

## The Ages 261

### Chapter 261 - A Good Dog Doesn't Get In The Way

Tianming was destined to embark on a road that would change his life. He wasn't afraid of a life-threatening battle, but the possibility that he was still the same man he was yesterday.

Such a genius was most frightening.

The white-haired young man surpassed the stars and pointed the Onyx Dragon at the cosmos, cultivating like a madman. Ye Shaoqing could only comfort himself with Qingyu. However, he soon discovered that even the tribane went beyond his imagination.

"Master, I have cultivated all the steps of the Moonset Galaxy Blade Art. Is there anything else? I've broken through to sixth-level Unity, would you like to test me? Master, I've already mastered the Path-Severing Flying Blade you taught me."

Staring at the diligent young woman, Ye Shaoqing felt a headache coming on.

"Your whole family are freaks of nature."

But on second thought, these two freaks were his disciples. Wasn't it great? What made Ye Shaoqing silly was the fact that even the little chick successfully executed the Heaven-Defying Sword Intent with its wings.

At that moment, Ye Shaoqing vehemently shook his fan, feeling like he needed a bucket of ice water over his head to calm down.

"What are you looking at? Haven't you ever seen such a handsome chicken?" glared the little chick as it angrily puffed up its feathers. "Why the hell are you still staring? Keep doing that and I'll change your destiny with a stab to the eyes!" In comparison, the black cat sleeping on the tree seemed normal.

In fact, Ye Shaoqing was happy for them. Although he wanted to ask if it was worth risking their lives, he was more curious to see just how far they would go.

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Sacred Mountain!

Ye Yuxi was on her way back to Azure Immortal Mountain, never imagining she would bump into Yuwen Kaitai again. His burly body flickered out from the shadows, intercepting her. Fortunately, she stopped in time, or she would have fallen right into his arms.

"Yuxi, you're in a hurry. It just shows how uneasy and fearful you are," Yuwen Kaitai chuckled. The ghastly scar on his face made it difficult to look him in the eye.

"Get out of the way, dog." Ye Yuxi couldn't be bothered to talk to him.

"Have you heard that Shendu comprehended heavenly will, successfully breaking through to the Heavenly Will stage? He's likely to seize the Grand-Orient Sword in the Realm Wars. The Ye clan is doomed," Yuwen Kaitai smiled.

Turning around, Ye Yuxi fixed a cold gaze upon Yuwen Kaitai.

"Yuxi, for the sake of our friendship, I'll give you one last chance," added Yuwen Kaitai.

"And what would that take?" asked Ye Yuxi.

"Your second brother, Ye Shaoqing, took an annoying bug as his disciple. Although a bug poses no threat to us, his behavior has made the Yuwen clan unhappy. So, once we get the Grand-Orient Sword, the first we're going to do is slaughter the Ye clan—that is, your father and your second brother. We're just clearing any obstacles and making an example. Huangfu Fengyun and Shangguan Jingshu, those old dogs, will take refuge in my brother. At that time, the Grand-Orient Sect will be unified," envisioned Yuwen Kaitai.

"Then what?"

"I won't tell you. But as long as you follow me, I'll say a few words on your behalf. When the time comes, you'll be a daughter-in-law of the Yuwen clan and you'll still have your life. By the way, I managed to convince your eldest brother Ye Tianlong. As a son of the Ye clan, his cultivation is actually lower than yours. He must be indignant. However, he's smart and wants to live. You should learn from him." Yuwen Kaitai's fiery gaze fell on her.

Ye Yuxi smiled. How could she be unaware about her eldest brother? But that didn't matter. Ye Tianlong was a coward who knew nothing important about the Ye clan.

"Yuwen Kaitai."

"What is your decision?"

"I just want to say, aren't you a little too confident in Yuwen Shendu?" she retorted.

"That's because you don't understand the Yuwen clan's resolve, nor Shendu's ambition!" Yuwen Kaitai burned with passion.

"Can ambition be used as strength? What a joke! The Grand-Orient Sect has fallen to fifth place in Grand-Orient. Not to mention the flourishing Heaven's Elysium has seven elysian children, four of which are at Heavenly Will. The forces ranked second, third and fourth are all eyeing the Grand-Orient Sword! Among them are several disciples of Heavenly Will. Even if Yuwen Shendu has some means, how can he seize the Grand-Orient Sword in a battle of such talented geniuses? So if you want me to surrender, wait until you actually possess the Grand-Orient Sword." Ye Yuxi shrugged in a show of indifference.

"You don't know Shendu's abilities. Even without the Grand-Orient Sword, as long as my brother keeps advancing, he'll break the balance in the council of elders one day."

"Is that so?" A smile rose to Ye Yuxi's lips. "Then I shall wait and see."

With that, she turned and decisively sped away, leaving a gloomy Yuwen Kaitai behind.

"You won't take the living path. Well, no matter how beautiful you are, all that will become of you is a skeleton." Yuwen Kaitai pounded the wall into smithereens.

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Tianming's breakthrough to fourth-level Unity was slower than he expected, by about five days. Right now, he was only ten days away from the Prime Struggle.

"Rising a level in a fortnight was impossible after all. The higher you go, the more difficult it is to advance. But for any genius in the Grand-Orient Realm, rising a level in twenty days was an almost miraculous achievement. In fact, it's taken me two hundred days."

Tianming stared at the five ferocious black characters on his right hand, proof that his body had aged two hundred days.

Every step was a race against time.

However, he was fearless and strong in both spirit and will. His kind of fearlessness wasn't born, but tempered by his experiences at the gates of death. Only after experiencing that can one advance bravely.

He was still the same, never admitting defeat, never conceding, never surrendering, never giving up!

The remaining ten days are obviously not enough for me to break through to fifth-level Unity. With my current strength, I don't know if I can deal with Yuwen Zhenxing and the others. Breaking through would be added insurance. If not, it'll be a life and death battle.

The Prime Struggle was perilous, more so than the battle with Li Xuanchen. However, Tianming couldn't care less about that, since it didn't matter.

On the edge of life and death, I just need to ensure that I'm stronger tomorrow than I am today. He covered his bane-rings and carried on with cultivation. Even with only ten days left, he was able to make great progress.

## **Chapter 262 - Cosmic Break, Transcendence**

Li Tianming currently had two goals. The first was to master Cosmic Break, which posed more of a challenge than Starfall. With each swing of the sword, each battle, each step forward, he knew that despite the fact he was more talented than any other, he worked the hardest.

His second goal was Death Requisition. Although he had been practicing Death Requisition for a considerable amount of time, he hadn't made it his main goal.

The little chick had succeeded in this respect. With its help, Tianming advanced leaps and bounds, finally mastering Death Requisition on the twenty-second day.

"Compared to the Voidgod Sword Intent, Li Wushen's Life-Death Whip Art has a different approach. The Life-Death Whip Art is very compatible with Archfiend. Joint usage of Soul Hook and Death Requisition will enhance the power, while Soul Hook relies on the element of surprise and Death Requisition is the real killing move. Under my whip, Gods and demons will perish!"

Even though Meow Meow had two Saintbeast War-Souls, it might not be the little chick's opponent, with its Soul Hook and Death Requisition claws used in conjunction with the Voidgod Sword Intent and its three spiritsource abilities.

Death Requisition might look simple but all it took was one move to make a clean kill. Only the last move of the Life-Death Whip Art, Transcendence, could surpass all beings. Now that Tianming had mastered Death Requisition, he had a new goal—that is, cultivation, Cosmic Break, and Transcendence, which all went hand in hand.

Master any one of these three and I'll be invincible in the Prime Tower! Unfortunately, time is running out. If only I had another fortnight.

Tianming stood at the entrance of Azure Dragon Sword Hall, narrowed eyes turned to Sacred Mountain.

"However, compared to crushing our opponents, I'd rather the three of us fight a perilous battle side by side!" The high-spirited little chick stood on his head, with its wings resting on its hips.

"Brother Chicken, that's what you like. I would prefer to bite them to death so I have more time to sleep!" Meow Meow looked listless, obviously lacking sleep of late.

"Useless chicken!" disdained the little chick.

"You're the chicken," retorted Meow Meow.

"What?" puzzled the little chick. "Whatever it is, whoever dares obstruct my way will be stabbed to death by my sword! When the time comes, I'll show you what real genius looks like!"

In its words, I have both abilities and battle arts. Do you surrender?

As soon as Tianming showed off his biceps, the little chick surrendered. "I was wrong. Are you feeling uncomfortable? Let me give you a massage."

The shivering little chick rolled to the ground with tears in its eyes, surrendering to the majesty of the dark arm.

"Brother Chicken, my back is a little sore. I'd like a rub," complained Meow Meow.

"The only massage you're getting is a fist to the balls!"

The little chick was furious; they were all going against him! Since it didn't dare retaliate against Tianming, the little chick went for the black cat, both jumping and bouncing about on Azure Dragon Sword Mountain. Tianming glanced at his lifebound space, noticing two dragon-shaped cracks in the two-colored egg.

"It's already this lively with two Primordial Chaos Beasts. I can't imagine what a headache I'll have when the third one hatches."

Feiling stood on the edge, leaning against his shoulder with her lips curled in a warm smile.

"Ling'er." Tianming placed his arm around her shoulders. "The Prime Tower is very dangerous, and I'm a little worried," he admitted.

"Worried about my safety?" asked Feiling.

Tianming nodded.

"Big Brother, I don't want to talk about this again." Holding out her hand, she pinched Tianming's nose and said, "Just treat me as your lifebound beast. They can fight with you, live and die with you, and so can I."

"It's not the same," insisted Tianming.

"What's different?"

"I can't sleep with my lifebound beasts, but I can with you." Faced with those blushing cheeks, Tianming couldn't help but feel tempted. "I recently heard that Su Wuyou is the number one beauty of the Grand-Orient Sect," he remarked.

"And what about it?"

"Well, when I fought against Su Yiran, I caught a glimpse of her."

"Is she beautiful?"

"Compared to you, she's a pile of dung."

"Big Brother, you're so rude!" She bit her lip.

"Do you like me like this?" he pestered.

Feiling found he was becoming more and more dirty.

"Do you feel like your morals have been shaken?" Tianming laughed wickedly.

"I'm ignoring you. You can participate in the Prime Struggle on your own. I hope you get beaten," she pouted.

"Don't!"

With a pull, Feiling failed to escape Tianming's hands. Arms wrapped around her, Tianming noticed Ling'er's Love, the violet gem shining in the sun. When he looked up, his eyes met her trembling gaze.

"Is it really beautiful?" she asked, her head bowed.

"Yes, it's beautiful." These three words summed up everything Tianming wanted to say. From physical appearance to soul, from strangers to shared understanding. Hand in hand, from life till death.

This was their destiny.

"Do you want to know who your biological parents are?"

"I do."

"One day, I'll find them for you."

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While Tianming was contemplating Cosmic Break, Qingyu suddenly dropped by.

"Big Brother, I'm going out for two days."

"The Prime Struggle is in a few days. Aren't you going to watch?" asked Tianming.

"Of course, I'll be back soon. I'd never miss any of your fights!" Qingyu smiled.

Her recent progress suggested that the Pentamoon Skybane had almost caught up to Tianming's decabane. She was close to breaking through to seventh-level Unity.

"Stay safe," reminded Tianming.

Qingyu wanted to keep the Pentamoon Skybane under wraps. Now that all eyes were on Tianming, almost no one was paying any attention to her. During Tianming's rise, she was almost invisible. But what she didn't know was that there were people in the shadows eyeing her.

"Don't worry, I'm not you. I don't attract attention wherever I go. A friend from the Wuyou Faction asked for a little help. I'm not heading too far away, just focus on preparing for the Prime Struggle."

With that, Qingyu ran off.

"Look at how fast she runs. She seems much happier lately," sighed Tianming.

"Well, of course. You've got me to thank for that," flaunted Feiling. During this period, she had spent half her time with Qingyu. As they say, birds of a feather flock together. Feiling's simplicity and positivity was infectious.

"You're amazing!" Tianming gave her a thumbs-up. "Does Qingyu have friends in the Wuyou Faction?" Tianming had been under the impression that she was usually alone.

"Before you arrived, Qingyu cultivated arduously. She often headed to the Abyssal Battlefield, performing tasks for the sect to obtain resources. Otherwise, she wouldn't have joined the Wuoyu Faction. If I'm not mistaken, her friend is called Guo Xiaofu, an inner disciple who rose from the outer sect. They cultivated together in the past," explained Feiling.

"It's good she knows someone. She should make more friends. If she can let go of her worries, her future will be boundless," said Tianming.

He was willing to shoulder the heavy responsibility of the Li Saint Clan's revival, absorb all the heat, and meet the world head-on! If only he could become the big tree that shelters his family, so Qingyu could enjoy the shade and grow with peace of mind.

However, Tianming had overlooked one thing—saplings under big trees find it hard to grow without sunshine. On the contrary, a small tree that had been tempered by the wind and rain could grow into a towering giant!

## **Chapter 263 - I'm Scared**

"Xiaofu, are we near your hometown, Fuling Town, yet?"

On this full moon night, the Grandwhite Kunpeng had its wings spread in flight. Looking at it from the ground, it looked like there were two moons in the sky.

Qingyu's ash-grey hair fluttered in the wind. Gradually, her hair color turned to that of the moon. However, nobody really paid attention to her, perhaps thanks to how attention-grabbing Tianming was.

"We'll be there soon. It's just across that mountain ahead," said a white-clad girl. She looked quite average with skin not as fair as Qingyu's. Not to mention, there were a few scars on her face, signs of the many battles she had fought. Unlike the elders' descendants, she had relied on herself to become an inner disciple.

"Xiaofu, why do you look so downcast? Do you feel unwell?" Qingyu asked concernedly.

"I'm fine," Guo Xiaofu said, hurriedly shaking her head.

"It's fine. Even though they kidnapped your parents, you said that they'd let them go after seeing a disciple from Grand-Orient Sect, right?"

"That's right. My parents offended these bandits, but they heard that I was a disciple of the sect, so they didn't dare go overboard."

"Then it's fine. Don't worry. I've made some progress lately. I can deal with bandits on the fourth level of Unity for you."

"Thank you, Qingyu!" Xiaofu turned to her and looked a little distraught. Qingyu found it a little weird, but didn't think too much of it as Xiaofu had always been a worrywart. She was tough, but quite helpless at times, too. That was why they had been able to get along in the Wuyou Faction. There were many others who looked down on Qingyu for her background and mocked her abilities, despite being a member of the Apex Branch. Only Guo Xiaofu seemed to still hold some respect for the Li Saint Clan.

To most of the other inner disciples, Guo Xiaofu's family background was indeed rather lowly. However, there was nobody else willing to train with Qingyu besides her. As Qingyu didn't have many friends to begin with, she cherished the few she had.

Right after they flew past a mountain, Guo Xiaofu said, "We're here. Let's descend."

"Alright."

Qingyu telepathically willed her kungpeng to glide downward. Soon, they reached the ground. When the kungpeng tucked its wings together, it beat up quite a lot of dust. Quite a number of trees shook under the moonlight, rustling rather audibly as if they were hiding quite a few figures in the dark.

"There's nobody here. Xiaofu, didn't you say that bandits occupied your hometown? This doesn't look like a town to me," she said when she saw the desolate place. For some reason, Guo Xiaofu's shoulders were shaking.

"Qingyu, I'm sorry! I'll pay you back what I owe in the next life!" she cried all of a sudden, sounding rather heartbroken as she ran away.

Right at that moment, a young man in robes of gold suddenly burst out of the forest, wielding a two-pronged spear. He smirked as he blocked Guo Xiaofu's way.

"Li Xuanchen?" Qingyu felt a chill down her spine. It happened too fast, and she was rather disoriented. She couldn't figure out why he showed up here. Not to mention, his savage expression seemed to suggest he would be taking out his prey soon. What was worse was Guo Xiaofu had ran to him as she cried and suddenly knelt.

"Li Xuanchen! Tell Su Wuyou and the others that I did what I was told! I beg you... ask them to free my parents! Please!" she cried in despair. It was clear now what had happened. She didn't dare to look back at Qingyu, as she definitely understood what was happening by now.

"Please, I'm scared!" Guo Xiaofu slammed her head against the rocky ground before her as she begged. The sound of the slamming was really disturbing to Qingyu.

"So you threatened Xiaofu with her parents to lure me out? Li Xuanchen, what are you planning?" she said as she took Vilemoon out of her spatial ring. Ever since getting a new elder brother and awakening her talent, her state of mind had changed considerably. Despite knowing she had fallen into a trap, her first thought wasn't to run or panic, but fight.

She glanced at Guo Xiaofu, feeling rather hurt at being reminded of what had happened to Li Wudi. The father and daughter had both been betrayed by the ones they were closest to. Even though Guo Xiaofu's parents were being used against her, Qingyu felt that she should've trusted her and asked her to help solve the problem. No matter what the reason, it felt horrible to be betrayed.

As the moonlight shone on her, her irises' color dimmed.

"Li Qingyu, you should ask me that question instead!" said a soft, but sinister voice from behind.

Qingyu turned back immediately and saw a young boy. Despite his tall physique, he seemed to be rather young. His white robes fluttered in the air as he looked Qingyu down with a sinister gaze.

"Yuwen Shengcheng?" she mouthed. Gripping Vilemoon even tighter, she armed her other hand with her three Crescent Spinblades.

"That's right, it's me."

"What are you planning?" she asked without a trace of fear.

That apparently pissed him off. He was already itching to see her terrified, kneeling look, like how Guo Xiaofu was acting now. "I'm here for revenge. I want to pay you and Tianming back ten thousand times the pain I suffered! I want you to forever live in my shadow! I want to ruin your mind and make you my meat slave that dances at my every beck and call! You can't even die without my permission! From now until your death, you'll be living in a nightmare. Only if you serve me well will I consider letting you catch a breath," he said, sounding more and more agitated as he approached her.

The scenes of his fight against Tianming and his father's disappointed expression flashed through his mind. Coupled with Qingyu's coldness, he felt the rage in his heart boiling.

"I think you're mistaken. You're the one who keeps messing with others. Nobody can realistically bully you. If anyone's to blame, it's your cowardice and overconfidence."

From Jincan's wedding to the fight at the Imperial Ninefold Gates and the fight for the manna on the Abyssal Battlefield, he was the one who had started all of them, only to lose horribly. It was a shame that he would never admit that. He was the kind of person who would always be able to justify what he did to others to himself.

"Shut up! How dare you look down on me? You're nothing but a pathetic member of the Apex Branch! Li Qingyu, I'd like to see if you still dare to act so defiant once I strip you naked!" He had grown more and



more restless over the past few days. As far as he was concerned, he felt his dignity had been trampled on, and he really had to vent all that frustration.

Faced with such seething hate, Qingyu was still unmoved. "Someone like you doesn't even deserve to be in the Yuwen Clan. You're like a stray dog that can do nothing but whine."

Yuwen Shengcheng almost vomited blood from anger. The worst part of that insult was that it was on point. "Li Qingyu!" He took a fierce step forward.

"You don't scare me. Yuwen Shengcheng, since I'm already here, stop troubling Xiaofu and let her parents go. I'll leave with you." She gripped her blade and gave the girl another look. Such was life. The powerless couldn't do anything, no matter how hard they tried. Not everyone was so lucky to have a chance to challenge destiny. Most people were merely playthings of fate.

"Alright. Guo Xiaofu, you may leave first," Li Xuanchen said.

Guo Xiaofu thought she had misheard. She thought Qingyu would hate her for it, yet she had taken it all herself and even wanted her to leave first, asking for her parents to be released on her behalf.

"Qingyu...." She stood up, her tears flowing from her face nonstop.

"Xiaofu, it's fine. Go first—" Before she finished, a golden spear emerged from Guo Xiaofu's body, stained in red. It was a one-hit kill. Guo Xiaofu looked down as her vision started blurring. Stretching out her arms, she cried, "Qingyu... save me... I'm scared..."

The spear was audibly drawn back through her body. Guo Xiaofu looked fearfully at Qingyu and slumped to the ground, dying like a stray in an alley. Her lifebound beast charged forward in a panic, only to be intercepted by a Sixteen-winged Gold Kunpeng and an Eight-armed Taotie. They tore it in two halves, spilling rivers of blood.

Everything suddenly fell silent. The manic smiles of the two youths, coupled with Guo Xiaofu's last words, were like swords piercing into Qingyu. She felt some difficulty breathing all of a sudden. Try as she might to force a breath, the scene caused her to turn cold. She clutched her chest and her eyes had turned into two full moons without her even realizing it. There was no pain or emotion in them, only cold killing intent.

Li Xuanchen and Yuwen Shengcheng approached her with playful smiles. "Li Qingyu, you're next!"

She loosened her tightened palms and closed her eyes. Nobody saw it, but Vilemoon vibrated a thousand times in a fraction of a second.

"I'm sorry, Xiaofu. I'll make sure you rest in peace." The glow emanating from Vilemoon almost seemed to be competing with the brilliant moon up in the skies.

### **Chapter 264 - Heavenly Pattern Projection, Clash of the Geniuses**

Today was the day when Prime Tower finally opened. Those in the Grand-Orient Sect had been waiting a month for it. The Prime Struggle attracted quite a lot of flair this time around, with all the grudges and interactions blossoming on full display. While the battles would take place in the tower itself, the audience seating was still located at the First Grand-Orient Battlefield.

The past month seemed like it had lasted forever. The day before the tower even opened arrived, the First Grand-Orient Battlefield had already been filled to the brim like a pot of boiling stew, with the fires beneath it still burning. There were more than a hundred thousand inner disciples in the sect, so it wasn't easy to accommodate so many people at once.

Even Azure Dragon Sword Mountain's Yuan Huitian had to rely on his status to get a good seat, let alone the other disciples. The audience members were already discussing how it would all turn out.

"Come to think of it, what level is the junior sect master at now?"

"I don't know, there hasn't been any news about it. Perhaps he didn't make much progress after all."

"These matters are almost always regulated by the laws of nature. There's no way his growth and talent are exempt from the universal laws."

"I heard Yuwen Zhenxing and the rest already made some preparations for him."

"They're definitely going to get back at him for Yuwen Shengcheng and Su Yiran."

"I wonder if the junior sect master will even reach the third floor. Nobody will be able to see anything happening on that floor, so it'll be rather dangerous for him."

"I doubt it's just a matter about getting back at him for those grudges. His blazing talent is definitely something certain factions are wary of."

"Will this be a repeat of what happened to the sect master?"

"Brothers, there are some things we can't simply speculate about."

The Grand-Orient Sect wasn't a place where people could get away with saying just about anything. As the crowd was in heated discussions, a beam of light emanated from the battlefield, causing all of them to cheer.

All they could see was the appearance of a tower of light and shadow appearing in the middle of the battlefield. It was transparent on two floors with semi-transparent layouts partitioning the levels, allowing everything happening there to be clearly seen from the arena.

"This is a heavenly pattern projection Elder Su Zhen created, right?"

"That's correct. It's an application of heavenly pattern barriers that can be used at the Heavenly Will stage."

"It seems to require some sort of special spirit ores to be installed within the tower itself. The mysterious nature of heavenly pattern barriers will allow the spirit ores to capture visuals from within the tower and project them here."

There was nobody in the projection for now, but at least the layout of the first two floors was visible. As for the third, no projection was made of it, making it impossible for those outside to know how the ones within were faring in the trials on the third floor. If anyone could emerge from the third floor to the top of the Prime Tower, they would become prime disciples.

If, however, nobody had entered the third floor by the sixth hour, they would fall off the second floor and be disqualified by the tower. The third floor had always been one of secrecy and mystique, making the discrepancy of knowledge about the tower between the seventeen participating direct disciples and four prime disciples to be quite large.

The highlight of the day was the treasure hunt on the first two floors of the tower, as well as whether or not Li Tianming would survive. The projection's appearance meant that the tower would open soon. Even if no prime disciples were raised, it was already an honor for the seventeen to be chosen to enter the tower—something the other inner disciples and outer disciples aspired to experience at least once. All seventeen of the chosen were super talented direct disciples of the elders or their family members, after all.

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When Su Zhen emerged from Fengtian Mountain's hall, Tianming knew it was about time for him to fight.

"Why's Qingyu not back yet?" Ye Shaoqing asked, frowning his brow.

"Granny's gone out to look for her. She said Qingyu went to Fuling Town, or something. Based on the speed of the Grandwhite Kunpeng's flight, she should've returned a day ago," Tianming said.

"Qingyu would definitely come back for something as important as this. Perhaps she's been delayed by something."

Tianming was quite worried about her. Back when she left, he hadn't thought too much about it. The closer it was to the opening of the Prime Tower, the harder it was for him to leave. Fortunately, the much stronger Jingyu was out looking for her. Given her familiarity with Qingyu, she would have a much easier time finding her.

"Qingyu isn't someone that usually makes others worry. It should be fine. She might be back soon, you just have to focus on not losing your life today." Ye Shaoqing usually wasn't as strict as he was today.

"Understood."

"Come to think of it, how confident are you in your abilities right now?" Ye Shaoqing noted the improvements he had made in the past month. Back then, he had felt that Tianming was about to commit suicide by going to Prime Tower. However, now he was genuinely curious how it would go.

"Don't worry. The least I can say is that I won't die inside."

That was enough to calm Ye Shaoqing down. As long as Tianming survived, he would have tons of chances in the future.

"What about the treasures on the first two floors?"

"I'll do my best to get them."

The first floor had a much-desired terrestrial manna that could allow a lifebound beast to evolve to a third-order saint beast, not to mention the second floor. Competition was sure to be fierce.

"What about becoming a prime disciple?" Ye Shaoqing asked.

"I'm not certain about that. I know nothing about the third floor, after all."

"You asked me back then whether you'd immediately become a prime disciple after you passed the third floor. Back then, I didn't give it too much thought, but I'll tell you more about it now."

"Please do."

"The elders decided that each generation should have no more than four prime disciples. If there are currently only three or fewer, the one to pass the third floor of Prime Tower will automatically be anointed as a prime disciple by the council of elders. But now there's already four, so if you pass the third floor, you'll have to fight one more round to disqualify one of the existing prime disciples and take their place. That's a one-on-one fight, and the winner gets the rank of prime disciple," Ye Shaoqing explained.

In other words, even if he passed the third floor, he would still have to get a prime disciple to step down before becoming one himself.

"Who among the four will be challenged, then?" Tianming asked the crucial question. After all, Yuwen Shendu and Su Wuyou weren't even in the same league.

#### **Chapter 265 - Tianming Heading to Battle**

"The challenger gets to pick which prime disciple to fight. The one who usually gets picked is either the weakest or has some weakness the challenger is in a position to exploit, so it's rather fair at the end of the day," Ye Shaoqing said.

"Will they fight on the spot?"

"That's also up to the challenger. The challenge battle may take place on any day within a month of when the challenge is issued. Normally, people schedule the fight a month later, as challengers need time to recover from passing Prime Tower's third floor."

A month wasn't too short a time for Tianming to improve.

"That's a rather good system. Survival of the fittest indeed," Tianming said. It was just like the path of cultivation. Either way, this was a matter left for later—what he had to focus on now was the Prime Tower.

"Tianming, if you're lucky enough to pass the third floor, I suggest you challenge Su Wuyou among the four prime disciples."

"Why's that?"

"She's the weakest among the four. Not to mention, you'll be able to improve further within a month, you monster." Only Ye Shaoqing would describe him as such, for nobody else truly knew the rate of his growth.

"What if I pick Yuwen Shendu?"

"Then you'd be an idiot."

"Hahaha..."

Ye Shaoqing was right. Yuwen Shendu had broken through to the Heavenly Will stage, a whole six levels above Tianming. Challenging Yuwen Shendu would be akin to giving up the chance of becoming a prime disciple. It was a fool's choice, one that he couldn't afford to make.

At that moment, Elder Su Zhen's voice reverberated throughout the First Grand-Orient Battlefield. "The Prime Tower will be opened soon. All seventeen direct disciples, come to me! From Taiji Mountain, Yuwen Zhenxing. From Fengyun Immortal Mountain, Huangfu Feifei. From Nantian Mountain, Chen Xiaoji. From Huochi Imperial Mountain, Gongsun Chi. From Yunxiao Mountain, Shangguan Jiayi. From Bolin Snow Mountain, Zhang Honglin. From Azure Dragon Sword Mountain, Li Tianming...."

There were seventeen disciples named in total. Each one was enough to awe the inner disciples of the sect. They were the people they aspired to emulate, though Tianming was probably an oddity and exception.

Soon, all of the talented youths made their way to Su Zhen. Putting aside their good looks, their bearing and the way they carried themselves caused them to give off a kind of distinct aura. From their resolved gazes, they seemed a league beyond the normal inner disciples of the sect. They were the elites and most hopeful among the new generation, and stood a chance of becoming prime disciples.

The tall, bald Yuwen Zhenxing was the most eye-catching of them all. While he didn't have any hair, he wasn't ugly in the least. Instead, he looked rather relaxed and pleased with his comfortable hairstyle, or lack thereof. Beside him stood Chen Xiaoji, Gongsun Chi, and the other minions that followed his lead. He really had quite an imposing party. Even someone as refined as Shangguan Jiayi paled in comparison.

Only one person, however, could steal the limelight from Yuwen Zhenxing: the white-haired youth with the ink-black arm. He looked slightly sinister, yet gentle, and his timeworn gaze gave him an aloof impression, as if he were walking down the path toward his death. None of the sixteen other disciples stood beside him.

"If I'm honest, the junior sect master looks rather charismatic."

"But he's in great danger. Let's wish him luck!"

Nobody dared overlook Yuwen Zhenxing and the others just because Tianming seemed calm, especially not after he said he would cut off Yuwen Zhenxing's arm. This was the first time he was so close to the huge, bald man.

Yuwen Zhenxing squinted and looked at Tianming, who turned to meet his gaze. When their eyes met, Tianming chuckled. It wasn't a mocking laugh, nor was it a friendly one, but it did cause the urge to kill in Yuwen Zhenxing to surge.

"Junior Sect Master, do your best and rush to the third floor," he said.

"No problem."

Though the exchange was brief, it was seething.

"Zhenxing, just focus on getting the treasures on the first two floors. I and Gongsun Chi will stop anyone attempting to fight you for them," Chen Xiaoji said privately to him.

"That's right. It won't be too late to deal with this annoying fly after you get the two treasures," Gongsun Chi added.

"Let's give him some false confidence at the start. Let him lose his cool. Once he gets to the third floor, it'll be much easier to deal with him," Chen Xiaoji said.

"Sure," Yuwen Zhenxing answered with a nod. The two treasures were almost certainly his, as his helpers were both top five among the seventeen present. He knew well that he had the advantage with the number of allies he had. This Prime Struggle was practically designed for his sake. He could take advantage of it and nobody could say anything about it.

.....

There were many elders gathered at Fengtian Mountain's observation hall, including Yuwen Fengtian and Yuwen Taiji. From the Su Clan were Second Elder Su Yunchi, Tenth Elder Su Jiudao, and Su Zhen, who was organizing the main event. Apart from them, there were Chen Nantian, Qin Wulie and Gongsun Sheng.

Elders aside, a few key figures from the Yuwen Clan were there, such as Yuwen Kaitai, Yuwen Zhenxing's father, as well as the most important youth in their clan, Yuwen Shendu.

The youth sat in a corner of the hall with a red heavenly pattern spirit gem in hand, trying to comprehend its mysteries despite the occasion. Beside him sat Su Wuyou, leaning slightly against his chair. She looked at his face with gentle longing, but Yuwen Shendu's eyes were closed the whole time, causing her to be slightly frustrated. All she wanted to happen now was for the Prime Struggle and Realm Wars to end sooner. In fact, everyone there hoped for the same.

"The two treasures have been prepared for Zhenxing. With my son and Gongsun Chi there, Zhenxing won't have a hard time getting them," Chen Nantian said with a hearty laugh.

"The three of them grew up together and get along well. With those treasures, Zhenxing's sure to soar to greater heights," Gongsun Sheng said.

"More crucially, we didn't have to spend any of our own money. The manna came from the sect itself, haha!" Qin Wulie said as he stroked his beard. They were the ones who designed the first two floors of Prime Tower, giving Yuwen Zhenxing a huge advantage.

"As for the fly that hurt my granddaughter, Yiran, is the plan in place?" Second Elder Su Yunchi asked Yuwen Kaitai, obviously talking about Tianming. Incidentally, he and Yuwen Fengtian were of the same age.

### **Chapter 266 - First Floor of the Prime Tower**

"Uncle Su, I already talked with Zhenxing. He said that as long as the fly dares step into the third floor, the three of them will have tons of tricks up their sleeves to deal with him," Yuwen Kaitai said.

"Tricks? What a bunch of kids.... They'll never come close to how we were like back in our day," Su Yunchi's son, Su Jiudao, said. He was Su Wuyou and Su Yiran's father and belonged to the same generation as Yuwen Taiji.

Thinking back to their youth made them chuckle and relax. It seemed that they were in for a good show tonight, in which the treasures of the sect would be given to the disciples in their own faction. It wasn't the first time they had done something like that.

All of a sudden, the quiet Yuwen Taiji looked around and asked, "Where's Shengcheng?" The youths in the hall were Yuwen Shendu, Su Wuyou, and Su Yiran. "Did you all see him?"

The sisters nervously looked each other in the eye. Just as they were about to make something up, Yuwen Taiji glared at them. "Don't lie and tell me the truth."

"Quick! Out with it!" Su Jiudao hurriedly said.

The seniors could well see that the two girls were rather nervous. Eventually, Su Yiran told them the matter involving Guo Xiaofu, Li Xuanchen, and Li Qingyu.

"Why in the world are you two messing around like that? What if Shengcheng encounters trouble?" Su Jiudao scolded.

"Jiudao, it's fine. It's no big deal. Young people are always more reckless and can't deal with humiliation well. It's good that he gets to vent," Yuwen Fengtian said to defuse the situation. In fact, he was the one who spoiled Yuwen Shengcheng the most.

"That's right. The two of them should be fine against Qingyu alone. They'll be back after they have their fun," Yuwen Kaitai said.

They didn't appear to be worried about Yuwen Shengcheng's safety. Not to mention, what he was up to was a little sinister and unfit for a child of his age. Yet, they hadn't expected Yuwen Taiji to crush the handle of his chair.

"Kaitai, send someone out to drag him back. Ground him for three years and don't let him out no matter what!"

Yuwen Kaitai's smile instantly vanished. "Big Brother, Shengcheng's only out to mess around. There's no need to—"

Before he finished, Yuwen Taiji shot him a glare with his heterochromatic eyes.

"Alright, I'll send someone to get him," the huge man said and immediately stood up. The atmosphere was rather tense.

"Actually, I can understand Taiji. He has high hopes for Shengcheng and wants him to focus his efforts on cultivation so that he can defeat his foes with his own power, instead of getting revenge using underhanded tactics like this," Second Elder Su Yunchi said.

The rest didn't add anything to the conversation. There was nothing good that would come from discussing this. Either way, Yuwen Shengcheng would be a prisoner for the next three years.

In the corner, Yuwen Shendu stared at Su Wuyou.

"Shendu, don't look at me like that. Shengcheng's been too frustrated lately. I'm just trying to help him vent," she said with her head lowered.

"So you resorted to something so vile?" Yuwen Shendu hissed.

"Don't you want him to vent so he can calm down and cultivate?"

"Wuyou, don't try to be smart with me. It'll only serve to push us apart." He closed his eyes and stopped looking at her.

"Alright, I understand." She bit her lip, tears flowing uncontrollably as a hint of hate festered.

"After seeing this fight, I'll be joining the Realm Wars. My survival is not guaranteed. If I die, I will scatter like the clouds. If I survive, I'll rise much farther than before. If I manage to achieve that and you still want to stay with me, don't do things that make me look down on you."

"Okay!" Her head hung even lower than before.

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Soon, the sun rose even higher in the skies. A creaking sound echoed out as the main entrance of the tower opened. The audience fell silent as they turned toward the tower situated above First Grand-Orient Battlefield itself, high above the projection of the tower's first two floors.

The tall white tower was marked by its age, radiating an ancient sensation. The moment the entrance opened, Tianming felt as if a doorway to a new world had opened before him.

"Rumor says that the Prime Tower was made by a god. It's not a mere tower, but a divine artifact."

"Only the founding ancestor of the Li Saint Clan could control something like this."

This was the greatest treasure of the sect, and all disciples would protect it with their lives. Tianming squinted and felt the sensation coming from the tower.

"The aura is too weak. Perhaps we'll only find out on the third floor."

He wasn't the only one to be challenging the tower for the first time; it was the same for all of them.

"Big Brother, are you confident in becoming a prime disciple?" Feiling asked.

"Well, it'll depend on how well you do," Tianming said.

"I still have one sealed ability, but I feel like it's about to come free soon."

"Really?" Tianming couldn't wait for the day he could use it.

Elder Su Zhen turned and said, "The Prime Tower has been activated. All seventeen of you, follow me inside!"

The Prime Struggle was finally starting. The audience loudly cheered at the announcement. In a world where geniuses were cherished and treasured, those who could become prime disciples would be afforded endless admiration and respect.

"Note that once you enter the tower, you'll be allowed to release your lifebound beasts."

In the next moment, Tianming was standing before the tower. There were seventeen white doors, one for each challenger. The structure towered above all of them like a titan looking down on mere ants.



After Tianming and the rest entered, the audience turned their eyes to the projection in the arena. While the projection was still empty, they knew it was going to start soon. The seventeen participants would charge through the tower with their lifebound beasts and be visible through the projection. It was as if time had stopped as the disciples eagerly awaited Su Zhen's announcement.

"Li Tianming," Yuwen Zhenxing said, making a cutthroat gesture. Right at that moment, Su Zhen announced the start of the struggle.

Yuwen Zhenxing was the first to burst into the tower. The door immediately closed behind him. One after another, the rest chose a door and charged in as well. They had to be quick and decisive, for if two of them entered the same door, there was bound to be conflict.

"The internal layout has been set by the seniors. The door Yuwen Zhenxing picked is definitely much easier!"

It was a shame Yuwen Zhenxing had immediately picked that door. Tianming couldn't chase him through it, but he had his gaze on Gongsun Chi, the closest one to him. He had a feeling that the choosing of a door was really important. Yuwen Zhenxing, Gongsun Chi, and Chen Xiaoji were definitely told which doors were the best picks.

"Ling'er!" he called out without hesitation, speeding himself up with the Celestial Wings and slowing his foes down with Temporal Field. His relative velocity skyrocketed at that instant.

Gongsun Chi charged toward the eighth door like a beam of fire, but Tianming cut in front of him right before he got in. He didn't even bump into Gongsun Chi, having overtaken him with sheer speed alone. The latter was just a moment shy of entering the door before it shut in his face, almost smashing it in.

"Li Tianming!" he roared as he turned to the next door with an expression of fury. He didn't think that before he managed to toy with Tianming, he would have his advantage taken away from him.

"How dare he... I'll make sure he suffers later!" The three of them had already promised Su Wuyou and Su Yiran that much. "As long as we get our hands on the treasures first, Tianming will be ours to mess with as we please!"

Little did he know that that would be only the start of Tianming's antics.

### **Chapter 267 - Stardust Charge, Meteoric Fall**

"Lifebound beasts can be let out right after entering Prime Tower." Tianming figured that the first floor of the tower had something to do with speed, and letting Ying Huo and Meow Meow out wouldn't affect his speed at all. Once he charged into the tower, he accelerated greatly with the two creatures clutching at his robes as they whooshed forwards, their fur and feathers dancing in the wind.

Ying Huo seemed a little troubled by the speed, swaying frantically as it dug its claws into its low-class mount, Tianming, while not forgetting to protect its hairstyle with its wings.

By then, the other sixteen had basically entered. All of a sudden, their lifebound beasts came out of their lifebound space, with the exception of Yuwen Zhenxing's. The moment he entered, he unhesitatingly charged forward at breakneck speed. However, Chen Xiaoji, who had followed behind him, manifested

his Indigo-scaled Unicorn and mounted it. Like a rider from the stars, he charged forward with terrifying speed.

Tianming figured that Yuwen Zhenxing didn't let out his lifebound beast because it was rather huge and would affect his speed. Tianming was paying attention to what they were doing; he wouldn't go wrong mimicking them, at any rate.

"Let's go for the treasures, first!"

On the first floor, the treasure was a terrestrial manna, something even Tianming hadn't seen before. With his Celestial Wings, he flew gracefully like a bird and charged forward with the help of Temporal Field. He noticed the first floor was structured much like an ant's nest, with huge, maze-like tunnels that allowed enough space for lifebound beasts to fight. Each of the seventeen doors led to one of the twisting paths that intersected each other at certain points. Nobody could really tell where the entrance was, let alone the exit, once they were deep enough. The walls that separated the paths seemed a little like Feiling's Spatial Wall, but were transparent enough for Tianming to see all the other participants through.

"This is something called formless ore, a weird, semi-transparent ore with black heavenly patterns. However, it is really hard to break," Feiling said.

In other words, as long as they picked a door, their paths would eventually lead them to the exit, no matter how many turns there were. The final destination would be where the treasure was situated.

Essentially, the whole floor was a semi-transparent maze. Before many disciples could react after they entered, Tianming spotted Yuwen Zhenxing and the others through the walls. However, he couldn't see too far through the formless ore, as it wasn't completely transparent. But that didn't stop the third eye on his left arm, which he didn't hesitate to use to find his way around.

"I see it!"

The first floor was huge and the paths were complicated, but the third eye could see through most of the formless ore walls and spotted a black spheroid at a corner of the floor. That should be a manna ball, a receptacle used to store manna. Manna balls were made using spirit ore, just like bestial weapons, so they were perfectly capable of containing manna. Once he got it, the treasure would be his.

"There's only one path that leads to it, and Yuwen Zhenxing and the rest obviously know which one it is!" At the very least, Tianming could see that Yuwen Zhenxing was heading straight toward the manna ball while the rest of the participants were hesitating about which way to go. Had he not taken Gongsun Chi's chosen path, Gongsun Chi would've already caught up with them.

"This is too unfair! The treasure is basically being handed to him!" Feiling complained.

"We'll see." Tianming hated underhanded methods like this, having achieved everything with nothing but his own power. However, his frustration only made him speed up even more.

With his third eye guiding him, he could quickly find out where to go once he lost track of his path. It was only helped by the fact that the path was made to be easier for Gongsun Chi to traverse. Tianming was zipping along so quickly that those in the arena saw him closing in on Yuwen Zhenxing and Chen Xiaoji.

Among the seventeen participants, Chen Xiaoji zipped toward the manna ball like a beam of starlight. With his lifebound beast, he was slightly faster than Yuwen Zhenxing. While most of the participants were making progress, some took the wrong path inside the maze. While formless ore was partially see-through, the manna ball couldn't be seen unless one was close enough. Most of them moved about like headless flies in the maze.

"Quick! Giddy up!" Ying Huo said, riding Tianming like a horse on wide plains. Feiling boosted the speed of his Celestial Wings even more, allowing Tianming to have an even further edge. One had to wonder if Yuwen Zhenxing's seniors were pulling their hair out over their bewilderment at Tianming not having taken even one wrong turn. Instead, Gongsun Chi, who had his path taken from him, had to spend quite a lot of effort to get back on the right track. However, he had lost his edge over the others.

When their paths met as they charged toward the manna ball, the audience were on the edge of their seats.

"Li Tianming is still a little bit farther than the rest."

"They're about to collide!"

"Li Tianming and Chen Xiaoji are ahead. Even Yuwen Zhenxing is lagging behind them."

"With him being so huge, speed definitely isn't his forte."

"I wonder if the junior sect master or Chen Xiaoji will get the first treasure."

"There must be something else!"

Soon, Tianming could see the unicorn at his flank at the path next to him. Their paths finally connected.

"Buzz off!" Chen Xiaoji shouted as he charged toward Tianming from the side with his spear raised. Instantly, the tip of the spear formed a galaxy with countless stars, with each of which was an attack on Tianming.

At the same time, his unicorn radiated bright blue like a great astral body. The horn on its head was as sharp as the astral lance in its master's hand. It was using its spirit-source abilities, Astral Glow and Meteoric Fall! The two spirit-source abilities were used in tandem with Chen Xiaoji's battle art, Stardust Charge.

Chen Xiaoji ignored the manna ball and charged toward Tianming instead, for his mission was to remove all obstacles for Yuwen Zhenxing. The threat from an eighth-level Unity beastmaster like him could be fatal. Right at that moment, Yuwen Zhenxing arrived at the path, but all he did was smirk at Tianming. While Chen Xiaoji kept him busy, he charged straight toward the manna ball.

### **Chapter 268 - Crushing The Mountains And Rivers With One Blow!**

"Despicable!"

Tianming had run out of time. The point was, Chen Xiaoji wouldn't give him an opportunity to catch up. He had to solve this problem at once.

"Tianming, how could you ever think of snatching away what belongs to Zhenxing? You must be joking!"

When the eighth-level Unity Chen Xiaoji released his full majesty, he resembled a river of stars and the Indigo-Scaled Unicorn increased in speed, charging toward Tianming in the blink of an eye.

Roaring, Meow Meow transformed into the Regal Chaosfiend, intercepting the attack.

Chaos Voltball!

The violent black lightning ball detonated in the passage. As the snake-like lightning rays danced, starlight shot out.

"Die!"

Chen Xiaoji's pike pierced Meow Meow's eyes. The starlight on the scales of his Indigo-Scaled Unicorn under him seemed to obscure everyone's vision. Once the horse's horn struck, it was enough to impale Meow Meow.

Even if they wanted to attack Meow Meow, would Tianming or Ying Huo sit back and allow it to happen? Would Meow Meow do nothing?

It roared into the sky as lightning gathered around it and became nine thunder serpents. The Black Thunder serpents intertwined and came crashing down.

The passage wasn't spacious, and Chaos Disaster had closed off most part of the passage.

Millions of Black Thunder serpents swept across, blocking the Indigo-Scaled Unicorn.

"Over here!"

Ying Huo suddenly appeared out of nowhere, attacking with Skyscorch Featherblast, so Chen Xiaoji was forced to dodge to the other side.

"You dead fool!"

Being one of the few eighth-level Unity disciples, Chen Xiaoji believed in his own strength. Aside from the four prime disciples, he ranked in the top five when it came to power. Of these seventeen opponents, Yuwen Zhenxing was the only one to whom he acknowledged allegiance.

Tianming had witnessed his performance in the First Grand-Orient Battlefield, how one man and one horse charged into battle, slaughtering all.

However, that wasn't necessarily going to be the outcome here.

"Who's the dead fool?"

With a wave of his Celestial Wings, the Onyx Dragon in Tianming's hand turned into a black phantom and headed straight for Chen Xiaoji. At the same time, Ying Huo and Meow Meow charged at their opponent.

How relaxing it was to go three against two!

Ying Huo possessed the most means, coming up with a myriad of abilities and battle arts. Though tiny, Ying Huo was a real executioner, forming a frustrating obstacle for both Chen Xiaoji and his Indigo-Scaled Unicorn.

Not only was Ying Huo adept at Soul Hook, it was able to fully employ the Voidgod Sword Intent.

Even though Chen Xiaoji had starlight armor, he failed to avoid a sword to the shoulder. That one blow had mangled his flesh, causing blood to drip down his arm.

By the time Chen Xiaoji chased after the little chick in a rage, Ying Huo had already escaped and hidden behind Meow Meow.

"Chen Xiaoji, over here!"

At that moment, Tianming suddenly appeared before his eyes. The determination in his eyes was overpowering and explosive. Just one glance at them could send him shaking to the core.

Voidgod Sword Intent, Countercurrent!

After ten thousand swings of the sword, Tianming had mastered this move to perfection. His sword went straight for Chen Xiaoji's head.

With a roar, Chen Xiaoji jumped off the Indigo-Scaled Unicorn and shot into the sky!

"You're but a mere fly. You're embarrassing yourself!" While Chen Xiaoji was occupied with words, Tianming responded with action.

"Destroy!"

With one blow, the mountains and rivers were crushed.

The Onyx Dragon supercharged with Heaven-Defying Sword Intent, as well as Tianming's thunder and fire dual abilities, coupled with Feiling's spiritual attachment, sliced down in one fluid move.

Chen Xiaoji's pike was unable to handle the sheer power of this blow, A loud bang reverberated in the air as the sword hit him on the head, rendering him dizzy.

Just as he jumped up from his horse, the force sent him smashing back toward his lifebound beast. At that exact moment, Meow Meow's electric fang chomped down on the Indigo-Scaled Unicorn's neck, sending the beast to the ground.

Blood splattered everywhere.

"How dare a vegetarian come head-to-head with us meat eaters! Meow Meow, kill it!"

While Meow Meow held down their opponent, Ying Huo struck a dozen bloody holes into the Indigo-Scaled Unicorn with Demise of Man-Earth-Heaven.

"Fucking hell, it's got really thick skin!"

The attack had Ying Huo's wings trembling. Fortunately, its wings had evolved into imperial wings.

"So this is a twenty-four-star second-order saint beast. How weak!"

The Indigo-Scaled Unicorn flew into a rage under their rampant trampling. Its desire to resist was immediately nipped in the bud when the little chick unleashed Soul Hook with its claws, aiming just below the horse's crotch. Whimpering pitifully, the horse behaved at once.

"Still fierce?"

The little chick's smile became the Indigo-Scaled Unicorn's nightmare.

As soon as Chen Xiaoji got back on his feet and witnessed the scene, he revealed a look of shock.

"Xing Han!"

That was his lifebound beast's name. Just as the words left his lips, a murderous threat loomed from the sky.

Chen Xiaoji's expression shifted greatly. Without his weapon, he was forced to cast his Meteorite Palm in a panic.

A black sword pierced through his palm.

"Ahh!"

From his throat erupted the most hideous, miserable scream. Chen Xiaoji stared at Tianming, eyes glazed with pain and boiling with anger.

"Die—"

Before he could finish his sentence, Tianming pounded his fist into Chen Xiaoji's face so his cheeks were sunken in.

"Shut up."

With a cold glare, Tianming flapped his Celestial Wings and flew out of the battlefield, picking up Ying Huo and Meow Meow along the way.

"Let's go!"

He accelerated in Yuwen Zhenxing's direction.

Although Chen Xiaoji was crushed and defeated, it had wasted quite some time. Taking advantage of their delay, Yuwen Zhenxing was much closer to the manna sphere.

Chen Xiaoji miserably crawled up, suffering from convulsions and tears slipping down his cheeks while his lifebound beast was still rolling and whimpering on the ground. Tianming disappeared before his eyes.

Chen Xiaoji huffed, "Tianming, you're dead meat! You're dead!"

All he could do was lose his temper. As he loudly cursed, he bit his own tongue and twisted in pain.

"What's wrong with you?" Right then, Gongsun Chi finally caught up and noticed his sorry state.

"Tianming snuck up on me," lied Chen Xiaoji.

"You're useless!" Gongsun Chi was rendered speechless by Chen Xiaoji's embarrassing state.

"That's easy for you to say. You couldn't even support your own passage. Otherwise, why would I have to intercept him!" fumed Chen Xiaoji.

"Forget it. Let's not fall out over this. We've got more important business. Let's get him," Gongsun Chi picked up speed.

"Don't look down on Tianming. You'll know when you meet him," Chen Xiaoji gritted his teeth.

Up ahead, Gongsun Chi chuckled, "Even if Tianming is very powerful, I won't be beaten so badly. Besides, in a life and death confrontation, the victor is still undecided."

Behind him, Chen Xiaoji rose to his feet and allowed the Indigo-Scaled Unicorn to recuperate in his lifebound space before catching up.

As for the injuries on hands and face, he had to externally apply spirit herbs for the time being. His wounds would definitely have a great impact on his combat effectiveness, and even affected his speed. Huangfu Feifei and Shangguan Jiayi had advanced further than him.

Anger flared up in Chen Xiaoji as he thought of the people outside who had watched the battle. Well aware of how embarrassing his current situation was, he knew he wouldn't be able to hold his head high for a while.

"You must make it to the third floor, Tianming!"

Only by killing Tianming could he douse his anger!

### **Chapter 269 - The Bloodfiend Taotie**

Tianming's crushing victory was equivalent to stepping on Chen Xiaoji to chase Yuwen Zhenxing. Unbeknownst to Tianming, he had already set off an uproar in Grand-Orient Sect's first battlefield.

The audience was both nervous and excited, standing up one after another and blocking the view of the people behind them, which inevitably caused a commotion. In the world of cultivation, a clash between such geniuses was enough to enthuse many disciples who stared wide-eyed as Chen Xiaoji was forced to taste utter defeat. The eighth-level Unity beastmaster fell to the ground, spewing out blood while his lifebound beast wailed miserably—a result that had defied everyone's expectation. Most of the audience in the first battlefield gasped, shock plastered on their faces as they stared at each other.

"The junior sect master must've progressed to be evenly matched with Chen Xiaoji. Looks like I underestimated him." Yuan Huitian shook his head and revealed a wry smile.

"He's frightening! Everyone knows he's a man who defies destiny. He's more talented than we imagined!" Gu Yu's eyes were filled with worship.

Azure Dragon Sword Mountain disciples cheered Tianming's name, blood boiling from the heat of the battle they'd just witnessed. There were countless others who thought like Yuan Huitian and Gu Yu.

There was no way they could equate Tianming to mediocrity now. Before this battle, they realized Tianming must have made a new breakthrough, but they never expected Tianming's preparations and calculations to exceed everyone else's.

There were many spectators from the Li Saint Clan, led by Li Xuanyi, Li Yansheng, Li Yunting, and Li Xuanhe, who were huddled in a corner of the battlefield, watching the scene.

"He defeated Xuanchen not too long ago, and now he's crushed Chen Xiaoji. His progress is amazing!" gasped Li Xuanyi.

The members of the Li Saint Clan had ugly expressions on their faces. After all, they had long since discarded the Apex Bloodline in their hearts.

"A pentabane is really a freak of nature! Have we made a mistake?" Li Xuanhe turned ashen.

He was the one to get acquainted with Tianming, and knew better than anyone else how powerful Tianming was when he defeated his son, Li Linghe. This wasn't the advancement of a genius, but the rise of a God!

"We'll see if he can actually leave the Prime Tower alive." Li Xuanyi gritted his teeth. Though he was well aware of a certain incident that was sure to happen, he was afraid to come clean.

"Of course, if he does become a prime disciple, we have to support him," Li Yunting sighed. In fact, he was already convinced.

"Do you actually think the Yuwen clan will allow him to continue growing?" retorted Li Xuanyi.

"Maybe not, but he has the Azure Dragon's Ye clan behind him, after all. Once he becomes a prime disciple and enjoys an elevated status, the Yuwen clan won't be able to kill him so easily. A prime disciple is no joke, and killing one is just as grave as killing an elder," said Li Yansheng.

"He's certainly made great progress, but whether or not he can survive the hands of Yuwen Zhenxing is still debatable, not to mention challenging the prime disciples. Becoming a prime disciple is purely a dream." Li Xuanyi grimaced.

This was the only way he could comfort himself so Tianming's meteoric rise wouldn't give him a sense of despair.

"Yes, let's wait and see," said Li Yansheng.

What was more embarrassing were the people coming to congratulate the Li Saint Clan. Li Xuanyi had to deal with them one by one, which caused him much discomfort.

Out of the hundred thousand people in the audience, at least seventy thousand admired Tianming's rise. His genius lay not in challenging his opponents, but constantly breaking the limits of everyone's imagination!

"I don't know what else to say except that I'm amazed," admitted Elder Ye of the Azure Immortal Mountain.

"There's a good show waiting for us to watch," said Ye Shaoqing, who moved over to his father's side. As Tianming's master, he was of course proud.

"After this, we must protect him no matter what," added Ye Qing.

"That won't be a problem."

"Father, about big brother..." Ye Yuxi began in exasperation.



"He's made his choice. Let him be." Ye Qing shook his head helplessly.

Ye Tianlong had taken refuge in Yuwen Taiji. Over these past few days, he had constantly tried to persuade the rest of them to join him. After being rejected, his pained look as he stared at the family he considered fools was truly chilling. Finally, Ye Qing drove him out of Azure Immortal Mountain.

"Yuxi, once we make a choice, we must be fearless and stick to it," Ye Shaoqing interjected.

"You don't have to tell me—I don't want to be a running dog." Ye Yuxi rolled her eyes.

What they didn't know was what a bombshell Tianming's performance would cause at Fengtian Mountain. But they could imagine just how upset Chen Xiaoji's father, Chen Nantian, would be, and they wondered just how many others would show the same chagrin.

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While the audience cheered, the battle in the Prime Tower was at its most tense moment! The audience kept their eyes wide open and saw Yuwen Zhenxing drawing infinitely closer to the manna ball. Although Tianming had been intercepted by Chen Xiaoji, he was tearing hell for leather through the tower. Whether or not he could catch up with Yuwen Zhenxing remained to be seen.

Behind Tianming were several other disciples. With the aid of his Celestial Wings, Tianming could already glimpse Yuwen Zhenxing's back. On a pillar up ahead was the manna sphere.

He shuttled through the passage as fast as he could, throwing out Archfiend. As long as the manna ball was within the range of Archfiend, it could instantly shoot out.

"Get out," Yuwen Zhenxing coldly laughed without even turning around.

A blood-red beast dashed out, directly occupying the passage and blocking Tianming's path. It was a Taotie! The beast was a third larger than the Eight-Armed Taotie, covered in scales the color of blood, and had a gigantic, ferocious mouth. In that mouth were five rows of shark-like teeth that could tear its opponents apart. Its blood-red scales were thick and coarse, its eyes a matching color. With a spike at the end of its slender tail, it was almost no different from a pike. This was a monstrous fighting machine.

At a glance, Tianming noticed thirty-three stars in its eyes. It was a third-order saint beast, undoubtedly the highest order saint beast in the entire tower. This beast was known as the Bloodfiend Taotie—the greatest killer amongst its kind, both cruel and ferocious, resembling a wildbeast. In fact, it was more bloodthirsty than a wildbeast!

### **Chapter 270 - I'm Afraid That's Not Possible!**

The Bloodfiend Taotie immediately blocked Tianming as soon as it appeared, spitting out blood-colored flames at him.

The blood-colored flames weren't hot, but instead cold and insidious. It was extremely terrifying. Upon contact with them, it would feel like the soul was being burnt away.

Tianming had completely lost his chance with the third-order saint beast blocking his way. Yuwen Zhenxing had already arrived at the manna ball when the taotie unleashed its spirit-source ability. He seized hold of it and stored it in his spatial ring.

“The first floor’s treasure is mine!” Yuwen Zhenxing was excited. Everything was going according to plan, apart from Tianming defeating Chen Xiaoji. Honestly, although Chen Xiaoji was defeated rather quickly, he had still made great contributions.

Otherwise, with Li Tianming’s abnormal speed, he really would have benefited a lot. Yuwen Zhenxing visibly relaxed now that he had obtained the treasure. He was imagining giving Tianming his beating now, when a giant gate suddenly opened above his head. The pillar the manna ball had been secured on extended, linking to the gate.

“Return, Xue You!” Upon Yuwen Zhenxing’s command, the taotie quickly disengaged from Tianming and rushed to Yuwen Zhenxing’s side, vanishing back into his lifebound space.

For Yuwen Zhenxing, now that he had obtained the first floor’s treasure, the next priority was the second floor’s treasure. Making a challenging gesture at Tianming, he quickly charged up the pillar toward the second floor.

Tianming had only just reached the bottom by the time his figure vanished.

“Noooo, my treasure!” Ying Huo said, irritated.

“Not a big deal. We’ll just take it when we catch up to him,” Tianming said, then entered the second floor and continued the pursuit. He was aware that there were no rules saying nobody could snatch the prize from whoever obtained it. There had been many such cases throughout history; it was allowed as long as it all happened inside the tower.

That made the Prime Struggle much more complicated, as obtaining the treasure was a very separate matter from holding on to it.

Tianming remained unperturbed even though the treasure had been snatched by Yuwen Zhenxing, as only the first third of the Prime Struggle had finished.

Gongsun Chi was third to arrive and quickly entered the second floor, before being followed by Huangfu Feifei, Shangguan Jiayi, and Chen Xiaoji, who was persevering.

Finally, another two arrived, Zhao Xingxing and Jiang Xuankong. They had spent a long time searching for the exit. Currently, many others were still lost inside. Still, these two were at seventh-level Unity, making them weaker than those who had gone before them.

Inside the maze, there were still four eighth-level Unity beastmasters stuck inside, completely lost on where to go. Now that the manna ball was gone, they were even more directionless than before.

Many spectators could already smell something fishy here. Those who had already known the route prior had not only quickly found the first floor’s treasure, but also quickly entered the second floor. The rest were all still stuck wandering around.

What did power alone count for?

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When Tianming entered the second floor, the first thing he saw was a thick mist that filled his entire vision.

Tianming quickly used his third eye to see the area clearly, but Yuwen Zhenxing was already long gone. Fortunately, the mist quickly started to recede.

At that moment, Gongsun Chi arrived, along with a pair of lovers. The pair looked like a match made in heaven, both holding themselves with an elegant bearing. They looked completely at odds with Yuwen Zhenxing and Gongsun Chi.

In terms of style, this pair would be Yuwen Zhenxing and Gongsun Chi's superiors, but they lost out in ferocity and fighting spirit.

Tianming recognized them. They were descendants of the first and fourth elders, and weren't part of Yuwen Zhenxing's circle. Of course, they weren't part of his circle, either. They were all competitors.

Two other seventh-level Unity beastmasters arrived. Li Tianming didn't recognize them, but they didn't matter much in the current situation.

The defeated Chen Xiaoji also crawled up, but looked to be in a wretched state.

However, to everyone's surprise, the second floor was completely bare!

The only thing was an ancient copper bell on the ground in the center.

Tianming just needed to see where Yuwen Zhenxing and the rest were running to see where the prize was located. As was expected, they were racing toward the bell.

"So, they're not completely shameless. Fortunately, that mist hindered Yuwen Zhenxing for a while, or else he'd already have the other prize, too."

The second floor was obviously to be a chaotic brawl with no rules. For Yuwen Zhenxing, Gongsun Chi, and Chen Xiaoji, all of whom were among the top five geniuses, what did they have to fear if they worked together? The one hiccup they hadn't expected was Chen Xiaoji being defeated first and temporarily becoming useless.

"Go!" Tianming didn't care about anything, but simply accelerated toward the bell with his Celestial Wings. He could only see Huangfu Feifei and Shangguan Jiayi dashing over.

As for the last two seventh-level Unity people, they didn't dare make a move, lest they be zeroed in on by Yuwen Zhenxing.

"Stop them. I'll take the treasure," Yuwen Zhenxing said.

"I'm afraid that's not possible!" Chen Xiaoji said with a troubled expression.

Yuwen Zhenxing glared at him. He had a slight disadvantage in speed! The original plan was just to have Chen Xiaoji and Gongsun Chi block Huangfu Feifei and Shangguan Jiayi. However, now there was an extra Li Tianming and Chen Xiaoji was unavailable. Their advantage had completely been lost.

However, Yuwen Zhenxing was still Yuwen Zhenxing! He was still the same person who had been raised in battlefields. When in battle, he would be completely different from other disciples.

He and his taotie quickly appeared in front of Huangfu Feifei and Shangguan Jiayi. Yuwen Zhenxing didn't just have to take the treasure; he also had to shut up any gossip. Hence, he had to show a satisfactory performance and convince the masses!

"Gutsy, aren't you, to compete with me! Come at me together!" There was a ferocious light in Yuwen Zhenxing's eyes, and his taotie gave a furious bellow.

The lovers exchanged a look.

"Take him down!"

"Yes!"

In a one-on-one, they would be wary of Yuwen Zhenxing. However, this right here was a rare chance for them!