

The Ages 171

Chapter 171 - Mu The Qilin, A Faithful Disciple!

The battle of the second day had reached its zenith! Mu Yang, together with his beast and a sword in hand, stood against the three brothers of the Lightning Manor. Within their generation, the Lightning Marshall Lin Tianjian had always been one of the best in the nation, and his two brothers Lin Xiaofeng and Lin Tianxuan weren't that far off either. As one, the three of them stepped into the arena.

The stadium roared at their appearance. Li Yanfeng? Sage Chen? No one thought about them anymore. After all, a real hero that was going up against three apex experts of Vermilion Bird was right here!

No one knew whether Mu Yang would survive this, but even if he didn't, he would have gone down gloriously. That being said, no one understood why he had to take the risk of fighting three people together, and waste the opportunity that Sage Chen had created for him. Only the Wei Clan knew the reason behind it.

Within the arena, the beastmasters were already ready for the fight of their lives. The Lin brothers had summoned their lifebound beasts the moment they entered, all of them brimming with killing intent.

The three brothers commanded four beasts in total. The first lifebound beast was a wasp dancing in the air, about the size of the Cloudspark Mosquito seen yesterday. It was the Woodland Thunder Wasp, a high-tier seven-star beast that belonged to the third brother, Lin Tianxuan. It was a dual-type bug beast, its two types being wood and lightning.

The second beast was the massive blue wolf that Lin Xiaofeng was currently riding. It was a bloodthirsty predator, its figure agile and claws sharp. From its drooling jaws, the beast was more than ready to feast on the bodies that would fall here. It was the Tempest High Wolf, a wind-type terrestrial beast belonging to Lin Xiaofeng.

The third beast was a Penta-Coloured Darkthunder Bird, the exact same type as the one Lin Rong had yesterday. All these three beasts were seven-star beasts, and the Darkthunder Bird belonged to Lin Tianjian, the Tempest Marshal!

But just like his children, Lin Tianjian was a twin beastmaster too! His second beast was standing right beside him, a colossal golden ape glowing with power and its furs like needles. It was an eight-star imperial beast, an evolution of the Vajra Berserk Ape!

Its most obvious feature was the six muscular arms growing out of its abdomen. As such, it was named the Vajra Six-Armed Ape. It was also a terrestrial beast with two types, lightning and berserk. It was a lifebound beast that resembled wildbeasts greatly, thus making it the most dangerous opponent in terms of savagery.

In no time at all, the three brothers and the four lifebound beasts had Mu Yang completely surrounded. The beasts were led by the roaring Vajra Six-Armed Ape, their bodies so big that the barrier barely had enough room for them to move about.

"Mu Yang, once you are dead the Wei Clan is finished for sure. It's saddening that you won't get to see the family getting wiped out completely for blocking the Lightning Manor's way. As for your death, you have no one to blame but your own foolishness."

Lin Tianjian was almost prepared to give up the battle today. He had thought that even with the three of them exhausting Mu Yang one by one, they would have difficulty winning. But now that Mu Yang had offered to fight all three of them at once, this was the best opportunity to be rid of that pest forever!

Against Lin Tianjian's provocation, Mu Yang did not say a single word, opting to unsheath his longsword instead. The ground shuddered as a gigantic lifebound beast had appeared by his side. Its figure was covered with black scales from head to toe. From the looks of it, it appeared to be a terrestrial beast with powerful legs and claws.

However, what was most obvious about the beast was its head. It clearly had the head of a dragon! Its head was even bigger and more majestic than a regular dragon's head, and its eyes were filled with a majesty of sorts.

It was a mythical qilin! Qilins, phoenixes, and dragons were all creatures from legends, with their quality determined by their bloodline. For example, the lowest bloodline amongst the dragons, the Blizzard Dragon, could barely be considered a dragon since it wasn't even an imperial beast.

Mu Yang's lifebound beast was the Ink Qilin, a mid-tier eight-star lifebound beast! Even if it was the lowest tier of qilin and wasn't even a saint beast, it was the only mid-tier eight-star beast across the entire Vermilion Bird. Other beasts like the Twelve-Winged Goldroc and the Octo-Starred Imperial Lion were all low-tier.

The Ink Qilin was a dual-type terrestrial beast, its two types being water and earth. As the king of terrestrial beasts, its presence alone was enough to pressure the four other beasts in the arena!

As Mu Yang stood in the arena with his qilin and the sword in his hand, the crowd cheered fervently. Even if everyone had heard stories about how majestic his beast was, it was the first time most people had seen it, since it usually stayed in the vicinity of the Sanctum. Mu Yang, on his part, hadn't battled for a long time either.

Since there were no real phoenixes in Vermilion Bird, the Ink Qilin was already the top lifebound beast across the nation, and the king of all beasts in the land! Even the Vermilion Bird King's beast was also only low-tier eight-starred.

"It's alright, no matter how strong his beast is, there's only one to deal with our four beasts."

"He's dead for sure."

"Charge!" At Lin Tianjian's command, the three men and four beasts attacked in tandem!

The three brothers each cast their own heavenly-ranked battle arts with their weapons. As for the four beasts, they took to the frontline with their tough physique and myriad spiritsource abilities.

The Woodland Thunder Wasp's attack reached first, as thousands of blue poisonous needles showered down onto Mu Yang and his qilin. The attack didn't end there either; once the needles pierced into the ground, it turned into vines that tangled the Ink Qilin.

That was just one of the many spiritsource abilities that Mu Yang had to deal with! He was facing far too many attacks at once, especially since at Heavenly Will the coordination between master and beasts was at its peak.

On top of the wasp, Lin Tianxuan held a bow, one far more powerful than Lin Xiaoxiao's Roaring Thunder Bow. Within moments, he had loosed ten arrows that turned into electric bolts, half of them attacking Mu Yang and the other half targeted at the qilin.

As for Lin Xiaofeng, he was armed with a cane, moving to flank Mu Yang. His beast followed beside him, stirring up a storm that shrouded the arena with dust! It was the Tempest High Wolf's spirit-source ability, the Sandstorm Blizzard!

It was difficult enough to evade the cane and arrows, not to mention the five-colored lightning bolt that the Penta-Coloured Darkthunder Bird continued to cast. The three beasts had a total of twenty-one different varying spirit-source abilities, each of them threatening and unique. Even if Mu Yang could block ten different spirit-source abilities at once, there would be eleven more waiting for him!

It was obvious how dangerous a scenario Mu Yang was in. To make matters worse, Lin Tianjian was approaching from the front with his ape, a golden halberd beaming with electricity in his hands!

The Vajra Six-Armed Ape used its ability to turn into its vajra form, making it even bigger than it already. Howling, it punched the ground, sending golden waves of electricity flowing towards Mu Yang. At the same time, Lin Tianjian used his heavenly-ranked battle art, Lightning Slash of The Three Daos!

"Die!" They attacked from all angles concurrently, and a bevy of abilities barrelled towards Mu Yang!

Lin Tianjian was certain that Mu Yang would fall under such an assault. This was an attack that no one in Vermilion Bird could possibly live through.

But was that really the case?

From the beginning, the Ink Qilin's expression was just like Mu Yang's, calm like water and firm like a mountain. Water was everlasting, its waves magnificent and energetic. The qilin was like a mountain, in more ways than one. Most of the time, it was stable, unyielding. But if it were to move...

With a growl, the Ink Qilin cast two different spirit-source abilities almost simultaneously. The Underworld Ink River came first, manifesting as a stream of ink circling around Mu Yang and itself. Inside the river of ink, shadows flashed past like figures in an ink painting, concealing the pair inside. The stream alone was enough to negate all the spirit-source abilities that the opposing beasts had just used!

The other ability was the Throbbing Earth. With the ability activated, the ground seemed to turn into a living thing, one in a contract with the Ink Qilin. The earth trembled and spikes shot out from beneath, forcing the three men and four beasts to avoid them.

If water shared the same principles as the Spectral-Dance of the Demise of Man, then a mountain represented the Earth-Quaker of the Demise of Earth.

"Six-Volt Crash!"

Balls of lightning formed in each of the Vajra Six-Armed Ape's six hands. A thunderclap shook the barrier as all six of them charged at Mu Yang as one! Dust and wind whipped outwards as the balls of electricity detonated, but the other beasts kept up their assault. Lin Tianxuan's arrows and Lin Xiaofeng's cane also continued to find the opportunity to strike Mu Yang when his defenses were down.

"Mu Yang, die!" Lin Tianjian pressed forward once more.

“Die?” Mu Yang suddenly disappeared.

Li Tianming’s eyes widened. So that was Spectral-Dance, the real Spectral-Dance! He took out his Grand Thunderflare Sword and started practising the battle art in the room. For him, it was as if the battlefield was divided into two, one being the one Mu Yang was on and the other being the room he was in.

“Demise!” At the core of Demise of Man-Earth-Heaven, the sword art aimed to bring demise to its opponents!

At that moment, the Ink Qilin swept Mu Yang into its Underworld Ink River, before jumping into the stream itself. With that, the two of them were both concealed, nowhere to be found.

Moments later, the qilin reappeared, its massive claws targeting the Penta-Coloured Darkthunder Bird! It was Lin Tianjian’s lifebound beast. Since he mostly relied on the ape, the Darkthunder Bird was mostly used for harassment.

Unfortunately, that particular quality also made it Mu Yang’s prime target! Mu Yang leapt out of the stream towards the bird. With the Spectral-Dance, thousands of swords stabbed towards the bird, courtesy of Mu Yang, who had turned into a phantom. The illusory flower of swords bloomed in mid-air, making it a grand sight to behold.

Within a second, the Penta-Coloured Darkthunder Bird was pierced through over a thousand times. Blood shot out from the innumerable holes on its sieve-like body, and with a shriek, the beast dropped to the floor, dead!

But that was just the beginning.

Chapter 172 - Divine Punishment!!

Even when under siege, Mu Yang managed to slay one of the beasts using his Ink Qilin’s spirit source ability to reposition himself. It was such a fascinating move, that many in the arena rose to their feet in astonishment. But little did they know that was just a beginning!

“In my whole life, I was never one to pick a battle with those who meant me no harm. But if people insist on making me suffer, to hurt those that I love and treasure, they will pay the price in blood! My whole life was only made possible thanks to my mentor. He taught me everything that I knew, even passing me the position of the Sanctum Potentate over his own son. Therefore, if the Lightning Manor wishes to eradicate the Wei Clan, then I, Mu Yang, shall kill every last soul in your clan!”

His voice was hoarse, giving it a demonic quality. His utterances, placed with the Ink Qilin’s spirit source abilities, made the stadium tremble!

“Die!” His roar seemed to come from the very heavens themselves, sealing the fate of the Lin brothers. In that moment, Mu Yang and his beast were like gods descending into the mortal realm!

Demise of Man, Soul-Extinction! It wasn’t just a sword art, but also had movement arts incorporated into it. All it took was a single step, and Mu Yang was three hundred meters away from his original position!

Lin Tianxuan was still drawing his bow when a black shadow flashed past him. Before he could figure out what had happened, his head fell, leaving a headless body atop the Woodland Thunder Wasp!

“Ehhh...” He watched as he dropped further away from his own torso.

“I... died?” He wanted to tremble, but he had no more body to tremble with. The head toppled down onto the floor, and was crushed into a pulp by the Ink Qilin’s Throbbing Earth!

Lin Tianxuan had fallen, under a move so fast that no one even had the time to react. Mu Yang’s Soul-Extinction had reaped a soul in the time needed to blink. It wasn’t a fancy move, but the result had left the stadium boiling.

As for the Lightning Manor, they were flabbergasted. Lin Tianxuan was the first beastmaster to die today. They had always wanted to kill members of the Wei Clan, but they only managed to cripple two so far. But when Mu Yang’s turn came, he decapitated Lin Tianxuan with one swing of the sword. And that wasn’t the end.

Like a comet, Mu Yang shot back towards the ground. It was Demise of Earth, Earth-Quaker! The ground trembled and ripples tore across the concrete arena like it was made of water.

From the undulating arena, the shadow of a sword shot out from the ground. It was the exact same move used to save Wei Tiancang yesterday. And today, the same sword pierced through the Tempest High Wolf’s torso and ripped through its back! The wolf was still chasing the qilin when the sword blasted through its torso, killing it instantly!

As a matter of fact, the Ink Qilin had been blocking most of the attacks for Mu Yang. One reason why he could move around to target the weaker opponents first was because the qilin had been absorbing all the damage for him, even though it was already showered in blood! They had been together for forty years, and they knew their partner’s thoughts without the need for communication.

Seeing their own brother dead, both Lin Tianjian and Lin Xiaofeng’s eyes reddened. As the qilin retreated to one side to catch its breath, Mu Yang was faced with Lin Tianjian and Lin Xiaofeng, together with the spirit-source abilities of the two remaining lifebound beasts!

Mu Yang slashed out once more, unleashing Demise of Earth’s Hell-Shaker! A vertical arc of sword ki cut across the arena and forced away Lin Tianjian, Lin Xiaofeng and the ape who were still three hundred meters away. Not only did he make the aggressors back off from the qilin to give it some much needed rest, it also bisected the Woodland Thunder Wasp, taking out yet another threat.

“One more down, three more to go!”

The entire stadium was in fervor as the hero from the Wei Clan shook everyone with his performance, save for the grieving Lightning Manor. Lin Zhao, the Lightning Seigneur, was shaking non-stop. His smile was wiped off his face completely, a pale white the moment Lin Tianxuan died. He wanted to shout, to tell his sons to back off, but the voice of the old man was drowned out by the cheers yelled by the sea of viewers in the stadium!

“CONCEDE! JUST CONCEDE!” Tears flowed across the elders face as he finally tasted defeat, but no one could hear him over the noise of the crowd. With Mu Yang’s heroic performance and elegant sword arts, the whole stadium chanted his name in unison, praising his deeds!

All that was left was Lin Xiaofeng, Lin Tianjian and the Vajra Six-Armed Ape. Four corpses were strewn around the stadium, blood splattered all over the place. Lin Xiaofeng's face was white as a ghost, and his lower half was wet, having realised that they would die here.

"I..." He hurriedly opened his mouth in an attempt to shout at the inspectors. But before the words could emerge from his mouth, he was met with Demise of Heaven's Divine-Fury!

Like a divine punishment, the strike descended from the skies and took Lin Xiaofeng's head off. It was a sword-art that defied the understanding of virtually everyone present. The Lin brothers had lost their last chance of winning when they failed to corner the Ink Qilin and allowed Mu Yang to kill the wasp. With all these conditions now fulfilled, Mu Yang's victory was already a foregone conclusion.

In fact, it wasn't an easy fight for Mu Yang, and blood was still surging out of the innumerable wounds he'd sustained. The qilin was in an even worse position, with lightning strikes ripping wounds across its body and the wasp's needle still draining on its blood. Mu Yang had nearly died too, more than once.

But what of it? With only Lin Tianjian and the Vajra Six-Armed Ape standing in front of him, Mu Yang was calm. Covered in blood, Mu Yang closed his eyes after using Divine-Fury.

"I concede!" The only reason Lin Tianjian was still standing was because he was supporting himself by putting his hand around the ape. No one could possibly understand his fear right now. Even if he tried his best to hide his terror, his pale countenance was worlds apart from the arrogance he had just now.

He had lost — there was no mistake to that. After not fighting Mu Yang for many years, the gap between them had only widened. It was an undeniable fact, with the price of such knowledge the bodies of his two brothers and the three lifebound beasts.

"No, I DON'T WANT TO DIE!" Lin Tianjian's mind collapsed entirely, and tears began to flow freely. Mercifully, his request was granted with all due haste; Jin Yixuan had immediately opened a hole in the Heavenly Pattern Barrier to let Lin Tianjian out.

Back when Wei Qing, Wei Tiancang, Wei Zikun and Wei Tianxiong conceded, it took at least ten seconds before Jin Yixuan opened the barrier for them. But an opening had already appeared not far from him, even before he finished his sentence.

Lin Tianjian felt relief as he finally caught a glimmer of hope. He made a mad scramble for the opening, which was only a hundred metres away. "Mu Yang, you shall pay for that!"

"Who gave you the courage to say that?" Mu Yang replied, shocking everyone with his words.

Surely Mu Yang wouldn't have the courage to attack Lin Tianjian after the inspectors had already opened a gate to let him out? Even Lin Tianjian himself thought that he was safe.

But the next second, Mu Yang had made a move.

"STOP HIM!" Terrified, Lin Tianjian commanded his beast to block that demon dashing towards him. Just a hundred metres! Under normal circumstances, it should only take him a second, but with his body trembling, his speed was inevitably lowered.

As he approached the exit, he turned around to find a sword piercing through the Vajra Six-Armed Ape's eye. His last beast was dead, without even being able to make a sound! It was killed with Heavenly-

Judgement of the Demise of Heaven, and with that, Lin Tianjian was now a crippled man for the rest of his life.

“Mu Yang, MU YANG, I WILL MAKE YOU REGRET THIS!!” Lin Tianjian roared in agony, as he ran towards the opening where his family was waiting for him. They were there to save him.

“Mu Yang, DON’T!” the Lightning Seigneur suddenly cried.

Just then, Mu Yang stopped on the spot.

“Tianming, watch this,” he said suddenly.

At the same time in the private room, Li Tianming had just finished practicing the sixth stance, Heavenly-Judgement. There was only Apocalyptic-Will left!

Without moving his body, Mu Yang stabbed towards Lin Tianjian’s back. A piercing ring echoed in the stadium as a boundless sword intent gathered on the tip of the sword. The next second, a beam of sword ki shot forward like a piercing ray!

The beam pierced through Lin Tianjian’s chest, travelled across the barrier and even punctured the Lightning Seigneur’s spirit source as he waited to save his son!

“A-ah...” Lin Tianjian froze on the spot as he turned back to look at Mu Yang in disbelief. The bloodsoaked figure silently sheathed his sword.

“Mu...” Lin Tianjian never got to finish his last sentence. The next instance, his body blew up. It wasn’t just any beast ki, but a beast ki infused with the will to crush the world! The move, modelled after an apocalypse, wrought utter destruction to its foes!

Lin Tianjian was dead, and even his corpse was shredded into millions of pieces. As for Lin Zhao, who had appeared at an unlucky timing, he was hit by the remnants of the Apocalyptic-Will, which even destroyed one of his spirit sources. The power had ripped a hole in his abdomen, causing him to collapse to the floor. He was still conscious, but that only furthered his suffering. Not just from his body’s pain, but the pain of losing three sons!

The stadium was shrouded in silence as they gaped at the man still standing in the arena. They watched as he kept his sword and tended to the qilin’s wounds.

At the same time, Li Tianming finally struck out his own Apocalyptic-Will. He had finally grasped the root of the move. It was a will, a will to battle till his last breath. With Mu Yang demonstrating it to him personally in that life and death battle, Li Tianming finally made a breakthrough.

Only when he had the will to oppose even the heavens, could he master the Apocalyptic-Will. With this newfound understanding, he finally mastered all of Mu Yang’s three demises.

But of course, none cared about him, as Mu Yang was the only center of attention right now. Him, and the Lightning Seigneur. Lin Zhao’s two other sons had already ran over to help him out.

“Medic, tend to his wounds, hurry!” If they didn’t treat his wounds fast enough, death was a certainty! With that gaping hole in his abdomen, six months’ bed rest was a given, and then some. More

importantly, given his advanced age, a full recovery was near impossible, especially with the loss of a spirit source.

But in the end, that was karmic retribution. Not only did Lin Tianjian not manage to escape, but because of him, even the Lightning Seigneur was injured now. It was just a remnant of the Apocalyptic-Will, so whose fault was it that Lin Zhao ran into it himself? No one would pity the Lightning Manor, since they were the bullies to begin with. They would only cheer for Mu Yang's superior techniques and performance.

Without a doubt, there was no one in the Lightning Manor who could stop Mu Yang. And since the Yueling Clan couldn't send anyone out, today's point naturally went to Wei Clan.

As such, Mu Yang stepped out of the arena still covered in blood, welcomed by a joyous and grateful Wei Clan.

Chapter 173 - Torment And Suffering

"Amazing!" That was really an incredible display of skills on Mu Yang's part, and Li Tianming couldn't help but give him a thumbs up.

"Damn, you sure showed them!" The little chick excitedly flapped its wings.

Like a true hero, Mu Yang had single-handedly defeated the three Lin brothers, showing them that the Wei Clan wasn't to be messed with! Even the crippled Wei Zikun ran towards him, despite his injuries.

"Brother Yang, thank you. Thank you for avenging me!" Tears of joy flowed down his cheeks.

The Wei Clan had more than their fair share of unjust treatment, with the Lightning Manor and the inspectors all treating them like fishes in a barrel. But it was Sage Chen and Mu Yang who rose to the occasion, securing one precious point for the clan. They even managed to make the Lightning Manor pay a hefty price for their sin.

"Don't worry, focus on recovering from your injuries for now." Even if the Lightning Manor had suffered their retribution, the Wei Clan had seen losses too. The murder and crippling of Wei Qing and Wei Zikun was uncalled for. The latter was unlikable, true, but that didn't justify him being crippled by Lightning Manor.

As for Mu Yang, he was showered in the awe and respect of everyone from the Wei Clan. Even if he never did join the clan as Wei Jing's spouse, he was, from the start to the end, the one that Wei Tiancang trusted the most.

"Master." Mu Yang joined the rest of the clan.

"Well done. I'm really proud to be your mentor." Wei Tiancang could no longer contain his tears as well. Words couldn't express the emotions that he felt.

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It took a while before the stadium finally recovered from its initial shock. With the day of battle over, people began to compare the losses taken by both sides. The Wei Clan had a few casualties, but it was a drop in the ocean compared to the Lightning Manor's losses. It could only be said that the Lightning

Manor had finally paid their price for playing the bully. The deaths of the Lin brothers were crude, but it was Mu Yang's strength that truly changed people's opinions. In a land where people followed the martial dao, people always respected the strong ones, just like how they cheered Li Yanfeng on just now.

"Will you look at that! And I thought Lin Tianjian was about his level."

"It's been so long since he last fought in public, but who would have imagined his improvements!"

"Mu Yang is definitely stronger than Wei Tiancang now, maybe even Wei Tiancang at his prime!"

"Forget Wei Tiancang, I doubt you can find someone who can compare to him, even in Torch Dragon and Aquamarine."

"You are right, only the inspectors could defeat him now."

"It makes sense for the Wei Clan to win the contest today. Even without Sage Chen, Mu Yang would still win if he fought the six of them one by one."

"But that means he wouldn't be able to slay the three brothers. If the Lightning Manor knew Mu Yang was this strong, they would have just given up the match today."

By now, many spectators had more or less guessed why Mu Yang had issued such a challenge.

"The three brothers really made a fool of themselves today. They were an even bigger fool than that Wei Tianxiong."

"Even the Lightning Seigneur's badly injured now. If they thought of making use of this chance to usurp the throne, then they must really be dreaming."

"The only one they have left is the Heaven's Elysium disciple, Lin Xiaoting."

"I suppose their only hope is for Lin Xiaoting to return ten years later to seek revenge."

"Ten years? What makes you think the Lightning Manor will still exist another ten years down the road?"

"So this is retribution."

"Haha."

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Within the crowd, two supernal mentors sat petrified, staring at each other. Cold sweat had drenched both Liu Xueyao and Zhao Tianchen's backs.

"Did you know that he was this strong?" Zhao Tianchen asked, the corner of his eyes twitching.

"Nope." Liu Xueyao's legs were slightly shaking as well.

"Well, if you had known, would you still choose to be the Lightning Manor's spy?" Zhao Tianchen asked, but received no answer.

"I need to go now." Zhao Tianchen stood up and took his leave. The longer he stayed with Liu Xueyao, the higher the risk that Mu Yang would come for him too. If it wasn't for Wei Tiancang, Liu Xueyao

wouldn't have even walked out of the Wei Manor alive that day. The Lightning Manor was finished, and he needed to cut all ties with them!

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Without anyone to lead them, members of the Lightning Manor were like headless flies. Some were crying, while others stood in shock. Even the two inspectors were stunned by the results. As the invigilators of the battle, they had already opened the barrier fast enough for Lin Tianjian.

"That was quite a powerful sword art. Who would have thought that a beastmaster of this level could be born in this rural land? Are you confident of taking him down?" Jin Yixuan asked.

"Probably, albeit troublesome. It'll be messy, and things might go beyond our control."

"That guy is even qualified to join Heaven's Elysium as a vice-inspector." Song Yixue frowned.

"What a pain. It would have been such an easy job if we hadn't met someone of this calibre," Jin Yixuan replied.

"Whatever, the casualties are all from the Lightning Manor, and it'll be fine as long as the Yueling Clan suffers no casualties. Anyway, they can just get the point for tomorrow, and all this would end," Song Yixue sighed.

"Well, who can they blame when they themselves lost a three to one fight? They were extended families, but now with Lin Xiaoting impotent, I doubt Yueling Ji will want to keep him. So I'd say we just give up on the Lightning Manor, and if Lin Xiaoting wants to come back for revenge then that's his own business."

Lin Xiaoting's impotence played a crucial point indeed. If he had secured his relationship with Yueling Ji back then, the Yueling Clan would have tried to help them. But that wasn't the case now.

"Just call it a day. The schedule for tomorrow is quite easy, so there's nothing much to look forward to."

"Then how do we deal with Mu Yang and the Wei Clan?"

"The one they hate is the Lightning Manor, not the Yueling Clan. We need to have a talk with Mu Yang soon. If he's willing to take the Wei Clan away from this nation, then we will spare their lives. If not then we will just have to kill him. Can't risk leaving any potential danger for the Yueling Clan." Song Yixue frowned.

"What about the Lightning Manor?"

"What Lightning Manor? Our friend now is the Vermilion Bird King." Song Yixue grinned.

"Hoho, I like where this is going." Jin Yixuan laughed too.

The two vice-inspectors beckoned the Vermilion Bird King, who was a few meters away.

"Yes, what may I do for you?"

"Call it a day," Song Yixue commanded.

"Understood."

“Oh, and now that the Lightning Manor’s finished, I suppose you know how to treat the new ruler of the sanctum, no?”

“I will protect them with my life.”

The Vermilion Bird King had Mu Yang to thank for defeating the Lightning Manor. But even then, he couldn’t help in protecting the Wei Manor, since that was already beyond his control. At the very least, if the Wei Manor cooperated and handed over the sanctum willingly, they wouldn’t end up like the Lightning Manor. By reminding not to kill anyone from the Yueling Clan, the king had already done everything in his power.

The Vermilion Bird King immediately announced the end of the day’s proceedings, with the winner being the Wei Clan. At the same time, Yueling Clan were having their own internal discussions.

“Father, don’t bother about the Lightning Manor anymore. They are useless, and even the inspectors won’t help them,” Yueling Ji said with icy-cold eyes.

“What about you and Lin Xiaoting?”

“I’m calling for a divorce tomorrow. Why would I marry someone who’s not even a man?” she said scornfully.

“Very well. Just defeat Li Tianming and secure Heaven’s Sanctum for us tomorrow. But Lin Xiaoting wouldn’t just let this go, right? What if he hates us for it?” Yueling Xiao asked.

“So? It’s not us who killed his father and uncles. And even if he amounts to anything in the Elysium, can he overrule Lady Long?” Even Yueling Ji did not dare to call that person her younger sister now.

At the same time, the Wei Clan was ready to leave. For the Lightning Manor, Lin Hao was the only one left who could lead the rest of the clan. The Lightning Seigneur needed treatment immediately. As for their revenge, the only ones they could count on were the inspectors.

“Let Lin Xiaoting talk to the inspectors. The Wei Clan had disobeyed the inspectors, so the inspectors will kill every last one of them!”

“How dare Mu Yang challenge the inspectors!”

“Xiaoting, where is Xiaoting?”

They chortled angrily. But what they didn’t know was that Mu Yang was so strong, even the two vice-inspectors had to treat him with caution. If the two inspectors didn’t manage to kill him and he got away, they would have created an incredible threat. The Yueling Clan was definitely not enough to stop that man, and if anything happened to the Yueling Clan, the inspectors would be done for too.

Just as the Lightning Manor was ready to take their leave...

“Father! Grandfather!” A youth ran into the stadium, his eyes red with rage. He was none other than Lin Xiaoting!

The first thing that greeted him was the corpses of Lin Xiaofeng, Lin Tianxuan and the four lifebound beasts. He had already heard news that they couldn’t even recover Lin Tianjian’s body, since it was

blown into pieces! At the side, the Lightning Seigneur was writhing and twitching uncontrollably, his body covered in blood. As he registered the scene that greeted him, Lin Xiaoting took a few steps back, gasping in shock.

Throwing his head back, he howled, "MU YANG! I swear on my life that I will murder every last person that you know, and torture you until you long for death!"

His roar echoed in the stadium, silencing the chattering crowd instead. The Wei Manor was about to leave when they stopped to look at Lin Xiaoting. Li Tianming, who was amongst them, turned to stare at his foe.

It would be his turn tomorrow. His hands had been itching for two days already, and Lin Xiaoting had finally made an appearance. He stood there looking at the raging, maddened youth. It was quite a contrast compared to the cruel, haughty boy that looked down on him three years ago.

Today, Mu Yang had proven himself. Li Tianming, however, would have to wait for tomorrow to pounce onto his prey. He could feel his eyes reddening from anticipation, but he knew that it was going to be well worth it.

Lin Xiaoting was already suffering from the pain he deserved, so why not let him enjoy it for one more night?

The crowd could see the two youths standing at two sides of the Flameyellow Stadium as their sights crossed. Li Tianming was the first to speak up.

"Lin Xiaoting. You said you will torture my uncle Yang until he wishes for death? Tell me, how about you? Don't you wish... that you still had a certain something? That's right, I'm talking about the Gelding Blight that made your manhood shrivel and rot away. So, tell me how are you feeling now, eunuch Lin?"

Amidst the silence, Li Tianming tossed out questions after another, each of them spicier than the previous one!

"Ge...Gelding Blight..."

The crowd gasped in shock. Who would have done such a vicious thing?

"Is that real? Lin Xiaoting's impotent now?"

"Shrivelling and rotting away..."

They looked at the pale and shocked Lin Xiaoting, and then at the indifferent Yueling Ji. The answer couldn't be any more obvious. Lin Xiaoting had lost the thing that defined a man; even his own wife didn't care about him now. If this was just a bluff, Yueling Ji would have already clarified it for him, but the Yueling Clan had instead risen to their feet, ready to leave. They had no interest to be involved in Lin Xiaoting's scandals.

Lin Xiaoting could feel pain and shame clawing at his heart, but he could blame no one else for that. If he had just been a bit kinder towards Mu Qingqing for the past month, he wouldn't have to suffer from that today. Now, the pain that he had inflicted upon her was here to haunt him, in front of so many people.

“He’s a eunuch now...”

“Could this be the greatest joke in Vermilion Bird’s history? A young man castrated one day after his wedding.”

It didn’t take long before cold, disdainful glances fell onto Lin Xiaoting. After all, half of the crowd had something that Lin Xiaoting no longer had.

As Lin Xiaoting stood beside the remains of his father and uncles, while being judged by an entire nation, he felt as if his body was tearing apart. Pain, shame and devastation coursed through his veins, and an indescribable feeling seared his mind. And all that was brought upon him by none other than Li Tianming, together with the retribution that was long overdue.

“Eunuch Li! Hahaha!”

Some weren’t even trying to hide their laughter now. The illustrious Lightning Manor had come to a pitiful end, so they had nothing to fear anymore. Loudest of all was the little chick, its little figure rolling about, its wings pressed to its stomach as it rolled around.

The only one who wasn’t laughing now was Li Tianming. He hopped onto the walls of the stadium, waiting for the laughter to cease before making his announcement.

“Lin Xiaoting, she is still watching you from that stone gate. So pull yourself together, and tell everyone here. Tell them about how you stole my Saintbeast War-Soul, killed my lifebound beast, and then pushed all the blame to me three years ago.”

As he said that, the world fell silent. Many looked towards where Li Tianming was pointing at, the stone gate.

It was as if the girl in white had never left.

Chapter 174 - It Won’t End Until One Stops Breathing!

Three years ago, the Saintbeast War-Soul had been the opportunity for Lin Xiaoting to soar to the heavens in one leap.

“The Saintbeast War-Soul was obtained by Li Tianming? And Mu Qingqing used to be Li Tianming’s girlfriend? And when she found out Li Tianming had obtained it, she told Lin Xiaoting, and became his girlfriend? And after that, she set Li Tianming up and seized the War-Soul, executing his lifebound beast and crippling him in the process?”

This rumour had already filled Ignispolis ever since Mu Qingqing wrote those eight words under the stone gate at Flameyellow Scions Institute. Now, Li Tianming’s words made everyone recall them.

The truth was starting to surface.

“So the real victim turned out to be Li Tianming. What a vicious move!”

“How ruthless. I can’t believe I even mocked Li Tianming several times.”

“They really hoodwinked everyone. It’s no wonder Li Tianming wants to kill Lin Xiaoting so much. They really went too far.”

Everyone guessed at the truth when they saw Lin Xiaoting's ashen face.

The Gelding Blight made Lin Xiaoting the butt of all jokes and lose his dignity as a man. And now, the truth from three years ago ruined his reputation. If he weren't a Heaven's Elysium disciple who had a powerful status, the audience would probably have started throwing eggs at him by now.

Lin Xiaoting clenched his fists, his eyes red as he stared at Li Tianming. However, he suddenly cracked a smile. "Trying to concoct that story again? You, obtain the War-Soul? Please, if you want to lie, at least make it believable!"

"Three years ago, you couldn't obtain Qingqing, so you sullied her in the Abyssal Battlefield, leading to her suicide. And now, you dare to come here to slander me? Everyone, do you actually believe this nonsense?" Lin Xiaoting was furious, thinking repeatedly that if he knew this day would come, he should have just killed Li Tianming. However, who would have thought the cripple could make a comeback?

Lin Xiaoting had indeed pointed out something. It was difficult for people to determine the truth without evidence.

Hence, for one more day, the truth remained uncovered!

"We were all just frightened by Mu Yang, but all he did was get one more point."

"Right, that has nothing to do with Li Tianming."

"I feel Lin Xiaoting's version is more believable."

As long as there were people, all kinds of theories would abound, some even going so far as to forget Mu Qingqing's words under the stone gate.

However, Li Tianming's words had only been said casually. He didn't expect many people to believe him without evidence.

However, tomorrow he wanted everyone in Ignispolis to be convinced without a doubt he was speaking the truth!

Let Lin Xiaoting quibble all he wants. I'll deal with him tomorrow.

"Li Tianming, you'll be fighting tomorrow, right?" Lin Xiaoting said icily.

"I will be the only one from the Wei Clan," Li Tianming replied.

"Very well. I'll give you a chance to challenge me. However, it will be a deathmatch. Only one will walk out of the Heavenly Pattern Barrier tomorrow!" Lin Xiaoting narrowed his eyes. He could only vent the frustration from being ridiculed publicly by killing Li Tianming!

"I couldn't ask for more!" Li Tianming smiled brightly.

"Pretty gutsy." Lin Xiaoting said disdainfully. True, the Lightning Manor suffered heavy losses, and he was afflicted by the Gelding Blight, but in the end, him being countless times stronger than Li Tianming was an immutable fact. Li Tianming seeking a deathmatch with him was simply suicidal.

"How will you guarantee only one person can walk out from the deathmatch?" Li Tianming asked.

“We’ll ask the inspectors to allow it, with all the experts of Ignispolis bearing witness! Inspectors, as long as someone hasn’t died, please do not open the barrier!” Lin Xiaoting said ferociously.

“Then let me make it a tad more specific: As long as someone is still breathing, please do not open the barrier!” Li Tianming added. Li Tianming had many things he planned to do before Lin Xiaoting stopped breathing. Lin Xiaoting’s suggestion was a true godsend.

“Permitted.” That one word from Jin Yixuan was enough to light the fires of war.

Everyone had been planning to leave, as they hadn’t expected a good show the next day. However, now their minds had changed.

“Let’s watch how Lin Xiaoting will torment Li Tianming to death.”

“He’ll probably vent all his hatred for Mu Yang and the Gelding Blight on him.”

“Death by a thousand cuts? Or will he flay him alive and pull out all his tendons?”

“I’m looking forward to it.”

“It seems the matter with the Saintbeast War-Soul could be true. Otherwise, Li Tianming wouldn’t be drawn to revenge the same way a moth is drawn to a flame.”

“What a pity. Lin Xiaoting is going to Heaven’s Elysium soon. He’ll lose his chance forever then, which is why he has to choose this self-destructive action.”

“I hear he’s quite strong, able to defeat people at ninth level Spiritsource. Still, does he not know the gap between him and Lin Xiaoting who has the War-Soul and is at Unity?”

Making it so that the barrier wouldn’t open until one died made it no different from a fight between caged beasts. It was obvious how bloody and violent it would be.

“Wait, don’t tell me you forgot about me.” Suddenly, a girl with a cold expression walked out. It was Yueling Ji.

She looked at Li Tianming. “I’ve already reached Unity. In the Abyssal Battlefield, you relied on tricks to offend me. Tomorrow, I will give you a sound beating!”

Offended? In truth, she was just displeased that Li Tianming had defeated her. Now, however, she was in Unity and had an eight-star beast, the Blizzard Spirit Dragon. She wouldn’t be satisfied if she didn’t take the opportunity to crush Li Tianming.

“Then it’ll make things meaningless. I want him to come at me at full strength, so he knows how futile all this is.” Lin Xiaoting sneered.

“Relax, I’ll leave him in one piece for you. I just want to show Li Tianming who is stronger!” Yueling Ji had trained hard for one whole month just to wipe clean that humiliation. Else, how could she go to Heaven’s Elysium if she couldn’t even beat someone from the countryside?

“That’ll be fine.” Lin Xiaoting smiled. All he wanted was for Yueling Ji to not snatch away the prey he wanted to savour slowly.

“There’s no suspense tomorrow. Li Tianming with his combat prowess of ninth level Spiritsource is just too far from Yueling Ji.”

“Now, husband and wife are fighting over the prey. Li Tianming will have a miserable end; he’s like a little rabbit in front of them.”

“Husband and wife? Pffftt...” When they thought of the Gelding Blight, people burst out into laughter again.

“Alright, alright, disperse. The battle continues tomorrow!” Song Yixue shouted, bringing an official end to the day.

.....

After half a month of clear skies, a huge downpour began. It wasn’t just any heavy rain, but a full-on torrential storm that came with gales and lightning.

The various families of Ignispolis all shut their doors. Few left the safety of their houses tonight.

This storm was reminiscent of three years ago.

At Lightning Manor.

Lightning Manor was located in a more low-lying area, and water quickly accumulated on the ground. Lin Xiaoting was kneeling in the downpour, soaked to the bones. He had been in this position for four hours.

“Vice-inspectors, Lin Xiaoting requests for a meeting.” This was his third time imploring them. However, no activity could be heard. By now, his eyes had turned red.

Suddenly, the door opened, causing Lin Xiaoting’s face to light up.

However, the people who came out were instead Yuling Hong, Yueling Xiao and Yueling Ji.

“Don’t waste your time. Get lost, the inspectors don’t want to see you. How tactless.” Yueling Ji rolled her eyes, before walking around him to leave.

“Why?” Lin Xiaoting was stupefied.

“You want to ask the inspectors to help you kill Mu Yang to seek justice for Lightning Manor, no?” Yueling Xiao stopped.

“Yes.” Lightning Manor, as of now, only had him who could request to meet the inspectors.

“Don’t indulge in wild fantasies. Mu Yang isn’t easy to deal with. It was your Lin Clan that offended him. They won’t take the risk for you all,” Yuling Xiao said.

“We offended him? Lightning Manor was fighting for your sake!” Lin Xiaoting stared dumbfoundedly at his father-in-law.

“So? Alright, the job’s done, you got the one point for us, thank you very much. You all can withdraw already. Just make sure you all act more honest in the future.” Yueling Ji cut in.

Lin Xiaoting paled.

“Come on, you can’t be that naive, can you? Lin Xiaoting, you’re going to Heaven’s Elysium. You need to mature more. Be realistic; Lightning Manor is worthless now.” Yueling Ji smiled.

Lin Xiaoting was utterly flummoxed, because these words seemed very familiar to him. Was this the same girl that had had so many daydreams of him in the past? “You say that, but have you forgotten we’re married...”

“Huh? What joke is that? Lin Xiaoting, who got married to you? In the future, watch your words, lest you lose your life. I, Yueling Ji, could never have married some genderless thing. Don’t ruin my reputation. You have to see reality clearly!” She looked down at him from above. She had already been thinking of this for quite a while, so it was good to clarify things now.

“Xiaoting, don’t worry. Our Yueling Clan still maintains its friendship with you all. Still, let’s forget all about that marriage, okay?” Yueling Xiao consoled as he patted him on the shoulder.

“I understand.” Lin Xiaoting was currently filled with so much humiliation and frustration that it felt like his heart was tearing apart.

And yet, why do their words sound so damn familiar?

“Alright, Lin Xiaoting. Now that we’ve clarified our relationship, don’t go and try to die in your deathmatch with Li Tianming. If you want to do so, give me a heads up so I can kill him first.” Yueling Ji smiled.

It didn’t matter that she did so now. After all, the battle was a deathmatch where losing meant death. No matter how much grief Lin Xiaoting had, he wouldn’t want to die. Hence, even if he didn’t want to fight for the Yueling Clan’s sake, he still had to work hard for their sake.

“Lin Xiaoting, you’re a mature person. You won’t be childish, right? You know when to admit defeat, right?” Yueling Ji used her finger to tap Lin Xiaoting on the head. Hard. A clear sound rang out as Lin Xiaoting’s head was forced to the ground. However, he didn’t move, keeping it lowered as he sniffled.

A streak of lightning lit up the world as brightly as if it were daytime. For a moment, that girl tapping Lin Xiaoting’s head seemed to be wearing white.

Chapter 175 - Li Tianming’s Identity

The downpour fell even harder. The gales continued howling, and the thunder crashed so loudly that every living thing was shaking.

A teenaged girl currently sat in front of Li Tianming. She had flawless skin, and only her eyes hinted that she was from the older generation. Although the window was closed, the candle fire in the room was still flickering.

Today, Li Tianming wanted to know who his true father was.

Wei Jing washad already prepared to confess everything. “Tianming, I already clarified everything to father and brother Yang after I was cured of Lifesbane. However, it’s hard to open my mouth about it

because it was such a strange matter. It's why I didn't tell your grandfather for twenty years. Even now, I'm getting a headache just thinking of how to explain it to you," Wei Jing said, frustrated.

"There's no need to be frustrated. What's past is past," Li Tianming consoled, well aware it was difficult for Wei Jing to say. Otherwise, she would have been honest twenty years ago, and so much could have been avoided. And especially, she wouldn't have gotten together with Li Yanfeng for the sake of covering up the truth and giving Li Tianming an identity.

"I was about the same age as you, then. On the Heavenly leaderboard, brother Yang was first and I was fourth. Once, I went to the Easton Domain for training."

The Easton Domain was in the eastern part of Vermilion Bird, at the borders of Vermilion Bird's territory in the Abyssal Battlefield.

"I climbed to the peak of Mount Verm, there, and met him...."

Him... Likely, that was my mysterious father! Li Tianming thought.

"Then, sparks flew, and you used that to keep your bodies warm?" The little chick popped up excitedly.

"Shoo to the side and don't interrupt!" Li Tianming smacked it away. He anxiously continued, "So, who was he, and what kind of person was he?"

"I... don't know...." Wei Jing smiled bitterly.

"You don't know?" Her response stumped Li Tianming.

"It was very strange. He was just a blurry shadow, untouchable and unseeable. However, sometimes he could be touched like a real person...." Wei Jing thought hard.

Li Tianming finally understood why she had kept mum for twenty years. Anyone who heard this story would think she was making a story up after being sullied. How would she even start explaining it to Wei Tiancang?

If Li Tianming's grandmother were still around, it might have been easier. Alas, she had left this world early. Some matters were a hard conversation topic between mother and son. Furthermore, Wei Tiancang had been trying to play matchmaker between Mu Yang and Wei Jing at the time.

"What happened next?"

"I found it very interesting, so I started to chat with him. He said that he was going through the most painful period of his life. He was trapped at that spot, and could die anytime.... He was very bored, so he decided to chat with me. I was more outgoing at the time, so I spoke about my own matters. Actually, he was quite a fun person. He really knew how to joke around, and said I was the most extraordinary person in the world. He was also quite a braggart, similar to you." When she spoke of him, Wei Jing seemed particularly happy.

"Me, a braggart? Please stop with the malicious slander." Li Tianming wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. I'm such an honest fellow, yet my mother thinks I'm a braggart. How preposterous.

Wei Jing rolled her eyes at him and continued, "He spoke of so many fantastical things that made me believe he was from a faraway world. He spoke of mortal beastmasters becoming Saints and extending their longevity by a thousand, or even ten thousand years. He also spoke of how you could become a god after overcoming the twelve 'Life-Death Tribulations', becoming someone who looks down on all life and eternally undying...."

"He said I was like a sprite. In all his years of campaigning and walking the edge of life and death, he rarely met people like me: naive, pure, and unconstrained." Wei Jing smiled

Li Tianming also smiled. "You didn't add that part to praise yourself, did you?"

"Nonsense, am I that kind of person?"

Both Li Tianming and the little chick guffawed. As for the black cat, it was busy sleeping in Wei Jing's arms.

Li Tianming found this story rather interesting. His blood father really did sound interesting.

However, there were no two ways around it. The story sounded very much like some female-oriented romance novel. An overbearing, humorous man that was powerful and experienced, along with a weird and bold girl from the countryside, full of life. After a chance meeting, sparks of a romance flew?

If that wasn't contrived, what was?

"Continue, continue."

"I didn't have much going on at that time, so I just stayed at Mount Verm and kept chatting with him, occasionally playing some games. After around twenty days, I felt he was a mysterious and witty man. At that age, I was quite interested in that kind of guy."

Li Tianming fully understood. Most young women would go through phases where they had crushes on adults.

"However, I didn't actually plan to do anything with him. Our worlds were too far apart, and I even felt like I was in a dream sometimes. However, one day he was filled with grief and said his enemies had found his location. He said that he wasn't willing to hand everything over to those people just like that.

"If it fell into their hands, he said, it would be a world-ending calamity. However, he had nowhere to hide it. Honestly, I still thought he was trying to frighten me as a joke. So I just said, 'I'll help you hide whatever it is.' I never expected that after I said those words, I would have... you," Wei Jing sighed.

"What does that mean?" Li Tianming didn't understand that last sentence.

"He said... the only way was through passing it down his bloodline. I thought it was a joke, so I agreed. And that was that. I thought I was dreaming...." Wei Jing seemed confused herself at this point.

"Bloodline? Does that mean me?" Li Tianming was stupefied. "That's it?"

"Yes. He sent me away and said he would lure those people away."

"Then?"

"I never saw him again." Wei Jing looked slightly pained.

"You sure you didn't meet a scammer and fall for his honeyed words? This might be some playboy you met," Li Tianming said, stunned. That was exactly how it seemed.

Fabricating some bold, imaginative stories and making himself look profound and humorous. Then, to top it off, he landed a finishing blow on the young girl with an act of heroism and care.

"Nonsense. I know that's not what happened. You never met him, so you don't know how special he was. Also, he did like me," Wei Jing said with certainty.

"She's beyond hope," Li Tianming said with some pain.

"Otherwise, where do you think the ten eggs in your lifebound space come from?" Wei Jing asked.

The ten Primordial Chaos Beasts!

Li Tianming was startled to hear about the thing that had changed his destiny. It meant Wei Jing might be right. The terrifying Primordial Chaos Beasts were an indication of how mysterious the man's background was.

Who were the ones chasing him down?

Li Tianming was no longer laughing. He finally had confirmation that his identity was linked to the Primordial Chaos Beasts.

"He said he'd come find me in a month's time, if he was still alive." Wei Jing lowered her head. She had returned to Wei Manor and waited.

One month.

Two months.

Three months. Still, no one had shown up, and she discovered she was pregnant.

"So he died?"

"Perhaps. Or, he cheated me as you said."

"Why would someone like him trick a lady from the countryside like you?" Li Tianming smiled.

"Who knows?" Wei Jing shrugged helplessly. "At the time, I was panicking, sure that he was dead. Brother Yang treated me well then. However, we grew up together, so I found him too overly familiar. With you added to the mix, things felt even harder."

"I probed your grandfather and determined he wouldn't accept me giving birth in Wei Manor. I wanted to give birth to you, but I didn't want to let Brother Yang help me, as that would hurt him... but as my belly got bigger, it would become unconcealable. So, my plan was to leave first, and vanish for a time. It just so happened that Li Yanfeng was wooing me then, and somehow, he found out I was pregnant. I was afraid he'd spread it around and humiliate your grandfather when others found out."

"Li Yanfeng proposed that I marry him, and he would be your father. I knew he wanted the authority of the Wei Manor. It would've been a mutually beneficial arrangement, since I wanted to give birth to you

in Ignispolis as well. I admit, I did accept it partially out of panic. However, your grandfather was even more furious after seeing Li Yanfeng, and ended up chasing us out of the city.

“So Li Yanfeng lost his dream of joining Wei Manor. Then, I got Lifesbane after giving birth to you, and he gained nothing in the end. He’d already announced you were his son, so he couldn’t change his mind and become a laughingstock. That’s how you ended up growing up in Flamehaven, and how I ended up spending twenty hard years there.”

Li Tianming finally understood the messy circumstances of his birth.

“Your real father hasn’t appeared for twenty years. As I grew older, I even began to feel like it was all a dream. Or perhaps, like you said, he was just some heartless person who tricked me. So, I wanted to spend the rest of my life in Flamehaven. I also slowly started to understand Li Yanfeng. We were publicly husband and wife after all.

“However, you know he got more and more upset because of these matters. In the end, he chased us away when Lightning Manor extended an olive branch to him. So, it’s complicated for me to talk about Li Yanfeng. Still, he did give us a place to live for twenty years.”

Li Yanfeng had become an accomplice to villains, helping Lightning Manor cripple Wei Zikun and crush Wei Tianxiong, before finally being crippled himself by Sage Chen. Wei Zikun was Wei Jing’s younger brother, which made the situation all the more complicated.

Li Tianming finally knew why she had hidden it from him for twenty years. Even she had some parts she was doubtful of.

“I understand. Although the past twenty years were hard, the past is past,” Li Tianming said.

“Yes.” Despite the downpour outside, the room remained peaceful.

“Do you still hold out hope that he’ll come back?” Li Tianming asked.

“Who?”

“My real father.”

“Not anymore. Hmph, he’s left me hanging for twenty years now!” Wei Jing said angrily.

Li Tianming smiled. Now, everything had been cleared up. Up next was for the final dash toward tomorrow’s battle.

When he stood up, Wei Jing suddenly said, “If you see him one day, you’ll immediately recognize him.”

“How?”

“He has a black arm, exactly the same as you. It has hexagonal scales, and an eye on the palm. You also don’t need to change your surname, because he’s also surnamed Li,” Wei Jing said seriously.

“What’s his name?”

“Li MUYANG,” Wei Jing said uncomfortably.

“Don’t overthink it. It’s just a coincidence, he has nothing to do with your Uncle Yang.”

One was Mu Yang, and one was Li Muiyang. What a... coincidence.

Chapter 176 - Three Levels In A Single Month!

"This rain is so similar to that night three years ago. If only it would last until tomorrow." A cold sneer flickered across Li Tianming's lips as he made his way to the Flameyellow Pagoda. It was the night before the promised day, so he wanted to cultivate for a while longer.

"Big brother!" Just as he arrived at the pagoda, a young girl dressed in a blue skirt greeted him, her expression just as joyous as his.

"Ling'er!" He hadn't seen her since leaving the Abyssal Trials, so it went without saying that he missed her.

"Big brother!" She trotted toward him, almost immediately drenched without beast ki to block out the rain. With her long hair plastered on her rosy cheeks, the beauty she gave off was different from her usual self.

"Don't get drenched by the rain." Li Tianming shielded her from the downpour and brought her into the Flameyellow Pagoda. There wasn't anyone there, since all the disciples were waiting inside the stadium for the next day's battle.

Li Tianming carefully manipulated his Aeternal Infernal Beast Ki, using it like a heater to dry her hair and clothes. She wasn't a beastmaster, so it would be easy for her to catch a cold.

"Big brother, father wouldn't let us out and had us locked up for the past few days," Jiang Feiling pouted.

"I guessed as much." It was only natural that the king would have his clan's safety as his top priority.

"Well, how do you suppose I made it out?" She blinked mischievously.

"Let me guess, you threw a tantrum and made the guards feel bad?" Li Tianming laughed.

"Of course not." Her eyes glowed with joy. "I unsealed another ability from my nails."

"For real?"

"Of course!"

"Then go ahead and show me."

"Alright!" Taking a few lighthearted steps, she beckoned at Li Tianming with a mischievous smile. "Big brother, run toward me as fast as you can."

"Let's see what's up your sleeve—" Li Tianming dashed forward and nearly broke his nose before he could complete his sentence.

"What the heck is that?" It almost felt like he had run headlong into a wall.

"That's Spatial Wall. You can use it to block and obstruct your opponents. There are other uses for it, too." As she spoke, she suddenly vanished.

“Where did you go?”

“I’m still here, come to this side.” Li Tianming walked along the wall, discovering that Jiang Feiling was hidden behind her wall.

“I can control what people see on these walls, so it can even camouflage us. I’m still not that familiar with it for now, but with sufficient practice, I should be able to form even more Spatial Walls.”

“Wow, as expected of my Ling’er!” Li Tianming smiled. The ability wasn’t just powerful, but also opened up all sorts of options in battle, making their combination even stronger during Spiritual Attachment.

“Of course!” Jiang Feiling clenched her fist tightly with an eager look on her face. “Big brother, I want to help you defeat them tomorrow.”

That was her main purpose for sneaking out using the Spatial Wall while Jiang Qingluan kept the guards distracted.

“You don’t have to.” Li Tianming’s lips curved upward.

“Why?”

“They don’t quite qualify.” Li Tianming’s courage would have sounded unfounded, or even foolish, if she didn’t know his secrets.

“Ling’er, all you need to do is help me make one more breakthrough tonight.”

“Sure.” At this point in time, she was willing to do anything to help him. Anything at all would be better than helplessly waiting inside the palace.

“Big brother, your hair. It’s quite pretty when it’s white....” Jiang Feiling bounced along beside him and played with the tips of his long hair.

“Did you only just notice?”

“Of course not, I just didn’t say anything.”

“Why?”

“It looked very... girlish....”

“Nonsense! Look at these muscles.”

Li Tianming’s cheeks flushed. What a disgrace for her to call me girlish! Perhaps I need to show her just how manly I truly am!

Li Tianming approached the Flameyellow Rock, speaking domineeringly, “Ling’er, ride me.”

“Excuse me?”

“Ah, I mean, attach to me.” Accidentally exposing his real thoughts was a big oof.

“Huh.” How could Jiang Feiling not know what he was thinking? But she attached to him nonetheless. It had been a month since she had last merged with his body, and Li Tianming felt the terrifying burst of power once more. It was even more effective than taboo techniques like the Purple Blood-Imprint, and

with her, Li Tianming felt like the world was within his grasp. Spiritual Attachment was a mysterious ability that both boosted his strength and aided him in his cultivation.

“Big brother, you feel very different now. What’re those rings?” As she surged into Li Tianming’s body, she instantly discovered the ten rings on his body.

“That’s Lifesbane.”

“No, there’s something fundamentally different now. It’s like you’re ten times better now in terms of how well you can absorb spiritual energy from heaven and earth. Is Lifesbane usually this powerful?” she asked curiously.

That was something even Li Tianming himself didn’t know. But the fact that he could improve by two levels and master the three demises were all thanks to Lifesbane. Without it, he might not even be able to defeat Yueling Ji tomorrow.

“Let’s give it a try.”

He punched the Flameyellow Rock, just like how he did the first time he got the rock’s blessing. Even the little chick and the black cat had left his lifebound space to cultivate.

“Meow Meow!” Jiang Feiling was elated to reunite with the cute little cat.

“Who’s calling me meow!” The black cat’s eyes were wide open.

“That’s your sister-in-law, be respectful.” The little chick bopped its brother’s head.

...

Each booming jab on the Flameyellow Rock was accompanied by the black heavenly patterns congregating once more.

“Looks like it’s had enough rest and is ready to help me with my cultivation again.” Li Tianming smiled as he continued punching the rock, the patterns swimming faster and faster in response.

About an hour later, Li Tianming was sucked onto the Flameyellow Rock again, and a familiar gush of spiritual energy permeated his body.

“The conversion really is ten times more efficient than it was previously. Your body truly has significantly changed because of Lifesbane,” Jiang Feiling sounded surprised.

“Not bad right? Did that convince you to pick me as your boyfriend?”

“Nah, try again when you’re as strong as the vice-potentate.”

“Isn’t that a bit too ambitious?”

“Li Tianming, you still have me. I can warm your bed for you!” the little chick snickered.

“Why don’t you go live happily ever after with Meow Meow....”

“Meow?” As for the black cat, it was completely out of the loop.

If anyone were to walk into the Flameyellow Pagoda, they would discover the incredible sight of Li Tianming and his two beasts joking around while they were stuck to the Flameyellow Rock.

...

Another hour later, they finally made a breakthrough. Less than ten days after he had broken through to the seventh level, Li Tianming was now eighth level Spiritsource. Even with his perfect synchronisation with the Flameyellow Rock, this wouldn't be possible if not for his Lifesbane. Cultivation was a process that became more difficult the further one went, and a more reasonable expectation without Lifesbane would be reaching the sixth level, instead.

What was there to worry about for the battle tomorrow? In the time Yueling Ji took to get from ninth level Spiritsource to first level Unity, Li Tianming had ascended three levels!

As expected, when the storm of spiritual energy was over, Li Tianming was repulsed from the rock. He left the rings, after which Jiang Feiling materialized beside him, knowing that Li Tianming could settle the fight himself tomorrow.

The two of them shared a knowing smile when their gazes met. Li Tianming glanced in the direction of Flameyellow Stadium, and the downpour showed no signs of stopping.

It was time to bring a conclusion to what had happened three years ago.

.....

As Li Tianming took Jiang Feiling's hand in his and left the Flameyellow Pagoda, he didn't notice the two pairs of eyes staring at them from the darkness. Only when they had left did the two figures walk into the Flameyellow Pagoda and observe the changes to the rock.

"Interesting."

"Rather interesting, yes."

Not long after, the middle-aged man and the girl melted back into the shadows.

.....

Within a private room at the Flameyellow Stadium, Li Tianming laid his Grand Thunderflare Sword by the window, its tip pointing at the center of the arena. Jiang Feiling stood quietly beside him as the two of them watched raindrops pelt the glass window.

The storm brewed with even greater intensity as the fated battle approached. Despite the calamitous weather, the room was quiet—with the exception of Ying Huo, who was bouncing around energetically. Meow Meow, on the other hand, was deep in slumber.

The night felt like it lasted forever, but the sun eventually rose. Even then, the rain didn't show signs of abating, and puddles had formed within the stadium. The spectators in the stands swayed with the wind, anxiously waiting for the battle to start.

The long-awaited hour arrived.

The Wei Clan had arrived, and even Wei Qing and Wei Zikun were there. Wei Jing saw that Li Tianming was accompanied by Jiang Feiling, and chose to leave them undisturbed. Everyone was aware that this was the most important day in Li Tianming's life.

The Lightning Manor and Yueling Clan arrived slightly later. Strangely, they walked in two separate groups, as if they were unrelated. All the members of the Yueling Clan were there, led by a haughty Yueling Ji.

As for the Lightning Manor, surprisingly, it was still the heavily injured Lightning Seigneur leading the clan. Then again, he was the only who could support Lin Xiaoting and cheer him on. He was carried on a stretcher, with an invisible barrier blocking the rain for him. Even from outside the barrier, his pale face and trembling body were clearly visible.

As for Lin Xiaoting, his bloodshot eyes bulged, and killing intent oozed out around him. He wouldn't let anyone challenge his position as the champion of their generation, not even Yueling Ji.

The tension between the two factions was palpable. Just then, the two inspectors arrived together with the Vermilion Bird King.

"Let's not waste any time." With a wave of his hand, Jin Yixuan activated the Heavenly Pattern Barrier.

It was time. Li Tianming picked up his Grand Thunderflare Sword and walked through the rain into the arena. A flash of lightning suddenly lit up the entire stadium, illuminating the white-haired youth that was standing there like an angel of death.

Chapter 177 - You Don't Qualify To Make Me Attack!

The stadium was deathly silent as everyone watched the young man step forward, a sword in his hand and lightning illuminating him. Every droplet of rain that fell onto him instantly vaporized into steam. His white hair fluttered in the wind, while his sword was wreathed in flame and lightning.

No one had expected that he, who was destined for tragedy today, would have such a moving aura!

Everyone was aware that his name was Li Tianming, and everyone was aware of just how many miracles he had created since returning to Ignispolis. And everyone was aware that, today, he stood on the battlefield to challenge that lofty figure in his destiny!

However, the unbridgeable gulf in power made people feel nothing but pity for him.

"If Li Tianming doesn't die here today, his future is limitless."

"It's either him or Lin Xiaoting today! However, Lin Xiaoting has received Heaven's Elysium's favor. How could he fall today?"

After a day had passed, the number of believers in the truth had also increased. It was this group that was filled with regret for Li Tianming.

"He's just as daring as Mu Yang. Alas, he wasn't born in Wei Manor, and when he did obtain a treasure, it was robbed from him."

"If he dies here, he deserves respect."

Hidden among the crowd of onlookers was an insignificant man dressed in a black raincoat that covered his whole body: Li Yanfeng. His gaze fell on Li Tianming, then shifted to Lin Xiaoting. Finally, it was directed to the Lightning Seigneur, Lin Tao, who was lying on a sickbed. His gaze turned ferocious. "Spectating from the bed?"

"Li Tianming, you've left me shocked time and time again since you left Flamehaven. If you manage to kill Lin Xiaoting today, you'll have completely convinced me. I'll even help you this time and remove Lightning Manor from Ignispolis! It can be considered a conclusion to our twenty years of father and son connection." Li Yanfeng's gaze never left the Lightning Seigneur.

Yesterday, he had staked his life to fight for Lightning Manor. When he was high and mighty, the Seigneur had promised to make him the second-in-charge of Lightning Manor. However, when he had lost, he was forced to crawl out of the stadium like some unwanted dog.

"For every debt, there is a debtor. As people, we really can't be too arrogant."

The Flameyellow Stadium was a microcosm of life. Some were worried, some furious, some were hot-blooded, and some were uncaring, only here to watch a show.

When Li Tianming stepped through the barrier, Yueling Ji, dressed in white, descended from the stormy sky like a goddess. The stadium, which had been turned into a watery realm in the storm, was now a world that belonged to her. She stepped forward, her Wind Cometh Blade in one hand and Snow Fall Blade in the other. The wind howled as it swept across the land, and snow fell, freezing over the world.

"Li Tianming. We don't have a grudge between us. I don't want the limelight today, so I won't kill you. But, I will show you how I've created a gap between us that you will never cross. That gap is known as eight-star lifebound beasts and the marvels of Unity! Before you perish here today, let me, Yueling Ji, show you the true power of Heaven's Elysium disciples."

When she finished speaking, Li Tianming raised his head to look at the girl in the air.

"Are you done prattling?" Li Tianming's tone was even frostier than her snow.

"Yes, so... let's fight!" Yueling Ji was very displeased by his gloomy attitude.

"Come out!" At her call, her Blizzard Spirit Dragon charged out. The dragon, which had alternating blue and white scales, gave a howl that caused the entire stadium to shake. The storm was its domain! And although it wasn't fully mature, the dragon's awe-inspiring and mighty presence, as well as its noble bloodline, was undeniable and worthy of admiration.

It was no longer a mere Blizzard Dragon. It was even more massive and impressive now, and its claw that previously had four claws now had five.

Who was it that claimed that now that the older generations had fought, there would be nothing exciting to watch in the younger generation's fight?

A massive pair of eyes locked on to Li Tianming. Yueling Ji was currently atop its head. Although the pair were only twenty, who would dare challenge their majesty?

"I heard you became a twin beastmaster?" Yueling Ji asked disdainfully.

“Yes, you heard correctly.” Under a flash of lightning, two lifebound beasts suddenly appeared on Li Tianming’s left and right shoulders. They were a little yellow chick and a little black cat.

However, no one was laughing at how cute they were anymore.

That was because, as of this moment, they were overflowing with the aura of massive beasts. Meow Meow was even wide awake. This was the first time the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend had publicly appeared, quickly drawing the attention of everyone. No one understood how Li Tianming’s beast could be so young, yet so strong.

However, there was no time to question it, as the two beasts quickly left Li Tianming. The little chick soared into the skies, its body aflame and the storm unable to touch it. As for the black cat, it arched its body and raced toward Yueling Ji with light steps. Its swaying body was accompanied by the rumbling of thunder.

Its blue eyes had already become wrapped up by lightning, and its pupils had already turned into two slits, making it look like a fierce and ruthless wildbeast, a fiend born from lightning!

“Attack!” A wondrous change befell Yueling Ji and her dragon. Their powers began to ripple out and merge together. With them as a core, a ‘bipolar domain’ was formed. This was one of the characteristic properties of the unity field.

The unity field was the core of the cooperation between a lifebound beast and beastmaster. The two could use the field to manipulate energy, such as gathering the spiritual energy of the world and infusing it for an explosive attack in battle. It was one of the terrifying means available to a Unity stage beastmaster.

The unity field would also create ‘nexuses’ to act as their core. Having an eight-star lifebound beast meant Yueling Ji could create a total of eight. Each nexus was independently capable of manipulating and infusing energy, causing the beastmaster to grow much stronger than before the nexuses had been created.

It could also be used as a medium to unleash a lifebound beast’s spiritsource abilities.

Yueling Ji hadn’t had time to train the stronger abilities of a Unity-level cultivator yet. However, her ‘snow field’ had turned the surrounding area into her personal territory. Just by coming near her, enemies would be passively assaulted by the snow without her needing to lift a finger. If anyone asked, she would refuse to believe it was possible to break through it!

Hence, with it activated, she charged at Li Tianming together with her dragon.

“If you don’t do anything and let me attack first, you won’t get a chance.” Yueling Ji gave a ghastly smile.

“Alas, you’re not qualified to make me attack personally.” Li Tianming’s mouth slightly curved upward.

“I don’t?” Yueling Ji involuntarily laughed. Was he mentally challenged, or had he lost his mind?

“Correct, Yueling Ji. You. Do not. Qualify.” Li Tianming stabbed his sword into the ground, then stepped back ten meters.

“Bold words!” Yueling Ji was furious. “KILL HIM!”

Her command given, the dragon gave a furious roar.

“Your opponent is us!” Suddenly, a little chick appeared in front of them.

“Get lost!” Yueling Ji launched her Whirlwind Nine Strikes. From all angles, it seemed like just the first strike would kill the little chick. Her dragon also activated a spirit-source ability, unleashing a breath of cold air that froze the storm in its path.

“Truly... weak.” The little chick flickered past the attacks, heading straight for Yueling Ji. Its tiny claw created a massive phantom claw that filled the skies.

No one present could tell this was Mu Yang’s Demise of Man sword art, Spectral-Dance!

Horrifying force was contained within the claw. The chick’s overbearing eighth level Spirit-source beast ki was even greater than Yueling Ji’s Unity beast ki, and its bestial arts were even more profound than her martial arts.

As for the dragon’s ability, the little chick belched out a fiery phoenix that immediately vaporized it before slamming into the dragon itself, eliciting a miserable shriek from the giant beast.

Finally, the little chick’s claw slammed into Yueling Ji’s Wind Cometh Blade and knocked it away. It continued past her, leaving burn marks on her waist from the Infernal Armor that was covering it.

An ice-type lifebound beast was utterly incapable of penetrating its armor.

The Blizzard Spirit Dragon was well and truly furious now. It unleashed all eight of its spirit-source abilities together, releasing a wave of energy that froze the very air itself and forced the monstrous little chick to retreat.

However, at that moment, lightning began gathering at the top of the barrier.

1. The author really likes to push the idea that Li Tianming is a "crazed demon", which is a reference he uses throughout the novel. I cut it here, because I don’t think it’s appropriate in this particular instance (where he’s not acting crazed, but rather cold and impassive), but it’s a recurring theme and a part of how the world in general sees him.

Chapter 178 - Lin Xiaoting, Come Down To Die!

Many could see the black cat crawling to the top of the Heavenly Pattern Barrier amidst the storm. Thunder roared as the sea of lightning seemingly formed a beast around the black cat. As the Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend, it couldn’t ask for a better arena as it feasted on the power of the storm!

With a terrifying boom, the lightning beast descended from the top of the barrier and struck the Blizzard Spirit Dragon at supersonic speed! Immeasurable voltage ran through its body, zapping it from head to toe. The almighty dragon was haughty no more as it spazzed uncontrollably with bubbles foaming from its mouth.

At the same time, Meow Meow had found the perfect spot on top of the dragon’s head, from which it swiftly scraped off the scales protecting the flesh beneath.

“Meow!!” It used its tail, the three-pronged electrospike, and rammed it straight into the dragon’s exposed flesh.

BZZZZZ!

The discharge electrocuted the dragon’s limp body. It wasn’t a cute kitty cat standing on its head, but a sadistic devil who could summon the power of a thunderstorm!

Meow Meow was busy grinning and enjoying the thrill of conquering its foe. If it weren’t for that cold smirk, no one would have imagined that such a cute, sleepy creature was in fact a terrifying beast.

Yueling Ji, at least, would never have imagined that. She watched, dumbstruck with terror and her mind completely blank. But my eight-star beast, my Unity Stage!

“How could it be! I... I must be seeing things....” She was trembling, and even her pupils were going out of focus.

“Hey pretty, you’ll regret ignoring the dashing and suave Mr. Chick!” a ghastly voice sounded right beside her ear, causing her to jump in surprise.

“Die!”

She summoned her Wind Cometh Blade back to her hands, immediately casting both her Whirlwind Nine Strikes and Glacial Squall Sword Art. Now that she was in Unity, the sword arts were many times fiercer than they used to be.

“Ha, wanna compare battle arts with me?” the little chick snickered. Yueling Ji wasn’t the only one dual wielding swords!

Demise of Earth, Earth-Quaker, Hell-Shaker! As the tiny chick swept out with its wings, the ground trembled in its wake. Another strike and its wing had turned into the sharpest blade, the sheer power knocking both of Yueling Ji’s swords into the air!

The impact sent her crashing into the mud, smudging her pure white dress. However, what was even more agonizing was the shame and trauma she was suffering.

“No, this can’t be!” Tears flowed down her face and joined the puddle on the ground. She struggled to climb back to her feet, only to find a youth emotionlessly staring at her. His imposing figure and the lightning surrounding him gave her the sensation that he was a white-haired reaper, ready to collect her soul. The image was ghastly and frightening, morphing Yueling Ji’s rage into fear and regret. That demon can kill me with just a look!

“Still want to fight?” Despite the soft volume, his voice rumbled like thunder. Each syllable was like a dagger burying itself in her body and soul.

Yueling Ji stood there, flabbergasted. In the distance, her Blizzard Spirit Dragon was still rolling and spasming on the ground. Each time it tried to climb back to its feet, a quick jab of the black cat’s tail would force it to collapse once more.

“Yueling Ji, answer me. Do you still want to fight?” One of his eyes burned with an infernal flame, while sparks relentlessly flickered within the other.

“Shall we end this meaningless battle?” He grabbed her by the back of her neck like a powerless kitten and lifted her off the ground.

Yueling Ji wanted to resist, but to her horror, she realized she could no longer summon any strength from her body. She could only hang there, limp, like a fish waiting to be scaled and gutted.

“Your eight-star beast doesn’t seem so scary after all. Your weakness at the Unity stage has ruined my expectations for it. Does Heaven’s Elysium really accept trash like you?” Li Tianming was savage with his words, and each of his lines sent more tears flowing down her cheeks.

“I... I’m no match for you. I take back everything that I said. I’ve lost, Li Tianming.” Yue Lingji wasn’t injured, and she was definitely still capable of fighting. But she couldn’t bring herself to struggle, as Li Tianming had terrified her like none before.

“Very well. There are no grudges between us, so it isn’t fair for you to be the one to receive my wrath anyway.” Li Tianming gently lowered her to the ground. As she was regaining her balance, her dragon crawled back to its feet as well. Humiliated as it looked right now, the Blizzard Spirit Dragon hadn’t suffered any serious injuries either. It would have been long dead if Meow Meow really wanted to kill it.

Shortly after, the two lifebound beasts returned to Li Tianming’s shoulders. The little chick grinned smugly and bounced up and down, while the lazy black cat made itself comfortable on his other shoulder. Even then, its lethargic posture couldn’t hide the hint of menace running through its lightning-filled eyes.

“Yueling Ji, have you accepted the fact that I can beat you with just my lifebound beasts? Or will you still want to seek trouble with me outside of this stadium?” Li Tianming asked. He still remembered the king’s advice. While he could do what he wanted with Lightning Manor, the Yueling Clan was off-limits.

“Li Tianming...” Yueling Ji stared dumbly. The battle was an eye-opener for her, revealing to her how vast the world was. She had lost the willpower to continue fighting.

“I will never dare to seek trouble with you again.”

The battle was over. From beginning to end, Li Tianming had barely moved. All he needed to defeat Yueling Ji and convince her of his superiority were his two lifebound beasts.

As she walked out of the barrier with still trembling legs, the stadium was so quiet one could hear a pin drop, just like when Mu Yang had slain the Lin brothers. As rain pitter-pattered on, all eyes were focused on the white-haired youth.

Yueling Ji’s utter loss was an unexpected outcome. A vast majority of the crowd had believed she would single-handedly crush him, but the truth was that just his two beasts were enough to crush Yueling Ji like an ant!

In the Lightning Manor, most were dumbstruck as they gaped at the arena, some even taking a step back. As for the Wei Clan, even Wei Tianxiong and Wei Zikun ran towards the railings and into the rain, just to take a better look at the white-haired youth.

Wei Jing and Mu Yang both wore a smile; he gently wiped the tear from the corner of her eye and said, “Don’t cry yet. The most exciting part is yet to come.”

Within the private room, Jiang Feiling stood alone by the window, her hands tightly gripping the ledge. She was fervently praying to the heavens for Li Tianming to slay his foe.

The appetizer was over, and the real battle was about to begin! From the invigilator's position, the Vermilion Bird King turned around to find the two inspectors frowning with disdain.

"Sir Inspectors?" he asked.

"Let them fight! Let me see what other surprises this Mu Yang and Li Tianming have! What the hell's with all these monsters from Vermilion Bird? Now, nothing's going according to plan."

The two invigilators frowned at each other. They thought it should be a piece of cake for the Yueling Clan to take over Heaven's Sanctum, but they were no longer so certain now.

With that, the king announced, "Yueling Ji has been defeated, so can the Yueling Clan send their next contestant? If there isn't one, it'll be considered the Wei Clan's victory, and they shall continue to rule Heaven's Sanctum!"

Those were the rules of the Sanctum Replacement Challenge! Since the inspectors had announced the rules in advance, they had to be prepared for the chance that the Wei Clan would win, thus forcing the Yueling Clan to give up this opportunity. They couldn't possibly replace the ruling faction of the Sanctum silently, since it was against the Elysium's rule. Doing so would risk exposing their plans completely, and would not be tolerated.

The challenge must continue, and so must the battles. It was just unexpected that after Mu Yang had defeated an entire generation from the Lightning Manor, Li Tianming was about to take on two Elysium disciples all by himself! After his victory against Yueling Ji, could anyone still say for sure that he stood no chance against Lin Xiaoting?

"This is a final reminder. What happens next will be a deathmatch. Until one of them completely stops breathing, the barrier will not open! If there are children among the spectators, please take them away, as some scenes will not be suitable for their eyes." The king's words made many citizens within the spectators' stand tremble.

Sometimes, dying was the easy part.

When the Vermilion Bird King finished speaking, another bolt of lightning crashed down, sending a current of electricity streaking across the puddles. Amidst the rain, a white-haired youth brandished his sword at the Lightning Manor.

Everyone in the Lightning Manor was as pale as paper, with the exception of one youth with bloodshot eyes.

"Lin Xiaoting, come down to die!" Like a bolt of thunder, the voice shook the entirety of Ignispolis!

Chapter 179 - A Blood Sacrifice to a Brother

Just as on that day three years ago, there was a torrential storm, as lightning flickered and thunder rumbled. He had watched Midas have all its feathers plucked out before being murdered.

Then, he carried his companion's corpse through the rain. Of that night, he had never spoken exactly how much hatred and pain he held.

He had sworn a vow, then.

"Brother, if one day I can stand in front of Lin Xiaoting... I will take his life! If I fail, I'll take my own life at your grave and join you in the afterlife. Wait for me. Wait for me to bring his blood as an offering to you!

"Brother, I'm sorry. If fate wills it, let's be brothers again in the next life. We'll kill everyone that needs to be killed, and I won't let you die in front of me again!"

He had knelt down in front of the grave, mourning their too-early separation, something that he had never believed could happen in the sixteen years before.

It had been three years since he'd made that vow, and he had been waiting for this day.

Li Tianming watched with a malevolent gaze as Lin Xiaoting, dressed in black, landed on the stadium and the barrier closed behind him!

It wouldn't reopen again until one of them died!

Lin Xiaoting's eyes were gloomy, and a hint of ferociousness was in his smile. A stormy day like this was a tailor-made battlefield for him! Just as on that night, he looked every bit a child of lightning. He had been an unscalable peak to Li Tianming then.

However, Li Tianming no longer held the same reverence.

"Your melodramatic revenge plot has sincerely touched me." Lin Xiaoting gave a strange laugh. A massive halberd, the Scarlet Electrohalberd, was in his hand. Blood-red electricity flowed through it and his body, making him look like a bloodsoaked god of murder.

In the following moment, his two lifebound beasts made their appearance.

The first was the same lifebound beast as the Lightning Seigneur, a Four-Eyed Divine-Lightning Eagle. It was a low-tier eight-star lifebound beast.

It had been this very eagle that had plucked away Midas' feathers. However, it hadn't had the chance to enjoy the Saintbeast War-Soul. That privilege had been reserved for the other lifebound beast!

It was a scarlet terrestrial beast that looked like a cross between a tiger and panther. It had a thick mane, a powerful body, and teeth and claws as sharp as any weapon! Bloody lightning also ran across its body, and its fierce gaze was aimed at Li Tianming.

This was the Scarlet Suanni Beast! Three years ago, it had still been a Golden Electropanther. However, the efforts of Lightning Manor and the War-Soul had pushed it into becoming Vermilion Bird's second mid-tier eight-star beast!

The War-Soul had been integrated into it as a spiritsource ability. In the three years since, it was this beast that had been Lin Xiaoting's greatest asset, and it was also thanks to it that Lin Xiaoting had been looked upon with favor by Heaven's Elysium. This beast could be said to have a saintbeast's ability!

However, the War-Soul belonged to Li Tianming, save that it had been seized from him in a malicious move!

At this juncture, what more was there to say? For other opponents, Li Tianming may have done his usual shtick of opening with a salvo of words. However, toward Lin Xiaoting, Li Tianming only had one word in his mind.

Kill!

Kill, until his body was shredded to pieces!

Kill until his corpse was no longer whole!

KILL, until rivers of blood are formed!

However, Li Tianming took the unexpected action of having the little chick and black cat step back, retiring his two terrifying beasts. Obviously, he didn't intend to have them fight!

"Has he become some crazed demon that's lost all rationality?" Everyone watching rose to their feet in shock at Li Tianming's courage.

However, such questions were unnecessary. They only needed to watch what happened next for the answer!

"That's, that's Mu Yang's Demise of Man-Earth-Heaven sword art! It's simplified, but it's a true heavenly-ranked battle art!"

"I was wondering why the little chick's bestial art looked so familiar!"

"Die!" Lin Xiaoting didn't care how many opponents there were. He too only had a single word in his heart: kill!

His halberd hacked down toward Li Tianming's face.

His lifebound beasts immediately created their unity fields, a scarlet lightning field from his suanni beast, and a fourpoint field from his eagle. The sixteen nexuses of the fields rumbled as an endless amount of spiritual energy poured into his attacks.

Double the amount of beast ki exploded as a unity-ranked battle art was unleashed: the Chaotic Demon's Thirteen Strikes!

The so-named unity-ranked battle arts were martial and bestial arts that had been fused together as perfectly as possible using the unity field. Lin Xiaoting led the battle with a frenzied onslaught of attacks, lightning flickering for hundreds of metres around, and the two lifebound beasts had already prepared their spiritsource abilities, while also unleashing bestial arts to support Lin Xiaoting. The eagle and suanni beasts' claws, talons, beak, and teeth were all wreathed in lightning as they drew difficult to track trajectories through the air.

How could Li Tianming survive the onslaught on his own?

Toward the incoming halberd, Li Tianming took the simple action of raising his left arm to block its path.

“Has he gone mad?”

All thirteen strikes slammed into Li Tianming’s black arm.

“Break!” Lin Xiaoting thundered, fully intent on removing Li Tianming’s arm.

A shrill scraping sound rang out that forced many to cover their ears. They witnessed Li Tianming being knocked up into the sky at an incredible speed. His arm, though, remained very much attached. However, the cloth around his arm had been shredded apart, revealing an arm covered in black scales.

It wasn’t a human arm underneath, but the claw of some beast, reminiscent of a dragon or qilin’s!

A fresh wave of shock rippled through the audience. Now, even more than before, Li Tianming, with his white hair and black arm, looked like a demonic god.

“What is he doing?”

Li Tianming had borrowed the force to accelerate upward at a breakneck pace, arriving almost instantaneously in front of the eagle!

His eyes immediately took on a cold shine.

Once upon a time, he’d been incapable of standing up to this Four-Eyed Divine-Lightning Eagle, back when it had only had three eyes. However, now Li Tianming’s response was to laugh in its face as countless phantom swords of the Grand Thunderflare Sword filled the sky.

Demise of Man, Spectral-Dance!

With his sword raised, Aeternal Infernal Beast Ki and Genesis Chaos Beast Ki collided with each other and burst outward.

A sword swept past, and the eagle was immediately bisected!

It hadn’t died yet, as what it had lost was only its wing.

Li Tianming didn’t stop there, but reappeared in a ghostly fashion, this time striking out with Soul-Extinction.

Another wing fell to the ground!

The eagle screeched in pain.

“When you plucked off my brother’s feathers, did you imagine this would happen? Blood debts can only be wiped clean with blood.” With its wings severed, the eagle was no different from being crippled.

“You have four eyes?”

Blood spurted out from four wounds, so fast they seemed to appear at the same moment. The eagle had now lost its eyes, in addition to its wings.

The giant eagle crashed down in front of the little chick and the black cat. At this point, it could only shriek and struggle.

Now, people finally understood why the king had made children leave.

“Ying Huo, Meow Meow. Remove all its feathers and keep it for me.” The words were delivered casually, but it was the pronouncement of a death sentence for the eagle!

Of course, this was just the beginning.

“Midas is your elder brother. We’ll scatter these feathers at its grave, and we’ll all be brothers from now on.”

Who at this point would still dare to call these little things cute? It was only because no one had ever seen them serious, nor witnessed them make a blood sacrifice to their brother.

Ripping off the feathers had finally helped Li Tianming warm up.

However, Lin Xiaoting’s eyes nearly popped out of their socket. It had all happened too quickly; Li Tianming had been so quick he had no chance to catch up.

Li Tianming dragged along his sword as he walked towards Lin Xiaoting, speeding up.

“Die!” Lin Xiaoting shouted as the suanni beast unleashed its spirit source ability, the Scarlet Electric Furnace, causing countless scarlet lightning bolts to bombard Li Tianming.

When it finally cleared, a white-haired demon walked out, completely unharmed. “Ah, Xiaoting, Xiaoting, are you trying to tickle me to death? What a dangerous ploy!”

The current Li Tianming had a Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend as a lifebound beast, and as such, lightning had next to no effect on him now.

Lin Xiaoting quickly turned pale. “Impossible... impossible!”

He staggered three steps back, staring at Li Tianming.

Li Tianming roared with laughter. “It always seems impossible until it happens!”

Chapter 180 - My Heart is Like A Demon’s!

Demise of Earth sword art: Earth-Quaker!

Just as when he was training, the Grand Thunderflare Sword buried itself in the ground. The earth began shaking and churning toward Lin Xiaoting like waves in the ocean.

The ground spat out an illusory sword and Lin Xiaoting threw himself out of its path, only for the sword to pierce his Scarlet Suanni Beast’s flank, causing blood to spray out. It had been fortunate and dodged quick enough to avoid a fatal blow.

However, what Lin Xiaoting wasn’t aware of was that Li Tianming had missed its vitals on purpose. There was simply no chance he would give it such an easy death.

Still, the attack had frightened Lin Xiaoting out of his wits. He remembered very clearly that it was this exact sword art that had reaped the lives of his father, his two uncles, and their four beasts! Their blood, along with the remnants of his father’s corpse, still hadn’t been cleaned up from the stadium.

Lin Xiaoting felt fear fill him. He was unable to understand how Li Tianming had gotten so strong; so strong that he could make him, who had been chosen by Heaven’s Elysium, tremble in fear!

His original plan had been to eliminate Li Tianming before he went to Heaven's Elysium, so as to avoid him becoming an annoyance.

Yet now....

"I can't die! I can't die!"

Anyone could see that in this battle, it wasn't Lin Xiaoting crushing Li Tianming, but rather Li Tianming crushing Lin Xiaoting!

Li Tianming's beasts hadn't even taken to the field at this point.

It was something so wildly out of expectations that the current situation was even more shocking than seeing Mu Yang's massacre.

At this moment, that youth had already become a white-haired grim reaper.

"THE SAINTBEAST WAR-SOUL! USE IT!" It was only in the depths of sheer terror that such shrieking could be heard. The battle had only just started, but Lin Xiaoting chose to utilize his greatest trump card. At this point, Lin Xiaoting hadn't been embarrassed only by the Gelding Blight, but by Li Tianming as well.

The Saintbeast War-Soul had become a spirit-source ability after being refined into the lifebound beast's spirit-source. However, it was of a standard rarely seen in all the world! As Lin Xiaoting's greatest asset, it would be what determined his life and death now; yet the suanni beast was currently the most anxious of all.

The beast was even more frightened than Lin Xiaoting, and a soul quickly floated up from the spirit-source located at its heart.

Shocking power thrummed and filled its entire body, carried by its beast ki and causing it to undergo monumental changes. Its bones began growing and its flesh started swelling up, as if it had devoured some ancient beast. Furthermore, whether it was its scarlet fur, skin, fangs, claws or eyes, all of it turned black.

The final change was the devilish ki suffusing the air!

It was three times larger than before, and it didn't look much different from a mature eight-star lifebound beast now. It even looked more savage than eight-star wildbeasts. The newly appeared devilish ki clung to its body, burning like a conflagration that covered the surrounding thirty meters.

Li Tianming was acutely familiar with this scene, as Midas had done it before, though it hadn't been as familiar with it as the suanni beast.

This particular Saintbeast War-Soul was known as the 'Devil Monarch Wildsoul'. When used to create a spirit-source ability, it would be the Devil-Monarch Possession.

The Devil-Monarch Wildsoul could strengthen a lifebound beast's body by a large degree, as well as turn it into a wildbeast, a natural killing machine. Even more frightening was the Devil-Monarch Ki. It could be infused into the lifebound beast's claws and fangs, granting it a corrosive property that could rend apart flesh. When used to injure, it would continue clinging to the wound like poison, further worsening it.

At that time, Li Tianming had realised this was a Saintbeast War-Soul, and was too fearful to disclose it to anyone, save who he thought at the time was the love of his life. Now, seeing its true power, the value of the war-soul was clear.

This war-soul had belonged to Li Tianming, and he had waited three full years to reacquire it. His heart was agitated, and his blood began boiling.

Li Tianming realized that he had underestimated Lin Xiaoting. It turned out he wasn't just someone who would roll over and wait to die.

As for Lin Xiaoting, his lifebound beast had gotten stronger, but he himself could still feel the terror of death engulfing him. Glowering at Li Tianming, he began using a technique he had never expected to need.

"Devilblue Incantation, invert my blood flow!" It was the taboo technique, the Devilblue Incantation again. Wei Guohao had ended up bedridden for three months after using it, allowing Li Tianming to enter the Abyssal Battlefield.

The Devilblue Incantation had a heavy price. Lin Xiaoting, too, would be bedridden for at least three months. Just like his grandfather the Lightning Seigneur, he would become as feeble as a chicken.

However, it was undeniably a better outcome than death.

Not everyone possessed the Devilblue Incantation, a life-saving measure in critical times.

Just like his beast, Lin Xiaoting began pulsing with devilish ki as his blood turned blue.

Now, both man and beast had powered up.

"Li Tianming, alas, alas!" Lin Xiaoting smiled ferociously and hefted his halberd. "Kill KILL! KILL!" he snarled, each word further warping his face into that of a devil's.

"Kill?" Li Tianming muttered as he shut his eyes. At that moment, he recalled all the times he had spent with Midas, from his birth until the goldroc's death.

He could almost imagine Midas saying, "Brother, after this, you can travel the stars and conquer all of Primordial Chaos! All you need to do... is kill this person and erase your inner demon. No one will ever be able to stop you again, be they god or demon! Kill them! Kill them all and avenge me!"

Li Tianming's eyes snapped open. Suddenly, to him, Lin Xiaoting and the suanni beast seemed like clowns prancing around. Never before had Li Tianming's eyes been so indifferent, as he saw past life and death.

Then, sword ki burst out.

Demise of Earth sword art: Hell-Shaker!

Lightning and flames were entwined around the sword ki, which instantly detonated, creating an attack that would shake even hell in its wake. And the current Lin Xiaoting and his beast looked exactly like denizens of hell!

Under that one swing, Lin Xiaoting's halberd split in two. Next in its path was his right arm, which flew three hundred meters away before colliding with the barrier.

Lin Xiaoting collapsed on the ground, screaming miserably as blue blood spurted out.

"Devilblue Incantation? What the hell is that?" the white-haired devil snarled.

No one in the audience of thirty thousand responded.

"Who the hell is the disciple of Heaven's Elysium!"

No one responded again.

However, the current Li Tianming only had his greatest enemy in his sights right now: not the suanni beast, but the Devil-Monarch Wildsoul!

"I couldn't tame you three years ago. But today, I shall make you kneel before me!"

Demise of Heaven sword art: Divine-Fury!

It wasn't a true-blue heavenly-ranked battle art, but it was a true manifestation of a deity's rage! Endless power gathered as a sword of judgement struck.

The suanni beast threw itself at him, claws swinging and fangs snapping!

The sound of sword ki meeting bone rang out as the suanni beast's left foreleg was torn off.

Demise of Heaven sword art: Heavenly-Judgement!

Li Tianming was currently in the sky, and it was as if heaven itself was delivering judgement as a streak of sword ki three thousand meters long swept forward.

The wildsoul was cut in two, leaving a giant wound on the ancient wildbeast's body.

What do we struggle and pursue in life? In the end, it's just for dignity, for our relationships, to protect and to prove ourselves.

Our relationships can range from brotherhood, to romance, to familial love. I'm currently trapped in this quagmire. My love for them is my inner demon. But so what? I'm willing to be bedevilled by such emotions! You killed one of my inner demons, so today, I'll become a demon just for you! This is the final time. From now on, only I do the killing and no one shall ever kill me! Li Tianming told himself.

Now that he had tasted bitterness, he never wanted to do so again. Mu Yang had said that Demise of Heaven was about having a god's will.

It was no problem, even if he had exaggerated things, because sword-intent could be as exaggerated as it needed to be and the heart had no limit. At this moment, Li Tianming's comprehension of Demise of Heaven wasn't any worse than a Heavenly Will expert's!

In its death throes, the ancient wildbeast in front of him mounted a bloodthirsty counterattack.

But right now, Li Tianming was just like Mu Yang had been the day before.

Before his sword, deities and the heavens alike fell!

Mortals were slain.

Earth was no longer left whole.

Heaven was no longer qualified to be called Heaven!

When the final Demise of Heaven, Apocalyptic-Will, was unleashed, the sword-ki immediately reduced the ancient wildbeast in front of him to flying ash.

The Scarlet Suanni Beast had perished in battle!

The Saintbeast War-Soul was now a black blob, sealed within Li Tianming's sword ki. It shivered in submission toward him, proof that it had once belonged to him. Otherwise, it wouldn't matter if Li Tianming had beaten it, it would simply dissipate.

That was the reason why no one had snatched away Lin Xiaoting's War-Soul. He had almost completely fused with it.

Only the real owner could do this.

Finally, the truth had come out. Who was framed and bullied, and who the real villain?

But the truly important matter, the winner here and now had also been decided.

The Four-Eyed Divine-Lightning Eagle was already plucked bald and covered in blood. Li Tianming landed in front of it.

"Get another beastmaster in your next life." A sword fell, and a head tumbled down onto the ground. Now, both of Lin Xiaoting's beasts had been killed.

Lin Xiaoting grabbed the stump of his right arm, his body still a deep blue, and crawled out of the ground just in time to witness this. Then, Li Tianming's apathetic gaze shifted to him.

Lin Xiaoting's body was convulsing, and as he took a step, he fell to the ground.

By the end, he was crawling toward Li Tianming, then assumed a kneeling position in front of him.

"I was wrong. I've lost, so I beg you, please show mercy." Tears fell as Lin Xiaoting said this. He rubbed his neck, feeling the desire to break it himself, but was unable to muster the strength to do so.

Lin Xiaoting was well aware that he would die here today.

This was a complete nightmare, an all-consuming terror that had started when he had been frightened into using the Devilblue Incantation. Li Tianming hadn't just defeated him physically, but utterly crushed his spirits, leaving none of his previous arrogance intact.

As of now, the only thing Lin Xiaoting could do was plead for a quick death.

"Fat chance." Li Tianming smiled, instantly crushing Lin Xiaoting's hopes. "If I show you mercy, who would show me mercy for my past three years? And what more, my brother? The world is fair. For every debt, there is a debtor, and I have finally come to collect."

The barrier wouldn't open until one of the two inside stops breathing.

The following scenes made many people turn away, but it didn't spare their ears from Lin Xiaoting's mournful screams over the next two hours, leaving them flinching.

After a full two hours, it finally ended.

Perhaps, centuries later, this would still be passed on from parent to child, a story of the day Lin Xiaoting suffered the punishment of death by a thousand cuts.