

## The Ages 1361

### Chapter 1361 - Galaxy Grandbeasts

It was time. The entire Violetcloud Battlefield violently shook, the boom of the war drums causing sky-high waves and cracks in the ground. The scene had the spectators bursting with excitement.

“Fight!!”

Although the people of the Violetglory Star seemed elegant and gentle, their courage and passion was no less than the people of Orderia.

The turbulent water roiled and the stars lit the sky. Above the sea, Tianming came face to face with Princess Shen Yu. The lifebound beasts around him were either taking a bath or surfing; they didn't seem to be aware of the impending fight.

Princess Shen Yu resembled a noble goddess. Her hand was wrapped around the hilt of a dazzling sword inlaid with seven gemstones of different colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Each gemstone shone like a star, adding to her brilliance. Of all the people Tianming had ever come across, she was the one who bore the closest resemblance to an empress.

At that moment she was wielding a colorful sword, her bright gaze fixed on Tianming's body. Her long dress was covered in stars and jewels and spread out around her. It was as if she was bathing in a sea of stars that revolved around her. The breathtaking, peerless woman had transcended the realm of beauty. She had become the symbol of the people's belief in majesty.

If she'd had the Primordial God-Emperor's inheritance, she could attract countless believers through her appearance alone. Her weapon, the Heptastar Divineglory, was comparable to Li Haochen's Crimsoncloud Dragonbane.

The splendor of the stars, the magnificent sword, and her peerless beauty sent the members of the Divineglory Alliance into a frenzy. They projected their own desire for battle onto Princess Shen Yu. Behind her were hundreds of millions of fiery gazes that followed her in examining Tianming.

"Lin Feng, can you feel it? Can you sense how much stronger I am compared to Mu Sha?" Her red lips gently parted as she spoke. On the battlefield, all she saw was her opponent. There wasn't a hint of a smile in her eyes. After all, Tianming had never been close to her.

“Just a little,” Tianming replied.

"You're still so arrogant and boring." Princess Shen Yu shook her head.

Tianming might seem obtuse, but in fact, he was deliberately ignoring her teasing.

Fed up and irritable, Princess Shen Yu flew toward him, her divinespring exerting enormous pressure. Dazzling light burst from the grade-nine divinespring on her chest, instantly flooding her entire body so her fair skin glowed with starlight. In order to achieve victory, she had activated the divinespring's ultimate form. The divinespring was originally a special medium for astralforce. Once its ultimate form was activated, she could temporarily raise its power to the level of a legendary grade-ten divinespring so her strength soared. The only side effect was not being able to use the divinespring for the next few months. All she wanted was to win this battle. Violent astralforce burst forth.

"Lin Feng, lifebound beasts from blood pacts don't undergo symbiotic cultivation from the time they're young and can't grow with you. They're inherently fragile and incompetent." Princess Shen Yu showed contempt for Tianming.

"Then why don't you show me a real lifebound beast?" Li Tianming bluntly responded.

"As you wish."

Tianming had roughly browsed through information about her. She was an eighth-level constellier with a grade-nine divinespring. However, her divinespring's explosion of power was far stronger than Tianming had imagined.

The divineglorians had special lifebound beasts known as starbeasts. That was a surprise to Tianming, because the lifebound beasts of the Heptastar Aerial Sect in the Flameyellow Continent were starbeasts. The Draconis House of Jian had swordbeasts that could integrate with their weapons. It was obvious the system had been inherited from the astralscape of order. However, there was a vast difference between the divineglorians' and the Heptastar Aerial Sect's starbeasts.

At that moment, five dazzling stars emerged from Princess Shen Yu's lifebound space and soared into the air. Each star had a diameter of at least two kilometers. They were some of the largest lifebound beasts Tianming had ever seen. They were known as galaxy grandbeasts. As special lifebound beasts, they were essentially living stars. One could also consider them as living rocks or living metal.

They were quite similar to Yin Chen, which was also a special life-form similar to stars. The difference was that Yin Chen's body was infinite, while the five galaxy grandbeasts were individuals that couldn't transform into various insects.

The stars surrounded Princess Shen Yu as their bodies deconstructed and reconstructed themselves; the process was somewhat similar to the silver eggs' transformation into cockroaches and locusts. However, theirs was a designated transformation. They could only turn into one form, unlike Yin Chen, who had infinite forms.

After the transformation, the five galaxy grandbeasts were formed. They were violet, gold, scarlet, green, and blue.

The violet one had transformed into an enormous beast. Its appearance was somewhat similar to the Archaionfiend, with a fierce, dragon-shaped skull, sharp horns, scales all over its body, sturdy hind legs, sharp claws and teeth, a pair of giant purple wings, and starlight gathered within its body. Although it appeared ferocious, there was something majestic about it.

There were subtle differences in the details between the five grandbeasts. Although their general shape was similar to the Archaionfiend, the differences were in the details. The gold beast didn't have wings, but was covered in gold spikes and had sword-like teeth, while the scarlet beast had three heads and could breathe fire. The green and blue beasts either had a thousand tails or eight arms.

Individually, they were known as the violetstar grandbeast, goldstar grandbeast, scarletstar grandbeast, greenstar grandbeast, and bluestar grandbeast. They circled Princess Shen Yu, who held the Heptastar Divineglory in her hand, her grade-nine divinespring bursting with power. Tianming had to admit that Princess Shen Yu was just as strong as Li Haochen.

"It's hard to say who'd emerge victorious if the two royal descendants were to fight!"

In the match with Li Haochen a few days prior, Tianming had fought hard to defeat him with his lifebound beasts alone. Today, his opponent was another heaven's chosen who was just as powerful and also possessed various means. However, Tianming was surging with confidence.

The beasts roared, their starlight so bright the spectators found it hard to keep their eyes open. But in the face of all that, Tianming pointed the Grand-Orient Sword at the princess and asked, "Is that all, Princess Shen Yu?"

His provocation was heard by the members of the Divineglory Alliance, causing cries of outrage and dissatisfaction among the crowd.

"That's right. The question is, can you take it?" Princess Shen Yu said with her sword in both hands. The grandbeasts charged toward Tianming. In that instant, their abilities erupted, splitting the sea in two. Colorless starlight combined, forming a beam of light that threatened to engulf Tianming.

At that moment, the little bird beside Tianming suddenly turned into a black and red phoenix with a wingspan of a thousand meters, soaring into the sky while unleashing Infernal Haze upon its opponents. Tens of thousands of fiery clones swarmed the battlefield.

There was a vast difference in its abilities when it was a thousand-meter giant phoenix versus when it was a little bird—these flame clones could block the five grandbeasts. In the beginning, they were repeatedly destroyed by the beam of light, but they soon condensed, transforming into blazing meteors. It was Ying Huo's Death Inferno. Countless falling meteorites slammed into the grandbeasts and the thunderous boom of explosions spread across the battlefield. Black and red flames violently surged up, forming a layer of fiery clouds above the sea.

"None of you move! I'll handle them myself!"

Four of Princess Shen Yu's lifebound beasts were six-star divine beasts, while the largest violetstar grandbeast was already a seven-star divine beast. The grandbeasts were extremely powerful, but unfortunately for them, their opponent was the seven-star Aeternal Infernal Phoenix, whose abilities had been greatly enhanced.

Ying Huo's newly-enhanced flames burned the grandbeasts. Like maggots attached to the bone, the flames were impossible to extinguish. Not even the living stars could bear it. Each move the hot-tempered phoenix made was lethal.

"Take this!"

Ying Huo flew a thousand miles into the sky and generated a fiery tornado, its body covered in flames. Turning into a three-kilometer-wide sun, it emitted rays of light that swallowed the grandbeasts.

"How powerful!"

The moment the battle began, the audience was shocked by this scene.

"You're telling me these lifebound beasts are from blood pacts?"

Tianming had started with a bang, his Aeternal Infernal Phoenix amazing the audience. After accumulating enough power, Ying Huo let out an ear-piercing cry and plunged from the sky toward the grandbeasts as the scorching sun exploded.

### **Chapter 1362 - Nonabane Godswords**

Ying Huo's newly-awakened super ability came smashing down with the sun. The sight reminded Tianming of the descent of the Divine Moon Realm. The violetstar grandbeast that had around seven thousand stars spread its wings wide in an attempt to block before a violet glow gathered near its abdomen in the same fashion blood lightning had gathered in the Archaionfiend's abdomen. Then a purple ball of lightning came shooting out toward the falling sun, resulting in a grand explosion. Everyone saw the furious flames slowly suppressing the lightning and eventually completely enveloping the violetstar grandbeast, whose wings were instantly swallowed up and torn apart when it tried to block it. Almost immediately, the beast was burned to smithereens.

"It's dead!" Ying Huo's cry resounded throughout the entire battlefield. While dying in the wondersky realm wasn't the same as dying in real life, it at least meant that the beast was out for the count for the rest of this battle. The other four beasts were also in range of the ability and had suffered varying degrees of injuries.

"It's a done deal. I'll leave the other small fries to you," Ying Huo said, suddenly shrinking into a dumb little yellow chick. It comically flapped its wings, but flew at a really slow speed as it commanded everyone's attention, patrolling the skies from above. The move stunned the audience into complete silence. These cultivators of a distant star were actually awed by a lifebound beast that was allegedly bound by a blood pact. They were so shocked they couldn't even find words to express it. All the while, Tianming's four remaining beasts entered the ocean and began fighting one on one with the other beasts. Even though their star counts were relatively low, the galaxy grandbeasts didn't seem to be able to gain any advantage over them.

"Princess Shen Yu's greatest assets are her galaxy grandbeasts. They should be far more powerful than wildbeasts bound using blood pacts, but the complete opposite of that is playing out right now! The violetstar grandbeast was defeated in an instant!" "If that's the case, that means she'll be fighting Lin Feng and his seven totems alone. No matter how powerful her divinespring is, there's no way it can make up for seven totems. The only way the princess can defeat him is if her weapon and battle arts are far superior to his, but is that even possible?"

"Who was the one that said those were blood pact beasts? How is Lin Feng even a totemancer? What a joke!"

"I'm sure nobody thinks his lifebound beasts are stronger than totems, right?"

The crowd broke into discussion, though most people didn't have time to even vent their doubts and frustrations. Seeing the Aeternal Infernal Phoenix almost instantly defeating the violetstar grandbeast, they were greeted with the following spectacle of Tianming and the princess's clash. He managed to completely dominate her after three sword strikes without even using his totems! Right after that, Tianming left the battlefield without even giving her a second look.

Instead, he turned to the crowd and said in a booming voice, "Everyone, I have something I'd like to announce to all of you!"

Princess Shen Yu stopped. She was still reeling from the shock of one of her beasts being completely eradicated in a single instant, her strongest one at that. She listened in along with the audience as Tianming continued, "I know my stunning performance and mysterious background has made it so that almost everyone is trying to recruit me! That's all fine and good, and I'm willing to one day pledge my allegiance to sects worthy of it and fight for them!"

"However, some people have attempted to force my hand by shamelessly touching a friend of mine. Even if that friend is just more of a passing acquaintance, it still pains me to hear that they've suffered on my account. There's no way a faction that resorts to such a method is fit to be among the top factions! I don't know who you are, but let me tell you now that I won't cave to any threat. The best I can do is to pledge to give it my all to make the ones that made the threat pay a heavy price for it!"

Tianming couldn't tolerate this at all. It wasn't that Liu Wanwan was important to him, it just wasn't something he would accept from anybody. He had planned to use this chance to publicly state it, knowing well that those involved in the kidnapping were listening. "I hope all of you reconsider it and release the captive. That way I'll pretend this never happened."

However, the crowd responded rather differently from what he expected.

"Isn't this a little overboard?"

"Even if kidnapping his friend is wrong, what right does he have to say something like that? Just because he has a powerful lifebound beast? Or his seven totems? Putting his lifebound beast aside, seven totems isn't anything to write home about."

"It's one thing to threaten the perpetrators, but his attitude is too much."

They didn't think Tianming was wrong to say that, but he sounded far too arrogant as a junior. Naturally, Tianming had expected that few people would take someone under thirty like him seriously.

"Let's settle the battle first before you make any more arrogant announcements," Princess Shen Yu said, raising her sword at him and channeling the power of her grade-nine divinespring.

"Alright, let's settle this." Now, countless eyes were on him. However, he didn't point his sword at the princess, but instead at the audience. "You all think I'm just an arrogant junior who has no right to criticize the perpetrators during such an occasion, right? So I'll show you exactly what qualifies me to do something like this!"

He turned to the princess, smacked his chest, and pointed his sword at her. Then he unleashed his totems, sending a wave of sword ki bursting out as the Eastdivinity Acme, Westvoid Progenifiend, Southsky Chaospit, Northapex Perpetuity, Ordinem Imperius, and the Welkin Imperius appeared. After those six, he let the other three manifest all at once! Nine swords levitated in the air, generating boundless amounts of sword ki and giving him an aura of the ultimate killing machine. The nine totems seemed to resonate with the Grand-Orient Sword.

Many people drew a cold breath at the sight, easily able to see how many godswords had appeared.

"Six, seven, eight, nine! Nine totems!"

"He's a nonabane! He has one more totem than the leader of the Violetcloud Imperium!"

It was the first time ever such wild chaos had exploded around the Violetcloud Battlefield.

### **Chapter 1363 - Potty of the Old Master**

At least half the people present were doubting what they saw.

"Nine! There really are nine!"

"It's real!"

Shocked cries and shrieks came from all over as the people in the audience were collectively losing their minds. They all stared at Tianming and his nine swords wide-eyed and flabbergasted, constantly asking those around them if they were seeing the same thing as sweat flowed out of their pores from sheer shock. It was no different from the moment Qingyu had reached Orderia.

Nonabanans were things that only existed in legend; there were no historical records of them actually existing. For many, witnessing a legend with their own eyes caused their hearts and innards to clench. The Violetcloud Battlefield was completely filled with chaos as countless messages were sent across the star, completely shaking the entire world.

"Lin Feng has nine totems!" they yelled. The fact had been set in stone. Too many people had dried their throats out from screaming and the mere thought of the implications of what they said caused their hairs to stand. To think that involving his friend in something troublesome was enough to make him so mad that he would reveal something so huge that could never be taken back.

All that had happened as he had expected it, but even so, he'd still underestimated the impact by ten times. The commotion was far too insane. Back then, his fame as the 'second miracle' was only circulated around among the juniors, but now even the millennia-old seniors were talking about him. Now, half of his goals had been achieved today.

What happened next was almost as shocking as what had just transpired: he used Myriadword Providence, causing each of his nine totems to turn into ten thousand swords that dominated the entire battlefield. Sounds of powerful swords clashing resounded throughout as they all turned and pointed toward Princess Shen Yu.

What could she do about it? She was the one who'd witnessed all that had happened from a far closer viewpoint than anyone else. It wasn't until she heard the commotion from the audience that she realized that all of this was really happening. The fingers with which she wielded her sword had lost all feeling as she stared like a wide-eyed deer at all those swords, her mouth quivering but no words coming out of it. She even subconsciously took three steps back as she recalled his stunning announcement, her spine still feeling the chills.

"Nine totems... he's even more terrifying than Ye Chen. What about me?" She had heard the rumors about Tianming being fed a lot of divine pills, so she thought that all the measures she had taken were a little too much. But what had happened just proved that the rumors were far from reality. Instead, she had taken action far too soon. Though she still looked calm, her mind was a complete mess. Everything

had gone well for her in her twenty-odd years of life, and this was the first time things had gotten so far out of control for her. The mere sight of the white-haired youth now caused her to sense fear sprouting from deep within.

I can't let it grip me! she reminded herself countless times. Raising her sword, she tried focusing on the power from her ultimate form, which the grade-nine divinespring granted her. Who said that nonabanes can't be defeated?

Her eyes glowed bright as her divinespring began resonating, channeling power far beyond the capacity of an eighth-level constellier into her sword as she charged at Tianming, executing the Astralflare Celestial Providence, a sixth-realm divine art that caused stars to manifest in her hands, the fires of which blended together to create a sea of flames that could even set the cosmic aether aflame. Within the flames was boundless divine providence. Her strike seemed far more powerful than what others had expected, but when faced with Tianming, she was destined to play second fiddle.

"Begone!" The ninety thousand totem swords arranged themselves into a sword formation, sealing off any possible escape route. Then four strands of grade-six divine hazard sword ki gathered on the Grand-Orient Sword. It was the very strike that had defeated Li Haochen. However, this was the complete strike that incorporated aspects from his totems, sword ki enhanced body, and the four-fusion strike, representing nine-tenths of his full power. It would be even more terrifying if he had been utilizing all ten of his totems.

The silver, black, flame, and blood dragons soared into the sky and blended into the sword formation, allowing the tens of thousands of totem swords to perfectly blend together with the move and enhancing the power of the strike manyfold. Then the tens of thousands of swords flew toward the princess like a great tidal wave, all of them changing into dragons. The dragon-power-infused divine hazard sword ki almost instantly swallowed up the princess's own Astralflare Celestial Providence.

"You—" The next instant, the princess was shocked to find that she had been pierced through countless times and killed in an instant.

"Farewell, Princess."

The countless dragons tore the royal princess to shreds, completely extinguishing all the light her body had been emitting like a great beast pulling the princess down from her pedestal and stomping her again and again into a pile of mincemeat. Her defeat had never been in question at all, and now she had lost her spot in third place. Though Tianming's victory had been a given after he revealed all of his totems, nobody could have expected him to win in a single strike! It was swift, ruthless, and imbued with such pure violence that the princess wasn't given the slightest bit of consideration at all. As she and her lifebound beasts were completely vaporized within the Violetcloud Battlefield, the audience hadn't reacted. Now, 'Lin Feng' alone was left within.

Not knowing what else to do there, the crowd broke into cheers and applause. Countless eyes were on Tianming and his lifebound beasts, as well as his totems. The battlefield controlled its lighting to shine the limelight on him. On the ranking, the princess's name dimmed and fell as it was replaced with 'Lin Feng'. The only name larger than his was now the 'Ye Chen' in the center, with the name of the second ranker, 'Gong Yin', being of the same size.

Meow Meow struck a pose in the light while the little yellow chick flapped its tiny wings and flew around at a turtle's pace.

"He defeated her in an instant with his nine totems!"

"Even Ye Chen took a few moments to defeat Gong Yin!"

"This world keeps surprising us with stronger and stronger geniuses!"

The Violetcloud Imperium was a faction that focused on totemancers, but even they didn't have any nonabanes.

"Based on his talent, he's even more impressive for having five lifebound beasts on top of nine totems."

"This isn't just shocking... it's completely world shattering."

The billions of people were still reeling from their initial shock. Now, feelings such as envy, excitement and admiration filled their minds; their imaginations had been set free.

"It probably won't be too much to describe talent as crazy as that as shocking as the fiendgods that once shook the world, right?"

For both Orderia and the Violetglory Star, nonabanes were things of legend. That was why Tianming didn't have to show all ten of his totems. By now, the crowd was going wild and spreading his fame far and wide.

.....

Up above the Violetcloud Battlefield were a few astral booths located in a prime spectating spot. The people within had clearly seen everything and they knew the implications of the appearance of a nonabane better than anyone, being the elites of the star. Within one of the booths were five Violetcloud Imperium disciples, their faces pensive.

"We thought of ourselves as the people who stood atop the world. Who knew that there would be people that even we would grow to admire?" Gong Yin said with a bitter smile.

"Senior Brother Gong, what would happen if you were faced with that strike?" Han Xingluan asked.

"I might be able to stop that move with all my totems, but he has lifebound beasts as well. Putting aside his future potential, his lifebound beasts' fighting power combined is probably stronger than his nine totems. It's almost equivalent to him having ten lifebound beasts, or twenty sword totems...."

That was a terrifying realization indeed. Naturally, the difference between an octabane and a nonabane wasn't only the difference of a single totem. Instead, the quality of their Lifesbane was completely different, which also came with differing talents. The other disciples grimaced at Gong Yin's analysis, seeming much humbler than their usual aloof selves.

"Old Master! Old Master!"

The green-eyed old man that stood before them had been blankly standing there for quite a while. When the disciples called out to him, he snapped out of it and said, "What potty? I never said anything about that! You misheard me!"



"Old Master, nobody brought up anything about a potty," Gong Yin said, stifling a laugh.

"Nobody? Ah, I never did either! Ahem!" He patted his chest and feigned a calm appearance.

"Old Master, I recall you saying just now that if Lin Feng wasn't a pill bottle, you'd offer your skull to him to be used as a potty. Do you want us to help you out with it?" asked a beautiful, petite female disciple.

"Nonsense! I never said that! How could words like that come out of a precious young girl like you? If only your words matched your looks...."

The other disciples broke out laughing. They knew that while this old man looked like an unhinged mess, he actually had quite a decent temperament, save for his penchant for childish antics.

"Old Master, you're also shocked by what you saw, right?" Gong Yin asked.

"Yes. He revealed that he's a nonabane, so there isn't much left to be said. We have to take action now."

"What action?"

"A rescue mission, you dolt! Let's return to the palace and assemble a large rescue force for Liu Wanwan! I'm willing to bet the Divineglory Dynasty is behind this. This is a huge chance for us. No matter the cost, we have to find Liu Wanwan. Use everything we have, even all of our informants!"

"All of our informants for a single rescue mission?" The disciples were completely stumped.

### **Chapter 1364 - Ye Chen the Optimist**

"The disciple of Mystgod Pavilion, Liu Wanwan, probably never would have expected that her name would also spread throughout the whole star in this fashion, either." People simply didn't know what to make of this freak accident. A nonabane alone had been enough to cause the old master to get so flustered. "You all shouldn't sit idly either. Contact Lin Feng as soon as possible and tell him the Violetcloud Imperium is looking for Liu Wanwan with everything we have. No matter his requests, agree to them!"

The old master quickly left to organize the rescue mission. No doubt, he would return soon.

"I wonder what's happening in the outside world right now," Gong Yin said, looking at the hundreds of millions of people at the battlefield cheering for Tianming. It was almost like they were worshiping him. Even a privileged elite like Gong Yin didn't get that kind of treatment. "I'm completely impressed."

.....

Within another viewing booth that was closer to the center of the battlefield were two people, a middle-aged man and a youth. The former was the imperial marshal of the Divineglory Dynasty, Princess Shen Yu's uncle. The youth, on the other hand, had stepped out of the darkness dressed in pure white robes. He didn't look the least bit fake. His black hair and eyes gave him a refreshingly straightforward appearance. Even though he wasn't the most handsome head turner, his genuine looks were the kind that would give most people a great first impression of him. Compared to Tianming, he seemed completely harmless, and those that didn't recognize him would think that he was a naive and innocent youth, something like a completely unstained piece of white jade. His smile radiated a pure radiance, like that of dawn sunlight. He was none other than Ye Chen, the harmless animal that people didn't pay

attention to at all. However, he could rival Tianming in terms of intimidation whenever he found himself on the battlefield.

"Nonabane, eh... what do you think?" the middle-aged man asked.

"Impressive. My horizons have completely expanded," the youth said.

"Do you see yourself in him?"

"Not really. He's different from me."

"How so?"

"His core personality is fierce and furious, and his cultivation stems from a similar path to my dear Wan's. He has a strong desire to dominate, while all I want is to live a free and unencumbered existence. I'll be happy if I live a comfy life and get to stomp on people here and there for a badass fantasy."

"It's not every day you get to meet someone that can rival you, yet you don't harbor the slightest bit of killing intent for him."

"Killing intent? I only wanted her to take care of him because I didn't want her to unnecessarily worry about minor figures. However, that guy stole my show. Badassery is my signature. Now he's proven himself to be an anomaly, so the threat he poses is larger than before. However, I'll still see him as a legitimate rival. If I envy him and want to kill him because he showed some talent, then I'd be doing a disservice to my own abilities. I shouldn't stoop so low over something like this."

"I see. Since that's the case, we should have Liu Wanwan released as soon as possible and settle this matter. That way we can at least still fairly compete with the Violetcloud Imperium for this genius."

"Oh? You still want him?"

"What's the alternative? Give the Violetcloud Imperium a heaven-sent gift by ignoring him? For a genius talent like this, there's only two options: we either eradicate them or recruit them, the preference being the latter before all options are exhausted."

"Uncle, that wasn't what you said from the start."

"Back then, we didn't know he was a nonabane. But now it's different."

"Wan might disagree if you want to take him into the dynasty,".

"I know. It's not just her, is it? You wouldn't approve of it, either. Since that's the case, are you suggesting we gift him to the Violetcloud Imperium?"

"What's the issue with that? I'm not concerned with him joining them."

"You're too confident in yourself, Ye Chen." The middle-aged man pensively smiled at him.

"You flatter me too much. It's the least I can do as a genius." Seeing the imperial marshal a little displeased by his reaction, he continued, "Uncle, what I meant was I won't concern myself with where he goes, whether it be to us or the Violetcloud Imperium. That's a choice he's free to make for himself. If

he comes to us, I won't personally be against it, but if he goes to them, I won't stop him either. Either way, he'll come challenge me for my top spot. All I need to do is to talk with my fists."

"You're far too optimistic."

"Of course! Such is my nature—easygoing, lazy, trouble averse, and pleasure loving. I have all kinds of shortcomings, but I've never feared fighting anyone." The fact that he was still able to laugh like that was impressive in its own right.

"Alright. I'll inform the emperor about this before we take any other action. As for Ni Hongyi of the Redcloak Ghosts, I'll take over this matter and make it as if it never happened. You and Wan may not involve yourselves in the matter of Lin Feng moving forward."

"Understood."

"I'll take my leave."

"Goodbye, Uncle."

When the imperial marshal was gone, Ye Chen held the windowsill with both hands and looked downward, noticing that Tianming had gone. However, his gaze lingered. "Do you find this interesting?"

The chaotic beasts within his lifebound space floated about. One replied, "It's still okay. They'd probably taste pretty good if we met in real life, that bird in particular."

"We'll encounter him sooner or later. I hope he doesn't come to mess with me of his own accord. Otherwise, I won't be able to hold back." He smiled as innocently as before without a shred of bad intention. As he pondered over recent events, a frost-faced princess entered the booth.

"Come here, dearie." Ye Chen sat down and pulled the beauty into his embrace. When the aloof princess snuggled close, she broke into tears like a little girl. "I'm not happy with this...."

"I understand. I'm sure it doesn't feel good to run into someone like that, given your status." He let his fingers roam around her body. Even though they were caeli in a dreamlike world, their sensations perfectly mirrored the real world's.

"Uncle told me to not interfere with Lin Feng's matters and leave it to him," she said with some discontent. However, she wasn't able to focus due to his playful touching. She could barely force herself to stay angry.

"Then let him handle it. There's no harm."

"What do you mean no harm? That person is too much of a threat to you," the princess said.

"You have to be more open-minded. If Lin Feng joins us, he'll compete with us. If he joins the Violetcloud Imperium, we'll have to fight him all the same. It's going to be a competition no matter what happens, so where he goes isn't important. Since he's shown himself to be a nonabane, that means that he's confident enough about his own safety, so your little tricks and plans aren't going to add up to much. He isn't going to show up because of it. Since that's the case, it's better to just let it go. Trust me. No matter where he ends up, I'll use my power to keep him in his place."

"Are you serious? He's a nonabane."

"Wan, your words hurt my feelings, you know. You haven't come to understand how terrifying your man is. A nonabane is no doubt powerful, but I'm an anomaly that this universe has given birth to."

"Hmph! You're the one who hurt my feelings!"

The two of them messed around for quite a bit. Then the youth lightly patted her smooth back. "Just rest assured and take your mind off this matter. Your man is someone who's defeated more than three hundred top geniuses across various nova source worlds in the Astraldome. Do you think I'd let someone upend me on my home turf?" He smiled, revealing his harmless, flawless teeth as his hands brushed across every part of her body with the agility of dragons.

"Big Brother Chen... let's go home first... before we dual cultivate!"

.....

The person standing in the dark corner was knocking on her crimson blade. Liu Wanwan was about to cry, but no amount of calling for help worked. Then, the red-robed woman outside received a transmission stone.

"What the fuck? A nonabane? It can't be!" She hurriedly pulled Liu Wanwan up by her collar and dragged her up to the purple clouds.

"Ma'am, please don't kill me!"

"Ma'am?" The woman glared harshly at Liu Wanwan.

"Big sister?" Liu Wanwan changed how she addressed her in a panic. "Beautiful Big Sister, surely someone as beautiful as you wouldn't do something as cruel as killing me! Please, have mercy!" As much as she tried to flatter her captor, her vocabulary failed her.

"Just get out of my face. You really are crazy lucky." The woman tossed her toward the ground.

"Whoaaaaa!" Liu Wanwan began accelerating toward the ground from the star's gravity, but managed to stabilize her body and levitate, avoiding the fate of being crushed into paste.

"Holy crap!" She immediately hid herself and took a breather, only to realize something. "Was I released? What was the point of all that flattery?"

Then she began running as fast as she could until she noticed some familiar landmarks. "Wait, I'm still near the Mystgod Pavilion. I should get back fast!" Her hair was completely disheveled from being on the run.

"Liu Wanwan!" someone cried out. She froze and turned back, only to see a tall, white-haired old man appear and descend to her side.

"Pavilion Lord! I was kidnapped!" she cried, tightly grabbing the leg of her would-be savior.

"Alright, it's fine now. I'll take you back home."

"Okay... I'm not dreaming, right? Was I killed? Did I return as a ghost?"

"Just shut up."

"Okay...."

### **Chapter 1365 - Old Master Shengui**

As the clouds sped past them, Liu Wanwan soon saw the Mystgod Pavilion.

"Wanwan, do you know why you were spared?" the pavilion lord asked.

"Because I praised that person's looks?" she asked timidly.

The old man suppressed the urge to give her a slap on the face. "How could a fine girl like you be so brainless...."

"Then what's the reason?"

"Lin Feng defeated Princess Shen Yu and revealed that he's a nonabane."

Liu Wanwan froze. "Nine? Pavilion Lord, have you gone mad?"

"I have not. You were lucky you befriended him. From now on, you'll be a VIP of our sect and under heavy protection. To reward you for establishing good relations with him, the sect has decided to grant you a few grade-five universal manna."

Liu Wanwan almost did a double take.

"Go to the wondersky realm and tell him you're safe, quick," the pavilion lord said.

"Oh, okay!" Just because she had come to know a nonabane for no good reason whatsoever, she'd been given multiple universal manna and afforded the full protection of her sect. It almost felt like a dream to her. She didn't even dare to bring up how she had defeated 'Lin Feng' a year ago at the Violetglory Pagoda.

.....

A clear body of shallow water appeared in front of Tianming, surrounding the small sandy island he was on. There were some palm trees on the island that gave shade to a small white building. Tianming walked across the fine white sand on the beach to the wooden house and entered it. It was rather plain inside, and he smelled fresh tea. The atmosphere was tranquil and relaxing. But when he looked ahead, he saw countless paintings of beauties on the walls, all of whom sported seductive and curvy bodies in all sorts of elegant and tantalizing poses. One look was enough to inspire a reaction from anyone.

This building was the room of choice one of the top figures of the Violetcloud Imperium chose to receive guests in. Han Xingluan had called this old man 'Old Master Shengui'. It was said that he had lived for a long time, but based on the paintings on the walls, one wouldn't be mistaken for thinking he was a man in his prime.

All of a sudden, someone tapped on Tianming's shoulder from behind. He turned around and saw a one-eyed old man smile at him. "All of these beauties here used to be my partners at one point in time. I poured my soul into completing the paintings myself, inscribing the essence of every moment I spent with them. Did my art move your soul to tears?"

"It sure did... shall we talk outside instead?" Tianming said awkwardly.

"No need. Let's bare our big hearts. Here. Proudly." The old man chuckled at his intentionally vulgar and easily misconstrued choice of words. 'Bare' obviously referred to the paintings of the unclothed women, and 'big' required no explanation whatsoever.

Tianming couldn't quite look away, but he agreed nevertheless. "Alright!" He looked straight at the old man without averting his gaze and calmed his heartbeat down.

"I'm sure the young ones told you how sincere I am, right? I've already arranged for all of our informants to keep an eye out for that beauty of yours. I promise we'll return her to you safe and sound," the old man said, slapping his chest.

"Your sincerity is much appreciated," Tianming said. He was too lazy to explain his relationship with Liu Wanwan to him. He had only been forced to reveal his totems because he didn't want someone so far away that he couldn't help to get into trouble on account of him.

"Then join the Violetcloud Imperium. This old man here will pave a path to a bright future for you! How about it? I'm sincere and direct. If we mistreat you in any way, I'll personally apologize to you."

"But you're going to be in the ground soon enough. Would that make a difference?" Tianming joked.

"Oh? Looking down on me, are you? If you don't believe me, I'll show you my trusty squirt stick. Witness how far it can squirt!" He was vulgar beyond belief, but people like him were most often direct and honest.

"Old Master, I'll be honest with you. I've been trapped somewhere and I can't leave. I might need years or decades before I can free myself. Since you helped me out today, I'll go to Violetcloud Imperium when I leave."

"Are you somewhere in uncharted aether?"

"More or less."

"That is a little troublesome. However, even I can tell that your words hold weight and I know you're not just bluffing. Since that's the case, we'll await you with great sincerity. On the day you leave, I'll bring our leader himself to come fetch you!"

"Deal."

"Not bad, you're a good kid indeed. On the first look, I knew you would be a genius among geniuses that's many times stronger than even the Divineglory Dynasty's Ye Chen!"

"That can't be right. You said that I was a pill maniac. You also said you'd cut your head off for me to use as a potty if I wasn't."

The old man immediately froze. "Damn those backstabbing brats.... I'll seduce their grandmothers and show them!"

.....

After leaving the beach house, Tianming was about to head to the eighth level of the Violetglory Pagoda. It appeared that Liu Wanwan's peril was but a mere setback. The main reason he had challenged Princess Shen Yu in the first place was because he wanted to head to the next level of the pagoda.

"Nothing on the Violetglory Star really matters to me for now. I still have the Azurecloud Continent to worry about, so let's focus on training."

Little did he know that everyone on the distant star had been mobilized to look for Liu Wanwan. Anybody that kept up with the news would be aware of her name. Not to mention, he himself was the constant center of attention in the wondersky realm. There were fanboys and fangirls all over the place.

Before he left, the wondersky fairy notified him that Liu Wanwan had asked to meet at Perplexity Island. "Wanwan?" Tianming snapped out of it and immediately headed over. The girl was indeed waiting for him there. "Are you safe now?"

"Yeah. Once you showed off your nine totems, you scared off my kidnappers." Liu Wanwan blankly stared at him.

"Were you hurt?"

"I'm fine. I'm back at the Mystgod Pavilion now. The pavilion lord now has everyone in the sect protecting me and even gave me a huge gift. I think he's nurturing me like his own granddaughter...." She still felt like she was dreaming. How else would she have survived being caught up in the controversy, and even gained so much from it?

"That's good to hear. I'm sorry for getting you involved in trouble."

"It's fine. If this happens a few more times, I think I'll end up filthy rich!" she said, smiling.

Tianming chuckled. Seeing her still so optimistic, he was relieved that this incident was behind him in the best way possible. If she had died because of him, it would definitely haunt him for the rest of his life.

### **Chapter 1366 - Grand Minister Yang Ce**

"Thanks to you, my name's now famous across the whole world. This feels great! Alright, enough talking to you. There's lots of people lining up to hang out with me" Liu Wanwan said. Everything was thanks to Tianming's prestige as a nonabane.

After she left, the imperial marshal of the Divineglory Dynasty wanted to meet him, but he said he didn't have time and went straight to the Violetglory Pagoda. It seemed a little weird that it wasn't the princess that asked to meet him this time. He suspected the Divineglory Dynasty to be behind this matter, and naturally, the princess could have personally been responsible for it. There was no chance she would have attempted something like this had she known that he was a nonabane.

"No matter what she does to me, I don't really care. She's only a stepping stone for me to reach the eighth level of the pagoda." He didn't care about the princess as long as she wasn't out there giving trouble to his acquaintances, nor did he care about the Violetglory Star. "Looks like the next stepping stone will let me cultivate using caeli imperius! Ye Chen, I'm coming for you."

.....

A day later, news of the appearance of a nonabane had spread like wildfire across the Violetglory Star, whipping up a storm. Even though Tianming didn't show up, countless people were trying to track him. He also ignored a few of the imperial marshal's requests to meet.

"The Ninedragon Imperial Tomb is a divine astralship. If I can get a miniature nova source to power it and restore its cruising capabilities, I might be able to reach the Violetglory Star one day." Even so, Orderia and the Violetglory Star were similar in many respects. If he could settle down here, there would be no need to go there at all.

The eighth level was filled with some of the best solarian caeli, with the weakest ones being about the tenth level. There were easily millions of twelfth-level solarian caeli there, making it quite the cultivation haven for him. Not even the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect would be able to provide him with something like that. Though the celestial orderians might have some, they definitely wouldn't have them in such numbers. In essence, Tianming's cultivation environment was far better now than if he had gone to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect.

However, the people he had been waiting for at the Azurecloud Continent had arrived right after he'd only gotten a taste of the arcane mysteries on the eighth level. He had brought three six-star universal manna for him and would be an important helper in his fight to take over half of the continent. He was none other than the head of the guest wing of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, and also had the position of grand minister. His name was Yang Ce, and he was lower in the hierarchy to nobody but the Seven Dragon Imperials. He was basically in charge of all the external affairs of the sect. Before the Veildragon Palace had invaded, he was the steward of all the mines and divine herbs of the sect.

Since he had arrived, Tianming left the wondersky realm and welcomed him with Long Wanying. As he was someone from Long Wanying's sect, Gujian Qingshuang didn't have any objections to him being there, knowing that he was actually incredibly powerful despite his young age. Once, he had been the top on the imperial star ranking, but he wasn't recruited into the Sky Palace back then. As for Ye Dongliu and Ye Buzhiqiu, they were staying rather silent. These days, the father and son were rather earnest, not that they could act otherwise under Tianming's control. With their lives in his hands, they were nervous even as they left for toilet breaks.

.....

At the Celestial Welcome Hall, a black-robed man with cold, but handsome features landed in front of Tianming and the rest. His hair was bound in a ponytail and he had a slender figure. Being dressed rather simply and neatly, he gave the appearance of a calm and quiet person. He glanced at Long Wanying without saying a word.

"How is it over there?" Long Wanying asked with worry.

"There's no solution for now. We'll keep dragging it out until an opportunity shows," Yang Ce said with a deep voice. After that, he tepidly greeted Gujian Qingshuang.

"Grand Minister, your cultivation level is even higher than I remember," Gujian Qingshuang said. With more and more powerful people coming, he had less and less authority over the matter of the divine tree. Nowadays, even Shi Yan couldn't do much and was merely waiting for reinforcements from her sect.



"You flatter me," Yang Ce said.

Knowing the quiet nature of the grand minister, Gujian Qingshuang didn't force the conversation. It didn't take long before they went back to what they were doing.

.....

Long Wanying brought Yang Ce to the Sixth Sword Branch. "It's best that you stay here instead of going back. We need your help," she said.

"Alright," he agreed without even asking what it was they needed help with. He really didn't waste any words.

"Now, give Tianming what you brought him."

"Alright." Yang Ce took out three treasure boxes and handed them to Tianming, giving him a close look as he did so. "I heard you defeated Li Haochen. Many of us were truly thrilled to hear that."

"Yeah. Celestial orderians aren't undefeatable, after all."

"I like your spunk," he said, giving him a thumbs-up.

"Tianming, go let your lifebound beasts evolve. I'll tell him the details of what we're up to," Long Wanying said.

"Okay." This was something that had to be broken to Yang Ce with care, though with the Ye duo as a precedent and given Yang Ce's personality, Tianming felt that it wouldn't be any trouble to ask him for help. However, they would still need an opportunity before they could 'hunt' Gujian Qingshuang. The plan had to be perfect when the time came.

Tianming had heard that Yang Ce was a totemancer, rather than a beastmaster, but he was from the dark totem line, a line that had nothing to do with the celestial orderians. Even so, they still had a long history on Orderia. Their line had fallen a lot over the millennia thanks to the oppression of the celestial orderians.

Yang Ce was also the leader of the other line of totemancers. They weren't that huge in number and they had been part of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect for many years. Naturally, he was quite powerful given his position as their leader. Long Wanying said that he would have no issue killing Gujian Qingshuang in a fight, but completely subduing him would still be difficult. If Yu Ziqian were on their level, his control over the cauldron would be much more powerful, which would raise their chances of success.

"I hope they can effectively work together when the time comes." Now that he had control over the Ye duo, Yin Chen had gained access to their mines and was able to greatly multiply. However, it was still hard for it to spread to the Supracloud Sanctuary to get detailed reports about their plans.

"Let's focus on evolving first." He left them to their conversation and headed back to Fairman Peak. He planned to give the manna to Meow Meow, Lan Huang, and Xian Xian. When he arrived, he sat in front of a stone desk and opened the three boxes to inspect the manna. The first was a vortex covered in lightning bolts, within which were eight trigrams. Even the lightning around it was arranged in a formation. There were six stars within, each of them shining brightly with mysterious and arcane forces.

"This manna is called the Eight Trigram Boltsoul and it was given by the Saintdragon Emperor...." He would remember this favor and repay it one day.

### **Chapter 1367 - Hunting Gujian Qingshuang**

Within the second box was a completely different manna. It looked like a miniature formation whose divine patterns were little dragons colored brown and blue. They blended together, forming a miniature world. This was a pure universal manna from the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect and was well suited for dragon lifebound beasts. It was the Myriadragon Heart. Looking closer, Tianming noticed that the six stars within it rhythmically pulsed like real hearts.

The third box contained a plant-type universal manna. It appeared that the Green and Violet Dragon Imperials understood Tianming's lifebound beasts well. It was called the Demise Sapling and looked like a real sapling of a tree, only the size of a thumb. However, this manna didn't have a corporeal form. If one touched it, the seeds would immediately sprout and take root in flesh, consuming it to fuel its growth.

All of the universal manna were greatly compatible with his lifebound beasts. Currently, Ying Huo was a seven-star divine beast while Yin Chen was a six-star divine beast. Meow Meow and the rest were still four-star divine beasts, however, with the last manna they had used being gifts from Sovereign Xi. Even Princess Shen Yu's weakest lifebound beasts were six-star divine beasts, so they were falling behind and weren't able to play as big a role as Ying Huo had during the fight.

Not to mention, even the Archaiionfiend was given a six-star universal manna by Xiaoxiao and had evolved into a more furious form. Tianming's other beasts had been waiting for a chance to evolve for a really long time, and given the power of their current bloodlines, they could easily endure the sudden surge of power the universal manna provided.

As there was quite a lot of space at Fairman Peak, all of them chose to evolve outside the lifebound space. Lan Huang and Meow Meow each grabbed their manna and went their own way, while Xian Xian took root outside and absorbed Demise Sapling using its roots by allowing it to sprout on it. The tree began visibly changing as its fifth flower prepared to bloom.

"Ling'er... while you're flowering, I'm molding as I wait for you." Tianming sat on Xian Xian's tree near Feiling's flower with a melancholic look. He talked to her every day, and today was no exception. As Xian Xian furiously grew, he continued talking to Feiling.

"Lately, I've encountered too many beautiful girls. If you don't come out and spoil me, I might go astray," he said in a hushed voice. Right after that, two thorns came out of the flower and pierced his face.

"Ouch!" She could hear him after all. Seeing the thorns about to continue the assault, he said, "Stop! I was just joking!"

He missed her far too much. "I don't think we've been apart for such a long stretch of time since our days in the Vermillion Bird Kingdom. I don't even know who I'm showing off to, nowadays. It gets really boring without you around."

As he spoke, he noticed some dew-like liquid forming around the flower. "Are you crying or did you get wet?"

The spikes pierced his abdomen, causing him to yelp in pain.

.....

After half a day, a new dark green flower had bloomed on the Radix World Tree. Xian Xian's evolution had brought it even closer to its true Primordial Chaos Beast form. Apart from the new flower, its body grew in size as well. Now it was around three kilometers tall, which would make it a gigantic tree to most normal folk. The new flower was a lotus shrouded in green mist.

"So it's called the Demise Greenlotus, huh...." This fifth flower followed after the Radiant Daffodil, Scarlet Lily, Evernight Rose, and Fiendsong Mares. They looked just as eerie as the rest, somewhat resembling the Scarlet Lily in that it could turn into many smaller green loti the size of a hand, spreading out across the whole tree.

Xian Xian's spiritform had changed into a green-themed outfit. Its body was covered in green loti all over, even the two wings behind it. Its eyes seemed brighter than before, and its body was covered in different, green floral patterns, making it even cuter.

"What ability did you gain?" That was the natural question to ask as each flower usually came with a new ability. The little green loti on the tree spread their petals like the Scarlet Lily's sword-shaped petals, instantly turning the surrounding area into a sea of green lotus petals. Then all of the petals exploded at the same time with even more force than Ying Huo's Sungod's Wrath. The mist from the explosion seemed really destructive, able to crush the surrounding fauna and even parts of the mountainous terrain.

"Is it an attack ability?" Tianming asked.

"It's more. The explosion spreads Demise Saplings all over the place, which can sprout and feed on the flesh of anything it touches. They can also grow vines to bind enemies!" Xian Xian gleefully said.

"That sounds impressive."

"Xian Xian's the best, after all! If Chicken Bro keeps bullying me, I'll be able to smack it hard!" it said with a giggle.

"Save it, you're the one who's always bullying Ying Huo, aren't you?"

"Really? Weird... why don't I remember any of it?"

Poor Ying Huo suddenly felt its left eyelid twitching as it was flying around far away. "They say that left is a good omen, while right isn't. I might have something good in store for me!" It hurriedly flew back to Fairman Peak. Someone should really tell this directionally challenged bird that the eyelid that was twitching was actually its right one.

.....

Soon after, Lan Huang and Meow Meow finished evolving as well. After absorbing the Eight Trigrams Boltsoul, Meow Meow became a six-star divine beast and gained a new ability called Regalfiend Wings,

an ability that could stack on top of Regal Chaosfiend. As its name suggested, eight black wings of dense lightning formed on top of its Regal Chaosfiend form, each of them resembling one of the eight trigrams. When all eight of them spread out and were arranged together, it looked like a complete set of eight trigrams and could generate so much power that it greatly increased Meow Meow's speed and enhanced the destructive capabilities of its abilities.

Lan Huang, on the other hand, had grown even more and gained the Dragonprison Hell ability. It was a mountain-and-water-type control ability that, when executed, caused the dragon scales on its body to blend with the elements of mountain and water to form countless small-scale dragons that assembled together into a cage that could keep its opponents bound. Though it would lower Lan Huang's defenses somewhat, it allowed its scales to be used offensively in the form of tens of thousands of furious dragons. Now, all of Tianming's beasts were six-star divine beasts and above.

"Ying Huo, come back!" Tianming hadn't engaged in symbiotic cultivation with Ying Huo after it had evolved, since he didn't need it while he was studying caeli. Now that they had all evolved, he would engage in symbiotic cultivation with all of them at once, channeling the newly unlocked bloodline powers into his body and allowing him to transform. This time, in particular, the changes were on a whole new level. Thanks to Ying Huo's great improvement, Tianming's Aeternal Infernal Body had changed into a fusion of human and Primordial Chaos Beast, giving him a rather crazy physique. Even his divine wills began shifting with the change in his bloodline, being strengthened somewhat. His control over the divine wills had also substantially improved. Not to mention, his albi also grew stronger, which allowed him to absorb and control even more astralforce.

"I'm at the fourth level of the Constellation stage now." He was even more powerful than when he had defeated the princess. "I suppose it's about time for me to go for number one on the Violetglory ranking. Soon, I'll be able to cultivate at the topmost level using caeli imperius."

Tianming didn't have too many thoughts about Ye Chen; he was merely another obstacle to be overcome and they wouldn't have any ties beyond that. He spent a few days stabilizing himself and updated his avatar's status using the heavenly locus formation. But right as he was about to enter the wondersky realm, Long Wanying and Yang Ce came looking for him.

"Tianming, we're ready now. There's an opportunity to take down Gujian Qingshuang. Should we move forward with it?" Long Wanying asked.

"Alright." Tianming got up and departed with them.

### **Chapter 1368 - Clearriver Sword Sect**

Tianming was aware of the opportunity that Long Wanying had mentioned. Over the next two days, Gujian Qingshuang would head out with Ye Dongliu, their destination being Clearriver, the territory of the Clearriver Sword Sect, a fourth-rate sect. The sect was a vassal of the Azuresoul Palace and followed their lead.

This time, numerous grade-six divine herbs were about to mature on the part of the Azurecloud Divine Tree within their territory. If those divine herbs were used to create divine pills, their value would double. Gujian Qingshuang wouldn't attend any ordinary harvest; after all, Ye Dongliu had always been in charge of this area.

This time, people from the second-rate Clouddrift Saber Sect were secretly hiding nearby, hoping to get a piece of the pie. Naturally, the people of the Clouddrift Continent weren't with the Supracloud Sanctuary or Azuresoul Palace, nor were they considered their supporters. Their intention was to fish in troubled waters and try their luck. The grade-six divine herbs that were about to mature was their goal. They had even defeated the Clearriver Sword Sect for that reason.

Thus, the head instructor of the Clearriver Sword Sect requested support from the Azuresoul Palace. Although they had enough fighters on their end, their head instructor had been severely injured. They needed at least one or two top experts to suppress their opponents.

At present, the harvest in the Greatriver Valley was nearing its end. Gujian Qingshuang had no choice but to call Ye Dongliu, Ye Buzhiqiu, and Jiang Qingliu back. Despite trying for a long time, the father and son had failed to get their hands on the Azuresoul Tower. In the end, they had even been reprimanded by Gujian Qingshuang.

Hence, they agreed to come up with a more detailed plan. In fact, if they waited for reinforcements from the Emyrean Sword Sect, their plan would be even more foolproof. However, Gujian Qingshuang wanted to visit Clearriver first. Although he could just send Jiang Qingliu and Ye Buzhiqiu there, Gujian Qingshuang was actually interested in the herbs and wanted them for himself. He also had Ye Dongliu accompanying him.

Yin Chen conveyed the information to Tianming and Long Wanying. In their opinion, this was an opportunity. They'd devised a detailed and thorough plan the moment Tianming's lifebound beasts had finished their evolutions.

Just as Gujian Qingshuang finalized his itinerary, Tianming and the others secretly set off ahead of time. This would be a thrilling and exciting battle. Success was critical; if they were victorious, there would be hope for their great cause.

Long Wanying, Yang Ce, Yan Nuxia, and Jiang Qingliu were all headed there. Among them, Jiang Qingliu set off last. Tianming and Yu Ziqian followed Long Wanying and the others to their destination first.

"Brother, are you nervous?" Yu Ziqian asked, his teeth chattering.

"You look like you're nervous," said Tianming.

"Of course I'm nervous. We're about to fight the head instructor. I wouldn't have dared to imagine this before," Yu Ziqian said.

"Things are different now. It's better for us to make the first move than sit still and wait for them to attack. These words were meant for your master."

"Yeah... what do you think our odds are?"

"According to them, we have an eighty percent chance of success," Tianming replied. It didn't matter if he was in charge or not, he believed in their judgment. There was nothing Tianming could do except pray that Long Wanying and the others would succeed.

"If they fail and Gujian Qingshuang manages to escape, he'll definitely join forces with the Empyrean Sword Sect to drive us out and kill my master...." Despite the risks, Yu Ziqian knew that their success would reshape the entire Azurecloud Continent.

"It's too bad the head instructor has been suspicious, cautious, and reticent from the very start. Not only is he uncommunicative, he also harbors ill will toward his fellow compatriots." If it weren't for that, they wouldn't have been forced to take this path.

After arriving at their destination, they began to set up the trap.

.....

Three days later.

"Now we wait for Ye Dongliu to lure Gujian Qingshuang over. Tianming, have you dealt with Ye Dongliu?" Long Wanying asked.

"Yes, I explained everything he was supposed to do in detail," Tianming said.

"Alright." Long Wanying nodded and the two exchanged a smile.

"Don't worry, we'll succeed."

"Yes!"

They stood at the top of the mountain, looking out at the enormous Azurecloud Divine Tree, its rich herbal fragrance wafting toward them.

.....

Three days later, a huge battle took place in the Greatriver Valley. The people of the Clouddrift Saber Sect had never imagined that the Azuresoul Palace's head instructor would make an appearance. As soon as he arrived, Gujian Qingshuang seized the herbs for himself and slaughtered as he pleased, killing off most of the people from the Clouddrift Saber Sect. The remaining cultivators fled in embarrassment.

There was no question about Gujian Qingshuang's purpose. He wanted to deter these foreigners from fishing in troubled waters. When news of this spread, other thieves would think twice. The Azurecloud Continent was at the eye of the storm and thieves would receive no mercy. Gujian Qingshuang took most of the grade-six divine herbs, leaving only one for the Clearriver Sword Sect. However, there was nothing they could do. If it weren't for him, they wouldn't even be able to touch the herbs.

"Congratulations, Head Instructor. If you can refine these darkcloud spiritfruits into darkspirit pills, they may help you break through to the next level!" Ye Dongliu smiled.

"I can forget about reaching the next level. I'm getting old. I can only hope to stabilize my cultivation within the next hundred years and support the Azuresoul Palace," Gujian Qingshuang said, his expression melancholic. He was under a lot of pressure after Gujian Daoyi's death.

"Don't worry, Head Instructor. As long as you have the Azuresoul Tower, you'll be able to remain at your peak condition for up to three hundred years."

"The problem is, you have yet to succeed," Gujian Qingshuang said.

"Jiang Qingliu is so useless. All he does is cultivate. We've done everything to lure him out, but he hasn't taken the bait! We had to stop so he wouldn't suspect us." Ye Dongliu blushed with shame.

"I'll cooperate with you when we get back. We can't delay any longer, things are nearing the breaking point. Now that Yang Ce is here, the Empyrean Sword Sect will also increase their manpower to fight against Li Wushuang. If I'm not strong enough, we won't get a say in any of this."

"It's been hard on you, Head Instructor. Jiang Qingliu is truly a sinner," Ye Dongliu scolded.

After a brief pause, Gujian Qingshuang said, "Let's return to the Azuresoul Sword Mountain!"

Failing twice had made him a little impatient.

"Yes!"

The two returned alone. That way it wouldn't be as easy for Li Wushuang to monitor them. Orderia's female overlord was still on a killing spree on the Azurecloud Divine Tree. They would be inviting a calamity if they returned in a grand fashion. Every step they took was like dancing on the razor's edge.

.....

Not long after their departure, Ye Dongliu received a transmission stone. But upon reading it, his expression turned ugly. "What kind of Sky Palace disciple is this? He's a shameless thief! And how dare Long Wanying push me around like this?!"

"What's the matter?" Gujian Qingshuang asked.

"Head Instructor, they're even more powerful now that Yang Ce has arrived. They don't even respect us, but it's not like we can afford to offend them. House Dongye will swallow the loss. Don't worry, Head Instructor...." Ye Dongliu shook his head and sighed.

"Tell me what happened," Gujian Qingshuang insisted.

### **Chapter 1369 - Goldridge Mountain Mine**

"Didn't Li Tianming ask you for metal veins? After Li Tianming swept up all the metal veins on Soulbreak Mountain and Greenjade Mountain, you refused to give him any more so he set his sights on the House of Dongye's metal veins. Just a while ago, he and Long Wanying invaded the Goldridge Mountain Mine and broke through our defense formation. After attacking my clansmen, the Whitedragon Empress occupied the mine. I still can't figure out how they managed to hollow out the mine so quickly. Does it have something to do with Li Tianming's fifth lifebound beast?"

The metal vein was protected by their people, as well as a formation. It wasn't easy for Tianming to forcibly seize it. After all, the people stationed there were rather strong. Of course, it was all a lie. Goldridge Mountain had long been emptied by Yin Chen.

"Aren't we near the mine?" Gujian Qingshuang asked with a frown.

"Yeah, that's why the transmission stone arrived so quickly. Head Instructor, it's fine. It's just a metal vein. We can't afford to offend them." Despite his words, Ye Dongliu looked extremely bitter and upset.

"No. Even if he's a Sky Palace disciple and she's the Whitedragon Empress, they can't take it by force. Are they bandits?" Gujian Qingshuang retorted.

"Then...."

"Since they've just broken into the mine, we'll go over and demand an explanation," said Gujian Qingshuang.

"Thank you so much, Head Instructor!"

"A lot's happened lately. The Azurecloud Divine Tree is related to our ten thousand-year plan. These people are supposed to be our support. How can they push us around like this? That's too much! Even after what happened to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, Long Wanying still refuses to stop," Ye Dongliu griped.

"Don't say any more."

Goldridge Mountain wasn't far. Gujian Qingshuang and Ye Dongliu quickly arrived at their destination. The grade-five formation had already been destroyed and the earth was scorched. However, Gujian Qingshuang didn't see anyone.

"Where did they all go?"

"They're probably tied up and held in the mine below. They certainly wouldn't want this to be exposed. They didn't think my clansmen would send out a transmission stone. I'm afraid they might kill everyone to silence them...."

Thus, Gujian Qingshuang and Ye Dongliu entered the cave, going deep into the mine. The deeper they went, the darker and hotter it got. There was lava everywhere.

"This way."

Following the audible voices, they continued forward. In the blink of an eye, they had reached the depths of the mine, the darkness engulfing them. The divine ores buried in the earth had to be washed before they could reveal their brilliance.

Just as they were climbing out of a metal vein, the earth behind them loosened. It sounded like a giant beast was moving. Then came the harsh sound of metal colliding against metal. Gujian Qingshuang was stunned.

"Is this the Divine Worldeater Cauldron?"

Rooted to the spot, Gujian Qingshuang turned to look around. It was so dark, he couldn't even see his fingers. It was obvious the cauldron had been sealed as soon as they entered it.

"It appears so! Is Yu Ziqian here as well? Is this a trap?!" Ye Dongliu said in shock.

"A trap?" Eyes gloomy, Gujian Qingshuang studied his surroundings, the gears in his head rapidly spinning. "Long Wanying has no reason to deal with me. Something's wrong...." He was extremely vigilant.



The two men had their backs to each other. Taking a deep breath, Gujian Qingshuang said, "Long Wanying, what stupid game are you playing? Come out! There's no way you can stop me with just Yu Ziqian controlling the Divine Worldeater Cauldron. Why go against an insignificant man like me? It's just a metal mine, it's not worth all this trouble."

In the darkness, Long Wanying, Yang Ce, and Yan Nuxia appeared.

"Is something the matter?" Ye Dongliu angrily asked.

"Shut up. It isn't your place to speak." Long Wanying glared at Ye Dongliu, turning her attention to Gujian Qingshuang.

"What game are you playing?" Gujian Qingshuang coldly said. He already had his weapon, lifebound beasts, and a transmission stone prepared. However, he couldn't quite comprehend their actions. Killing him wouldn't do them any good; in fact, they needed him.

"We're going to kill the two of you," Long Wanying said.

"Why?" Gujian Qingshuang asked in confusion.

"Long Wanying, are you crazy?" Ye Dongliu shouted.

"No, I'm not. It's your fault for attempting to kill Jiang Qingliu over and over again, Gujian Qingshuang." Long Wanying sneered.

"You!" Gujian Qingshuang was dumbfounded. When he turned around, he noticed a sixth person in the cauldron, standing behind him. It was Jiang Qingliu, the man in possession of the Azuresoul Tower.

"Head Instructor, I'm sorry. I can't give you the Azuresoul Tower."

Gujian Qingshuang uncontrollably trembled, a manifestation of the inner struggle and avoidance that surfaced as a result of the revelation of his heart's darkest desires. The Divine Worldeater Cauldron, Yu Ziqian, Long Wanying, and the others had all appeared. Of course, Jiang Qingliu was involved. The man also knew he wanted to harm him!

"Uncle Ye, let's fight our way out of here. Yu Ziqian can't control the cauldron that well!" Gujian Qingshuang said.

"Yes!"

"Now!"

Upon his command, Ye Dongliu pulled out his sword while Gujian Qingshuang turned to attack Jiang Qingliu. However, Ye Dongliu thrust his sword into Gujian Qingshuang's back. The sword exited through his abdomen and blood burst from his wound. After a moment of stunned silence, Gujian Qingshuang looked back at Ye Dongliu, his mind sluggish with shock.

"You?" That was the most puzzling part.

"I'm sorry, Head Instructor. You'll soon know why...." Pulling out his sword, Ye Dongliu retreated.

In that instant, Yang Ce, Long Wanying, Yan Nuxia, and Jiang Qingliu besieged Gujian Qingshuang. Every attack was swift and precise, because they knew this was a battle they couldn't lose!

...

Outside the Divine Worldeater Cauldron.

"Good news!" Yu Ziqian excitedly said. They were waiting near the lid of the cauldron; Yu Ziqian had used his own meager power to seal it.

"I know." Tianming was a little nervous.

Through Yin Chen, he knew Ye Dongliu's every word and move. He had ordered Ye Dongliu to find an opportunity to make the first strike. And when Gujian Qingshuang's murderous plan was revealed, Ye Dongliu, his most trusted friend, had stabbed him with his sword.

Tianming's plan had worked! Even if Gujian Qingshuang possessed an astral physique, he would have sustained at least a moderate injury. With his combat effectiveness taking a dip at the start of the battle, he would only be fighting with eighty percent of his usual strength even though his lifebound beasts were unharmed.

Battle had broken out in the Divine Worldeater Cauldron. With Ye Dongliu on their side, it was five against one. Thunderous roars sounded in the depths of the mine. Compared to the Greatriver Valley, the mine was actually a better location.

The people in the mine had been transferred out. They didn't actually damage the formation. Ye Buzhiqiu had even come to improve it to ensure the noise inside couldn't be heard outside. With Ye Buzhiqiu in control of the formation, it was impossible for Gujian Qingshuang to leave even if he managed to escape from the cauldron. All transmission stones would be intercepted as well. When they'd first come up with the plan, Long Wanying and the others believed they had a good chance of success.

### **Chapter 1370 - The Answer Is Here**

"They're all cunning and insidious men. They won't take risks if they're uncertain of the outcome. The only challenge now is whether or not the bonegnaw ants succeed." Tianming said.

"I can't imagine...." Yu Ziqian was speechless.

"He mustn't be allowed to leave the Divine Worldeater Cauldron. The formation is merely insurance."

"Alright!" Yu Ziqian used all his strength to maintain the seal on the cauldron.

Inside the cauldron, the battle was becoming more and more violent. The entire mine shook; caves collapsed and boulders fell. The devastation happened to bury the cauldron underground. Tianming and Yu Ziqian hid in the cracks of the cauldron so they wouldn't be buried under the rubble.

"Aunt Ying chose the right location. The mine collapsed and buried us all! Even if the head instructor escapes the cauldron, he'll still have to dig his way out," said Yu Ziqian.

"You're right."

They were optimistic about the situation. But at that moment, the cauldron violently trembled. If it weren't for the obstruction of the fallen rocks, the cauldron's lid would have already tipped over.

"The head instructor is really strong!" Circulating his astral force, Yu Ziqian channeled all of his power into keeping the cauldron sealed as the impacts from within seemed to hit Yu Ziqian's body. He was close to vomiting blood.

There was nothing Tianming could do to help him. Instead, he blocked the opening with his lifebound beasts. The lid cracked open several times but the elders seemed to act quickly, forcefully dragging Gujian Qingshuang and his lifebound beasts back. The thunderous battle continued inside.

"How despicable!" Gujian Qingshuang's resentful bellows sounded from within, indicating that the fight was almost over.

Tianming had to admit that he admired Gujian Qingshuang. It had been about an hour, but there was still movement inside the cauldron. That meant the five elders had yet to completely subdue him.

"It seems it's harder to restrain than to kill." After all, Gujian Qingshuang had the help of his lifebound beasts. Taking them down wouldn't be easy.

"They have to ensure that Gujian Qingshuang can no longer fight at all before letting me in."

After more than an hour, the entire cave had collapsed. If one were to view the mountain from the sky, they would notice an enormous area that was now a pit. If it weren't for the formation, such a loud movement would have attracted those within a hundred mile radius. The elders had made a wise choice in taking advantage of the House of Dongye's private mine.

Several transmission stones flew out from the crevices, but they were all blocked by Yin Chen's quick hands. They didn't even make it to the formation.

Two hours later, calm was restored.

"Tianming, come in." Long Wanying shouted.

"They succeeded!"

Yu Ziqian and Tianming exchanged a joyful look. They were both overwhelmed with excitement from taking down the head instructor of a second-rate sect. Tidying himself, Tianming grabbed a large number of Yin Chen's eggs and entered the cauldron. At the moment, the interior was already lit. With just one glance, Tianming noticed the Azuresoul Tower. The next thing that caught his attention was the blood-soaked man suppressed by the tower. His body was wrapped with dense black threads. This was Yang Ce's divine artifact.

Gujian Qingshuang was still struggling and roaring with anger, glaring at the rest of them with his blood-red eyes. In order to completely restrain him, the five elders had all sustained minor injuries. In particular, Ye Dongliu seemed to have been wounded by Gujian Qingshuang's sword. With his abdomen still bleeding, he shrank to the side and sighed.

Tianming walked up to Gujian Qingshuang, while Long Wanying followed close behind him. "Be careful. He's much stronger than we expected."

"Alright."

It was clear that Tianming had been the one behind their actions today. He had only appeared after Long Wanying and the others imprisoned Gujian Qingshuang, instead of killing him.

Tianming stood in front of the head instructor. "Head Instructor, I know you have many questions. We have a lot of time today. I'll answer them one by one."

After another fierce struggle, Gujian Qingshuang suddenly gloomily laughed. "Alright, let's cut to the chase. I'm still confused. How did Jiang Qingliu know about my plans to kill him and seize the Azuresoul Tower? How did you get Ye Dongliu to work for you?"

"The answer is here, Head Instructor." A small silver egg appeared in Tianming's hand. The egg turned into ten cockroaches that became invisible at once. It was as if they had disappeared completely.

"Did you see that? They might have disappeared right before your eyes, but they still exist. The moment I arrived at the Azuresoul Sword Mountain, they began spreading all over. I heard every word you said to Shi Yan and Ye Dongliu."

Gujian Qingshuang stared in wide-eyed shock. Gasping for air, he looked at Tianming with disbelief. "It devoured the metal vein? And as a result, it can increase in numbers?" Gujian Qingshuang asked, his voice hoarse.

"Yes. That's why I desperately wanted metal veins. My lifebound beast needs more counterparts to invade the Supracloud Sanctuary." Tianming nodded.

Gujian Qingshuang was obviously very intelligent to have discovered the crux of the matter so quickly. "Then what about Ye Dongliu?" He couldn't figure it out. Why had Ye Dongliu so completely surrendered?

"That involves the Bonesea Silverstar you gave me." The cockroaches in Tianming's hands reappeared and transformed into tens of thousands of metal bonegnaw ants. They crawled all over his hands. "It's called the bonegnaw ant, and it can parasitize your bones so that you obey only me throughout the rest of your life," Tianming explained.

Gujian Qingshuang was stupefied as Tianming described the effects of the bonegnaw ants in detail.

"So you want to control me because I was going to kill Jiang Qingliu? What're you planning?" Gujian Qingshuang dejectedly asked.

"That's not the only reason. Our views are completely different, so it's impossible for us to work together. Since that's the case, I can only force you to stand on my side. Don't worry, you won't suffer any losses. I'm not a sinister and self-indulgent man, nor am I as stubborn as you. I can combine our strength and give the Azurecloud Continent a chance at rebirth!"

"How will you do that?" Gujian Qingshuang asked through gritted teeth.

"Through controlling you. You'll open all Azuresoul Palace's mines for my use so Yin Chen can multiply, invade the Supracloud Sanctuary, and monitor Yun Tianque's actions. Then I'll deal with him the same way I dealt with you. With you and him both under my command, the two will secretly unite. There's much that can be achieved once the entire continent becomes one. We'll no longer be led by the nose!"

Gujian Qingshuang burst out laughing.

"What are you laughing at?" Tianming asked.

"How impressive!"

Tianming didn't expect to hear those words.