brother is born and how will I differ from other twin-beastmasters? From what I know, their beasts almost always hatch at the same time."

"Even we don't know why we were born separately. But that implies that whenever a Primordial Chaos Beast is born, you will have to start all over in your symbiotic cultivation."

"Start all over? I have to start from Beast Vein again?" Li Tianming remembered rubbing his head so hard at those words, some hair had even fallen off.

"That's right. Even if you are currently fifth level Spiritsource, you are also first level Beast Vein, since you have just connected your beast veins with second brother. As its lightning power is too insignificant compared to my Aeternal Infernal Power, the former won't survive in your body. As a result, both of you will not be able to cultivate lightning power," said the little chick.

"Do we have a solution to this?"

"Well, I have been thinking about it for a while, and I do have a solution. Remember when it became more active? It was right when we first arrived..."

Ying Huo's solution was none other than the phenomenon of emergence, and what happened today had indeed validated his guess. From now on, every new brother they gain would also trigger similar phenomena.

With such an environment, the newborn beast could channel lightning to facilitate its hatching. It would then exploit the phenomenon of emergence to cultivate together with Li Tianming. The lightning-type spirit hazard was its favourite food, and the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend would make use of it to connect the nine beast veins in a short period of time, develop the lightningsource and push themselves to fifth stage Spiritsource.

"Only then can the two different powers balance out in your body. Once that happens, you'll be able to develop the proper symbiotic cultivation system of a twin-beastmaster. Otherwise, any imbalance in the

power of the beasts would lead to an imbalance in the power within your body. Since all ten of us are your lifebound beasts, surely there would be a solution to this,” the little chick explained, letting Li Tianming know why the phenomenon of emergence was the best solution.

“In other words, as I grow stronger, I need to find a suitable place to facilitate the birth of the next Primordial Chaos Beast! Ideally, it needs to be somewhere with plenty of treasure, like spirit hazards, spirit herbs or spirit ores! Only then can our new brother reach the same level as the infernalsource in the shortest time possible, thus achieving balance within my body!”

Right now, both Li Tianming and the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend were draining away the energy from the stormy clouds in the sky. They would connect every single beast vein, and then form their new spiritsource from there!

“Normally speaking, lifebound beasts of twin-beastmasters are of the same type, and rarely are they ever different.” Li Tianming thought of Lin Xiaoting, who was a good example, since both of his lifebound beasts were at least primarily lightning-type. “No matter how many lifebound beasts a beastmaster has, the number of spiritsources he can form still depends on his strongest lifebound beast.”

For example, if a twin-beastmaster had one five-star beast and one six-star beast, then he would be able to form six spirit sources. Five of them would have double the capacity, with power from both beasts, while the sixth one belonged to the stronger beast. Only if the five-star beast evolved would the sixth spiritsource double its size as well. Generally, twin-beastmasters would practice the same technique with both of their beasts.

“But that’s not the case for me! Ying Huo and the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend are of completely different types, and it will need its own separate technique. The power I cultivate with it cannot exist in the infernalsource, so I’ll need a new spirit source for that! I can share the two’s abilities, but the two cannot share power between themselves.” That would be the main difference between Li Tianming and regular twin-beastmasters.

Of course, that would not make him any weaker. What would happen when lightning and fire fused together? Li Tianming would soon find out whether a spiritsource with double the capacity would be stronger, or his two, differently-typed spiritsources were stronger!

“No wonder it took such a long time to hatch. Turns out that I needed a place for it to catch up to our level as soon as it hatches. That would be a necessary prerequisite for our symbiotic cultivation to take place,” Li Tianming noted. “That also means that the obstacle that the rest of the eight brothers will have to overcome will become bigger as I continue to cultivate. And it’s not like I can always find the most suitable place.”

Still, it was a good thing for Li Tianming. He was already at fifth level Spiritsource, and now he just gained a new beast at the same level in the shortest period of time! He could barely wait to witness the power of his new Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend!

As lightning continued to fall, the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend in Li Tianming’s lap had already started its symbiotic cultivation, creating an explosion just by simply running it!

“Young one, what is the name of your technique?” Li Tianming questioned loudly.

“Genesis Chaos Codex, meow!”

First the Aeternal Infernal Codex, now the Genesis Chaos Codex?

.....

Meow?

Li Tianming could not see it, but from the furry feeling in his hand, he had a bad feeling about this. What happened to the badass tiger he was promised? Why did it look like a tiny cat?

Heavens, why must this happen to him? As if the little chick wasn't enough for people to laugh at him for already! Even after chomping down two mannas, the only change that happened to it was that tiny little horn popping out of its head. Ying Huo even tried blocking it with its 'hairstyle', saying it was ugly.

And now, a cat? Was he destined to be the guy with cute house pets instead of ferocious beasts?

Li Tianming had no time to bemoan his fate, for his priority was to familiarise himself with the brand-new Genesis Chaos Codex.

Electricity ran through the Lake of Islands, the sheer heat alone making the water levels recede. It was indeed true that out of all the elements, lightning and fire were the most destructive of them all. While fire excelled in dealing damage over time, lightning attacks were swift, outputting maximum damage in a single burst.

Li Tianming was very much used to the power of fire, and this was his first time practicing the power of lightning. Even though his nine beast veins were already strong enough, he was still awed by the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend's beast veins. It was like eighteen dragons entwining onto each other, half of them blazing with infernal flames while the other half infused with lightning. The symbiotic cultivation system had brought much benefits to Li Tianming. With the birth of every Primordial Chaos Beast, he would be able to gain a new power. Not only did he have the Aeternal Infernal Physique, but he now had the Genesis Chaos Physique too! It would continue to stack in the future, changing his body completely each time.

Li Tianming did not have an affinity to lightning-type powers at first, especially since his lifebound beast started off to be metal-type. But a few seconds was all he took to become a lightning-type genius, courtesy of the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend!

He could feel the new power being injected into his Aeternal Infernal beast veins, remodelling his body entirely. There was no room for Jiang Feiling to help, so she stood idly by and admired the birth of his Genesis Chaos Physique. While both of his lifebound beasts would only enjoy the benefits of their own elements, Li Tianming had two, doubling the capacity of his beast ki.

Their first beast veins were connected! With the help of the Genesis Chaos Codex, the lightning spirit hazards converted into Genesis Chaos Beast Ki, pouring into his beast veins. Li Tianming had already stored his Aeternal Infernal Beast Ki away in his infernal source. If he hadn't done so, his newfound powers would be consumed instantly. He had not reached the point where the two powers in his body were balanced yet.

With his beast veins cleared of Aeternal Infernal Beast Ki, Li Tianming and the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend drained away the spirit hazard, rapidly expanding their Genesis Chaos Beast Ki.

It didn't take long for the second vein to be connected, but that was just the start of something spectacular.

Chapter 137 - Lightningsource!

What followed was a set of beast veins connecting every hundred seconds. It didn't take long for all nine sets of beast veins to connect, and majestic power began to course through them.

It was time to form the spiritsource. Just like with the little chick, Li Tianming's new spiritsource formed at the dantian. As the centremost position, it was the most stable and balanced location.

As for the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend, its spiritsource formed at its stomach too.

Li Tianming's Genesis Chaos Beast Ki converged in his dantian. Lightning began to flood inside as well, which was quickly converted by the Genesis Chaos Codex.

At the left of the dantian, the infernalsource was like a burning sun, while the new spiritsource was like a tiny black point. However, this tiny point, full of black Chaos Lightning, was expanding at a breath-taking pace. This point was called the lightningsource!

As time passed and the sea of lightning in the sky lessened, the lightningsource continued to grow. It grew from a tenth of the infernalsource, to a third to half! The lightning present was enough for it to skyrocket from zero to a level equal to the little chick!

It wouldn't take long for it to reach fifth level Spiritsource.

.....

This was a grand occasion rarely seen in the Abyssal Battlefield. No one would think that it was caused by Li Tianming, with all who saw it instead believing it to be some disaster.

The faraway Yueling Ji had the same idea, hiding as far away as possible while sneering coldly.

Only one person knew the origin of all this was Li Tianming, and that he wouldn't die. Mu Qingqing!

She was right in front of Li Tianming, watching as he held a new lifebound beast that guzzled down the lightning of the Abyssal Battlefield madly.

The lightning was as black as ink, replacing Li Tianming's Infernal Armour. Now, he looked like a black-coloured monster, frightening and heaven-defying!

Mu Qingqing was currently being protected by a sphere of lightning, which kept her alive. She was aware that her continued survival was solely because Li Tianming didn't want to let her off easily.

Just like Li Tianming three years ago, she had now lost her lifebound beast. Blueshine, the Rage-Dragon Whalelord, didn't really have that heavy a sin. It wasn't its fault it had a master like Mu Qingqing, so Li Tianming gave it a painless death.

However, he wouldn't grant Mu Qingqing that. Now that her lifebound beast was dead, her beast ki was dispersing. Her strength was falling rapidly by the second. She would never be able to cultivate again.

Unless she had a Primordial Chaos Beast as well.

Her only option left was to use a blood pact to find a wildbeast. However, Li Tianming refused to let her have even that chance.

Mu Qingqing had lost all her beasts, and the Purple Blood-Imprint had sucked away much of her blood. Even a one-star wildbeast could end her now.

Her face was pale and her figure had thinned out a lot. She had never been so ugly in her life. However, the biggest blow wasn't a physical one, but a mental one.

She could see Li Tianming absorb the power of heaven and earth, his strength increasing wildly with every second!

She could see Li Tianming gain a new lifebound beast, just as terrifying as the little chick!

She could see Li Tianming had gained an even greater fortune than the Saintbeast War-Soul!

However, she had never anticipated this. The little chick's appearance was just too disconcerting. However, she knew that if the little chick hadn't been so heaven-defying, Li Tianming would never have been able to crush her as he did today!

She was terrified!

She shook uncontrollably, but she had no tears to cry out. She had never expected a day she would be in such a pathetic state. Mu Qingqing no longer dared to say she could defy her destiny, or that Li Tianming was naive or childish. She could no longer dare say everything was under her control. Her loss was so complete, so thorough that she couldn't even resist.

Even the Purple Blood-Imprint she had staked it all on was a joke in front of him. Li Tianming had casually broken it without using any tricks. Twenty years of struggle and clawing her way up, all gone in an instant. All thanks to that young man she had ruined three years ago.

She wanted to hate.

However, when she watched the terrifyingly mighty Li Tianming, she couldn't even entertain that emotion. She tried to press down on her limbs to stop the shaking, but she couldn't. When she tried to open her mouth to breath in, even breathing had become difficult for her.

"You did this to yourself." The little chick appeared in front of her, giving her a cold, hard look.

"I... I..." She was unable to speak. Apart from her fright, some matters of the past also resurfaced in her mind. Tears finally started to pour down, proof that she could cry after all.

"Is there any point in regretting? There's always karmic retribution in this world. Mistreating those who treated them well has a price. What you gained back then, you'll lose an order of magnitude more."

"Karmic retribution..." She didn't believe in destiny, but she still hadn't been able to escape karmic retribution.

“The only pity is that you won’t be able to see Lin Xiaoting killed by my brother.”

“No. Perhaps she will.” A man walked out of the mass of lightning serpents, each as dark as night. Black lightning coiled around his body, and he opened his eyes to reveal what seemed like two seas of lightning within them. His current appearance made Mu Qingqing lower her head in fright.

The little chick knew that this meant the process had ended. The lightning that was once omnipresent had dispersed, with Li Tianming now looking like a whole new person. This meant he and the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend had both reached fifth level Spiritsource!

Right now, the infernalsource and lightningsource in Li Tianming’s body had reached parity.

The little chick had a slightly displeased look. From now on, Li Tianming didn’t only belong to it. The shameful feeling of being one of the two wives to a man had abruptly appeared in its mind, and the little chick suddenly felt like puking.

“Where is it?” the little chick asked.

“Sleeping.”

“...”

As expected, it really was a lazy fellow.

“Ying Huo, how dare you trick me!”

“Huh?”

“You said it would be a peerlessly domineering tiger!”

The little chick chortled. “Heh. Don’t fantasize any longer. You just don’t have that kind of destiny.”

Li Tianming was in despair. What part of this was a fierce tiger? It was just a palm-sized little black cat, just a tiny bit bigger than the little chick!

It was a fluffy black cat with pink claws with a face full of innocence and the bluest eyes that blinked at Li Tianming. Just like the little chick at birth, those eyes had one star on them. It also had a furry tail that swayed from side to side as it slept, and shook when it had a nightmare.

Most infuriating of all, surpassing its laziness and its love for sleeping, was how it attached a ‘meow’ to every sentence.

‘Waaaahhh, so tired, meow.’

“Not gonna cultivate anymore, meow.”

“Zzzz so sleepy, meow...”

Earlier on, Li Tianming had watched speechlessly as it crawled back into his lifebound space. Rolling over, its legs sticking up, it went back to sleep.

Now, it would never wake up, no matter how it was disturbed.

Li Tianming wanted to question how this was a fierce tiger. In comparison, the little chick might be a little shameless, but at least it was wild, hot-blooded and full of a warrior's spirit. It was also very hardworking, putting maximum effort whether it was cultivating or fighting.

The newcomer looked more like it would be a cheerleader from the sidelines.

However, Li Tianming didn't say anything as Jiang Feiling had already fallen into its trap.

"How cute! It's a thousand times cuter than Ying Huo. Big brother, could you give it to me as a present? I want to hug it to sleep! Look at those eyes."

"Big brother, don't bring the kitty into battle. What if it gets hurt? If there's any danger, send Ying Huo in first. It has thick skin, and actually, it deserves a beating!"

If the little chick were to hear it, it would probably be angered to death.

"Big brother, what do you want to name it? How about Meow Meow? It's a cute name that fits it!" Jiang Feiling looked at him expectantly. And that was the story of how the domineering Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend got its adorable little name.

Meow Meow? Meow Meow?! Li Tianming opened his mouth, but couldn't bring himself to veto it, lest he made Jiang Feiling sad.

Li Tianming found the black cat very powerful. In the first round, it had gone straight for Jiang Feiling, grasping Li Tianming's weak spot. This was a skill that Ying Huo would probably never grasp.

It had a cute appearance, but its personality and style meant that it could never be cute in the truest sense of the word.

Regardless, the black cat's birth had brought Li Tianming a lot of help, as he had surpassed his limits.

Now, it was a frighteningly talented Li Tianming that reappeared in front of Mu Qingqing. He cultivated in both fire and lightning, possessed two Primordial Chaos Beasts, as well as Vermilion Bird's number one beauty and the world's greatest assistant in battle and cultivating, Jiang Feiling.

In contrast, Mu Qingqing had lost her lifebound beast, and her beast ki was starting to disperse, while her body was bloodied and feeble.

Who would have remembered that three years ago on that stormy night, she had nestled in Lin Xiaoting's arms, watching on coldly while Li Tianming was attacked and Midas died?

Li Tianming remembered it very clearly.

And so did she!

However, that contrast had only served to contribute to her mental collapse.

"Look up." Li Tianming's feet appeared in front of her eyes. Then, a set of cold yet seemingly familiar fingers held her chin, forcing her head up.

Chapter 138 - Like A Deity!

Mu Qingqing looked up, and with a jolt, realised that one of Li Tianming's eyes was shining like the sun, while the other was a pitch-black sea of clouds. It was like staring into the face of a deity!

"Qingqing, do you need a mirror to see how ugly you are right now?" Li Tianming's lips curved.

Three long years. It had taken him three years to get to this point. To see her begging and crawling at his feet was like a dream came true! Trampling her body and spirit like this was nothing short of exhilarating.

But that was just the first step. He had known for a long time that Mu Qingqing wasn't his match, ever since he defeated Wei Guohao. She put up a good fight, but that was all. Now, Li Tianming's target had shifted to Lin Xiaoting, and only with his death would Midas rest in peace.

As for Mu Qingqing, she was entirely at his mercy now. A single finger would end her, and under his burning stare, Mu Qingqing began to shake violently, to the point that even her eyes were having trouble focusing.

"Are you showing me mercy when you said you don't want me to die?" She squeezed the words out of her lips.

"For someone who called me naive just now, you yourself are quite naive too." Li Tianming laughed, knowing that mercy was never an option. "I'm just wondering how I should end you! I'll be a beast if I show you even a tinge of pity."

Li Tianming lightly patted her cheeks, a cold smile on his face. "Now that I think about it, killing you with a stab or two is letting you off too lightly."

Mu Qingqing trembled. "What for? Have you forgotten the time we spent together, and how you treated me back then?"

"Of course I didn't, and you called me naive for that. But you're right. And now, I'll never be that fool again." Li Tianming detached the Blazing Dragon Fang from his Blazing Dragon Chainblade.

"Congratulations. I now know how I should handle you. Let this be my last sincere promise to you: you will not die an easy death, or else I'll never be able to face Midas."

His Blazing Dragon Fang pierced straight through Mu Qingqing's body, and she shrieked, curling up like a puppy a moment later. He hadn't stabbed her randomly either; he'd perforated one of her spirit sources with that strike.

Mu Qingqing now looked like a complete wretch, her fingers drawing five bloody marks across the rock. Was it a pitiful sight? Li Tianming didn't think so. Who was there to pity him on the night he carried Midas' corpse with him for miles in the rain?

"The positions of your five spiritsources... I remember them very well. Since Blueshine evolved, you should have two more. Those you can keep, Qingqing." It was a given that he knew those things, with all the time they spent together. He still remembered their happiest moment together, back when they first attained Spiritsource. A Saintbeast War-Soul, however, was enough to make her betray him utterly.

He stabbed out four more times, each of them piercing a spiritsource, scattering her beast ki to the winds. She was already handicapped when her beast died, but Li Tianming had accelerated that process

by crushing most of her spirit sources. She now had two left; returning to Lightning Manor without dying was still within her.

"I beg you, kill me! I know I've sinned! Just kill me!" She knelt down, half-sobbing, half-shrieking. Was she still that white lotus flower that people admired and envied, with her hair scattered across her face and her body covered in blood?

The answer was obvious. She was now facing the music, and the man she'd wronged was playing for her.

Li Tianming grabbed her head and forced her to look in his eyes. "You and I both know that's not going to happen. Qingqing, do you know why I'm not going to kill you today?"

"You're going to live and feel how the past three years treated me. No, not three years. You'll just need to endure until I turn Lin Xiaoting into bloody strips of flesh, and burn that sight into your eyes. Hold on until then, and I'll forgive you. How about it?" A demonic smile danced on Li Tianming's face — but who was the one who had turned a once-sincere smile into the now-devilish leer?

"Aah..." Mu Qingqing opened her mouth, but her trembling had reduced her words into an incoherent mess.

"I... am sorry..." She forced the words out of her lips as tears rolled across her face.

"No, no. Admitting defeat now is just too early. Save it for the day when I kill Lin Xiaoting." Li Tianming rose to his feet, and Mu Qingqing fell to the floor. With only two spirit sources supporting her body, she was close to death. In fact, she had already fainted.

For Li Tianming, that was the first step of his revenge. Killing her was pointless; her being alive would add on to her suffering. He was not intending to let her off easily. What he wanted was for her to return to the Lightning Manor, to experience what he had felt for the past three years. It wouldn't take long, and everything would end once Lin Xiaoting died at his hand.

For now, he was going to let her ruminate on something he knew the answer to. Was physical pain the greatest suffering? Or would it be the hurtful words of others and the mental trauma she would be going through? Li Tianming would leave her to find out in the Lightning Manor.

Apologising now was simply too premature. After all, Li Tianming's vengeance had just started. True, it was cruel, but this cruelty was a necessity if he was to ever walk out from the shadow of his past. Once everything ended, he could return to being the optimistic, cheerful, fun-loving boy he was, praying that he would never meet someone like her again.

What was over was over. For now, he needed to claim his victory for the Abyssal Trials to save his mother's life. Anything else could wait.

The little chick had brought Jiang Qingluan and the Bluefire Vermilion Bird to one of the islands while the two were exchanging words. The Heavenly Pattern Barrier had shrunk to cover a fifth of the lake now — the trials were going to end in a moment or two. Li Tianming headed over to check Jiang Qingluan's injuries. She was still alive but unconscious, and even in her sleep, she seemed to be in pain.

“Li Tianming, even with such a storm, you didn’t die?!” Three teenagers approached from a distance, with two of them looking somewhat reluctant. Of course, the reluctant fellows — the Xing and Chen brothers — were obviously disappointed at Li Tianming’s stellar performance, and to drive home the point, Xing Que was the one who had asked that question.

“You killed Mu Qingqing? Are you not afraid of the Lightning Manor, or even Lin Xiaoting?” Chen Hao sounded shocked.

“Nah, she’s still alive. I just crippled her,” Li Tianming replied with a smile.

“Even then, you are done for.” Xing Que frowned. He could tell that Mu Qingqing was in a really bad state.

“Mind your own business, or I don’t mind teaching you a lesson too.” Li Tianming’s smile widened.

The two fellows clammed up immediately. They hadn’t gotten over their phobia of him yet.

“How is Princess Qing doing?” Mo Lin ignored the twins and joined Li Tianming.

“She’s poisoned, but I don’t have any antidote. Do you?” Li Tianming asked.

“I do. I’m a medic, so I’m quite familiar with the uses of various spirit herbs.” He reached for his pocket, showing off his ample preparations for the Abyssal Trials.

Mo Lin took a look at Jiang Qingluan. “Black-Devil Poison. Fortunately, I have the appropriate antidote.”

“Will she be fine?” Li Tianming asked nervously.

“Don’t you worry. She might need to rest for a few weeks after this, but she should be fine.” Mo Lin answered. Li Tianming heaved a sigh of relief, and so did Jiang Feiling. Mo Lin was a medic, so naturally they could trust his words.

As for the Bluefire Vermilion Bird, it was also affected by the same poison. While Mo Lin did not have enough spirit herbs to cure it, it was hardy enough to resist it, until they returned home.

Mo Lin started to heal Jiang Qingluan. About ten minutes later, the sickly-green hue on her skin began to recede.

“Apprentice brother Mo Lin, do you mind helping me to check whether she can stay alive for about a month?” Li Tianming pointed at Mu Qingqing.

“She’s in a bad state now. Her spirit sources are broken, and she overused the Purple Blood-Imprint. She can definitely make it back to the Lightning Manor, but she’s thoroughly crippled,” Mo Lin sighed.

“Do you find what I did cruel?” Li Tianming asked.

“Not really. I heard my master say that the events three years ago had another side to it.” Mo Lin’s mentor was Mu Yang’s apprentice brother.

“And does brother Mo Lin believe that?”

"I do." Mo Lin looked at him in the eyes and said without hesitation. Surprisingly, he believed that it was Lin Xiaoting and Mu Qingqing's fault. That was enough for Li Tianming to be grateful about, and he was glad that he saved Mo Lin from Yueling Ji the other day.

"Another side? Are you suggesting that Mu Qingqing and Lin Xiaoting framed you and that the Saintbeast War-Soul was yours to begin with?" Chen Hao questioned.

Xing Que breathed in sharply. "Chen Hao, what did you just say?!"

"My father mentioned that before, but I didn't believe it at first. You see..." Chen Hao threw a complicated look at Li Tianming. So he really wasn't the filthy criminal depicted by those rumours, and was actually the victim? And yet, under these circumstances, with your lifebound beast killed and your Saintbeast War-Soul robbed, you still returned for revenge?

His opinion of Li Tianming did an about-turn as he processed the shocking twist.

"Uncle Chen said that?!" Xing Que glared at Li Tianming. He wasn't dumb, and if so many seniors had claimed that, then it seemed likely that what they said really was real. Now that the basis of their discrimination looked like a lie, he was beginning to feel a delightfully indescribable emotion.

The subject of their discussion, however, was rather indifferent to their opinions. He simply stood beside Jiang Qingluan, silently waiting for her to wake up.

Once the Heavenly Pattern Barrier was a thousand metres wide, it shattered. And with that, the Abyssal Trials were over.

Any moment now, representatives from Heaven's Elysium would be appearing.

End of Volume 1: The Eggstraordinary Duo

Next, Volume 2: Bane of Life

Chapter 139 - Inspectors From Heaven's Elysium!

Volume 2: Bane of Life

The fragments of the shattered Heavenly Pattern Barrier fell around them as the black sounds in the sky dispersed. Silence enveloped the region.

The Black-Devil Poison was slowly being removed from Jiang Qingluan's body, and she woke up just in time to see the barrier disappearing. Even though Jiang Feiling was excited, it wasn't a suitable timing for her to detach from her spiritual form.

As Jiang Qingluan opened her eyes, she saw the blurry image of a teenager looking at him. He wore a bright smile, one that was brighter than the sun, enough to cheer up anyone instantly.

"Li Tianming..." She was still on the ground, so Li Tianming helped her up, propping her against a rock.

"Is Ling'er with you?" That was the first thing Jiang Qingluan asked.

"I'm here, Qing'er. Big brother saved you." Jiang Feiling whispered as she gathered her spiritual form and appeared in front of Jiang Qingluan briefly, before quickly going back into Li Tianming.

“Saved me...” Her head was a mess, and only then did she recall what happened.

“Right, where is that bitch Mu Qingqing? How dare she use the Purple Blood-Imprint! And where is Blue?” Jiang Qingluan looked around, and was relieved to find her Bluefire Vermilion Bird resting beside her. After listening to Li Tianming’s explanation about the poison, she kept Blue back in her lifebound space for it to rest. She was still weak, and barely had the strength to even walk.

“You saved me?” Jiang Qingluan gawked at him.

“Don’t look at me like that. I won’t accept it if you promise yourself to me. I’m not into love triangles, especially with my girlfriend’s best friend.” Li Tianming joked with a straight face.

“W-why don’t you die somewhere then...” Jiang Qingluan threw him a fierce stare. She was quite grateful of him at first, but now she just wanted to punch that stupid face.

“Was it all you?” Jiang Qingluan asked in shock, seeing Xing Que and Chen Hao with their head lowered, and Mu Qingqing lying on the floor unconscious.

She was especially glad that Mu Qingqing had been defeated. She too was aware of Li Tianming’s aim for taking part in the Abyssal Trials, and it was now clear that Mu Qingqing would not be joining Lin Xiaoting in the Elysium. She couldn’t help but recall how Mu Qingqing had defeated her with a squad of wildbeasts, and she was glad to see that Mu Qingqing being punished for that.

“Not bad. But don’t you dare think that I will let you be with Ling’er just because of that,” Jiang Qingluan said.

“Your permission? Is that edible? Because I don’t see a need for it.” Li Tianming rolled his eyes.

“Big brother, don’t be so harsh on Qing’er.” Jiang Feiling smiled.

“Whatever.” Jiang Qingluan’s primary focus right now was rest. With the current condition of her body, she might still need Li Tianming to carry her out of the battlefield later.

“How did the trials go?” Jiang Qingluan asked, and Li Tianming explained to her everything that had happened.

“Sooo... you got first place for the Abyssal Trials, and a profound manna to boot! What a lucky guy! And you will be going to Heaven’s Elysium too? Congratulations, Li Tianming! Good riddance, and don’t you think you can bring Ling’er with you!” Jiang Qingluan was both happy and worried for him. She found it hard to just let Jiang Feiling go, and was worried that Li Tianming couldn’t take good care of her. The world outside Vermilion Bird was more complicated than they could imagine.

“Well, we shall see. Who knows what we will get out of the trials,” Li Tianming replied. That said, he was about ninety-percent confident about his victory, since the profound manna was in his hands.

“Whatever it is, I guess we’ll congratulate brother Tianming first. From now on, you will be a disciple of the Elysium, but don’t forget about those of us in Vermilion Bird.” Mo Lin smiled.

As for Chen Hao and Xing Que, they didn’t utter a word. Even if Li Tianming said nothing to them, the two did not know how to face him, especially after all that mocking and jeering. Heck, they didn’t even

know how to face their mothers. After all, they didn't just fail to enter the Elysium, they were actually trounced in a two-on-one battle against Li Tianming.

What they dreaded most was Xue Lan. What thoughts would she have, once she heard about Li Tianming's stellar performance? As his new status as a would-be disciple of Heaven's Elysium? They didn't even dare to think about it.

The disappearance of the barrier signified that the Abyssal Trials was ending. Li Tianming scanned his vicinity, looking for other surviving contestants. From what he saw, there were only two others in the region, a boy and a girl both dressed in the attire of Torch Dragon. When the profound manna first appeared, they resisted their urge to interfere, which was why they managed to survive.

Other than those two, there seems to be no one else left. That also meant that the participants of Aquamarine had been wiped out entirely. As for Torch Dragon, four had died, leaving behind two survivors and a Yueling Ji.

It was nothing short of a miracle for Vermilion Bird, what with Mo Lin needing rescue, Chen Hao and Xing Que admitting defeat, and Jiang Qingluan being kidnapped. None had died, with the one closest to death the unconscious Mu Qingqing.

"Li Tianming, congratulations on winning the Abyssal Trials and becoming a disciple of the Elysium," said one of the two survivors from Torch Dragon.

"How lucky of Vermilion Bird. There's us two left, but when placed beside Aquamarine..."

Since Mu Qingqing killed two and Yueling Ji killed two others, the other three were either killed by Yueling Ji earlier or died for other reasons.

"Isn't Yueling Ji from Torch Dragon as well?" Li Tianming asked.

"She got in last-minute. They said she was from a hidden clan in Torch Dragon, but I've never seen her before," replied the young man from Torch Dragon.

"Hold your tongue, unless you find life too boring." An unhappy voice rang out from around the corner. Yueling Ji, who had hidden on one of the islands after her defeat, finally made an appearance.

That made nine of them, with eleven dead. Li Tianming had killed one, Yueling Ji apparently killed eight. In that case, Mu Qingqing should have killed two others, the two being Gu Suyu and Li Qingcheng.

After hearing Yueling Ji's threat, the other two from Torch Dragon stopped talking. Yueling Ji herself gave Li Tianming a cold smirk, waiting with arms crossed in front of her chest.

About a minute later, two people appeared in front of the disciples, one male and the other female. Both of them were middle-aged, and appeared to be immensely strong cultivators. The man was wearing a long black robe, a black flame burning within his hawkish eyes. In contrast, the lady was donned in a white robe that hid her figure completely, her icy features giving off an unapproachable air.

The duo's appearance caught everyone's attention immediately. With the aura they were releasing, it was clear that they were representatives of the Elysium. With their superior identity and their terrifying aura, one look from them could drop the youngsters to their knees. The two were in an entirely

different world; even Mu Yang would have to pay his respects to them, for they were from the headquarters of every single Heaven's Sanctum, Heaven's Elysium!

"You are all still young, so most of you probably don't know me. I am Jin Yixuan, and this is Song Yixue. We are the vice-inspectors from Heaven's Elysium, in charge of the Flameyellow Scions Institutes of the eighteen nations in the region," said Jin Yixuan, his solemn voice weighing on them like a mountain.

Eighteen nations! When Li Tianming was young, he thought that Vermilion Bird was the entire world, and he only learnt of Torch Dragon and Aquamarine when he grew a bit older. But even if they were just 'vice-inspectors', they were in charge of a total of eighteen nations. That was enough to suggest that their positions were higher than even Wei Tiancang, who was the Potentate.

"Greetings to the two inspectors." Jiang Qingluan gestured at those from Vermilion Bird, and led them to greet the two vice-inspectors. It was a basic knowledge for those born in the royal families to casually remove the 'vice' in front of the vice-inspectors' titles when making conversation.

"How strange, none of you got killed by that spirit hazard." Song Yixue suddenly chipped in. The only one who saw Li Tianming absorbing all the lightning was the unconscious Mu Qingqing, and no one else, not even Mo Lin, knew that the phenomenon was caused by the birth of Li Tianming's beast.

"That's because we were in hiding," Mo Lin said respectfully. Hopefully, that was enough to hide Meow Meow's birth from the two seniors.

"Hm, the Abyssal Trials is over. Who obtained the draconic water obelisk?" Jin Yixuan asked.

And with that, the most exciting moment of the Abyssal Trials had arrived. With a single announcement from the inspectors, Li Tianming would join the ranks of Heaven's Elysium as a disciple there, soaring into a world the rest could not possibly even imagine!

"Inspectors, it is I, Li Tianming of the Wei Clan from Vermilion Bird." Li Tianming answered. As per his deal with Wei Tiancang, Li Tianming was a representative of the Wei Clan, and Wei Jing would be saved if he won honour for the Wei Clan.

However, Li Tianming realised there were no responses from the two inspectors after a while, so he looked up into their faces. Why was Song Yixue looking at that Yueling Ji in the distance?

"Inspectors?" From their look, it was evident that they did not monitor the trials live, and only came after the barrier had vanished. That would also explain why Mu Qingqing managed to get away with using the Purple Blood-Imprint. But why was Song Yixue looking at Yueling Ji?

"Li Tianming, show me the draconic water obelisk," Song Yixue commanded, leaving no room for argument.

"Here it is." Li Tianming thought they were making a final confirmation. But the moment he took the profound manna out, a small wave of water had swept away the manna, placing it in Yueling Ji's hand.

"Inspectors, what's the meaning of this?" Li Tianming asked. Everyone had the same question, because why would they reclaim the treasure that Li Tianming had so painstakingly fought for? Was the Elysium going to be so stingy that they weren't actually giving him the manna?

"What?" Song Yixue stared at him.

“I don’t understand.” Li Tianming had a bad feeling about this.

Jin Yixuan smiled. “Let me do the explaining.”

“Li Tianming, how could you snatch the prize intended for the winner of the Abyssal Trials?”

Li Tianming froze on the spot, stupefied. Him, snatch the prize?

Chapter 140 - Consolation Prize Winner, Li Tianming

“Sir inspectors, I defeated Yueling Ji and obtained the draconic water obelisk. Didn’t I take the first place in the Abyssal Trials?” Li Tianming asked.

“Who said obtaining the obelisk meant first place? The trials end when the obelisk appears. It was the prize. Who gave you permission to snatch it?” Song Yixue barked, and a formless pressure fell onto Li Tianming’s shoulders.

“The Abyssal Trials were determined by the person who killed the most! Yueling Ji killed eight, so she’s number one, which is why the prize — the obelisk — appeared. Why else would we use a water-type mana as a prize? Can you even use it?” Jin Yixuan said.

It wasn’t just Li Tianming. Apart from Yueling Ji, everyone else was shocked. Initially, everyone had believed that whoever killed the most would win, which changed to being the holder of the obelisk with its appearance.

Now that the trials had ended, they were saying it was the number of kills that was the winning condition?

Li Tianming was enlightened when he saw Yueling Ji smile at him. Everything had been decided from the start. The rules were left undeclared intentionally, so that they could be changed if needed.

If Yueling Ji obtained the obelisk, being the possessor would be the winning condition. If she hadn’t, killing the most would be the winning condition. And if she hadn’t killed the most, another factor would make her the winner anyway.

This hoo-ha, along with the deaths of eleven, all just to send Yueling Ji into Heaven’s Elysium! What sort of status did she have?

Li Tianming, of course, was furious. This was the only way to save Wei Jing!

However, these two inspectors had statuses that surpassed even Wei Tiancang. How could Li Tianming reject their ruling on their private game?

Before powerhouses, the weak were just mute chess pieces, whose fate was to be moved around and discarded where necessary.

He now knew why Yueling Ji could use a grade six bestial weapon, why she could keep smiling until now, without any worries to speak of.

“I announce that first place of the Abyssal Trials goes to Yueling Ji of Torch Dragon. Her prize shall be the profound mana, the draconic water obelisk. And, on the day she makes a breakthrough to the Unity stage, she shall become an official disciple of Heaven’s Elysium!”

“Many thanks, sir inspectors!” Yueling Ji emotionally received the draconic water obelisk, before sending a brilliant smile filled with mockery at Li Tianming.

“Fight with me? What a good joke.” Yueling Ji’s smile grew even wider.

This scene made everyone even more speechless, because everyone was now aware that the Inspectors had played them and the Heaven’s Sanctums of the three countries for fools. The biggest victim of all was Aquamarine; with an entire generation of geniuses lost in the Abyssal Battlefield.

How could such figures be so shameless? And more importantly, who exactly was backing Yueling Ji?

“Youngsters. I know you all must have certain thoughts now, but this is the test of Heaven’s Elysium. I hope there won’t be tongues wagging unnecessarily after this. If your futures and your clans were to suffer because of this... it’ll be a pity, no?” Vice-Inspector Song Yixue gazed at everyone, the fey chill in his eyes enough to frighten everyone present.

It was a naked threat, but one no one would dare to call him out publicly. With their status and power, suppressing a group of youngsters was too easy.

“Also, Li Tianming had an excellent performance in the Abyssal Trials, so the two of us have decided to give him a consolation prize, a royal manna. Li Tianming, what type do you need?” Jin Yixuan asked.

If there was someone unhappy here, the one who would be unhappiest would be Li Tianming! The whole time, he had a feeling that a candidate had long been confirmed, but once he obtained the obelisk, he’d decided that he had been overthinking things.

Alas, he had been played for a fool. However, this was something even Wei Tiancang couldn’t change, let alone someone like him. It would be suicidal for him to voice his displeasure now.

Jin Yixuan was intelligent. By giving Li Tianming a royal manna now, it made it more difficult for him to speak out in the future.

“Lord Inspector, I need lightning-type manna,” Li Tianming replied.

“Sure. This is the three-pronged electrospike. Work hard, and one day, you may make it to the ranks of Heaven’s Elysium,” Jin Yixuan said.

However, his words only made Song Yixue chuckle. For somewhere like the peninsula, without any special connections, a millennium could go by without any new blood for the Elysium, unless someone had luck that rivalled Lin Xiaoting.

Jin Yixuan handed over a royal manna to Li Tianming. It was a conical rock with a sharp three-pronged tip. Electricity flickered on it, giving it a breathtakingly strange aura. It was perfectly suited for the black cat.

Normally, this would be a royal manna that would make anyone envious. However, how could it compare to the draconic water obelisk? That could raise a lifebound beast to eight-stars!

However, Li Tianming could only accept it.

“Heaven’s Elysium, heh...” Li Tianming now had a poor impression of Heaven’s Elysium. Perhaps he would journey there one fine day and see if everyone there was just as shameless as the two in front of him.

Li Tianming didn’t show any of his displeasure outwardly, making Jin Yixuan quite satisfied. Now, what was a small matter to them had come to a close.

At this moment, five people raced over, Mu Yang among them.

“Lord Inspectors!” Mu Yang rushed over. When he scanned the members of the Vermilion Bird team and found that only Mu Qingqing was heavily injured, he heaved a sigh of relief.

It was excellent that none had died. More crucial to their survival, however, was that none of them actually had a reason to die.

Xing Que and Chen Hao had wisely hidden away to lick their wounds after being beaten by Li Tianming, preserving their lives. Mo Lin had been saved by Li Tianming. As for Mu Qingqing, her Purple Blood-Imprint made it such that Yueling Ji may not actually be able to beat her. As for Jiang Qingluan, she had been taken hostage, which inadvertently saved her life.

Mu Yang was happy, but the rest weren’t. One such example was Aquamarine’s Sanctum Potentate, Murong Tianhai. A few years older than Mu Yang, he had assumed his post for just a few years, but the shock from the complete annihilation of Aquamarine’s disciples had made him seem older in a matter of seconds.

Torch Dragon’s Sanctum Potentate, Wang Kun, wasn’t happy either. His disciple, Ji Changyan, was missing. Apart from Yueling Ji, who had been arranged to enter by the powers that be, only two of the original six were now left. While such a development wasn’t unexpected, that didn’t sooth his pain whatsoever.

“Lord Inspectors, where are the geniuses of my Aquamarine?” Murong Tianhai asked shakily, his face ashen.

“I’ve said before that life isn’t guaranteed in the Abyssal Trials. They all perished in battle. You can only say they had poor luck, insufficient strength or weak wills,” Jin Yixuan replied.

Murong Tianhai staggered back, his face paling more and more. “Aquamarine has lost this generation of geniuses!”

While it didn’t matter now, twenty years later, Aquamarine would be suppressed in terms of powerhouses by the other two countries. Being conquered wasn’t off the cards anymore.

In comparison, Vermilion Bird was the luckiest.

Staying alive was already a victory in the eyes of many. As for losing first place, that affected Li Tianming and Li Tianming only.

“First place belongs to Torch Dragon’s Yueling Ji. She’s at ninth level Spiritsource, holds the profound manna and defeated over eight of her peers. Such a talent is fully deserving of entering my Heaven’s Elysium. Congratulations, Potentate Wang.” Song Yixue smiled.

Potentate Wang was stunned. You're congratulating me? My Sanctum lost every single genius, all direct descendants of Torch Dragon's mightiest families! Screw your congratulations! That Yueling Ji isn't even in my freaking Sanctum!

Truly 'moved', Potentate Wang said, "Yueling Ji didn't let down our expectations. On her behalf, I thank the Lord Inspectors!"

Jin Yixuan and Song Yixue laughed.

"Come, let me make the introductions." Next to Jin Yixuan, there were two others. One was a middle-aged man around Mu Yang's age, while another was an old man. Both were dressed in white robes and were bursting with power.

Even the old man was still strong and muscular, he had to be a powerhouse. In fact, he looked like he didn't lose out to the potentates present.

"This is Yueling Hong, clan leader of Torch Dragon's hidden clan, the Yueling clan." Jin Yixuan gestured at the old man.

"Both potentates, I've been looking forward to meeting you for a long time." The old man cupped his fists in greeting.

"Hello, senior." Mu Yang returned the gesture. However, if they were a hidden clan of Torch dragon, shouldn't Wang Kun be introducing them?

The inspectors also seemed very close to them. Also, how did they get here? Only potentates were supposed to be able to bring people here...